



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 10/28/2008

Approved by School Committee December 9, 2008

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2008
6:30 P.M.
Joint Meeting with Board of Selectmen

Present: *School Committee Members:*

Denise Burns, Chair, Joe Curran, Vice Chair, Joe Curro, Sue Sheffler, Ronald Spangler, Secretary Leba Heigham, and Jeff Thielman.

Kathleen Bodie, Interim Superintendent, Mark Ryder, Director of Special Education Sue Mazzarella, Chief Financial Officer, Student Reps, Alice Xiang, Ellery Rosin

Ms. Burns exited the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Curro it was unanimously voted and approved to enter into Executive Session for the purpose to discuss strategy with respect to on going litigation, collective bargaining may be conducted.

Roll Call: Unanimous

Vote 7-0

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Ms. Heigham it was voted and approved to exit out of Executive Session and return to the Regular School Committee Meeting.

Roll Call: unanimous

Vote 7-0

The following motion made by Mr. Spangler during Executive Session was read, and Ms. Burns requested for the record to include the roll call votes.

Mr. Spangler moved That, absent a settlement acceptable to the School Committee, the School Committee directs Stoneman, Chandler & Miller to pursue the arbitration of Chuck Coughlin to its conclusion with a decision from the arbitrator, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Roll Call: Mr. Thielman Yes, Ms. Heigham Yes, Sue Sheffler Yes, Mr. Curro Yes, Mr. Spangler Yes, Mr. Curran No, Ms. Burns Abstained

Vote 5-1-1

Mr. Curran motioned to limit legal expenses this school year to the amount approved in the school budget presented to Town Meeting. Further, that before any funds in addition to the amount budgeted are earmarked or spent, that we get:

A) A complete, detailed accounting of all monies spent since the inception of this personnel decision - including copies of all legal billings,

B) An independent legal review of the Arbitration Case to date.

C) An Explanation of where additional funds will come from to pay legal billings in excess of the amount budgeted.

D) A detailed contingency plan to address the potential decision by the Arbitrator in favor of the employees, including where the funds will come from to pay the settlement expenses, seconded by Ms. Heigham for discussion.

Ms. Burns requested a friendly amendment to break down each item as individual motions. After discussion with other members, Mr. Curran withdrew this motion.

Mr. Curran motioned to receive a complete, detailed accounting of all monies spent since the inception of this personnel decision - including copies of all legal billings, seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Vote 7:0 unanimous

Mr. Curran moved to request an independent legal review of the Arbitration Case to date, seconded by Mr. Spangler.

Vote 1 - 5- 1, Mr. Curran voting Yes, 5 no's and Ms. Burns abstained

Motion fails

After much discussion Ms. Burns asked Mr. Curran to combine C and D on the original motion

Mr. Curran asked Ms. Bodie and Ms. Mazzarella if a plan could be completed by date certain, Ms. Bodie and Ms. Mazzarella replied yes, but Ms. Mazzarella pointed out that she could not predict all legal projections, and would have to consult with legal counsel.

Mr. Curran moved to direct the Budget Subcommittee, by date certain of November 21, to develop a financial plan that addresses a decision by the arbitrator, seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Mr. Curro would like to amend the motion to include to investigate and looking at cost of settlement.

Mr. Spangler suggested amending the motion and wants settlement wording taken out.

Mr. Curro withdrew his friendly amendment of the motion.

Vote 7:0 unanimous

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Sean Harrington, 10th grade student at Arlington High School declared his support of the Pledge of Allegiance at the high school. Sean provided a letter of support from United States Senator John F. Kerry, band members, including Charlie Daniels and over 200 hundred signatures for his endeavor to provide a flag in each classroom and for students to recite the pledge of allegiance. Mass General Law Ann. Chapter 71: Section 69 was also provided to the committee members, that noted the School Committee shall provide flags of the United States in each building and classrooms.

Diane Mahon, Varsity Cheerleading Coach, spoke on upcoming competitions and the Thanksgiving game vs. Arlington Catholic at the Peirce Field.

CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Heigham moved to table the Consent Agenda to after the Selectmen and School Committee members' discussion, seconded by Mr. Curran.

Vote 7-0

Point of Personal Privilege by Ms. Heigham to thank the committee and the Arlington community for their support over the past few weeks.

STUDENT REP UPDATES / RECOGNITION

Ellery Rosin and Alice Xiang spoke on the Athletic teams accomplishments, encouraging the community to vote for the Arlington vs. Bedford football game on Friday, November 7, 200 to be broadcasted by Fox 25 News. The Art work in the School Committee Room being displayed is from high school students, in Art 1 and Art 2 classes. Student reps also spoke about the Club Fair being held this week.

BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS DISCUSSION

Clarrisa Rowe, Chair, BOS, and Brian Sullivan Town Manager spoke on the status of state funding and local revenue. The discussion called the attention to the importance on the committees working jointly to get the support of the taxpayers and community on the importance on these tough problems to solve.

After the discussion on the School Department being audited on Title I and revolving revenue accounts from Ms. Rowe and Mr. Sullivan, Mr. Spangler and Ms. Sheffler stressed to the committee their concerns about not being included in the discussion on the specifics of the audit. Ms. Burns stressed the process of the audit had been in place since August and former Superintendent Levenson was aware of it. Ms. Burns then addressed the committee, she said "the committee elected her as chair and that committee members individually made calls to attorney's, individual members were calling and asking who they would like to be superintendent, without going through the chair". Ms. Burn then asked, "if they had no confidence in her as their chair and to speak on behalf of this committee, which she tried to do fairly and honestly, to right now motion to remove her from her seat and assign someone else, Mr. Curran could step in."

Ms. Sheffler made a statement, that in the past when a chair met with the superintendent, notes or highlights were given out to keep the entire committee informed but Ms. Burns replied that she and Mr. Curran had never received any of highlights.

Mr. Thielman called point of order and asked the committee to address the issues when the committee was done speaking about the finances with the Board of Selectmen.

Ms. Burns exited the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Ms. Lacourt updated the committee on the previous nights meeting on the 5-year plan Mr. Greeley appreciated the joint efforts of both committees. Ms. Mahon spoke about the committee supporting Ms. Burns as chairwoman. Mr. Thielman asked Mr. Sullivan when the School Committee will know the numbers we will be working with for the FY 10 budget and the findings on the research on GIC. Mr. Sullivan noted late January he would have a better idea of a number and that he continues to research the GIC, and will report back the findings in about a month.

Mr. Curran exited the meeting at 9:55 p.m.

Mr. Spangler was the Acting Chair for the rest of the School Committee Meeting.

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 Regular Meeting Minutes September 9, 2008 with Emergency Meeting Minutes of August 7, 2008 and September 4, 2008 minutes.

* Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes September 23, 2008

* Approval of Warrant # 09053 dated October 14, 2008 in the amount of \$476,892.27.

* Approval of Second readings to amend: EB Safety program -, EBAB Pest management, EBC Emergency plans, EBCB Fire drills - ECAC Vandalism, EC Buildings and Grounds Management, EDC Authorized use of School-owned Materials, and ECB Buildings & Grounds Maintenance (to abolish)

On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curro it was motioned to approve the consent agenda.

Mr. Curro suggested removing policies EC Buildings and Grounds, and ECB Building and Grounds Maintenance out of consent agenda.

Vote 5:0

Mr. Curro motioned to refer EC Buildings and Grounds, and ECB Building and Grounds Maintenance policies back to Policy & Procedures to clean up and check printed vs. online copy, seconded by Mr. Thielman.

Vote 5-0

SPACE NEEDS

Interim Superintendent Kathleen Bodie presented the Space Utilization and Needs of the Arlington Public Schools that the School Committee requested. Mark Ryder, Special Education Director also spoke about the space needs for creating In District programming and the immediate space needs for new programs for next year. Ms. Bodie would like the town to do an evaluation on student enrollment trends and Mr. Spangler noted that the Selectmen would take the data to the Crosby & Parmenter Advisory Committee.

VOTE DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY GRID & DISTRICT GOALS FEEDBACK FOR 2008 - 2009

Mr. Curro gave an overview of the District Accountability grid, explaining the addition of several reference columns.~ He described the subcommittee's efforts to pull together supporting material following the change in administrative leadership and in the face of full turnover on the subcommittee this year.~ Mr. Curro focused on two objectives for which there had been no final resolution as of the previous School Committee meeting, and he entertained questions.

Mr. Curro motioned for the School Committee to accept the recommendation of the District Accountability's Subcommittees Scoring Grid and approve all points the subcommittee recommends for the 2007 / 2008 school year District Accountability Goals, seconded by Mr. Sheffler.

Mr. Spangler moved to amend the motion to award a point for Goal 1E.

Ms. Heigham seconded the motion for discussion and pointed out the subcommittee could only award points on materials the subcommittee had backup on.

Mr. Spangler withdrew the amendment.
Vote 5- 0

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Interim Superintendent Kathleen Bodie thanked Andrea Razi, Charlie Skidmore and all on the success of the AHS Health and Safety Awareness Day and reported out on October 1 enrollment numbers, Professional Development, Space Needs, Grants update and a minor bus accident.

Mr. Curro motioned to move the 11 o'clock rule to 11:10 p.m., seconded by Mr. Thielman.
Vote 5 - 0

Mr. Thielman motioned to schedule a Regular School Committee Meeting on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 at 7:30 p.m. seconded by Mr. Curro.
Vote 5-0

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. Thielman motioned to table the Secretary Report until the next meeting, seconded by Mr. Curro.
Vote 5 - 0

ROUNDTABLE

Members discussed how the School Committee would proceed after tonight's meeting and Mr. Spangler will call Ms. Burns.

Mr. Curro and Mr. Thielman noted they would have Town Treasurer, Steven Gilligan reporting on the follow up on the 403B discussion at our next meeting.

Mr. Thielman reported on the elementary principals discussion on students riding bikes to school and Ms. Bodie responded that it's the parents' decision, but bikes cannot be brought onto school property.

Mr. Curro motioned to move the 11 o'clock rule to 11:15 pm. seconded by Ms. Heigham.
Vote 5 - 0

Mr. Spangler reported on the Budget Subcommittee meeting of October 24th, and on the approved minutes that the committee received from the July 29, 2008 meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Thielman motioned to adjourn at 11:12 p.m., seconded by Ms. Heigham.

Vote 5 - 0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Arlington School Committee
Administrative Assistant
rs*