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School Committee Minutes 05/11/2010

Approved by the Arlington School Committee June 8, 2010

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

7:30 P.M.

Present:

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

Dr. Kathleen Bodie Superintendent, Dr. Wallis Raemer Interim Assistant Superintendent, Ms. Diane Johnson Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Miles Powell Student Representative, Mr. Steve Pereira, AAA Representative and Ms. Karen Fitzgerald Administrative Assistant.

Absent:

Mr. Mark Ryder Director of Special Education

Dr. Raemer exited the meeting at 9:15 p.m. and returned at 9:24 p.m.

Ms. Johnson exited the meeting at 10:04 p.m. and returned at 10:08 pm.

Dr. Raemer, Mr. Pereira and student rep Mr. Miles Powell exited the meeting at 10:46 p.m.

Reflection, Remembrance, and Recognition

Mr. Curro reflected on Dorothy Heights, civil rights leader and president of National Council of Negro Women for forty years passed away on April 20, 2010. Mr. Curro invited Principal Skidmore to speak on alumnus of Arlington High School Class of 1940 Army Staff Sgt John Farrell, Jr. who served and was recently was found through DNA and brought back to his family. Mr. Skidmore noted that the Mr. Bill Carey, former School Committee member had donated trophy cases on the main floor of Arlington High School and where a plaque and articles of Army Staff Sgt. John Farrell Jr. would be on displayed. Mr. Curro remembered Ms. Muriel Nihan long time Arlington resident - secretary for Arlington Public Schools from September 1974 and retired in July 1990 from the Special Education department who passed away on April 7, 2010. Mr. Curro acknowledges Ms. Nanci Ortwein's partner, Mr. Edward Kelly who passed away last week. Mr. Curro offered a moment of silence.

The artwork from the Dallin Elementary School is on display in the School Committee room for the month of May.

Public Participation

Ms. Mary Cummings, Ottoson Middle School Special Education teacher invited the School Committee members to meet with her and legislators to discuss putting educators on the Board of Education and other modifications that can be made to ensure teachers are heard in the state house.

Ms. Diane Mahon, Chair of Board of Selectmen & Assistant Varsity Cheerleading Coach would welcome the School Committee and Board of Selectmen to a bi-annual joint meeting in May and October to discuss both school and town

issues jointly. Ms. Mahon suggested that Dr. Bodie and Police Captain Bongiorno meet to discuss keeping the lights on behind the high school until 11 p.m. for a safe place for high school students to gather. Ms. Mahon would like to see the fence between the girls' softball field and the old Brigham's parking lot replaced as part of the requirements of whomever purchases the Brigham's property. The Board of Selectmen supports the efforts of Bridge the Gap fundraising and invited the group to their next Board of Selectmen Meeting.

Mr. Curro introduced student representative Miles Powell and AAA representative Mr. Stephen Pereira and welcomed both of them to the School Committee meeting.

Academic Challenge & Enrichment

Dr. Wallis Raemer, Ms. Andrea Gingrande and Ms. Mies Boet-Whitaker updated the committee on the Academic Challenge and Enrichment programs and introduced the part time Teacher Assistant Ms. Kate Cubeta. The staff from ACE gave a presentation on Meeting the Needs of Gifted Students in Arlington, and handouts were given on the New Model of ACE for the first year.

The services provided from ACE staff included the professional development consultation services to classroom teachers and to principals. Other services provided were the co-taught and creative thinking skills units given to students in grade 3-5 for six weeks and direct services for students in grades K-5 included class extension in math, reading and writing and offered pullout groups for 7 students for six to eight weeks in ELA and math for the top 5-10% of students in grade 3 and 4.

After hearing the presentation the committee did note that ACE is on the reduction list for next year and appreciates the programs and professional services that have been provided to the students.

Wellness Policy/Arlington Youth Health & Safety Coalition

Director of Health, Wellness and Guidance Ms. Cindy Bouvier presented JLCE - Nutrition and Wellness Policy from Arlington Public Schools, which supports health, nutrition and physical activity for everyone. Ms. Bouvier spoke on the nutrition education for students from pre-K-12 and help students to advocate for life long healthy habits. The wellness program includes staff wellness programs such as a wellness challenge with Fitness Together and APS, yoga classes, walking works challenge, weight watchers and dance programs with the town and schools. The community wellness programs included the flu clinics, parent forums, stop smoking hypnosis evenings, and community education classes.

Ms. Colleen Leger from Arlington Youth, Health and Safety Coalition spoke on the collaboration of the police, town officials, schools, faith institutions, parents, youth service organizations, local and state government and youths in town. The mission is to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risk behaviors that affect Arlington youth. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey of 2009 to gauge youth behavior findings showed current alcohol use and binge drinking is down from the previous survey done in 2007, which shows the benefits from AYHSC.

Budget Update

Dr. Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent reported that the Arlington Public Schools Fiscal Year 2010 – 2011 Budget that was adopted by the Arlington School Committee was given to Town Meeting and posted on the Arlington Public Schools website. Dr. Bodie hoped to present the school budget to Town Meeting possible on Wednesday May 12 or Monday May 17, 2010. Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer spoke about the plans with the Capital Budget to purchase a 35 passenger school bus, plow, restore all gymnasium floors, replace rugs in auditorium of high school, upgrade photo copiers and scanners. The Thompson and Stratton School improvement plans are also included in the budget of Capital Planning.

Ms. Amy Speare, member of Arlington FY 11 Emergency Gap Fundraising Campaign updated the early donations received at \$75,000 and town wide programs are being set up to raise the additional funds to reach one million dollars.

Mr. Curro thanked Ms. Speare and Ms. Heigham spoke briefly about the Memorandum of Understanding between the Arlington School Committee and Arlington Education Foundation.

Ms. Heigham moved to authorize Mr. Joseph Curro, Chair of Arlington School Committee to sign the Memorandum of Understanding between the Arlington School Committee and enter an agreement with the Arlington Education Foundation, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curro suggested moving to agenda item Vision 2020 Survey before hearing Superintendent Report.

Vision 2020 Survey

Ms. Jane Howard, Co-Chair of Vision 2020 Standing Committee and Task Group presented the Vision 2020 Report for the 2010 Annual Town Meeting and summary and analysis of Vision 2020's Survey.

Mr. Josh Lobel presented a power point analysis of the survey results pertaining to schools which included school budget adjustments, town fields, AYCC, override, use of stabilization funds, install solar electricity, and changing the income tax to 6% survey results. The committee members appreciated the report and thanked Ms. Howard, Mr. Lobel, and other members, such as Co-chair Joey Glushko and Dr. Spangler.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kathleen Bodie reported on the appreciation of her food service, maintenance and custodian staff during the recent order to boil water emergency. Dr. Bodie spoke about the Anti-Bullying Bill that recently passed by the legislature and the plans to work with a trainer this summer to develop protocols for bullying. The Pops Concert was held last weekend and features the concert band, madrigal singers, honors string orchestra, jazz band, mixed chorus, and full orchestra. The artistic works from students in all nine schools is on display in the Town Hall on the second floor until the end of May.

Students in grades 3-10 will be taking Math and Science MCAS over the next few weeks. Dr. Bodie appreciated Ms. Sue Sheffler for organizing the successful visit from our sister city Nagaokakyo.

Secretary's Report

Ms. Cindy Starks reported on all correspondence received: draft minutes from March 9, 2010, two Brackett and one Bishop newsletters; Town Government Reorganization Committee Interim Report dated May 5, 2010; Legal Expenses April 2010 Letter to OMS Principal from MLK Jr. committee about the handling of anti-Semitic hate speech in school; letters in support of Ace, Drama, and a guidance position at; Nurse Recognition Day reminder; Ottoson Middle School Memorial Day program invitation; email regarding grants; Letter from MTA about perceived personnel issues; Letter from AEA about attendance at school committee meetings; copy of an editorial sent to the advocate about special education on Arlington; May 7th 2010 edition of the Ottoson parents newsletter; Town Meeting amendments on Articles 29 and 30 Crosby and Parmenter Schools.

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 # 10150 Total Warrant Amount \$436,575.95 dated April 27 2010.

*Minutes for Approval: January 26, 2010 and March 23, and March 25, 2010

Mr. Thielman moved to approved Warrant # 10150, Total Warrant Amount \$436,575.95 dated April 27, 2010, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 7-0

Ms. Starks moved to approve Minutes from January 26, 2010, March 23, 2010 and March 25, 2010, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 5-2, Dr. Ampe and Mr. Pierce abstained

THOMPSON SCHOOL – MSBA UPDATE

Dr. Bodie updated the School Committee members on the Thompson School and Massachusetts School Building Authority report, which must show equity among all schools in Arlington. As the Thompson School project moves forward Dr. Bodie must show a report and design capacity that shows enrollment is equitably through all seven elementary schools.

The process to redistrict and a written plan must be completed by June 30, 2011.

After Dr. Bodie noted the plans the following motion was made.

Mr. Thielman moved in order to distribute enrollment more equitably throughout the town's seven elementary schools, it is moved that the Arlington School Committee will begin the process of redistricting during the 2010-11 school year and will implement a redistricting plan by the date the new Thompson Elementary School opens. The School Committee will receive an interim report on plans to redistrict from the Superintendent by December 31, 2010 and a final report with specific recommendations for redistricting by June 30, 2011. The Community Relations Subcommittee will work with the Superintendent and her staff to develop the interim and final reports, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted: 7-0

After Dr. Ampe ask if redistricting means new lines or just policy, Mr. Thielman stated that redistricting would mean new hard lines.

Roundtable

Mr. Judson Pierce reported on his first Policy and Procedures Subcommittee meeting held on Monday May 3, 2010 and had discussed policy KF Community Use of School Facilities. This was presented on behalf of the Bishop Cooperative Theater Michelle Clifford and Doug Grant, who had requested using the Bishop School for after school activities without incurring any fees.

Mr. Pierce moved to grant a waiver for any fees for use of non rented rooms within the Bishop School by the Bishop Coop Theater for school year 2010-2011 for activities conducted within the building's normal operating hours, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 6-1 Mr. Thielman voting No.

After Mr. Pierce had suggested that the committee should investigate the administration of policy KF in relationship to additional costs that accrue to different groups, permits and non permitted sanctioned activities and to consistently enforce district wide the policy and for purpose of re-writing a policy to clearly define qualifications for rental fees Mr. Thielman suggested to Mr. Pierce to meet with the Policy and Procedures subcommittee and revisit the policy and make changes and bring forth as a first and second reading to change the policy. It was also suggested that the subcommittee research and clearly define how rents are determined and fair for all and consult with the Chief Financial Officer and the administration team before changing the policy.

Mr. Pierce expressed to the committee that he would like the Policy and Procedures Subcommittee to explore early enrollment policy for kindergarten students.

Dr. Ampe asked for the blessing of the School Committee to send her letter to the press.

Mr. Thielman has received emails and phone calls noting that PTO's fundraising is inequitable between each PTO, and said that the Town wide PTO voted to give money to Bridge the Gap Fundraiser.

Ms. Starks emailed with Mr. Good regarding the use of funds in schools to purchase technology and the Technology Council and with Mr. Periera on the METCO program. Ms. Starks attended the Pops Concert, Cherry Blossom Festival and the Arlington Boys and Girls Club annual award dinner.

Ms. Heigham encouraged the full School Committee members to attend Town Meeting at 8:00 p.m. on the night the school committee budget is discussed.

Mr. Curro announced that negotiations met today, May 11, and will possibly be singing in an upcoming fundraiser associated with Bridge the Gap Fundraising program.

Mr. Curro stated that the School Committee had placed Article 29 and 30 on Town Warrant and suggested that the committee take action on the amendments of these for Town Meeting.

Ms. Starks moved that the School Committee recommend acceptance and backing of these two amendments to Warrant Articles 29 and 30 for Town Meeting, seconded by Dr. Ampe.

Voted: 7-0

Mr. Curran appreciated Mr. Curro performing at the Bishop School concert. Mr. Curro announced the first Legal Services Review Subcommittee is set for Friday, May 14, 2010 at 8:00 a.m.

Mr. Pereira thanked Mr. Curro for setting a seat at the School Committee meetings for AAA President and invited the School Committee members to attend a retirement party for Mr. Bob Penta and Mr. Stephen Carme on May 25, 2010 at the Double Tree Guest Suites in Waltham, MA.

Executive Session (collective bargaining union and non-union)

Ms. Heigham moved to enter Executive Session at 10:46 p.m. to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect, collective bargaining may also be conducted, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, seconded by Ms. Starks.

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

Adjournment

Ms. Starks moved to adjournment at 11:00 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Voted: 7-0

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