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School Committee Minutes 09/11/2007

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2007
6:30 PM

Present: Susan Lovelace, Chair
Sean Garballey, Vice Chair
Jeff Thielman, Secretary
Denise Burns
Joe Curran
Sue Sheffler
Ronald Spangler

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Chief Financial Off: Sue Mazzarella
Interim Asst. Supt.: Kathleen Bodie
Interim Sp. Ed. Dir: Gerald Kopperschmidt

Student Reps.: Bobby McWatters
Callie McHugh

Sean Garballey arrived at 6:45

The meeting opened by Susan Lovelace, Chair with a statement thanking the Arlington Studio for the new cameras and for broadcasting our first meeting tonight with all three-cable companies, Comcast, RCN and Verizon and welcomed our new student representatives.

On a motion from Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was Voted to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of receiving counsel for the pending litigation and to hear and discuss the level III grievance and to reconvene to open session.

Roll Call Mr. Spangler yes, Ms. Sheffler yes, Mr. Curran yes, Ms. Burns yes, Mr. Thielman yes, and Ms. Lovelace yes
Vote: 6:0

On a motion from Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was voted to exit out of Executive Session and return to our regular meeting with a ten minute break.

Roll Call Mr. Spangler yes, Ms. Sheffler yes, Ms. Burns yes, Mr. Thielman yes, Mr. Garballey yes, and Ms. Lovelace yes
Mr. Curran had exited the room
Vote: 6:0 8:36 pm

Meeting started at 8:47 pm with Chairwoman Susan Lovelace having a moment of silence for the anniversary of September 11th. Ms. Lovelace noted that ACMI studio's have completed an upgrade on equipment for the School Committee Room and welcomed Bobby and Callie are our new students representatives, and will be formally introduced at the next School Committee meeting.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Julianne Keys: World History teacher at Ottoson Middle School made a statement in regards to the Middle School, job changes, pay cuts, scheduling issues, being understaffed, not filling the tech ed position and students having additional directed study's.

Judy Phelps: resides at 77 Oakland Avenue, Retired Ottoson Middle School, Former AEA President stated how she would like

more leadership from the top and is saddened by low morale from all the teachers regarding all the issues over the past two years with Middle School principal and now with the emails and would like the School Committee to ask Mr. Levenson to leave the district now.

Jack Duranceau: Arlington High School Science Teacher, President, AEA, and a parent, will ask the members of the AEA on September 24th for a vote of no confidence for Superintendent Levenson and stated additional grievances will be forthcoming.

Sherry Wyles mother of twin 8th grade boys, 22 Prescott Street made a statement that she was appalled how the Ottoson Middle School email situation was made public & the effect it had on her children and many children in Arlington and the loss of Mr. Larry Greco as a teacher. She asked the School Committee to give the Town of Arlington a new start and new leadership and asked not to renew Superintendents contract.

Robert Bartholomew, AHS class of '67, parent and Teacher Ottoson Middle School made a statement in regards to the Athletic Director position being vacated July 18th how this position has not been filled and how time has elapsed and the Fall season is underway with no one in place to do scheduling, collect fees, health eligibility forms, check on academic qualifications and the list goes on. Nancy Brennan has been working with House Dean Robert DiLoreto to see that things have run smoothly but believes this should have already been in place as other vacated position were filled in a timely manner and stated the students will be the ones who suffer.

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 07174 in the amount of \$1,488,663.69

*Approval of Warrant 07177 in the amount of \$273,568.64

*Approval of Warrant 07182 in the amount of \$83,431.23

*Approval of Warrant 08013 in the amount of \$135,931.19

*Approval of Warrant 08020 in the amount of \$455,856.58

*Approval of Minutes: Regular Meeting June 12, 2007, & June 21, 2007 and

*Approval of Executive Session June 12, 2007

*Approval of Jerry Kupperschmidt Contract

*Approval of Kathleen Bodie Contract

*21st Century Plan @Arlington High School

*Approval of Bus Operator Contract

*Approval of the early release day from April 5 to March 11, 2008

*Approval of Arlington Vision 2020 student rep from Arlington High School to be Rachel Boudreau

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted to approve the consent agenda with the removal of the items noted Vote of 6:1 Mr. Curran voting No

Mr. Garballey motioned to amend the motion with the removal of the 21st Century Plan and removal of Contract for Jerry Kupperschmidt, Director of Special Education.

Ms. Burns motioned to amend the motion as noted as well as the removal of Kathleen Bodie's Assistant Superintendent Contract.

Mr. Curran amended the amended motion with the above as well as the removal of warrant 07177 in the amount of 273,568.64 and the warrant 08020 in the amount of 455,856.68.

SPECIAL EDUCATION UPDATE & VISION APPROVAL

Jerry Kupperschmidt gave a brief update on the Special Education Department, the Response to Intervention (RTI) in relation to reading is going well, the improved data systems, and the new classes that were developed to keep more children in the district are staffed by skilled and highly qualified teachers.

Superintendent Levenson reported that teachers and parents were reached out to and together have given over 12 hours of input to get the vision of 10 beliefs of the Special Education Children to where it is.

10 Beliefs for the Special Education Children of Arlington

- 1. Nearly all special education students can be at grade level in math, English, science, and social studies. When this is not likely, we should state so explicitly, and forge common expectations with parents. In all cases, standards should be as high as possible for all students.**
- 2. Mastery of fundamental skills, such as reading, writing, math, study/organizational skills (a.k.a. executive function skills), and the ability to socialize with peers should be a priority, starting in the early grades and continuing until students demonstrate grade level mastery.**
- 3. Intensive targeted support, not breadth of services, will help students achieve.**
- 4. Not all interventions work equally well for all students. We must measure progress and try multiple strategies targeted to individual student's learning styles, until effective strategies are confirmed. All children deserve access to a range of "best practices," which requires developing a range of proven approaches and strategies.**
- 5. Scheduling is of strategic importance.**
- 6. Teamwork, communication, and integration between general education and special education will improve student learning.**
- 7. Students with great needs require highly skilled staff to achieve at high levels.**
- 8. When possible, it is better to educate students in district.**
- 9. Special education is successful when a student is able to perform on grade level working independently and when services are no longer needed.**
- 10. For most struggling students, general education, not special education, should be the first level of intervention.**

On a motion from Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curran it was voted to approve the Special Education Vision of Achievement, June 25, 2007 10 Beliefs for the Special Education Children of Arlington.

Vote: 7:0 unanimous

OTTOSON UPDATE

Superintendent Levenson noted two weeks before school started he asked Dr. Judith Malone Neville who has been a Middle School Principal for 16 years, 10 years as House Dean and 4 years as a Superintendent to come to the Ottoson Middle School as Interim Principal and to build on what we already have.

Dr. Malone Neville acknowledged the professional staff at the Ottoson and the students were settling in. The committee members welcomed Dr. Malone Neville and questions in regards to the cluster structure, directed study halls, the computer tech position not being filled and teachers teaching out of certification were asked and addressed and will be looked at further by Dr. Judith Malone Neville.

Pulled items from Consent Agenda Discussed

Mr. Curran questioned items from the pulled two warrants and Ms. Mazzarella addressed the issues with a follow up from Ms. Bodie.

On a motion by Mr. Spangler and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was

Voted to approve Warrant 07177 in the amount of \$273,568.64 and approval of Warrant 08020 in the amount of \$455,856.58

Vote 7:0 unanimous

Mr. Garballey was on of the search committee to hire the Special Education Director. Mr. Garballey and all the members of the School Committee welcomed Jerry Kupperschmidt to the district.

***On a motion by Mr. Garballey and seconded by Ms. Burns it was
Voted to approve the contract to hire the Gerald Kupperschmidt as Interim Special Education Director for 2007-2008.
Vote: 7:0 unanimous***

***On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to the approve the contract to hire Kathleen Bodie's as Assistant Superintendent
Vote: 5 –1 –1 (5 Yes, Ms. Burns abstained and Mr. Curran voting No)***

***On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Ms. Burns it was
Voted to amend the contract to hire Kathleen Bodie as Assistant Superintendent to Interim Assistant Superintendent.
Vote 2-5 motion failed***

Superintendent Levenson noted that teachers, administration as well as the search committee were all in agreement that Ms. Bodie was the best applicant and the support of the staff towards Ms. Bodie on opening day was apparent.

Mr. Curran expressed his concern and appreciates all that Ms. Bodie has done but will not support the motion and would like Kathleen to continue as interim Assistant Superintendent and would like someone in this position with more experience. Ms. Burns had questioned the Fringe Benefits portion of the contract. Superintendent Levenson explained that Stoneman, Chandler and Miller LLP attorneys had created a standard contract for all administrators and was identical to former Assistant Superintendent Hutchinson's contract. The other School Committee members wished and support Ms. Bodie in becoming the Assistant Superintendent.

21st Century Plan

***On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was
Voted to Approve the 21st Century Plan of Action for the Arlington High School
Vote: 4 in favor 1 opposed Mr. Garballey 2 abstained. Mr. Garballey voted No, Ms. Burns and Mr. Curran abstained***

Ms. Burns and many teachers at the Ottoson feel that the technology instruction is limited and not up to the 21st Century plan vision and would like further discussion. Mr. Garballey supports the goals and vision of the 21st Century and would like Mr. Skidmore to come back and speak about this more after the scheduling in the technology classroom is worked out at the Ottoson.

Superintendent Levenson noted that it was not our plan to change or limit the amount of technology instruction the students are receiving at the Ottoson School that this 21st Century is a vision statement.

Callie McHugh, the student rep noted when she come to the high school she was prepared to do reports and projects using computer applications and implementing a computer class in high school is to late and does not fit in students schedules and is best taught at the middle school level.

Ms. Lovelace asked Superintendent to report on the Social Studies Director

Superintendent Levenson welcomed Kerry Dunne to Arlington Public Schools as the new K-12 Social Studies Director. Ms. Dunne has come from the Framingham District.

Mr. Thielman read a prepared statement to the School Committee that he released the emails to the media pertaining to the Ottoson Middle School situation with Principal Bouris and Mr. Coughlin.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION

Ms. Lovelace went over the evaluation and summarized the following report that was completed by the seven School Committee members and the evaluation was about the Superintendents entire year, and noted that that committee had perceived Superintendent Levenson differently, and acknowledged that that committee is divided.

Ms. Burns noted that the evaluations were completed before the summer and gave low scores and feedback to the Superintendent on ways to improve and does not agree in they way of the evaluation process.

Mr. Spangler made a statement that the Superintendents Evaluation documents which we are discussing, CBI and CBI-E document, can be found on the website under policies. A guide is used to help answer the six various categories.

Mr. Curran expressed his concern that Superintendent has many strong points but feels the Superintendent has not done well with communication and has not done well in promoting our community and to continue to be an effective administrator in the Town of Arlington.

**On a motion by Mr. Garballey and seconded by Ms. Burns it was Voted to move the 11:00 rule to 11:05
Vote 7:0 unanimous**

Mr. Garballey was also in agreement he would like better communication skills and more leadership skills from the Superintendent to help lead the district.

CBI - E

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION TOOL

Performance Level: 1= Unsatisfactory
 2= Needs Improvement
 3= Meets Expectations
 4= Exceeds Expectations
 5= Exemplary

* Any item that is rated below "meets expectations" should be explained in order to determine the course of action needed for improvement

TOTAL COMMITTEE:

1. Completing annual objectives	1	2	3.1	4	5
2. Committee-superintendent relations	1	2	3.2	4	5
3. Educational-professional leadership	1	2.5	3	4	5
4. Personnel relationship/management	1	2.1	3	4	5
5. Community relations	1.9	2	3	4	5
6. Business and finance operations	1	2	3.7	4	5

7. OVERALL PERFORMANCE 2.75 (almost meets expectations)

DIVIDED COMMITTEE:

(Mr. Garballey, Ms. Burns, Mr. Curran)

1. Completing annual objectives	1	2	3	4	5
2. Committee-superintendent relations	1	2	3	4	5
3. Educational-professional leadership	1	2	3	4	5
4. Personnel relationship/management	1	2	3	4	5
5. Community relations	1.3	2	3	4	5
6. Business and finance operations	1	2.3	3	4	5

7. OVERALL PERFORMANCE 1.8 (between unsatisfactory & needs improvement)

(Ms. Lovelace, Mr. Thielman, Ms. Sheffler):

1. Completing annual objectives	1	2	3	4	5
2. Committee-superintendent relations	1	2	3	4.6	5
3. Educational-professional leadership	1	2	3	4.3	5
4. Personnel relationship/management	1	2	3	4	5
5. Community relations	1	2.5	3	4	5
6. Business and finance operations	1	2	3	4	5

7. OVERALL PERFORMANCE 4.0 (exceeds expectations)
 (OVERALL PERFORMANCE including Mr. Spangler: 3.45 (between meets & exceeds expectations))

Ms. Lovelace pointed out that four out of the seven School Committee members feel Superintendent Levenson is doing a good job. Over the next few weeks the School Committee will further discuss and vote on Superintendents contract, and encourages the community to send letters and comments to the committee on how they sense he is doing.

ADJOURN

On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Thielman

It was voted to adjourn 11:05

Vote: 7:0

Submitted by

Karen M. Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

School Committee