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School Committee Minutes 12/08/2009

APPROVED BY THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 9, 2010

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2009
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair Denise Burns, Vice Chair
Joe Curro, Secretary Leba Heigham
Ronald Spangler Cindy Starks
Jeff Thielman

Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie
Interim Assistant Superintendent: Wallis Raemer,
Chief Financial Officer: Diane Johnson
Student Representatives: Maggie Griesmer

Absent:
Excused Absence: Special Education Director: Mark Ryder

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

Dr. Bodie exited the meeting at 8:40 p.m.
Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 8:45 p.m. and returned at 8:47 p.m.

Mr. Curran stated the Committee is trying to go paperless.
Mr. Curran recognized the artwork of the students from Bishop School that is being displayed in the School Committee Room for the month of December.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

BUDGET FY 11 OVERVIEW

Dr. Kathleen Bodie thanked Mr. Curro, Dr. Spangler and Ms. Starks of the Budget Subcommittee on the organization of the successful Public Visioning Session Meeting that was held at the Arlington Town Hall on Tuesday, December 1. Dr. Bodie summarized the findings from the forum which drew over 100 participants.

Ms. Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, spoke briefly regarding Arlington Public School athletics fees, kindergarten fees, daycare fees and facility rental fees. Ms. Johnson did say we should be looking to increase the facility rental to expand revenue, but noted the difficulty for current staff with the collection of fees for each of the programs.

There was further discussion by the members regarding the possibility of athletic fees being self-supporting, corporate sponsorship for each team sport, and kindergarten grant criteria. Currently, the kindergarten grant only provides 17 percent of the cost of the kindergarten program and dictates what fees we can charge. The discussion among the committee included the impact if we dropped the kindergarten grant and increased kindergarten fees to cover the complete cost of the program.

As the discussion continued, various scenarios were brought into the conversation: pairing schools together, closing

one school, redistricting or flexible districts. Class sizes were a concern of the committee and no one was advocating for any of the options being discussed. The committee requested from Ms. Johnson various scenarios with associated numbers, including an analysis of operating costs at each of the schools and the savings to be gained by sharing a principal and/or other administration. If the data show large savings from any of the suggestions discussed tonight then maybe the community would be willing to accept the changes. Also, the committee inquired if the administration had considered shifting additional classrooms together like the K/1 model, and asked what the net fiscal impact would be.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Bodie announced that the Arlington Education Association has agreed to start the 2010 - 2011 school year on Wednesday, September 8, 2009.

The Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) has notified us that the selection of a feasibility study designer is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15th and will be reviewing the designer applications for the Thompson School Project. The Designer Selection Panel consists of 12 appointed members and three representatives from the town: Brian Sullivan, Town Manager; Jeff Thielman, School Committee member; and Kathleen Bodie, Interim Superintendent.

Dr. Bodie stated that all municipal employees must email or sign an acknowledgement that they have read and will follow the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees.

Dr. Bodie notified the committee on the procedures for school delays due to snow and noted that the high school had no heat today and that the problem was being worked on.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS SEARCH CONSULTING FIRMS

Ms. Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officer, explained the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee Request for Proposal process for the Superintendent of Schools Search for Consulting Firms and announced that Ms. Leba Heigham and Ms. Denise Burns will join her in choosing the search firm and will bring their recommendation to the full committee for a vote of approval.

Members from New England School Development Council were the first search firm the School Committee members heard from.

Ms. Johnson stated that Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ltd. had called late in the day and withdrew their proposal, therefore, due to the next presentation scheduled to start at 9:30 p.m. Mr. Curran moved to take the next agenda items out of order: Secretary Report and Roundtable.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Curro reported on all correspondence items received: draft minutes from November 3, 2009 and November 10, 2009; the Massachusetts School Building Authority letter to Kathleen Bodie dated December 2, 2009 regarding the Designer Selection for the Thompson Elementary School; Department of Community Safety letter from Corey Rateau dated December 7, 2009 regarding School Crossing - Pheasant Avenue @ Fabyan Street; Brookline unions approved GIC insurance article from Brian Sullivan; Mr. Bartholomew letter on cheerleading fees; and school newsletters.

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 #10073 dated November 24, 2009 in the amount of \$590,730.73.**

Mr. Thielman moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Ms. Burns.

Voted: 7-0

ROUNDTABLE

Mr. Thielman suggested that the Selection Process Subcommittee should delegate which search firm the committee use for the Superintendent Search Process and announce it before the next School Committee meeting.

Dr. Spangler moved that the School Committee will approve the recommendation from the Selection Process

Subcommittee on which consulting search firm the School Committee will use for the Superintendent Search Process and announce it before the December 22, 2009 meeting, seconded by Ms. Starks.

Voted 7:0

Dr. Spangler spoke upon the recent robotics competition and thanked all the students and teachers involved. Dr. Spangler also spoke about reviewing the Vision 2020 survey regarding the budget and the upcoming STOMP program at Tufts University.

Ms. Heigham thanked all the teachers for their work with conferences that were held this week and announced the next District Accountability meeting will be held, Tuesday, December 22, 2009.

Ms. Starks reported on the past Community Relations subcommittee meeting and that the discussion was on the Parmenter and Crosby Schools and noted the discussion will continue again at the next Community Relations meeting on, Monday, December 14, 2009.

Mr. Curro will hold the next Budget Subcommittee meeting after the Community Relations meeting, Monday, December 14, 2009 at 5:30 p.m. Mr. Curro would commended Dr. Raemer on the Professional Development Day and the use of the private social website Ning.

Mr. Curro moved that the School Committee sponsor the Martin Luther King, Jr. dinner, provided that the sponsorship fee be covered by a private donor, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Voted 7:0

Before the vote was taken on Mr. Curro's motion, Ms. Burns and Ms. Heigham noted that they were uncomfortable not knowing who the private sponsor was, and Mr. Curro said that he was willing to cover the fee.

Ms. Burns thanked Mary Cummings and Meg Moloney for organizing the Educators and Legislators meeting and reminded the committee that the SADD presentation will be held on Wednesday, December 9, 2009.

Ms. Burn asked Ms. Johnson about a discrepancy on the legal fee document she prepared and presented to the committee tonight, as it showed Stoneman, Chandler and Miller's line item retainer fee of \$65,000. Ms. Burns said that the retainer fee from Stoneman Chandler and Miller approved by the School Committee on May 22, 2009, showed a three-year retainer, the first year \$40,000, the second, \$42,500 and the third, \$45,000, through June 30, 2010.

Mr. Curran asked for a five-minute break before hearing from the next consulting search firm Massachusetts Association of School Committee.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS SEARCH CONSULTING FIRMS

The Committee heard a presentation by Glenn Koocher of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees regarding the Association's application to serve as a consultant for the Superintendent search process.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Burns moved to adjourn at 9:57 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Voted 7:0

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