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School Committee Minutes 1/13/2009

Approved by School Committee February 10, 2009

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2009
6:30 P.M.**

Present: Denise Burns, Chair, Leba Heigham
Ronald Spangler, Secretary, Sue Sheffler
Joe Curro, Jeff Thielman

Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie
Chief Financial Officer: Sue Mazzarella
Special Education Director: Mark Ryder

Absent: Joe Curran, Vice Chair
Student Representatives

Meeting started at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Thielman exited the meeting at 9:15 and returned at 9:19 pm
Mr. Ryder exited the meeting 9:30 and returned at 9:35 pm.
Ms. Sheffler exited the meeting at 9:48 and returned at 9:53 pm

EXECUTIVE SESSION

6:30 - 8:13 p.m.

Mr. Thielman moved to enter into Executive Session at 6:30 p.m. for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation. Collective bargaining may also be conducted, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Roll Call: Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Mr. Spangler Yes, Ms. Burns Yes, Ms. Sheffler Yes, and Ms. Heigham Yes.
Vote 6:0 unanimous

Mr. Thielman moved to exit out of Executive Session at 8:13 p.m. and return to open session with a five minute break, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Roll Call: Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Mr. Spangler Yes, Ms. Burns Yes, Ms. Sheffler Yes, and Ms. Heigham Yes.
Vote 6:0 unanimous

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

RECOGNITION AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Ms. Burns reminded the committee members about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Birthday observance at the Town Hall, on January 19th. The artwork displayed in the School Committee room is from the Bishop School students and athletics update was given on the winter teams. Ms. Burns read the email from Mr. Skidmore congratulating Ellen Digby who was awarded the Martin T. Meehan Education Leadership Award.

VOTE OF SUPPORT PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Sean Harrington, AHS student spoke about the shortage of flag holders and flags in each classroom at the high school and had

collected signatures from around Arlington, the country, and from U.S. Senator John F. Kerry in support of reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. AHS Principal Mr. Skidmore collected the data supporting which classrooms needed holders and flags and supports Sean Harrington's attempt to put the flags in place. Ms. Burns consulted with Town Legal Council and we were told the flags should be in place. Ms. Burns noted that the School Committee cannot have a policy to override the courts' interpretation of the law on the Pledge of Allegiance, but the School Department will follow the current laws and support displaying the flags. Ms. Burns encourages Mr. Skidmore setting aside a place for students to pledge of allegiance. Mr. Joe Daly will work with Sean and the Arlington Veterans on funding for the flags. Mr. Hughes was at the meeting to support Sean Harrington.

Mr. Curro moved to commend Mr. Harrington on all his work on this issue and encourages Sean to continue working with the School Authorities on the flag replacement issue and to encourage that there be an opportunity for a voluntary recitation, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 6:0

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE

Mr. David Good, IT Director was welcomed by the entire committee and spoke about his past 25 years of IT experience. Mr. Good spoke about his first few weeks in Arlington, and explained that he has started to do assessments and inventory of his department. Dave has reviewed job descriptions and noted he could use more support the IT department. Other discussions included pilot programs on Smart Boards in the classrooms, wireless classrooms at Thompson and Stratton School and LCD is classrooms. Mr. Good recommended having an IT committee formed to confer on these topics and make recommendations and set priorities within the town and school departments. Several committee members expressed interest in receiving recommendations from this IT committee on how to invest money now to gain long term cost savings in the IT department. Ms. Heigham invited Mr. Good to the next Curriculum Instruction and Assessment Subcommittee meeting in January.

BUDGET DISCUSSIONS

Vote on Bottom Line

Joe Curro moved that The School Committee submit the Fiscal Year 2010 Operating Budget Bottom Line of \$39,053,116 to the Finance Committee, seconded by Ms. Sheffler.

Vote 6:0

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Interim Superintendent Kathleen Bodie spoke on the delayed openings last week and having the announcements posted on TV and on the APS website for no-school notifications. Other notification options will continue to be discussed. Ms. Bodie congratulated Ellen Digby on the Martin T. Meehan Education Leadership Award by the Middlesex County District Attorney's Office on December 11.

Ms. Bodie informed the committee that Judy Bohn has resigned her position as grant writer to take a position with Facing History. Ms. Bodie pointed out the benefits APS received from Ms. Bohn over the years. This position will be posted and must be approved by the School Committee.

Mr. Thielman pointed out that a Town Meeting member had requested a chart on grants the Arlington Public Schools had requested vs. grants we received. Ms. Bodie acknowledged the request and will provide the data to the committee.

Mr. Ryder pointed out that the Dept of Elementary and Secondary Education notified him that no further progress reports are required and the Arlington Public Schools are in good shape but will be reviewed again in 2011.

CHAIR'S REPORT

No report given

ROUNDTABLE

Mr. Thielman reported on the previous Community Relations Subcommittee meeting. The Brackett School is looking for support from the School Committee on the renovations of the space that surrounds the Brackett School.

Mr. Curro requested from Ms. Burns some time at the next School Committee to discuss '08-'09 Goals and measurements the District Accountability Subcommittee has been working on, and would like to take a formal vote on these.

Mr. Spangler and Ms. Mazzarella had attended the Permanent Town Building Committee meeting held January 6, 2009. Each

department head was asked by the Town Manager to submit to the Lieutenant Governor's office a set of one-page requests for shovel-ready capital projects, in advance of the proposed federal stimulus legislation. The following were the six selected from eight submitted to our Town Manager on the school side: Rebuilding of Thompson School, Energy Management System, Boiler replacement at high school, Energy efficiency school buses, Re-pointing and waterproof brick at high school, and Refurbishing for the Stratton Elementary School.

Mr. Spangler reported that the School Facilities Working Group is meeting this Thursday at 5:00 p.m. Ron would like to recognize the Thompson Rebuild and Equity Task Force that advocates for the Thompson School, and which recently arranged to have three of the four members representing Arlington on Beacon Hill to walk through the Thompson School. This brought attention to endorsement of anything the state can do to support the Thompson School rebuild/renovation.

Ms. Heigham gave an update on the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment last meeting.

Ms. Sheffler informed the committee on the SADD presentation to be held on January 21, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed all the School Committee and other Town Officials to attend.

Ms. Burns will present the updated contract the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee and Interim Superintendent Bodie agreed to, at the next meeting of the School Committee. Ms. Burns asked committee members to confirm with her that each member is still willing to work with each other and to meet with Rob Evans, Director of Human Relations. Ms. Burns would like to get feedback from members to pursue the Transitions Program.

Ms. Heigham would like to go on record that the committee needs to continue the work with Rob Evans begun at the last Superintendent Retreat, and work on the seven goals. Ms. Heigham would like to take advantage of all resources to help support our young committee and would like to pursue the Transitions program and get it started.

Mr. Thielman concurs with Ms. Heigham.

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Spangler reported out on all correspondence received:

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 requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.

* **Approval of School Committee minutes from November 12, 2008 and December 9, 2008**

Mr. Spangler motioned to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Vote: 5-0, (Ms. Sheffler had exited the room)

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Curro motioned to adjourn at 9:53 p.m., seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Vote: 5-0 (Ms. Sheffler had exited the room)

Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
School Committee
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