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School Committee Minutes 09/28/2010

Approved by the Arlington School Committee October 26, 2010

**The Arlington School Committee
Regular School Committee Meeting
Tuesday, September 28, 2010
7:30 p.m.**

**Unless noted
Meeting to be held in the 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. Kirsy 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, Ms. Maggie Griesmer, Student Representatives and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Absent Steve Pereira, AAA Representative

Mr. Ryder exited the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

The student representatives exited the meeting at 9:09 p.m.

Mr. Curro opened the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Mr. Curro read a quote on the first day of autumn. Mr. Curro had a brief moment of silence for the passing of Mr. Frank Roberts former Drama Teacher, and for Helen Chinal, who worked in the Assessors Office at the Town of Arlington.

Mr. Curro introduced Maggie Griesmer, AHS senior and Student Representative and encourages her participation. Mr. Curro acknowledged and invited three Arlington High School students, Alex Van Thong, Shannon Chapman and Chris Opie to speak and explain the Arlington High School Focus Media Group that is part of the Arlington Community Media Inc. The students would like to invite additional students to become members and will meet on Thursday October 7th, 2:30 p.m. in the Media Center of the High School.

Public Participation

None

Special Education Parents Advisory Committee (SEPAC) Survey Results

Ms Barbara Tilson, and Michael Levi presented the Arlington Special Education Parent Survey that was conducted by the SEPAC group in April 2010. The reason for the survey was to review how things were working out in the Special Education Department, from a parent's point of view. The SEPAC Committee had received 20% responses from parents who have children on IEPs, 504s, or in the referral process. The report shows the strengths in the system and areas of concern. The School Committee and Administration appreciated the work the committee did to prepare the

survey and deliver the results and will continue to work with the SEPAC. The full report can be found on the SEPAC website. The School Committee and Administration wish Ms. Tilson well as Mr. Levi will take over as SEPAC Chair.

Budget and Finance Discussion

Ms. Leba Heigham informed the full committee that the Budget Subcommittee's last meeting was held on September 21, 2010 and was informed of the work done by the consultants of the process reviews by Dr. Bodie and Ms. Johnson. Ms. Heigham said Dr. Bodie and Ms. Johnson presented to the Finance Committee on September 22, 2010 and that the Finance Committee requested that our school budget should be a shared commitment. Mr. Curro, Dr. Ampe, Mr. Curran and Ms. Heigham also attended the Finance meeting that evening. The subcommittee received copies of the Town Scope of Review that they expect from the Town's report from the Powers and Sullivan's Audit. The next Budget Subcommittee meeting will meet on Tuesday, October 7, 2010 at 7:30 p.m. and will review our FY 10 Actuals, end of year report, status report from our consultants, and our monthly reporting for September 2010.

Ms. Johnson received a draft today from the comptroller and after she reviewed the financial report for FY 10, noted that it did not include revolving or grant funds. This report only included accounting of general funds appropriations, which only represents 80% of the actuals in FY 10. Ms. Johnson and her team are working on the end of the year report and will be submitting this on September 30, 2010. Ms. Johnson said once the end of year report is done she will have the data to move forward in preparing the multi year analysis which will connect the 2005 -2009, then connect the 2010 and then she will be able to reformat the FY 11 budget backwards.

Ms. Johnson said the amount of time it would take her to take the comptrollers report and make it fully comprehensive to 100 percent of all revenues for the school would be a lot of time. If the comptroller is tasked to do that, then great, otherwise Ms. Johnson will continue to work on the end of year data, and expect to have this report at our next meeting October 12, 2010.

Mr. Curro stated he met with the auditors and said once the auditors' give their report the committee will have recommendations to follow. Mr. Curro said he looks forward to receiving the report. Mr. Curro did say that the Budget Subcommittee should be doing a report for Town Meeting and should prepare a timeline so the full Committee can vote on a revised budget for FY 11. Mr. Curro did remind the committee of the invitation from Town Moderator, Mr. John Leone, for the full committee to attend Special Town Meeting on Monday, November 15, 2010.

Mr. Thielman reminded the committee and Ms. Johnson that at our last meeting on September 14, 2010 the committee had a discussion on receiving a report on FY 10 from Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Johnson. The report from Ms. Johnson was to show FY10 budget vs. actuals and where we were over on expenditures and where we were under on revenue compared to the budget the School Committee members approved. In addition, he wanted further information on how we would save the \$1.5million from the FY11 budget.

Mr. Thielman asked Ms. Johnson when the School Committee would have the data. Ms. Johnson replied that the data the comptroller is working on does not include the grant revenue and revolving funds for FY 10, but suggested we request that it does include that information.

Ms. Johnson informed the committee that the comptroller is following the direction of the Finance Committee, therefore if the Finance Committee requests additional data then Mr. Thielman could have his report from her.

Mr. Curran added that he would like the report Mr. Thielman has requested too and asked why the Finance Committee is directing what the Comptroller is reporting. Mr. Curro did inform the committee that the grants do not fall under the Finance Committee; they are mostly concerned with town appropriation, which goes to Town Meeting, but that the School Committee has the right to request it from the comptroller.

Ms. Heigham did say she will work with Mr. Fanning, member of the Finance Committee to request the documents Mr. Thielman and Mr. Curran and the full committee are requesting.

Mr. Thielman moved that the Superintendent request the Town Comptroller to prepare a report on the FY '10 School Department budget that includes income and expenditures of town money, grant funds, and revolving funds.

Seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 6-0-1, Mr. Pierce abstained.

Mr. Pierce asked if this was a request that the comptroller could do for us. Mr. Thielman said that it is a request, and if the comptroller could provide the information to help out the School Department then the committee would appreciate that. Ms. Heigham did add that the request falls under the Town Manager Act and that it is appropriate to ask the comptroller to do this work for the school.

Ms. Johnson did inform the committee after Mr. Curran stressed that he wants all athletic fees to be very transparent in the budget that the FY 11 monthly reports will now show FY 11 revenues and FY 11 expenditures under athletics as well as all other revolving accounts.

Mr. Pierce appreciates the comptroller helping us and does not want to add the additional task for her and asked Ms. Johnson why she can not produce the 20% of the budget that falls under revenue and grant funds. Ms. Johnson replied that she cannot produce the FY 10 report, continue doing all the FY 11 reporting and can keep up her work and get it all done by the Special Town Meeting.

The committee would like the motion to stand and appreciates the work the comptroller is doing for the schools.

Dr. Bodie referenced the letter dated September 27, 2010 she sent to Preschool Parents and Guardians due to an Arlington Advocate article that gave the impression that Menotomy Preschool fees were being used to offset cost of the additional Kindergarten teacher at the Brackett School. The funds used to hire the teacher came from savings of not filling three teacher assistant positions that were already in the budget.

Dr. Bodie mentioned that we received a second check in August for \$116,000 from Bridge the Gap Funds, and this would be discussed at the next meeting.

Executive Session 9:09- 9:40

Mr. Curro entertained the motion to table all items on the agenda: Summer Professional Development Update, Adequate Yearly Process (AYP) Data Report, Report of the Legal Services Review Subcommittee, Policy and Procedures Subcommittee, Massachusetts School Building Authority's Green Repair Grant Program for Stratton School, Consent Agenda, Secretary's Report, Superintendent's Report Roundtable, to enter into Executive Session at 9:09 p.m. to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with union and or non-union personnel, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation when an open session might have a harmful effect., seconded by Mr. Thielman.

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. Heigham moved to remove from the table agenda items Summer Professional Development Update, Adequate Yearly Process (AYP) Data Report, Report of the Legal Services Review Subcommittee, Policy and Procedures Subcommittee, Massachusetts School Building Authority's Green Repair Grant Program for Stratton School, Consent Agenda, Secretary's Report, Superintendent's Report, Roundtable,, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Summer Professional Development Update, Dr. Wallis Raemer

Dr. Raemer explained all the summer 2010 Professional Development Workshops that were available as In-District Summer Workshops as well as Out of District Summer Workshops and said about 100 teachers took advantage of these professional opportunities.

Dr. Raemer said some of the Curriculum Program Initiatives included training for technology specialists in the new Gmail and Goggle docs system for Fall 2010 Online Independent Study Courses for high school students were developed using Open Course Ware and other online resources, which was funded by the Arlington Education Fund. The Lucy Calkins Writing Program and the Math Responses to Intervention program have been implemented as well as the Science and Technology Engineering program.

Mr. Thielman suggested to Dr. Raemer that Mr. Skidmore attend our next meeting so he can show us a visual schedule on the effects of the budget cuts to the Science Department for the students of Arlington High School.

Ms. Starks shared an option at her school for teachers to help with cost savings where teachers can take on no duties, if they adopt intervention students, during teacher's free blocks to support these students.

Dr. Raemer said the Math Responses program shows teachers where students are in their learning curve and that the Lucy Calkins writing programs helps students with expanded writing skills.

Adequate Yearly Process (AYP) Data Report

Dr. Raemer presented the Arlington Public Schools District Annual Yearly Progress reports, which comes out of the No Child Left Behind Law for all the elementary schools, the middle school and high school. All individual schools meet AYP except Thompson and the Middle School. Dr. Bodie said the district continues to work with these identified groups and said all students are receiving the support they need to improve.

Report of the Legal Services Review Subcommittee

Mr. Curro reviewed the work of the Legal Services Review Subcommittee over the spring and into the summer to determine whether or not the Committee should enter into a new agreement with Stoneman, Chandler and Miller or should seek the services of a new legal team.

Mr. Curro and the subcommittee have done extensive research and had hoped to have a recommendation on counsel going forward but are not at that stage currently.

Mr. Curro summarized the Legal Services Review report that the subcommittee prepared which includes information on the School Committee Role in Appointment of Legal Counsel, the Current State of School District Representation that includes Labor Relations, Special Education and School Law. The subcommittee members conducted interviews with surrounding school district to research comparable districts legal services. The Legal Services Review Subcommittee recognizes that Arlington Public Schools do not have a Human Resources Department and discussed the current and potential role of in-house legal counsel, as well as joint labor counsel with the School and Town. The Legal Services Review Subcommittee did say in the event the School Committee does move forward and changes counsel; transition plans should be made.

Mr. Curran inquired how many Special Education cases went to court on the recommendation of counsel and would like to know how many cases we won and lost. .

Mr. Curro did say the Subcommittee would continue to meet and discuss the issues and bring their recommendation to the full committee.

Policy and Procedures Subcommittee

Mr. Pierce thanked the entire subcommittee on working on Policy File JICFB Bullying in Schools and presented this policy for a First Reading.

Dr. Ampe was confused by wording of "a school" and suggested language changes to the policy to show that the policy references our public schools in "Arlington".

The committee discussed the policy, formatting, the law and language of the policy and compared it to the documents that were included in the School Committee packet from MASC. Mr. Pierce will take this up again at the next Policy and Procedures Subcommittee meeting to make the policy clearer and bring back to the full committee for a first reading.

Mr. Curran moved to Reinstatement of File JCA – Open Enrollment, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 7-0,

Massachusetts School Building Authority's Green Repair Grant Program for Stratton School

Ms. Johnson said she filed the Statement of Interest on September 22, 2010. Mr. Curro certified the School Committees vote from September 14, 2010.

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 #11033 Total Warrant Amount \$316,054.05 dated September 7, 2010

* Approval of Warrant # 11036 Total Warrant Amount \$ 539,869.16 dated September 14, 2010

* Approval of Regular School Committee minutes June 8, 2010, June 22, 2010, August 2, 2010 and August 3, 2010

Mr. Heigham moved to approve the Consent agenda as presented with the removal of June 22, 2010 minutes,

seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Starks moved to approve the minutes of June 22, 2010, seconded by Dr. Ampe.

Voted: 6-0-1, Mr. Thielman abstained

Secretary's Report

Ms. Starks reported on all School Committee documents received:

- draft minutes September 14, 2010
- thank you email from a parent positively effected by the SC's waiver of the open enrollment policy
- copy of the MASC mailing with example policies for this school year regarding bullying and social networking sites
- copy of the approved legal service review subcommittee dated July 28, 2010
- copy of the approved policies and procedures subcommittee dated august 26, 2010 and September 14, 2010
- copy of the statement of interest in the state's green repair program certification for Stratton school, submitted on September 22, 2010
- draft copies of minutes of school committee meetings held on June 22, 2010, august 2, 2010, august 3, 2010 and September 14, 201
- copy of the flyer for the MASC/MASS conference to be held on November 3-6, 2010
- copy of an email regarding carpeting issues at the Ottoson Middle School
- copy of a letter from the WT Rich Company to Chairman Curro regarding their services building public buildings
- email from Town Manager to the school committee on the topic of legal counsel
- email from a town meeting member regarding the topic of legal counsel
- preliminary report of legal services review subcommittee
- copy of the Brackett School Newsletter dated September 27, 2010
- copy of a letter to from Superintendent Bodie to preschool parents and guardians regarding the funding of the additional Brackett kindergarten teacher
- Letter from Moderator John Leone requesting the presence of the entire school committee at the special town meeting on Monday, November 15, 2010

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kathleen Bodie reported that four of our schools have been identified by the Department of Education as Accommodations Schools. They are Stratton, Pierce, Brackett and Arlington High. The Dept of Ed identified these schools as high achievement on MCAS and outstanding for improvement. Dr. Bodie pointed out that our Wellness Courses are listed on our website as is her September Newsletter. Dr. Bodie reminded parents that October 5th is the first early release day.

Roundtable

Mr. Thielman moved to table Roundtable, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Mr. Thielman withdrew the motion.

Mr. Curran would like to consider payment plans or implementing a policy on payment plans for athletic teams due to the enormous increase of athletic fees, without any family cap.

Mr. Curran asked Dr. Bodie who prepared our two recent press releases and asked how they were paid for. Dr. Bodie and Mr. Curro stated they collaborated on them at no cost to the district.

Adjournment

Mr. Thielman moved to adjourn at 11:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

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