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Minutes 03/27/2006

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE SPECIAL MEETING & PUBLIC HEARING MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2006

Present: Jeff Thielman, Chair
Susan Lovelace
Sue Sheffler, Vice Chair (exited @10:00) Paul Schlichtman (@7:10)
Suzanne Owayda, Secretary Martin Thrope
Sean Garballey (@7:10)

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
Student Rep EJ Harris

Mr. Thielman called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. He explained that after a brief executive session the Superintendent would report on some of the changes in the budget. The School Committee would then have the opportunity to ask questions and then the public hearing would begin.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was Voted to enter executive session for the purpose to discussion of negotiations and to reconvene to open session. Roll Call: Unanimous 5-0

EXECUTIVE SESSION 7:05 to 7:20 pm

Negotiations

CHANGES IN FY '07 BUDGET

METCO

Supt. Levenson explained that based on further research and meeting with METCO leaders that he is proposing to maintain the director's position in the METCO program. The added cost to maintaining the position is \$35,000. To offset the cost Nate is recommending a reduction of \$15,000 in utilities based on the latest forecast, and a reduction of \$20,000 (.5) of reading teachers from the certified academic support teachers line.

Other changes

The Superintendent explained that in response to concerns that the K-12 Health, Wellness and Counseling position is too broad in either scope (too many people) or breadth (too many areas) he is presenting the following proposal for consideration:

.. K-12 Director of counseling and coordinator of at risk services (1.0 FTE). Responsible for:

Licensed social worker, psychologists or similar trained professional.

Oversee at risk, mental health, and stress issues for the district.

Oversee guidance as it related to social and emotional issues.

Interface with community, police, and others

Solicit grant funding.

.. Lead teacher (4 plus 1) Health, PE, and FACS (1.0). Responsible for:

Coordinate Health, PE, and FACS departments

Mentor new staff

Coordinate coaching/mentoring

Order materials

Lead study groups as needed

Teach 4 classes

Cost implications: additional cost of lead teacher \$13,000; to offset this cost a reduction of \$10,000 from teen stress/drug/alcohol contracted services budget and a \$3000 reduction in the district wide professional development budget.

Supt. Levenson noted that he is comfortable with the original proposal but could support either plan.

QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED FY '07 BUDGET

The Superintendent heard concerns and answered questions from School Committee members on:

The reduction of the athletic director position, the incorporation of ACE under the direction of the K-12 science director, the restructuring of the elementary library, the elimination of the social studies chair position, restructuring of the reading program and the process and method used in notifying staff.

Mr. Thrope gave a statement on his reasons for not supporting the budget at this time. (Statement attached).

PUBLIC HEARING

Questions & Comment from the public

.. Park Willey APS parent and member of Stand for Children, voiced concern on the future of the nutrition, health component in the schools.

.. Emily O'Neill, secretary of the AHS Guidance Department – concerned over the dismantling of the supervisor position and the possible decrease of service to students

.. Jeff Carver, urged reconsideration of the elimination of the .5 ACE coordinator

.. Barbara Tilson, of SEPAC member, support of the budget.

.. Mark Tomlinson APS parent, elimination of social studies at the elementary level.

.. Danuta Ayad, elimination of 2nd languages and safety concerns at the Brackett school playground

.. Steve Swanson, loss of PE director and the future of the department.

.. Lisa Fenschell, Stand for Children, spoke in support of Kate Cremens Basbas, and the PEP grant

.. Barbra Boltz, METCO parent- happy with the restoration of the METCO director to full time

.. Mona Zeffel, APS, Stand for Children and SPOT member concerned with the size and scope of the K-12 Health and Wellness director position.

.. Lisa Hennessey, Thompson School parent, against cutting any time from the traffic supervisor positions, does not take into account the extra time needed for students staying after school.

.. Yanni Malore METCO parent spoke of the positive experience her child received in the METCO program in APS.

.. Hillary Rappaport, Thompson school parent – believed that the proposed changes in the budget are worth trying and supports the integration of ACE under the science department..

.. Jean Maguire, METCO Executive Director thanked the Superintendent for his support for the METCO program and requested that if there are any changes or new requirements for bus monitors that she be notified.

.. Cindy Starks, APS parent and SPOT member concerned with the lack of detail in the budget on how the process will work.

.. Josh Lobel, APS parent and SPOT member spoke relative to the 5-year stability plan.

.. Andrew Fischer APS spoke about the methods to increase state aid.

Mr. Thielman declared the public hearing on the budget closed.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted to adjourn at 10:55 pm. Unanimous vote

Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary