



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

**webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us**

## **School Committee Minutes 09/14/2010**

*Approved by the School Committee October 14, 2010*

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

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

### **Present:**

*Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair, Ms. Leba Heigham, Vice Chair, Ms. Cindy Starks, Secretary, Mr. Jeffrey 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, Steve Pereira, AAA Representative, Robert Shea and Adam Zarkaris, Student Representatives and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.*

*Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, arrived 8:31 p.m. (from another meeting).*

*Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:50 p.m. and returned 9:55 p.m.*

*The student representatives exited the meeting at 10:00 p.m.*

*Mr. Ryder exited the meeting at seem to be missing this information*

*Mr. Curro opened the meeting at 7:52 p.m. due to technical difficulty.*

### **Reflection, Remembrance and Recognition**

*Mr. Joseph Curro had a brief moment of silence for September 11<sup>th</sup> victims and their families.*

*Mr. Joseph Curro and Dr. Kathleen Bodie announced that recognition tonight was for the Designation as National Blue Ribbon School awarded to Mr. Alan Brown, Principal, Dr. Raemer, Janet Satlak-Mott and to all teachers, parents, students and community of the Stratton Elementary School. This award is given to honor schools whose students have achieved and attained higher levels of performance and shown improvement in student achievement especially among disadvantaged and minority students. Mr. Bill Grubb, Stratton School Council President and Mr. Chris Carmody Co-President of PTO congratulated the entire staff.*

### **Public Participation**

*Mr. Shane Curcuru, parent of Brackett kindergartner, thanked the School Committee members on keeping everything transparent and reminded them to follow policy and receive monthly budget reports. Mr. Curcuru suggested publishing all school committee meeting documents to the website.*

*Mr. Ron Colosi, President of Arlington Education Association congratulated the faculty of Stratton on the Blue Ribbon Award and Arlington High School faculty on being ranked 35<sup>th</sup> in the state for high schools per the Boston Magazine and ranked number one for the lowest childhood obesity and least overweight students in the state.*

*Mr. Paul Toner, President of Massachusetts Teachers Association (asked to speak tonight by the Arlington Education Association) encouraged the School Committee, Administration and Union to respect each other and work together to resolve differences and negotiate a contract.*

### Fiscal Year 2010 Deficit Discussion

*Mr. Joseph Curro reported that he attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting last evening to discuss the \$1.5 deficit in 2010 and how the school will have to make it up in FY 11. Mr. Curro stated the reaction was surprise and disappointment, but School Committee and Board of Selectmen are committed to follow through with the Board of Selectmen's recommendations. The Board of Selectmen will notify the District Attorneys Office per MGL, the Town Manager will have Powers and Sullivan conduct a Financial Audit and the School Committee Budget Subcommittee will recommend a consultant firm to prepare a Process Audit.*

*Dr. Kathleen Bodie apologized to the School Committee members and Arlington Community and regrets not clearly communicating the shortfall in June. Dr. Bodie supports the audits and will analyze and will put all improvements into place to avoid this in the future.*

*Ms. Heigham, Chair of Budget Subcommittee read the Proposed Scope Of Work for the Consultant to assist the Arlington School Committee's investigation of the FY'10 Budget Deficit and to evaluate proposed steps to improve reporting and oversight, as unanimously directed on August 26, 2010 by the full School Committee members.*

*The Budget Subcommittee met with three consulting firms and Mr. John Crafton, MASBO President was recommended by the subcommittee and members of the Finance Committee to lead the Process Audit.*

*Mr. Crafton explained that there will be two other members of his team to help prepare the Process Audit and outlined the review process. When asked by Dr. Ampe and Mr. Pierce if there was any conflict of interest, it was noted by Mr. Crafton that he and Ms. Johnson (APS CFO) were acquainted with each other only because Ms. Johnson is a member of MASBO.*

*Mr. Curro was informed that the results from the audits would be done by October 29, 2010. This timeline will coordinate the Special Town Meeting on Monday, November 15, 2010. Mr. Curro noted the recommendations will have actions and the committee will have to act on those.*

***Ms. Heigham moved that the Arlington School Committee contract with the Massachusetts Association of School business Officials, Inc. (MASBO) to conduct a review of the Arlington Public Schools' financial operations and address all issues outlined in the Scope of Work, seconded by Ms. Starks.***

***Voted: 7-0***

*Ms. Heigham reported that the budget subcommittee would be reviewing policies DI and DBJ, which outline reporting and the frequency of financial reports. Mr. Thielman suggested waiting until Mr. Crafton has prepared all recommendation before either policy DI or DBJ be reviewed.*

*Mr. Curro asked Ms. Johnson to walk the committee members through the packets of Budget Materials Ms. Johnson prepared. Mr. Curran asked why salary was not with names and why this is not done in MUNIS. Ms. Johnson explained that she puts the data into Excel to deliver the view of the data that she and the school committee needs. Ms. Johnson is working to improve the organization of the data and Payroll is now entering position control numbers with each employee. Mr. Curro and Mr. Curran would be interested in the Process Audit findings of this procedure.*

*Mr. Thielman requested Ms. Johnson to explain to him what we spent on actuals vs. budget for FY10 budget numbers and where the \$1.5 million will come from out of FY 11 Budget by the next School Committee meeting. Ms. Johnson informed Mr. Thielman and the committee that she would not know how long it would take her to prepare this report. Ms. Johnson informed the School Committee members that Ms. Ruth Lewis, Comptroller is preparing a similar report and will consult with Ms. Lewis.*

*Mr. Thielman requested an update from the Comptroller and requested from Ms. Johnson to inform the Budget Subcommittee next week of how many hours it will take for her to prepare a report to show where we over spent, on salary, non salary and out of district costs – budget vs. actual. Mr. Pierce asked about the actual, and the end of year reports and if there were any red flags in place that would show a deficit. Ms. Johnson explained that she realized that Special Education was over but did not have the tools to grasp it. Ms. Johnson apologized that the reporting should have happened but did not.*

*Dr. Bodie informed the committee members that she and Ms. Johnson will work with town professionals and look at all Budget*

data for the Town of Arlington and will continue to meet with the Town Manager, Finance Committee, and Budget Revenue Task Force members.

Mr. Curro announced the Special Town Meeting on November 15, 2010. Mr. Curro thanked Mr. Curran and Ms. Starks for attending the Board of Selectmen meeting and encourages the School Committee members to attend the special Town Meeting. The Finance Committee requested Superintendent Bodie and CFO Johnson attend their meeting on September 22, 2010. Mr. Curro informed the committee that any concerns of Mr. Gilligan, Town Treasurer, will be put to rest if the timeline goes according to plan to set the tax rate. The Board of Selectmen will hold a hearing on December 6, 2010 to set the Tax Rate. Recess 10:05 p.m. – 10:11 p.m.

#### Open Enrollment – File JCA Discussion, J. Pierce

Mr. Pierce moved the following motion after he stated the policy to Suspend a policy and that by doing so would help equalize class sizes at a few elementary schools.

**Mr. Pierce moved that the School Committee temporarily suspend File JCA-Policy Open Enrollment so the Assistant Superintendent, at her discretion, may grant Open Enrollment requests, appropriately filed, in order to relieve class size in the sending school and/or to support more equitable class size in the district while not adversely affecting the receiving school only in Sept, 2010, seconded by Mr. Curran.**

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

#### MSBA Funding for Stratton School, D. Johnson

Requested vote to pursue-Statement of Interest

**Ms. Heigham motioned to pursue Statement of Interest and stated having convened in an open meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2010, the Arlington School Committee of Arlington, MA, in accordance with its charter, by-laws and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interested dated September 22, 2010 For the M. Norcross Stratton School located at 180 Mountain Avenue, Arlington, MA 02474, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which Arlington, MA may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future, seconded by Mr. Curran.**

**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 # 11015 Total Warrant Amount \$178,669.02 dated July 28, 2010

\* Approval of Warrant # 11020 Total Warrant Amount \$129,846.39 dated August 10, 2010

\* Approval of Warrant # 11026 Total Warrant Amount \$231,658.73 dated August 24, 2010

\*Approval of Job Description: Assistant Director After-School Programs (Hardy)

Ms. Starks moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

#### Secretary's Report C. Starks

Ms. Starks reported on all correspondence received since June 2010 until current.

- School Committee draft minutes of meetings held on 8/2/10, 8/3/10, and 6/22/10

- approved minutes of Regular meeting on 5/25/10

- DA/CIA 7/20/10

- Legal expenses update

- email from parent regarding the increase in athletic fees for the 2010-2011 school year

- email questioning funding priorities

- a multitude of emails regarding the pledge to the flag in the morning in APS, most in response to the erroneous reporting from Fox News

- copy of a press release in response to the erroneous reporting about the pledge from Superintendent Bodie and SC Chair Mr. Curro

- letters from those regarding the pledge of allegiance issue

- email regarding the increase in kindergarten fees for FY 2011

- emails regarding number of kindergarten teachers and class sizes at Bracket for FY 11

- email regarding the move of the preschool to the Thompson as part of the rebuild plan

- email requesting ACE be put back for 7th and 8th graders

- copy of letter dated July 6, 2010 to Mark Peck, president of MJ Flaherty Company for their generous donation of an air conditioner for the Menotomy Preschool

- email apology to the school committee for conduct at a previous school committee meeting by a member of the public
- copy of a public records request letter
- copy of a letter to Chairman Curro regarding the traffic supervisors
- copy of a letter to Chairman Curro regarding the legal needs of the Arlington Public Schools
- emails from parents about our priorities if we get further funding
- emails commending the school committee decision and policy on the pledge of allegiance issue
- email from PE teacher about PE and number of times taught in elementary schools for FY11
- email requesting that online documents be updated and maintained
- several emails requesting another vote and meeting to reconsider the Brackett K teacher addition for FY 11
- email questions on the budget for FY11
- copy of letter sent to all staff and administration from the CFO (Diane Johnson) explaining new process and procedure around the FY11 budget and expenditures
- email requesting ability to open enroll K students in other schools than Stratton to help alleviate class size issues
- copy of the 2010 ACMI awards bill from their awards banquet held in June
- letter concerning athletic fees and requesting more equitable balance of support from the town and parents
- copy of a letter to the president of AFSCME from Superintendent Bodie dated August 6, 2010 regarding the reduction of traffic supervisors
- email requesting that everything from SC mtgs be posted electronically the day after a meeting at the latest
- copy of a letter from Paul Cahill of Arlington Pop Warner requesting a partial waiver of facility rental fees
- copy of the letter sent to parents and guardians of the Thompson school from Spt. Bodie regarding their no child left behind status
- copy of a letter to Supt. Bodie from New England Assoc. of schools and colleges indicating dates that AHS will be evaluated
- copy of a letter from Supt. Bodie to MSBA regarding the SC vote on May 11, 2010 regarding school enrollment
- copy of a thank you letter from the US Census to the APS for taking part in the 2010 census effort
- copy of a letter to Chairman Curro from administrative staff regarding the current budget difficulties

### Superintendent's Report K. Bodie

*Dr. Bodie presented her Superintendent Report and encouraged the Arlington Community to subscribe to receive the new Newsletter Dr. Bodie will be sending out from our website, which will include updates from her Superintendent report.*

### Roundtable

***Mr. Curran moved to waive non-custodial facility fees on a temporary, emergency basis for the Pop Warner Cheerleaders use of the Ottoson Middle School gym during the hours of 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Thursday for a period of two to three weeks, seconded by Mr. Thielman.***

***Voted: 7-0 unanimous***

### Executive Session:

*Ms. Starks moved to enter Executive Session at 10:49 p.m. to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and or non-union personnel and to exit out for adjournment purposes only, seconded by Ms. Heigham.*

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

*Voted: 7-0*

### Adjournment

*Ms. Starks moved to adjournment at 11:09 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.*

*Voted: 7-0*

*Respectfully Submitted*

*By Karen M. Fitzgerald*

*Administrative Assistant*

*Arlington School Committee/cs*