



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

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

Minutes 6-13-2006

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JUNE 13, 2006

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary

Sean Garballey
Jeff Thielman
Martin Thrope

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Chief Financial Officer: Sue Mazarella
Asst. Supt.: Kevin Hutchinson
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo

Call to order: 7:40 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Hilary Rappaport-Thompson School Parent voiced concern over the proposed schedule change at the elementary schools especially the elimination of fifth grade chorus in order to primarily drill for MCAS prep.

Robert Bartholomew – APS Physical Education teacher for 31 years stated that he is gravely concerned over the cut Athletic Director position to .5 and the elimination of the secretary housed there.

Peter Rufo – APS Physical Education teacher for 28 years echoed the above concerns and also noted that the students of Arlington suffer from the decision and requested that the Committee rethink their decision.

Kevin Cummings – APS Physical Education teacher for 10 years voiced concern over the safety of the students explaining that the AD monitors all students to ensure that they are medically cleared to participate in the sports program.

Dan Hirsch – APS parent and coach echoed the sentiments of the previous speakers and asked for reconsideration of the cut of the APS Athletic Director.

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 #06160 in the amount of \$557,364.26

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Sheffler allowed the students from the AHS science and engineering club make a presentation on the activities and accomplishments of the club that includes; Robotics Team, Bridge Building, Rocketry Team, JETS Team, Science Bowl and the AAPT Physics Bowl.

ACE REPORT

Supt. Levenson explained that one of the things that he was asked to do was to expand the ACE program (in a budget neutral way) and make it more widely available to all students at the same time. The ACE team has developed a plan that is ACE and more; it encompasses scheduling electives and choices for middle school students.

Ottoson Middle School principal Stavroula Bouris and Science Director Judith Sumner described the elective offerings and explained how ACE fits into the elective process.

The Science Explorations program will be offered at two levels, one open to all students with an interest in science and technology and the other for students who participate in the ACE program. Ms. Bouris stated that it is an elective process for 7th & 8th graders. All 7th graders will be out of their cluster classes at the same time. All 8th graders will do the same thing; however during the second half of the year Ms. Bouris would like to offer 8th grade students a range of different electives (watercolors, stand up comedy, etc.). The list of electives will be composed during summer workshops. The idea will be to run this for the 8th

grade next year and then full implementation for 7th & 8th graders for the 2007-2008 school year.

Dr. Sumner reported on the ACE program that will be expanded to 3x per week for a half year. It will be offered at two levels; one to all students who have an interest in science and technology and the other for students who participate in the ACE program.

Both programs will essentially follow the same curriculum; adjusted as needed.

In response to Mr. Thrope's question on scheduling Ms. Bouris explained that all of the 6th graders will be exposed to all of the electives. In 7th & 8th grade students will be able to continue with an elective that they are interested in. All students are required to take physical education although it is not an elective but is scheduled that way to facilitate easier scheduling.

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

To endorse the approach of 7th and 8th grade science program and electives as outlined in the presentation and expanding the instruction periods for the ACE program as well. 6-0.

Mr. Thrope suggested that in the course of developing new electives that they be brought before the Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment subcommittee.

TITLE IX REPORT

Athletic Director Rob DiLoreto presented the Title IX report. Mr. DiLoreto explained that the goal of the committee this year was to conduct a student survey. The purpose of the survey was to solicit student opinions about Arlington High School athletic topics for additional study and potential improvements with a focus on gender equity. The survey was administered on an anonymous basis, distributed to all AHS students and comprised of: 3 demographic questions (gender, grade, participation in athletics); 10 topic-based questions (response scale – strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). The response rate was high with a total of 710 students completing the survey, 342 females and 368 males. Some of the results of the survey summary:

- .. Outdoor facilities are highly prized
- .. Indoor facilities are view as low quality with poor maintenance
- .. All students and subsets view athletics as an important part of AHS life (ranked as 3rd highest in all data cuts)
- .. Wide gaps in perception of gender equality between females and all other demographic groups
- .. Female athletes have stronger opinions than all other subsets regarding: athletics being an important part of AHS life, enjoy attending events, gender equality

Next steps include:

Ensure the continued support of AHS athletics, as sports are considered extremely important to the quality of life at AHS and to the development of our young adults

Continue the excellent work and upkeep on the outdoor fields, in particular the new turf field

Explore any means possible to improve indoor athletic facilities

Discuss ways to understand more about the gender equality opinion of females and how to close the gap.

Acknowledge that female sports are justifiable lagging in some respects (e.g. uniforms), given some teams are still relatively new and continue work bring to an equitable level.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted that the School Committee accepts the Title IX report and to request that the Superintendent make a report at the next meeting based on the findings of the survey results. 6-0.

Mr. DiLoreto requested to address the committee relative to the athletic director position. Rob announced that with his present position being reorganized to a part time position he would not be able to serve as at AHS in the capacity of Athletic Director. Mr. DiLoreto thanked Supt. Levenson, former Supt. Kay Donovan, the School Committee, Nancy Brennan his secretary and the three principals for the opportunity to serve as the athletic director for the past six years.

MEMBER RECOGNITION

Suzanne Owayda was in attendance with her family. All members of the Committee as well as Supt. Levenson, Judy Bohn, former member Joani LaMachia and campaign manager Cathy Saleh acknowledged and thanked Suzanne for all of her hard work on the Arlington School Committee.

SUPERINTENDENT'S DIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE CALENDAR REPORT

Miriam Stein member of the Superintendent's Diversity Advisory committee reported on the committees work on the Religious Holidays and Observances. Ms. Stein explained that the group was in contact with religious leaders and put together a list of some of the important days for religious observance for various faiths. The Advisory Group expects to add more days to the list and will report back to the School Committee at the June 27th meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT

Stuart Cleinman and Kathy Fennelly gave a statement as to why they are seeking to fill the school vacancy. Both candidates declared that they were not intending to seek permanent election in the spring.

Ms. Sheffler explained that the committee must decide by ballot; she requested that each member fill out the ballot, sign it and return it to her. The ballot results were 4 in favor of Kathy Fennelly and two in favor of Stuart Cleinman. Ms. S Sheffler declared Kathy Fennelly the school committee appointee.

Mr. Thrope moved that Ms. Fennelly's vote be unanimous.

MASC Line Item Budget Authority

Supt. Levenson explained that the final phase of the new budget process and reporting structure is to establish: 1) what constitutes a line item. The School Committee must approve any transfers between "line items" during the course of the year after the budget is approved and 2) what level of budget detail (actual vs. budgeted) will be reported to the committee on a regular basis. After consulting with Glenn Koocher, Director of MASC he is proposing the following plan:

1. Line items requiring school committee approval of transfers are highlighted in grey on the budget summary.
2. On a monthly basis, the school committee will be provided budget vs. actual per the budget summary, including all the detail lines.
3. Any changes within a budget line item that impacts policy or has a long-term impact on the district would also require a school committee vote.

MASC Director Glenn Koocher explained that the recommendations that have been presented are the policies that he has recommended to every school district. This is consistent with the kind of advice that is recommended and advised at new member orientations and budget workshops to all school districts. Mr. Thrope questioned who decides what impacts policy or has a long-term impact on the district? Mr. Koocher stated that it is a self-policing system that the school committee monitors along with the superintendent.

Moved by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded:

To direct the Superintendent to prepare the budget in conformance with the line items presented with the intent that the school committee use the line items for governance and that we direct the policy & procedures subcommittee to come with recommendations for amending the policy in conformance with this practice.

Mr. Thrope requested that the motion be divided.

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

Voted that the School Committee adopt the line item practice for budgeting and that the reporting out of the budget will be done in this manner for the Fiscal 2007 budget. 5-1 (Mr. Thrope voted no on procedural grounds – he is comfortable with the substance but does believe that is the way to go about doing it)

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to refer the line item document to the policy and procedures subcommittee (Budget Transfer Authority) – for the purpose of redrafting the policy (DBJ) as appropriate to conform with the line item authority document.6-0.

Ms. Sheffler noted that we needed to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and that we would complete the remaining agenda items upon return to open session. Mr. Thielman inquired if the committee needed to take a formal vote to invite individuals into executive session. Mr. Koocher explained that the school committee may invite whomever they want into an executive session as long as those individuals understand that disclosure of what is discussed in executive session is in violation of the state ethics law.

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

Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations. Upon return to open session the Committee will continue with the remaining agenda. Roll Call: 6-0

Executive Session 10:00 –11:10 pm

.. Negotiations

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Supt. Levenson brought up two points not mentioned in the superintendent's report. 1) Mr. Levenson clarified that it was never suggested nor was it in any plan that the athletic director secretary would be eliminated. He does not know where the concept came from, nor is it in any budget document.

2) The committee needs to vote to acknowledge acceptance of the monthly updates on the Special Education timelines and the Corrective Action Plan.

Mr. Thrope questioned if there has been any attempt to meet with the traffic supervisors to hear their concerns and to communicate with them? Mr. Levenson responded that there have been 4 meetings held in the last 2½ weeks. He acknowledged that there is still a great deal of anger and frustration over the budget decisions. Nate reported that Chief Ryan and CFO Sue Mazzarella met with the entire staff twice; Sue and the Chief have met individually with their representative and Nate has also met individually with their representative.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mr. Thielman it was

Voted to accept the monthly special education timeline and corrective action plan. 6-0

PTBC/SBAB UPDATE

Mr. Thrope reported that the items on the punch list at the Dallin School would be completed after the close of school. Mr. Thrope also reported that the PTBC believe that there may be a window of opportunity to start the Thompson School. Supt.

Levenson and Town Manager Brian Sullivan will meet directly with the SBA to discuss the going forward. Preliminary plans already exist for the Thompson School rebuild. Mr.. Thrope suggested that the Infrastructure Working Group should meet and explore ways to move ahead with the project.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Garballey presented the following policies for a first reading:

- .. 1st reading of Policy BDEA (change in number of subcommittees)
- .. 1st reading of Policy DI (language change)
- .. 1st reading of Policy GCD-E (Professional Staff & Observance of Major Religious Holidays)
- .. 1st reading of Policy JH-E-1 (Student absences for Observance of Major Religious Holidays)

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 14th at 3:00pm.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Correspondence

NEW BUSINESS

None

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Garballey it was
Voted to adjourn @ 11:20 pm.

Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary