



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 08/03/2010

Approved by the School Committee September 28, 2010

The Arlington School Committee
Regular School Committee Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 3, 2010
6:30 p.m.
School Committee Room – Sixth Floor,
Arlington High School
869 Massachusetts Avenue, Arlington, MA

Present:

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

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Excused Absence:

Dr. Wallis Raemer, Assistant Superintendent,

Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 7:20 and returned at 7:30 p.m.
Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 7:49 p.m. and returned at 10:55 p.m.
Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 10:48 p.m.

Mr. Curran moved Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition agenda item to be heard after Public Participation, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted 7-0

Public Participation

Ms. Nancy Lowe suggested to the School Committee that they consider the four priorities of Add Backs voted on in June with the additional money from Bridge the Gap. Ms. Lowe asked the Chair to move agenda item of Final Budget discussions before the School Committee enters Executive Session.

Ms. Cheryl Ierna and Ms. Lisa Kelley expressed their concern with the classroom size at the Brackett Elementary School. Ms. Kelley suggested adding a fourth Kindergarten classroom and questioned where the extra Kindergarten Fees were going if parents are paying more and receiving less.

Ms. Carrie Firuison expressed concern with the large classroom sizes and requested adding a fourth Kindergarten classroom at the Brackett Elementary School and to uphold what the committee voted back in April.

Mr. Shane Curcuru suggested smaller classroom sizes and asked how the budget posted in March showed more cuts on the Elementary level and suggested more current information is posted on the Budget for parents to understand.

Mr. Curro tabled Public Participation and acknowledged agenda item Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition.

Mr. Curro, the entire School Committee, Dr. Bodie and Mr. Skidmore presented to Mr. Henry Allyn Sheehan his Arlington High School Diploma. Mr. Sheehan enlisted in the United States Navy in 1943 at the age of 16 and never received his Arlington High School diploma.

Public Participation (Continued)

Ms. Diane Foster, parent and also a teacher is concerned with the large classroom size for the Kindergarten classrooms and suggested to the School Committee and Administration to look at the Department of Education guidelines of not exceeding 25 students in a classroom.

Ms. Kim Burnett expressed concern with the large Kindergarten classroom size at the Brackett Elementary School.

Mr. Robert Kelley knows the difficulty of teaching young children a sport or teaching in a classroom with so many students in the group with little support. Mr. Kelley is concerned with the large kindergarten classroom sizes at the Brackett Elementary School and asked why the additional cost of the kindergarten program does not cover the cost for adding enough teachers and assistant to run a successful program.

Mr. Steve Goodwin expressed concern again tonight about the large classroom sizes at the elementary level and asked where the add backs have been allotted and which schools will receive the add backs.

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 # 10177, Total Warrant Amount \$1,733,756.69 dated June 22, 2010
- * Approval of Warrant # 10181, Total Warrant Amount \$255,208.61 dated June 29, 2010
- * Approval of Warrant # 10187, Total Warrant Amount \$70,010.89 dated June 30, 2010
- * Dallin Safe routes to School/Right of Entry
- * Second Reading/Final Approval: File JS – Voluntary Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Ms. Starks amended the motion by pulling the Dallin Safe routes report and Mr. Curran amended by pulling out the Second Reading / Final approval of File JS – Voluntary Pledge of Allegiance.

**Ms. Heigham moved to approve the Consent Agenda on all Warrant Articles, seconded by Ms. Starks.
Voted: 7-0**

Dr. Bodie informed the committee that the pilot project for the Dallin School Safe Routes would begin in the spring of 2011. The properties behind Dallin School will temporary hold equipment from the Mass DOT during this federally funded, state-administered program. The design will increase walking to school by renovating and placing sidewalks around the Dallin School at no cost to the Town.

Mr. Curro, Chair of the School Committee is required to sign the Right of Entry Form for the Massachusetts Highway Department to enter the Dallin Property if the School Committee votes to approve and move this project forward.

**Mr. Thielman moved to approve the Dallin School Safe Routes to School Project, seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted: 7-0**

Mr. Pierce explained the that the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee was charged with reviewing the state and federal law on the Pledge of Allegiance and after six weeks of research and approval of this new policy by town council and school lawyers the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee recommends the following policy for a second reading.

Mr. Pierce moved that the School Committee approve the second reading of File JS – Voluntary Pledge of Allegiance, which reads:

An American flag shall be appropriately displayed in each classroom in the Arlington Public Schools. The principal of each Arlington Public School shall ensure that every student has the opportunity to say the Pledge of Allegiance each school day if the student so desires. A student, teacher, or administrator may not be compelled to say or lead the Pledge of Allegiance or punished for not saying or leading it.

Legal References: G.L.c 71, Section 69; Opinions of the Justices to the Governor, 372 Mass. 874, 879-880 (1977), U.S.C. Title 36 Chapter 10

**Seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted: 7-0**

Vote to Authorize Relocation of Preschool Programs to Thompson Elementary School

Mr. Thielman informed the School Committee members by voting to authorize the Relocation of the Preschool Program to Thompson Elementary Schools that this would be included in a feasible study, which could potentially qualify Arlington for reimbursement.

Mr. Thielman moved that the School Committee recommend plans for the redesigned Thompson School include an Early Childhood Center, to best accommodate the district needs for the Special Education integrated preschool programs, seconded by Ms. Heigham

Voted: 7-0

Transportation Advisory Committee Presentation / Pedestrian Safety Proposal

Dr. Bodie introduced Mr. Edward Starr and Elisabeth Carr Jones from the Transportation Advisory Committee. Ms. Jones and Mr. Starr prepared the Transportation Advisory Committee Report after the Board of Selectmen requested a study of the Traffic Supervisor locations. The TAC report includes general recommendations as refresh painted school crosswalks, safe route maps for each school district, clear snow after snowstorms around street corners and working with each school on other recommendations. The TAC Report recommends retaining Traffic Supervisor part of the school day at each elementary school and at the middle school. The report shows improvement plans and data on Traffic Supervisors locations on traffic and crashes as well as number of students crossing and other safety factors.

Recess 7:45- 7:49 p.m.

Executive Session

Ms. Starks moved to enter Executive Session at 7:49 p.m. To comply with the provisions of any general or special law to protect confidentiality of personnel matter and to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation and/or to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union or non-union personnel to hear six Level 3 Grievance Hearings, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

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

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Starks moved to exit Executive Session at 10:48 p.m. and return to open session, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

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

Voted: 7-0

Recess 10:48 – 10:55 p.m.

Ms. Heigham Move the 11 o'clock rule to 11:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thielman

Voted: 6-0

FY 2011 Final Budget Allocations

Dr. Bodie and Ms. Johnson informed the School Committee that the additional \$100,000 received from Bridge the Gap Fund recommends the following Add Backs – to cover the four approved allocations.

\$47,000 1 .0 PE Teacher

\$16,000 1.0 TA to cover elementary prep periods for physical education
\$15,000 Middle School Math Support (Tutoring)
\$20,000 Athletic Fee Relief
\$ 2,000 Additional Middle School Guidance Support

Dr. Bodie said she has heard the concerns from parents regarding the Kindergarten classroom sizes at the Brackett School and he will continue to look at the kindergarten classroom sizes and with any turn over savings or additional money from Bridge the Gap she would recommend using the money toward adding Teacher Assistants and taking the Transportation Advisory Committee's recommendations with Traffic Supervisors.

**Ms. Starks moved that the School Committee use the \$100,000 received from Bridge the Gap Fund for \$15,000 for Middle School, \$ 2,000 for added Middle School Guidance Support, and use \$63,000 for Teacher Assistants, then take the \$20,000 from the Athletic Fee Relief and use it toward additional Teacher Aids.
Seconded by Ms. Heigham
Voted: 1-5, Ms. Starks voting Yes**

The committee would like to keep with the spirit of the recommendations they made to spread out the add backs and therefore the following motion was made:

Mr. Thielman moved to approve Dr. Bodie's recommendations for the \$100,000 Add Back Allocations from the money received from Bridge the Gap Fund as follows:

**\$47,000 1 .0 PE Teacher
\$16,000 1.0 TA to cover elementary prep periods for physical education
\$15,000 Middle School Math Support (Tutoring)
\$20,000 Athletic Fee Relief
\$ 2,000 Additional Middle School Guidance Support
Seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted: 6-0**

**Mr. Thielman moved to authorize the Superintendent to use available monies to meet as many recommendations in the Transportation Advisory Committee report and hire additional Teacher Assistants, seconded by Ms. Starks.
Voted: 6-0**

**Mr. Thielman moved to table all remaining agenda items District Goals Report, Secretary Report, Superintendent Report, Roundtable until September 14, 2010, seconded by Ms. Starks.
Voted: 6-0**

**Ms. Starks moved to adjourn at 11:26 p.m. seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted: 6-0**

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

**The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair, which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.*