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School Committee Minutes 10/09/2007

The Arlington School Committee
Regular Meeting
October 9, 2007
7:30 PM

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

Superintendent: *Nate Levenson*
Assistant Superintendent *Kathleen Bodie*
Chief Financial Officer *Sue Mazzarella*
Interim Special Education Dir *Gerald Kupperschmidt*

Student Reps *Callie McHugh*
 Bobby McWaters

Public Participation:

Cindy Starks and Barbara Goodman, Co Chairs, Stand for Children, presented a summary of issues facing children in Arlington that were written from the community on Town Day.

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 September 25, 2007 Minutes and Executive Session from September 25, 2007

*Approval of Warrant# 08042 total amount \$584,659.60

*Policies & Procedures 2nd^t Reading

Policy BGB, BDB, BEDH DBJ, BDFA-E-3, BGE and FA/FB/FBB

On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Garballey it was Voted to approve the consent agenda as presented
Vote 7:0 unanimous

Welcome Student Representatives:

Ms Lovelace welcomed seniors, Callie McHugh and Bobby McWaters, the student representatives for the Arlington School Committee.

Presentation of draft district goals for 07-08

Superintendent Levenson, along with the administrative team has drafted what the district would like to set as a priority and

accomplish this year. The common theme is to build on what we have already started and what we already have.

Jerry Kopperschmidt, Interim Director of Special Education presented goal #1: Special Education and ELL: all special education will achieve their full academic and social potential. The objective: to implement Special Education and English Language Learning reforms per Coordinated Program review, internal needs assessment, and the districts special education vision.

Ms. Bodie presented goal #2: Student Achievement: All students will attain high levels of academic success through the implementation of a data driven standards based and education and will be measured through assessments. The objective is to continue to implement essential standards and common assessments in math, reading, writing, science and social studies K-12, which build upon the foundation of our standards, based education.

Mr. Skidmore presented an overview of goal # 3: For the 21st Century, An appropriate education for a complex world, to ensure that all Arlington graduates are well prepared for social, emotional, and vocation success. The objective would be that all students are able to incorporate the knowledge, skills, and habits of mind and are prepared for the 21st century.

Sue Mazzarella gave a overview of goal # 4: Work Environment to support teaching and learning: provide tools and systems that enable staff to focus on student success
The objective here would be to improve the work environment for staff and administrators to make-work simple, more efficient and improving the work environment.

Ideas include a pilot cashless payment system for lunch at middle school, upgrade the Thompson, Stratton and the HS, utilize the online calendar to better schedule events, , streamline purchase order processing and working with the AEA, curriculum leaders and principals for a safe workplace.

As input from the community, parents and staff are heard and presented the goals will change, the discussion will continue at the School Committee / Superintendent Retreat and will be placed on the web, and by mid November they will be completed and presented to the School Committee to vote on.

Superintendent Levenson welcomed and introduced Kerry Dunne, Director of K-12 Social Studies.

On a motion by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Spangler it was Voted to move Executive Session to the end of the meeting and to return to open session.

Vote 7:0 unanimous

Roll call Mr. Spangler, Yes, Ms. Sheffler, Yes, Mr. Curran, Yes, Ms. Burns, Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Garballey Yes, Ms. Lovelace Yes,

CHAIR'S REPORT

State of the School Address

On the recommendation of Ms. Lovelace it was voted to hold a State of the Schools Address at Town Hall for the end of October or beginning of November.

Vote 6:0, Mr. Curran not in the room

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Levenson updated the committee on the K-5 reading common assessments that took place for all children. The new in house special education programs are going well.

Dr. Judy Malone Neville has reached out to Police Chief, Fred Ryan on plans to bring in the diversion program to the middle school. International travel for students and staff are continuing. The Literacy Lab at the high school and middle school are receiving positive feedback and the administrative team collectively will be reviewing this program and will update on this later in the year. The custodial staff is talking with the union for suggestions on how to help ease the burden during short-term vacancies and absences.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey and seconded by Ms. Burns it was voted to refer to all related Peirce field issues with fundraising, security and sports issues to the Community Relations Subcommittee, in conjunction with the DPW, police department, and the Budget Subcommittee to post a meeting and report back by early December.

Vote 7 :0 unanimous

Parents at Thompson and Stratton are happy with capital improvements. Mr. Spangler asked Ms. Mazzarella on the MSBA notices of intent and Sue reported the school should be notified by November 2.

Superintendent responded to Mr. Thielman, that he would be reporting on the MCAS scores in early November.

SUBCOMMITTEE

Mr. Garballey is in the process of setting up a joint Budget Subcommittee meeting with the Superintendents Diversity Subcommittee and the representatives of the AEA on hiring minority candidates. The Budget Subcommittee is looking to meet weekly or biweekly to discuss the budget starting in November.

Superintendent would like the budget to be approved earlier than in the past, around March 15, to maximize the hiring process for minority hiring.

Mr. Curran would like the Cost Containment Manager to attend the next Budget Subcommittee meeting, to address corporate fundraising for the athletic teams.

SECRETARY REPORT

Mr. J. Thielman reported on correspondence received from Stand for Children and Permanent Town Building on the completion of the Dallin School.

NEW BUSINESS

School Committee members reported on their liaison experiences with each school.

Mr. Curran noted he was not satisfied with Superintendents response at the last School Committee meeting regarding Superintendent Levenson being appointed by his former School Committee in Harvard as the Assistant Superintendent.

Ms. Lovelace noted this is an issue with the Harvard School Committee not the Arlington School Committee and based on the information provided to Ms. Lovelace and our previous School Committee members they hired Superintendent Levenson.

Ms. Sheffler would be willing to provide all material provided to the committee to hire Superintendent Levenson to Mr. Curran to review, at a later time.

***On a motion by Mr. Curran and seconded by Mr. Garballey it was Motioned to vote to asked Mr. Levenson to answer yes or no if he was the Assistant Superintendent of Harvard School System by law according by the Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71 section 59.
Vote: 3-4 Motion fails***

Roll Call, Mr. Spangler No, Ms. Sheffler, No, Mr. Curran Yes, Ms. Burns, Yes, Mr. Thielman No, Mr. Garballey Yes, Ms. Lovelace No

Ms. Lovelace entertained the motion at 9:45 pm to enter into closed Executive Session to discuss contract and traffic supervisors and then return to open session.

Mr. Spangler seconded the motion.

Vote: 6:1 Motion passes

Roll Call, Mr. Spangler Yes, Ms. Sheffler, Yes, Mr. Curran No, Ms. Burns, Yes, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Garballey Yes, Ms. Lovelace Yes,

Ms. Burns did not realize that she would enter into executive session to vote on the Superintendents contract tonight, and being on the subcommittee she noted not enough time has gone into this subcommittee.

Ms. Lovelace spoke that Mr. Maher was not comfortable addressing the committee regarding the Liability Insurance, and stated most attorneys would not address this request on a "what if" scenario.

Mr. Curran would like to meet with the Liability Insurance Attorney that represents our rider over \$100,000. to receive a clear unbiased opinion to the situation.

Entered into Executive Session

Returned from Executive Session at 11:07 PM

Ms. Lovelace entertained the motion to approve the Contract of the Superintendent that was discussed in Executive Session and Mr. Spangler seconded the motion.

Roll Call, Mr. Spangler Yes, Ms. Sheffler, Yes, Mr. Curran No, Ms. Burns No, Mr. Thielman Yes, Mr. Garballey No, Ms. Lovelace Yes, Vote 4:3 motion passes

As Ms. Burns noted, she is comfortable about the decision that the superintendent will be hired for three years but will not support the motion and hopes Superintendent Levenson will restore the trust of the whole community and she will support and work with Nate and hold him accountable as the Superintendent.

Mr. Curran will not support the motion, and stated the contract should not be for three years and agreed more time was needed to negotiate the superintendent's contract.

Ms. Sheffler appreciated how the committee was respectful and thoughtful of each others views and will support the motion.

Mr. Garballey reflected on his past comments and hoped the vote was postponed until December until the superintendent was able to bring the community together and would of liked to meet with the Liability Insurance before a vote can be taken.

Mr. Thielman will support the vote and is grateful Nate will be staying
Ms. Lovelace thanked the committee members.

*On a motion by Ms. Burns and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted to move the 11 o'clock rule to 11:40 PM
Vote 7:0 unanimous*

Superintendent Levenson thanked the committee members and appreciates all the feedback from each member and understands that everyone does not agree but would like the support of the entire committee and is thrilled to be here in Arlington..

*On a motion by Mr. Thielman and seconded by Mr. Curran It was voted to adjourn at 11:30 PM
Vote 7:0*

*Submitted by
Karen Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant, School Committee*