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Minutes 05/09/2006

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2006
7:30 PM**

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary
Sean Garballey
Suzanne Owayda
Jeff Thielman (@ 9:00 pm)
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo
Student Rep: EJ Harris

Ms. Sheffler called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm. Ms. Sheffler announced that there would be one change in the order of the agenda; member update would be moved to after the review of the ice rink since Town Counsel, John Maher would be present to speak to the topic. Mr. Thielman has been delayed due to flying conditions.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Rose Casazza, President of the Arlington Traffic Supervisors and Kathryn Kriketos addressed the Committee relative to the proposed cuts made in their positions and how it will impact those involved.

Susan Stewart a representative of Stand for Children thanked the School Committee for their participation at the Stand for Children Rally at the State House on April 26th.

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 requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence.
*Approval of Warrant #06149 in the amount of \$425,267.92
*Approval of Field Trip

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted approval of the Consent Agenda as presented

FOOD SERVICE REORGANIZATION

Supt. Levenson explained that Food Director Rob Rice was unable to continue to work full time and submitted his resignation. Nate questioned if there was some way to keep him. After much discussion with Rob Rice and Garry Murphy, and a detailed review of the current structure and finances, they developed a "win-win" proposal in the form of reorganizing the Food Service Department. The restructure would retain Rob Rice as the food director part time, create an assistant food director full time and eliminate the current secretarial position. The Superintendent explained that some of the current administrative tasks, payroll etc. would be handled in payroll and the business office. This would allow the district to retain a top employee, lower the cost of running the program, and train a potential successor.

Mr. Thrope questioned if this was a time limited transition and voiced concern over the inconsistencies in the leadership cuts being made in academics areas; he will vote against the proposal. Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that the proposal is sound management practice and supports the idea. The remaining members of the committee were also in support of the proposal.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted to approve the food service reorganization and the two new job descriptions, Food Service Director and Assistant Food Service Director. 5-1 Mr. Thrope with a no vote as noted above.

ICE RINK UPDATE

Board of Selectmen member Jack Hurd along with Athletic Director Rob DiLoreto, Fred Dolan and Bob Bartholomew were

present.

Mr. Hurd explained that the purpose of meeting with the School Committee is to share the idea of renewed interest to place a skating rink at Arlington High School. He is requesting the go ahead to explore the feasibility of continuing with private funds.

The intent is to honor former AHS coach Ed Burns; it addresses the high demand for ice time and also develops a future revenue stream. Mr. Hurd acknowledges that the school committee would have jurisdiction over the facility.

Town Counsel John Maher highlighted the agreement with the Industrial Parties pointing out that there is still \$1million left available for use until 2012. Mr. Maher stated that MGL, chapter 55, section 53 permits private fundraising and stated that it is legally feasible to do.

Supt. Levenson stated that it is a great idea and strongly supports further research. Mr. Hurd requested that a representative from the school committee serve on the planning committee and will return once a plan is developed. Mr. Hurd also recommended that the issue be referred to the public memorials committee for their recommendation.

Member Update – Suzanne Owayda announced that she would be resigning her position on the School Committee due to her family relocation to London for business. Ms. Owayda stated that she would submit her resignation to the Town Clerk so that the school committee can appoint a replacement at the meeting of June 13th.

Town Counsel John Maher explained how the fulfillment of the vacancy falls under section 5 of the Town Manager's Act. The school committee must give a 7day notice under a separate posting with a specific agenda item identifying the purpose of the meeting. Four out of six members must approve the appointment. Mr. Maher stated that he would follow up with a memo on the process and procedure.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was Voted to direct the Committee Secretary to post the notice for the school committee vacancy to solicit interested individuals, that any interested persons send a letter of intent by 4:00 pm on June 8th to the office of the School Committee. The School Committee will make the appointment at the regular meeting of June 13th 2006. Unanimous.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Supt. Levenson stated that there are three issues that need to be addressed relative to the school calendar: the graduation day, the Last Blast and the bottom of the calendar that lists holidays and religious observances.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve the upper portion of the proposed 2006-2007 school calendar (as amended, bracket October 2nd holy day and change graduation to Sunday) that includes all school attendance information. 5-1 Mr. Schlichtman with a no vote.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was

Voted to approve retaining graduation ceremonies on Sunday, but refer the date of the Last Blast to a committee of representative staff, parents, student advisory council and the Student Health and Safety Task Force for a recommendation on the practicality and safety of alternate dates or structure for the Last Blast. Unanimous 6-0.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was

Voted to refer the information and language below the calendar to the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory Task Force. They are asked to report back with a preliminary report and recommendations by June 13th for which holidays and religious observances should be included in this portion of the calendar page, and a rationale for each. Unanimous vote 6-0

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Sister City Request

Based on the recent trip to Japan, our sister city, Nagaokakyo would like to strengthen the ties between the two cities. This would bring a greater level of understanding, multiculturalism, and a wider worldview for our students. Our sister city has 3 requests:

1. To facilitate Arlington students visiting Japan each year, including a home stay (this would be at no cost to the district).
2. To host Nagaokakyo students for about a week each year, including a home stay. They would like us to provide transportation in/around town as well as a facilitator. They will pay for these services. (This will be at no cost to the district).
3. To encourage and support an Arlington teacher, resident or alumni to teach English each year. A bachelors degree, not a teaching degree is required. This would be at no cost to the district. A salary (tax free), health insurance, and airfare will be provided by Nagaokakyo.

Update on International Exchange

Based on the research already conducted and his recent trip, Supt. Levenson stated that a paid international tuition based program for foreign students to attend AHS is viable and desirable.

Mr. Levenson requested a motion of support to continue the research with the goal of having a small pilot program for Japanese 11th graders starting September 2007. This research would not require additional budget funds. A pilot program of 5 students should generate \$40,000 - \$50,000 incremental revenue for the district. No final decision would be made by the School Committee until the Fall of 2006. Mr. Thrope was not in favor of the plan stating that the administration's time could be better spent.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to direct the Superintendent to pursue the tuition exchange program and produce a recommendation to the School Committee for approval no later than October 2006. 6-1 (Mr. Thrope No)

21st Century Forums

We have begun the important, but complex task of answering the question "what knowledge, skills, and habits of mind, will prepare our children to succeed emotionally, intellectually, and vocationally over the next 50 years?" The 1st meeting for high school staff was held today. Background reading was provided as well as an outline of the plan.

Special Education Update

The Superintendent reported that APS received good marks and praise from the DOE on our first Corrective Action Plan submission/review. Mr. Levenson explained further that the highest praise is that the DOE granted a 45-day extension for the next submission, based on the effort and accomplishments to date. We still have much to do, but the special education staff should be very proud of their accomplishments

Budget Update

A number of competing plans have been proposed for State Funding of Education (Chapter 70). Most indicate that Arlington would receive some additional funds. Any additional state funds could not increase the FY2007 school budget, but that a decrease in state aid would likely decrease our budget. This is because our budget is already at the maximum limit set by the 5-year stability plan (Lyon's plan). Increased state aid might allow us to continue with 4% operating budget growth, and 7% health insurance increases for the next few years. We will be able to establish the previously budgeted special education reserve fund for \$350,000.00.

School Choice Vote

Mr. Levenson noted that as required by law the School Committee must vote on school choice; he is recommending that Arlington Public Schools not participate in school choice for the 2006-2007 school year.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted that Arlington not participate as a choice district for the 2006-2007 school year. Unanimous

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Ms. Owayda gave a report on the curriculum, instruction and assessment subcommittee and the following motions were recommended for the full committees' approval.

On a motion by Ms Owayda seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted that current 10th grade students (next September, 11th grade students) may apply for a waiver from the physical education requirement if they are taking 6 or more academic classes. Students must also demonstrate from a list of activities developed by the school administration that they are participating in some type of regular physical activity. Students will apply to the guidance department for the waiver.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was

Voted to direct the superintendent to evaluate the current physical education requirements with regard to any proposals made by the Student Health and Safety Task Force and current district goals, specifically goal 2 (essential standards) and goal 4 (skills needed for the 21st century). Unanimous 7-0.

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Garballey reported that subcommittee met and discussed the concession stand and decided that the subcommittee would research how other cities and towns manage their concession stands. The Subcommittee will also check with MASC to see if there are any policies already established.

Policy JEB Kindergarten Entrance Age- this policy was established due to the concern from teachers about the age variations in kindergarten. The new policy allowed for transition over a three-year period. As it stands now all students entering kindergarten must be five years old by August 31st.

Mr. Garballey reported that the subcommittee voted to request the administration to provide statistics on the ages of children entering kindergarten during the transition years and information from staff to see whether or not the policy was successful.

Mr. Garballey assured the Committee that the subcommittee is not waiving on the policy and was not pursuing making any changes in the age requirement, but only wanted to have information available to better communicate with the public.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday May 24th at 7:30 pm

Supt. Merit Adjustment

Mr. Thielman gave a review of the merit pay process to date explaining that a total of 27 points have been awarded to date. The timeline for reviewing the merit pay grid was updated at the meeting of May 5th and indicates to the committee when to expect the review of the remaining items under each goal. The subcommittee recommended that the School Committee/Superintendents retreat on June 22nd consist of three parts: 1) formal review pursuant to Policy CBI 2) Review of goals to date based on the merit

pay grid and 3) a discussion of potential goals 2006-2007.

GOAL REVIEW – SUPT. MERIT ADJUSTMENT

Mr. Thielman stated that Goal 1 (Implement Special Education and English Language Learners reforms per Coordinated program Review) measure four (Produced reports on meeting timelines & compliance with the Corrective Action Plan) requires that the committee vote to receive the report only.

“ **Goal 1 – Measure 4**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was Voted to receive the Corrective Action Plan Tracking Report and the March Special Education monitoring report from Supt. Levenson. Unanimous vote 7-0

“ **Goal 1 – Measure 2 (Obtain written feedback from Special Education PAC)**

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was Voted to award Supt. Levenson 1 point on Goal 1, measure 2 (Obtain written feedback from Special Education PAC). 6-1 Mr. Thrope with an abstention.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

“ Correspondence Reviewed by Mr. Schlichtman: a letter from Finance Committee member Mary Ronan and a letter from Town Manager Brian Sullivan responding to a complaint by a traffic supervisor.

“ Mr. Garballey announced that the Special Education College Fair would be held on Thursday, May 11 at Arlington High School from 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Mr. Garballey will be a speaker on the panel held from 6:30 to 7:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

“ **Summer Schedule** – Ms. Sheffler requested that committee members submit their summer schedules to the school committee office to help identify and set a summer school committee meeting.

“ **June 22nd Meeting** – Ms. Sheffler informed members that the school committee retreat would be held from 12:00 – 4:00 pm instead of 10:00 – 2:00 pm as previously scheduled.

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

Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary