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School Committee Minutes 06/23/2009

*Approved by the School Committee October 27, 2009
and enter ACMI video into the record*

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, JUNE 23 2009
7:30 P.M.**

Present: Joe Curran, Chair, Denise Burns, Vice Chair
Joe Curro, Secretary, Leba Heigham
Cindy Starks, Ronald Spangler
Interim Superintendent: Kathleen Bodie
Chief Financial Officer: Sue Mazarrella
Special Education Dir: Mark Ryder

Excused Absence: Jeff Thielman

Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 8:27 p.m. and returned at 8:30 p.m.
Mr. Curro exited the meeting at 9:19 p.m. and returned at 9:21 p.m.
Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:53 p.m. and returned at 9:55 p.m.
Ms. Burns exited the meeting at 10:20 p.m. and returned at 10:33 p.m.
Dr. Spangler exited the meeting at 10:40 p.m. and returned 10:41 p.m.
Ms. Burns exited meeting at 10:45 p.m.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the Ottoson Middle School Council encouraged the School Committee to create a plan for adequate space to accommodate the projected increase in enrollment over the next five years.

Mr. Andrew Fischer discussed a bill he had filed with the General Court in January 2009, An Act Establishing A Task Force in the Attorney General Office to Study Establishing Municipally-Sponsored Automobile Insurance Programs. He described how municipal self-insurance of motor vehicles could be a source of revenue for the Town of Arlington.

Mr. Marty Thrope, Gray Street resident and former School Committee member expressed his outrage regarding the altered Powers and Sullivan report to Town Meeting.

Ms. Hilary Rappaport expressed her concern regarding arts enrichment in the Arlington Public Schools.

Mr. Michael Carta, a resident, 30-year teacher, and AEA 1st Vice President, voiced upset with the altered document submitted to Town Meeting and compared this with two employees currently in arbitration over a similar situation. Mr. Carta inquired as to who will take responsibility and what ramifications will be brought to the employees involved.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Dr. Spangler said he believes that Mr. Curran has held private meetings with dismissed employees of the Arlington Public Schools who are in arbitration and alleged that information being discussed in Executive Session has been leaked to outside parties. While acknowledging that he did not have proof of the source of leaks, Dr. Spangler asked that Mr. Curran recuse himself from executive sessions on this matter.

Ms. Burns moved as requested by Ms. Starks, to go into Executive Session to conduct a strategy session with respect to receiving updates on legal litigation matters, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted 2-4

Roll Call: Ms. Heigham - No, Mr. Curro - No, Ms. Burns - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Dr. Spangler- No and Ms. Starks – No. Motion failed.

POWERS AND SULLIVAN AUDIT DISCUSSION

Committee members discussed the creditability, integrity and the transparency of the School Departments presentation to Town Meeting surrounding the report from Powers and Sullivan and the unsigned apology letter posted on the APS website.

Dr. Kathleen Bodie and Ms. Sue Mazzarella discussed the apology letter; the distribution of the original report to the Committee and the Board of Selectmen; the abridged version given to Town Meeting; and the fact that the latter should have been footnoted. Dr. Bodie apologized for not including the entire report.

Mr. Curran invited Mr. Jim Powers and Ms. Renee Davis, Auditors, from Powers and Sullivan, CPA firm to the table to help answer questions relating to this matter.

Mr. Curro reminded the Committee that Superintendent Bodie and Chief Financial Officer Mazzarella sent a letter of apology to Town Meeting, and that one or both of them attended Town Meeting for three consecutive nights to make themselves available for questions.

Mr. Powers stated that no misappropriations of funds were found. However, he said that a deficiency in internal controls was identified.

Ms. Ruth Lewis, Comptroller for the Town of Arlington, said that identified deficiencies in internal controls have now been addressed.

Ms. Burns moved a letter of reprimand, with copies of the specific documents, be put in the Superintendent's file in the event other inaccurate information is presented in the future, that we have a chain of events documented. Before the motion was seconded, Ms. Heigham suggested to Ms. Burns to take the motion off the table until Powers and Sullivan answered all questions. Ms. Burns withdrew the motion.

Committee members discussed the genesis of the audit; specifics of its findings; and the propriety of using an abridged version.

Mr. Powers reiterated the finding of a deficiency in internal controls; stated that the Town Manager's April request for the audit was legitimate; and said that the normal course of action once a report is signed is to use it in its entirety.

Ms. Lewis, the Comptroller, explained the new process for journal entries..

Ms. Burns noted that the integrity of Ms. Mazzarella and members of her staff were not in question. Ms. Mazzarella again recognized the mistake, expressed regret, and pointed out to the committee they should not hold the Superintendent accountable.

Committee members further discussed the assembly, policy and presentation procedures of the Budget Booklet to Town Meeting.

Ms. Burns moved to put a letter of reprimand in the Superintendent's file for presenting, whether intentionally or unintentionally, a falsified document to Town Meeting, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Voted 2-5 Motion failed

Roll Call: Ms. Heigham - No, Mr. Curro - No, Ms. Burns - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Dr. Spangler- No, Ms. Starks - No

Discussion continued between Committee members.

Ms. Burns requested that it is the School Committee's responsibility to hold the Superintendent accountable and that she would like the Committee to do so.

Mr. Curro moved that the Committee include in the Superintendent's file page 31 and 32 of the Budget Report to Town Meeting, the original Powers and Sullivan letter, and the letter that Dr. Bodie and CFO Susan Mazzarella wrote on June 15, 2009 to Town Meeting explaining the circumstances, seconded by Ms. Burns.

After further discussion regarding the sharing of responsibility between the Administration and the School Committee, ,
Mr. Curro withdrew the motion.

DISCUSSION ON TIER 3 & 4 RECOMMENDED FY 10 BUDGET REDUCTIONS

Mr. Curro discussed the June 17, 2009 Budget Subcommittee's suggestions to consolidate and prioritize Tier 3 and Tier 4, to keep a running total, and to ask the Superintendent to state any changes to the tiers. Mr. Curro would like to get a sense of the Committee before moving forward, in case added cuts are to be made over the summer.

Dr. Bodie and Ms. Mazzarella explained the Proposed Prioritize Tier 3 and 4 Reductions with a running total as requested, and stated that it strove to reflect the apparent consensus of the Committee to keep as many classroom teachers as possible. Some committee members suggested that the Superintendent look at reducing stipends and making additional administrative reductions.

Mr. Curro moved that the School Committee accept in principle, the proposed Tier 3 and 4 Reductions line FF through CC, plus the new line identified - Savings offset, seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Following Ms. Burns' suggestion to call out the specific lines due to the document being presented in the prioritized order,

Mr. Curro amended his motion and moved that the School Committee accept in principle the reductions in detail on the Arlington Public Schools - Budget Planning- Budget Subcommittee Meeting, June 17, 2009 proposed prioritized Tier 3 and 4 Reductions document, lines items: FF -High School and District wide Stipends \$18,500, OO - Athletics \$10,000, -- - Teaching Assistant (2.0 FTE) \$32,000, DD -1.0 FTE Brackett Elementary \$48,500, CC - 1.0 FTE Dallin Elementary and the identified -- Savings Offset (energy savings) for \$10,000, seconded by Dr. Spangler.

Even though Dr. Bodie said she and the Town Manager felt comfortable with the budget numbers the state announced recently, she requested direction from the committee on the prioritized reductions of \$150,000 from Tier 3 and 4.

Several Committee members recommended holding an additional School Committee meeting before voting the motion. In consideration of this, **Mr. Curro withdrew the motion.**

Ms. Heigham moved to add a School Committee meeting for the purpose of finalizing the Budget recommendations on Thursday, July 2, 2009 @ 7:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Voted 6 - 0

IT DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION PLAN

Mr. David Good, Chief Technology Officer, presented the Arlington IT Organizational Chart and explained the purpose of reclassifying job descriptions within his department. Mr. Good encouraged the committee to approve the Manager of Academic Systems job description. He explained that any additional funding would come from the IT budget and that stipends currently being paid would cease.

After the discussion, Dr. Spangler moved to approve the Manager of Academic Systems Job Description, second by Mr. Curro.

Voted 4-0-2, Ms. Burns and Mr. Curran abstaining.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Kathleen Bodie was pleased to announce the appointment of Ms. Tara Rossi as the Dallin Elementary Principal and welcomed Ms. Rossi to Arlington.

Mr. Ryder explained the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Complaint to the Department of Elementary and Second Education (DESE) on six investigated allegations. Mr. Ryder said the district has taken appropriate steps to correct any services related to the issue.

Dr. Bodie encouraged the School Committee to consider her proposal for leadership in the Fine Arts Department for next year, to split the department into two departments - music and visual arts. Dr. Pat Tassone would be interested in returning as the Interim Director for Music K-12 and Mr. David Ardito is interested in assuming the Interim Director of Visual Arts K-12.

Superintendent Bodie congratulated Colleen Gorman, a fifth grade teacher at the Brackett Elementary School on receiving the Paul Harris Award sponsored by the Rotary Club of Arlington. Dr. Bodie thanked John J. Bilafer Arlington Citizens Scholarship Foundation for awarding scholarships to Arlington residents totaling nearly \$150,000.

With deep regret, Dr. Bodie announced Ms. Mazzarella's decision not to renew her contract as Chief Financial Officer. Several Committee members expressed appreciation to Ms. Mazzarella for her integrity and service and wished Ms. Mazzarella well as she pursues her career in the private sector.

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

***Dr. Spangler moved to approve the School Committee meeting on Monday, July 27, 2009 at 7:30 p.m., seconded by Mr. Curro.
Voted 5-0, Ms. Burns was out of the room.***

APPROVAL OF EXPANDED JOB DESCRIPTIONS

***Dr. Spangler moved to approve the Lead Guidance Counseling 9-12 - College Planning and Transition Support job description, seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted 6-0***

***Dr. Spangler moved to approve the Elementary Academic Challenge and Enrichment (A.C.E.) Resource Teacher, seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Voted 5-1, Ms. Burns - No***

CONSENT AGENDA

***Mr. Curro moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented: Approval of Warrant # 09173, dated June 9, 2009 Total Warrant Amount \$881,743.27, Minutes to be approved: May 26, 2009 and the Proposal Jazz Band Italy Music Tour 2010, seconded by Mr. Spangler.
Voted 5-0-1, Ms. Burns abstained***

ROUNDTABLE

Ms. Heigham reported that the Superintendent Search Process Subcommittee will hold meetings in July and August, which are posted to the website. Ms. Heigham requested time for Executive Session on July 2, 2009 for strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation and for non-union contracts.

Mr. Curro said the Negotiations Team is meeting on June 24, 2009 and said the Budget Subcommittee continues to discuss the current budget 2010 and the budget timeline for next fiscal year 2011.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Curro reported on the following correspondence received: Ottoson Middle School Council Letter; Letter from Special Education parent on specific case; thank you note from Julia Pattison-Gordon on receiving the Ida Robbins Scholarship; Focus on Mathematics expositions flyer; John J. Bilafer Scholarship Foundation awards booklet; Mr. Skidmore's parent update regarding MCAS grade 10 results; Summer 2009 Professional Development Workshops flyer; and school newsletters.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Ms. Heigham moved to enter Executive Session at 10:45 p.m. to conduct strategy session with respect to collective bargaining; collective bargaining may also be conducted and to conduct strategy session with respect to non-union contract, and return to open session, seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Voted 5 - 1, Ms. Burns - No

Roll Call: Ms. Heigham - Yes, Mr. Curro - Yes, Ms. Burns - No, Mr. Curran - Yes, Dr. Spangler- Yes, Ms. Starks - Yes

Ms. Burns excused herself, stating that she will not go into Executive Sessions, due to trust issues with other committee members.

Ms. Heigham moved to exit Executive Session at 11:25 p.m. and return to open session, seconded by Mr. Curro.

Voted 5-0

Roll Call: Ms. Heigham - Yes, Mr. Curro - Yes, Mr. Curran - Yes, Dr. Spangler - Yes, and Ms. Starks - Yes

Ms. Heigham moved to accept the Contract of Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction as presented for Wallis Reamer, seconded by Dr. Spangler.

Voted 5-0

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Spangler moved to adjourn at 11:26 p.m., seconded by Mr. Curro.

Voted 5 - 0

Respectfully Submitted by

Karen Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

Arlington School Committee JC 10132009 final