



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
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minutes 9-26-2006

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2006**

Present: Sue Sheffler, Chair Sean Garballey
Susan Lovelace, Vice Chair Jeff Thielman
Paul Schlichtman, Secretary Martin Thrope
Kathy Fennelly

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Asst. Supt. Kevin Hutchinson
CFO: Sue Mazzarella
Sp. Ed. Director: Barbara Cataldo

Call to order: 7:35 pm

Ms. Sheffler requested a motion to accept the final agenda.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

.. AHS student Robert McInnes requested that the school committee support mandatory picture identification badges for adult staff and teachers. (as will be required of students).

.. Mr. Richard Russo –presented a proposal to the School Committee that would require curriculum that may conflict with the religious and moral views of a student be presented to the school committee for approval before the principal executes the activity.

.. Josh Lobel spoke relative to the importance of discussing solutions for the remaining two schools due to the change in the state money and rules.

.. Ron Spangler- Stratton parent and TMM concerned over the rebuild plan, agrees that we need a new plan and financial resources. Suggested that the Schools Facilities Working Group may not be the right body to pursue the project. But emphasized that moving forward must include vigorous, open and inclusive discussion.

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 the regular meeting minutes of June 13, 2006

*Approval of Warrant 07034 in the amount of \$371,437.47

*2nd reading of Policy JLCE & JLCE-E – Nutrition & Wellness Policy and Exhibit

*2nd reading of policy IHBEA English as a Second Language

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

Voted to approve the consent agenda as presented.

SEPAC

Barbara Tilson, chair and Trish Orlovsky co chair of the Arlington SEPAC (Arlington Special Education Advisory Council) gave their annual presentation to the School Committee, which included:

- v A brief overview of the council and current state of SEPAC/Fulfilling our mandate
- v Reported on the Massachusetts CMR 603.28
- v SEPAC yearly calendar and workshops and SEPAC outreach efforts
- v Arlington SEPAC 2006 Spring Survey results
- v New programs, memberships, reading initiatives.

Mr. Thrope announced his intention to resign from the school committee in the spring of 2007, allowing three open seats for the next election. (statement attached)

TRAFFIC SUPERVISORS

Mr. George Laite was present with the traffic supervisors representing Senator Havern's office The Senator's office was

contacted to help the traffic supervisors organize into a union. Mr. Laite explained that state labor relation law MGL 150E does guarantee the right to organize a union and to negotiate a contract. School Committee can voluntarily recognize the traffic supervisors as the bargaining agent, eliminating the need to go before the labor relations board. There is a posting time requirement, at the end of the posting time, contract discussions would then begin..

The other way is for the employees to petition the labor relations board for a certificate of recognition. This process has already been started but would cease if the voluntary recognition route was pursued; he urged the Committee to take that course of action.

Roseanne Casazza elected president of the Arlington Traffic Supervisors repeated the request that the Superintendent and the School Committee act in good faith and recognize the association as a bargaining agent. Asked for either a yes or no vote from the committee.

The Committee discussed at length concerns over past miscommunications, the importance of understanding labor laws and the ramifications of taking such a vote without input from legal counsel.

Mr. Garballey suggested addressing the issue at the next policy and procedures subcommittee meeting, attorney Joan Stein will be there and can address all concerns.

Ms. Casazza stated that the traffic supervisors are requesting that their salaries be restored and will allow the school committee two weeks to resolve the request to organize a union.

It was agreed that the policy and procedures subcommittee would meet on Wednesday, October 4th at 2:00 pm to address the concerns of the traffic supervisors. The crossing guards will be on the agenda at 3:00 pm; Attorney Joan Stein will be in attendance.

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was Voted that within the limits of the collective bargaining statute and labor laws that a representative of the school committee negotiating team meet with a representative group of the traffic supervisors, our attorney and a representative of the police department to begin conversation on the issue (recognition of the traffic supervisors as an Association/union). The legal issues of the 150E request are researched by the policy and procedures subcommittee which will report back to the full committee at the regular meeting on October 10th. 7-0

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was Voted that it is the sense of the committee that we are agreeable to the recognition with the understanding that the committee needs to consult legal counsel to ensure that all provisions of laws and regulation are followed and that there is an expectation of a formal vote on this matter at our next meeting. 7-0

SCHOOL BUILDING UPDATE & DISCUSSION

Supt. Levenson stated that the purpose of the discussion was to put some facts and information on the table and emphasized that there is no attempt to push any specific agenda. Nate summarized the Thompson and Stratton Reconstruction

1. The hope, desire, and want of nearly everyone and every board is to rebuild both the Thompson and Stratton schools. This has not changed.
2. State reimbursement rules have changed from when the original rebuild plan was developed.
3. The new rules make it likely that Thompson will qualify for reimbursement; it could be as soon as 2 years nor more than 10 years away.
4. The lower reimbursement provided under the new state rules, suggest that additional funds from the town may be needed to rebuild Thompson, beyond the amount left in the override.
5. The new rules make it unlikely that Stratton will qualify for state reimbursement for many years.
6. The town of Arlington working in conjunction with the School Committee needs to craft a new plan.

Nate explained further that School reconstruction has historically been heavily subsidized by the state @ 67% in Arlington. However in changing the results, there's probably not a single rule that benefited Arlington. The Superintendent also reviewed the school construction timetables, the town funding requirements, cost implications of 6 vs. 7 schools and technology upgrades needed at the Stratton and Thompson School.

Mr. Thrope was in favor of the Superintendent pursuing Article 65 voted at Town Meeting that specifies that the school facilities working group create a plan and update it to complete the work on the Thompson and Stratton Schools. The article further states that the group should continue working on the issue until completed and meet with parents in each of the two schools at least once per year.

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

Voted that the School Committee urges the Superintendent to convene a school facilities working group to carry out the tasks defined in Article 65 of 2006 Annual Town Meeting adopted by a unanimously by vote of Town Meeting. Roll Call: 5-2 motion passes (Ms. Lovelace and Ms. Sheffler voted no)

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Mr. Thrope ASC reaffirms their support for 7 neighborhood elementary schools and the rebuild program.

Ms. Sheffler considered calling the motion out of order. Mr. Thrope appealed the decision of the chair (second by Mr. Garballey) (Ms. Sheffler withdrew her out of order motion).

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was
Voted to indefinitely postpone Mr. Garballey's motion. Roll Call: 5-2 motion passes
Mr. Garballey and Mr. Thrope with a no vote

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was:
Voted that the School Committee urge the Superintendent to pursue the course of action initially suggested by Mr. Garballey,
further detailed by the Superintendent in terms of meeting with the appropriate Town bodies, Board of Selectmen, Finance
Committee, Capital Planning and PTBC committee to engage and discuss moving forward with planned development. 6-0 (Mr.
Thrope not present)

STAFFING UPDATE

Supt. Levenson gave an update on the staffing for the 2006-07 school year.

- v Hiring, 98% of staff was hired for the start of school and 100% of classroom teachers ready for the start of school
- v Positions still open – a high school guidance counselor, 6 special education teacher assistants, 3 clerical positions, a high school alternative program teacher and an assistant occupational therapist.
- v The level of turnover –66 staff members left at the end of the 2006 school year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

.. **Study Groups/Leadership Academy** Supt. Levenson reported that there are four new district wide study groups forming and encourage school committee members to participate in any that would interest them.

21st Century education – Ms. Fennelly volunteered for the study group.

Cyber issues – The Policy & Procedures subcommittee will continue to work on this.

College planning – Mr. Garballey volunteered for the study group.

AHS discipline, diversion, prevention and consequences –Mr. Garballey also volunteered for this study group.

.. **Professional Development Schedule**

Supt. Levenson reported that at staff urging a yearlong professional development calendar has been created which includes schedules for afternoon meetings and early release days.

.. **Monthly School Budget Report/Summary**

1st of the monthly financial updates –the budget is tight, Nate's effort will be to report on actual expenditures and every month a forecast of where we will end. The special education in district spending is over budget due to referring more services to more students; this may be offset by a decrease in out of district services or an increase in special education tuition revenue.

.. **Principal's Compensation**

Mr. Levenson acknowledged that his interpretation of Education Reform and district policy regarding principal compensation differ. The Superintendent agreed to accept the school committees' interpretation of the hiring policies and will formally request approval for principal compensation in the future. Mr. Levenson stated that when the contracts were signed his interpretation of the policy was that having an approved budget was sufficient.

The Superintendent requested that the school committee approve the contracts/annual salaries for Hardy School principal, Deb D'Amico and Brackett School principal, Stephanie Zerchykov.

Mr. Thrope pointed out that the policy is clear and states that the superintendent shall present contract information in advance of signing.

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

Voted to approve the contracts for Hardy School principal Deb D'Amico and Brackett School principal Stephanie Zerchykov. 6-1
Mr. Thrope voted no due to process and substance

Mr. Thrope does not understand why both principals are receiving the same compensation even though the administrative experience of the two candidates is significantly different; he questioned what the justification for paying the same money, does not doubt their credentials but pointed out that it is an issue that the school committee may have wanted to weigh in on and the policy mechanism would have allowed that.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

.. **Policy & Procedures** Mr. Garballey reported that the subcommittee is working on the electronic communication policy; attorney Joan Stein review the draft policy with any recommended changes/revisions and will present them at the next meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Reviewed correspondence.

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

Voted to refer Mr. McInnis proposal for staff picture identification badges to the policy & procedures subcommittee meeting. 7-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Dates for school committee retreats and subcommittee meetings

v Budget Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday October 25th at 5:00 pm

v Supt. Merit pay subcommittee will meet on Friday, October 13th at 3:00 pm

The committee agreed to the following dates to hold the superintendent /school committee retreats: Friday November 3rd from 9:30 – 1:30, Friday, March 30, 2007 from 10:00 – 2:00 pm and Friday, June 15, 2007 from 10:00 – 2:00 pm.

Ms. Fennelly requested that the school committee participate in the community read that is sponsored by the Robbins Library where everyone in town is reading the same book at the same time. The book is "Mountains Beyond Mountains" by Tracy Kidder, copies were provided for the sc members by the library. The committee will discuss the book at its retreat on November 3rd.

Mr. Garballey requested that the Superintendent provide at the next meeting a handout explaining how the CAPP program has changed.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was Voted to adjourn @ 10:50 pm.

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*