



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 12/14/2010**

Approved by School Committee January 25, 2011

The Arlington School Committee  
Regular School Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, December 14, 2010  
7:30 p.m.

School Committee Room – Sixth Floor  
Arlington High School  
869 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476

Present: Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Joseph Curran, Dr. Kirsi Allison-Ampe and Mr. Judson Pierce.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Dr. Wallis Raemer, Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Steve Pereira, AAA Representative, Student Representatives: Ms. Maggie Griesmer and Ms. Kelsey Russell and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Student Reps exited the meeting at 9: 20 p.m.

Mr. Ryder exited the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Mr. Pereira exited the meeting at 9:35 p.m.

Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 10:11 and returned at 10:15 p.m.

Mr. Curro opened the meeting at 7:30p.m.

### Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition

Mr. Curro reflected on two quotes he came across today. Mr. Curro had a brief moment of silence for Arlington High School Teacher, Mr. Kevin Richardson's mother who recently passed away and for Selectman Kevin Greeley's mother in law who passed away this past week. Mr. Curro welcomed Mr. Pereira, AAA Representative and Director of Metco and the two student representatives, senior's Kelsey Russell and Maggie Griesmer.

The Artwork displayed in the School Committee Room is from students in the Bishop School.

### Athletic Fee Schedule Follow-up

Ms. Heigham, Chair of the Budget Subcommittee, thanked Mr. Ted Dever, Athletic Director and Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer for all the work they contributed to preparing the following documents: Varied Approaches to adjusting Athletic Fees for 2010-2011 Year, Suggested Alternative Funding For Athletics FY11 and the Arlington School Committee Budget Subcommittee motion for 12/14/2010.

Ms. Heigham reported that the revenue target required for 2010-2011 was \$450,000 but with Bridge the Gap contributions, adjustment to gate fee the Revenues required for Athletics is now \$417,000.

Ms. Heigham said Mr. Dever and the committee brought forth proposals to include a family cap and abatement for students in multiple sports. The Budget Subcommittee unanimously accepted Mr. Dever's recommendation of a \$1,600 family cap and a \$40 discount for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> sports and brings this recommendation to the full School

Committee tonight for approval.

**Ms. Heigham moved to adopt the Athletic Director's recommendation of a \$1600 family cap and a \$40 discount per student for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sports per motion of November 23, 2010; fee collection was deferred until December 14, 2010 and should resume tomorrow December 15, 2010, seconded by Dr. Ampe**  
**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce Yes, Dr. Ampe Yes, Mr. Curran No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes.**  
**Voted: 6-1**

Mr. Curran said he has always voted against user fees and the amount of user fees the School Department collected last year was \$230,00 in fees from parents and student athletes. That amount was \$51,000 more than the \$179,000 used to establish the FY 10 Budget. Mr. Curran stated the surplus can only be used in the athletic expenses and only the School Committee can vote to allocate the money for something else, Mr. Curran asked who made the decision to reallocate the \$51,000 and where did those funds go?

Ms. Johnson said that part of the \$51,000 represents gate revenues of \$13,000 and this got posted to fees and not to tickets sales and the athletic fees were used to offset athletic expenses. Mr. Curran referenced the law of Student Activities Fees and to the fact the School Committee never voted to allocate the appropriation of funds for anything else but for athletics.

Mr. Curro said the School Committee voted a budget and a funding level to support services and our revenue are projections and that is what caused the short fall last year and the non-town revenues went against us. He said if athletics were cut or increased then that would have been the violation. Mr. Curro suggested to Mr. Curran to only speak to the motion on the table but Mr. Curran stated that he was not happy in the order of the Budget Subcommittee coming up with this athletic fee recommendation before the Athletic Advisory Committee members were nominated and had their first meeting. Mr. Curro assured Mr. Curran that the School Committee would consider the Athletic Advisory Committee's recommendations on reducing the athletic fees any further after the subcommittee meets.

Dr. Ampe said the Budget Subcommittee discussed the timeline and said they accepted this recommendation before submitting the projections to the Athletic Advisory Committee because they had to start the process of the collection of winter fees so the School Department did not end up in a deficit once again.

Ms. Starks said that by putting the motion forward tonight says the School Committee, Mr. Dever, and Ms. Johnson have heard what families wanted, immediate fee relief and a family cap. Ms. Starks said once the Athletic Advisory Committee meets and forwards their recommendations to the full committee they will be heard and recognized. Mr. Curran was not happy with the volunteer who was involved in preparing the data used by Ms. Johnson and Mr. Dever because they were not a finance person, and no input was received from anyone who had been nominated to the Athletic Advisory Committee. Mr. Curran spoke on the low participation numbers for the winter teams such as gymnastics, junior varsity hockey and the track team due to the high Athletic User Fees.

Ms. Heigham said that the parent volunteer was involved in helping only to input and crunch data into excel. Ms. Heigham asked Mr. Dever if it was his recommendation to propose the \$1600 family cap and the \$40 discount for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> sports. Once Mr. Dever said no Athletic Director recommends fees, he said he had used the data from last year to propose the family cap of \$1600 and \$40 discount for 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> sports because it would help 352 players rather than a lower family cap of \$1375, which would impact 110 families but less overall students.

**Mr. Thielman moved to terminate the debate, seconded by Ms. Heigham**  
**Voted: 5-2, Mr. Pierce and Mr. Curran voted No**

A roll call was taken to adopt the budget subcommittee's recommendation.

**Ms. Heigham moved to adopt the Athletic Director's recommendation of a \$1600 family cap and a \$40 discount per student for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> sports per motion of November 23, 2010; fee collection was deferred until December 14, 2010 and should resume tomorrow December 15, 2010, seconded by Dr. Ampe**  
**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce Yes, Dr. Ampe Yes, Mr. Curran No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Mr. Curro Yes.**  
**Voted: 6-1**

Mr. Curran announced the Athletic Advisory Committee would meet on Wednesday, December 15, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. The School Committee members said to Mr. Curran if after the Athletic Advisory Committee meet and their research of the data shows how a lower user fee could be proposed they would assess their recommendations.

## Nominations for Athletic Advisory Committee

Ms. Starks and the Community Relations Subcommittee recommend the following names to the Athletic Advisory Committee

**Mr. Curran moved Ms. Starks and the Community Relations Subcommittee recommendations of the following names to the Athletic Advisory Committee: Cheryl Schiller, Colleen Sleeper, Robert Bartholomew, David Good, Richard Greco, Paul Cahill, Stephen Harrington, Karen PPieroni, Kevin Wall, John Crowley, Tony Messuri, William Sullivan, Student to be named, seconded by Mr. Pierce.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Mr. Curran will run the Athletic Advisory Committee meeting as was appointed by the Chair at the last School Committee meeting on November 23, 2010.

## Reports of Principals and School Councils

Mr. Curro said the Principals from all nine schools were here tonight for the Presentation of School Improvement Plans from each of their schools and said the School Council is charged with preparing the School Improvement Plans and setting Goals with the Principals.

Dr. Bodie said each Principal had prepared their School Improvement Plans and were included in the packets. Dr. Bodie wanted each principal to report on the current years effects with the current budget reductions and speak on the impact of additional budget reductions into FY 12. Dr. Bodie said FY 12 Expense assumptions are \$46,358,000 with a total estimated Revenue of \$42,260,000 therefore the gap between FY 12 Revenue & Expenses would be \$4,098,000.

This impact will reduce teachers at the high school and middle school, administration and support staff, and would offer larger class sizes, and reduce class offerings. Mr. Skidmore, Principal of Arlington High School, Mr. Tim Ruggere, Principal Ottoson Middle School, Ms. Deb D'Amico, Mr. Alan Brown, Ms. Sheri Donovan, Ms. Tara Rossi, Ms. Karen Hartley, Ms. Stephanie Zerchykov and Mr. Steve Silvestry along with their School Council Co Chairs, Presidents, parents, grandparents and community members echoed each other and addressed the devastating impact this year's budget reductions took on classrooms teachers, staff and student learning. Other effects of the budget included increased class sizes and decreased technology. Each principal said the support of the PTO was outstanding and currently the PTO's secured funding for many projects that the School Department previously provided for, such as classroom supplies, reading and writing instructions, smart boards, technology items and additional professional development. It was stressed that the budget has never been this bleak in the many years of these professional administrators careers and they find it difficult to meet the goals of the district in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without finding additional funding.

Overall, the committee members agreed that even with the lack of funding to Arlington's teachers, staff and administrators Arlington continues to provide all with children a good education. Mr. Thielman encouraged everyone to contact our state representatives to get mandated funding for Arlington.

Ms. Heigham requested that each principal present all School Improvement Plans in the same format. Mr. Thielman and Ms. Starks said they would support an override to help keep the quality of education in Arlington because the override would also be a smart investment for the Town of Arlington. Mr. Curro asked if it made sense to devolve decisions about specific spending priorities to schools. Principal Donovan said that in her previous administration position in New York she worked with a budget just for her school but believed it was best to have equity among all nine schools, work together and have one district school budget.

**Mr. Thielman moved to table all items up until Bullying Intervention Plan, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Dr. Wallis Raemer thanked Cindy Bouvier for all her work on the plan and thanked Mr. Ryder and Ms. Bouvier for including various feedback from many parents and legal counsel. Dr. Raemer recommends this Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Mr. Pierce asked Mr. Mike Levi (parent and president of SEPAC) to come forth and once he did, he said he was pleased to hear the plan will be reviewed annually; feedback was included and would like to recommend this plan.

**Mr. Thielman moved the recommendation of Dr. Ramer to approve the Bullying Intervention and Prevention Plan, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Recess 9:25 p.m.- 9:35 pm.

**Ms. Starks moved to remove from table all tabled items, seconded by Mr. Curran**

**Voted: 7-0**

Public Participation

Mr. Jim Pieroni said the family cap of \$1600 for athletic user fees is unacceptable and suggested that the administration should have waited until after the Athletic Advisory Committee met. Mr. Pieroni was not pleased that Ms. Johnson presents different budget numbers and that no one explained where the surplus income from athletics in FY 10 went.

Students Toni Huang, Megan Hourican and Chenag Sellin expressed their concern that student participation for the winter teams are very low and suggested lowering the fees to attract more student athletes. Each student stressed the importance of participating on a team and said students would have less chance of using drugs and alcohol and spoke on the importance to include athletic information on college applications.

Mr. Michael Riley, Arlington resident was disappointed that public participation was moved to later on the agenda. His children participated in athletics and suggested any overcharges parents paid last year should be returned and not carried over anywhere in the budget.

Mr. Doug Grant echoed Mr. Curro's statements that Mr. Curro had presented at Town Meeting on November 15, 2010. Mr. Grant had sent correspondence to the administration and has not yet been provided a response. Mr. Grant would like to hold someone accountable for the shortfall.

Mr. Sean Harrington (student) quoted Dr. Jefferson "To they own self be true", whom he interned with and suggested transparency and trust to each committee member and to each administrator.

Lesley Ellis School Request for Approval of Program Change

Ms. Heigham welcomed Ms. Deanne Bensen from the Lesley Ellis School. Ms. Bensen has requested approval from the School Committee members for a program change to include grade 6 curriculums at the Lesley Ellis School.

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the 6<sup>th</sup> grade program at the Lesley Ellis School, seconded by Ms. Heigham.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Executive Session 10:21 p.m. – 10:51 p.m.

**Ms. Heigham moved to enter Executive session at 10:21 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation when an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the committee. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion or union personnel, or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with union or non-union personnel and return to open session, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Roll Call: Mr. Pierce Yes, Dr. Ampe Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curran Ms. Starks Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, and Mr. Curro Yes**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Ms. Heigham moved to exit Executive Session at 10:51 p.m. seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Home Schooling Report

Dr. Raemer reported that 41 families participate in Home Schooling for 2010-2011 school year, which is up from last.

FY 2011 Budget Discussion & Mid-Year Controls/Reductions, K. Bodie/ D. Johnson

**Ms. Heigham moved to table FY 2011 Budget Discussion & Mid-Year Controls/Reductions, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 7-0**

Consent Agenda - All items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion.

~There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the committee so request, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

*Approval of Warrant # 11072 Total Warrant Amount \$583,289.89 dated November 23, 2010*

*Approval of School Committee Minutes: ~ October 26, 2010*

*Special Meeting - January 11, 2011 at 6:30 p.m.*

**Ms. Starks moved to pull out the minutes of October 26, 2010 and approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Mr. Pierce.**

**Voted: 7-0**

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the School Committee Minutes of October 26, 2010, seconded by Ms. Starks.**

**Voted: 6-0-1, Mr. Curro abstained**

#### Secretary's Report

Ms. Starks reported on all correspondence received from November 23 through December 14, 2010:

- Draft & Final copies of the Bullying & Intervention Plan
- Draft copies of the minutes of school committee meetings on Thursday, October 14, 2010 & Tuesday, October 26, 2010
- Email from Superintendent Bodie to the School Committee on the outcome of the GIC vote
- Copy of the letter from Juliana Rice to Chairman Curro about the Superintendent's Evaluation
- Invitation to the Thanksgiving Day Football Game on Thanksgiving Day at 10:15 am vs. Arlington Catholic
- Copies the of Brackett School Newsletter dated November 15, 2010 and November 22, 2010
- Copy of a letter from MSBA announcing the opening of the statement of interest process for FY 11 between 11/17/2010 and January 26, 2011
- Copy of the Ponder report date November 2010
- Email from a parent regarding a gas leak near Brackett School
- several emails from concerned parents and citizens on the new athletic fees imposed in FY 11
- copy of a letter to Stratton parents & guardians regarding work to be done on the school
- email from a parent supporting the current athletic fee structure
- copy of a letter from MSBA to Superintendent Bodie containing review comments of several pieces of the Thompson rebuild
- copy of a letter from Chairman Curro to Stoneham, Chandler Miller about our vote to retain them for Special Education/General School Law Matters
- thank you letter from Janice Bakey to Chair Curro about our sponsorship of the annual Dr. Kin observance in January
- copy of the Deutsch/Williams Newsletter dated Fall/Winter 2010
- emails from parents requesting specific content and consideration for students with special needs and autism spectrum disorder in the bullying plan
- email from a parent about the fee for full time kindergarten
- email about the fire alarm at Bishop
- email about Stratton's PCB testing and its passing with flying colors
- invitation to the Arlington MLK celebration on Sunday, January 17 at 6pm at town hall
- letter from Brian Sullivan announcing the appointment of a new public works director, effective January 18, 2011
- notification of the skating arena to be named for Ed Burns on December 28, 2010
- notification of the AHS athletes named Dual County All Stars
- notification of an incident of bullying at the Thompson school

**Ms. Starks moved the 11 o'clock rule to 11:15 p.m. seconded by Dr. Ampe.**

**Voted: 6-1, Mr. Curro voted No**

#### Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie congratulated the Ottoson Middle School robotics Team, and the Performing Arts Department. Dr. Bodie said the Thompson School Building Committee would present the preferred option to build a new school on the same site as well as two other options to Massachusetts School Building Authority on December 15, 2010.

Dr. Bodie said the air quality at Stratton School was virtually free of PCBs and thanked everyone for coming together and discussing plans if the results were different. The MSBA voted to invite the Town of Arlington into the Green Repair Program to conduct a feasibility study on the Stratton elementary School for a potential roof, window and/or boiler repair/replacement project. Warrants for Spring Town Meeting open December 7 and close January 7. Dr.

Bodie read all the Arlington High School fall All Stars whom appeared in the Boston Globe on Sunday.

Roundtable

Mr. Pierce said the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee was looking into the revision of policies around meeting dates and times for the School Committee meetings. The next Policy and Procedure meeting will be Wednesday, December 22, 2010. Mr. Pierce said the next SEPAC meeting would be held on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Curran expressed, to the chair, that he would like an Executive Session at the second School Committee meeting in January, so the full committee could address the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer regarding the FY 10 deficit. As directed by the Chair and Subcommittee Chair, Mr. Curran had submitted questions to them over a month ago with regards to the process audit prepared by Mr. John Crafton, MASBO and wants these questions answered by Dr. Bodie, Mr. Curro or Ms. Heigham, not by our legal counsel. Dr. Ampe requested that the chair forward language around a motion prepared by legal counsel over a month ago.

Mr. Thielman said he would attend the MSBA meeting on Wednesday with Dr. Bodie. Ms. Starks said she meet with METCO parents and said the Athletic Advisory Committee members will meet on Wednesday, December 15, 2010 at 6:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room.

Mr. Curro wished everyone happy holidays.

Adjournment

**Ms. Starks moved to adjourn at 11:11 p.m. seconded by Ms. Heigham.  
Voted: 7-0**

Respectfully submitted by  
Karen M. Fitzgerald  
Administrative Assistant  
Arlington School Committee/cs/