



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 02/08/2005**

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**REGULAR MEETING**  
**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2005**

**Present:** Paul Schlichtman, Chair      Joani LaMachia  
Jeff Thielman, Vice Chair      Suzanne Owayda  
Martin Thrope, Secretary      Sue Sheffler  
Barbara Goodman

Superintendent: Kay Donovan  
CFO: Rob Addelson  
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry  
Sp. Ed. Director Marilyn Bisbicos @(8:30)

Call to order: 7:00

### **KOREAN WAR RECOGNITION**

Supt. Donovan honored the veterans of the Korean War in a recognition ceremony. The Superintendent along with AHS principal Charles Skidmore awarded diplomas to those veterans who left Arlington High School to go into the service. Other speakers included the Paul Schlichtman, Chair of the School Committee, Diane Mahon, Chair of the Board of Selectmen and Brian Sullivan, Town Manager. The AHS madrigal singers along with the honors orchestra performed at the ceremony.

Call to order: 8:00 pm

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None

Committee member Suzanne Owayda requested a moment of silence for Stratton School student Kenneth Dao who recently died from cancer.

### **BUDGET AND REVENUE TASK FORCE – DISCUSSION**

Town Manager Brian Sullivan, Selectmen Mahon and Lyons along with AEA President David Blakely and vice president and Jack Duranceau were also in attendance at this part of the meeting.

.. Report of Budget Revenue Task Force

Charlie Lyons spoke to his five-year financial plan for the Town and the group discussed the implications for the town and schools. Mr. Lyons did state that he supports the schools FY06 budget request of 6%. Supt. Donovan explained the proposed plan to principals and department heads where the consensus was that it was a good plan. Committee members were in agreement with the concept of the proposal and made the following motion:

Moved by Ms. Goodman seconded by Mr. Thielman

Voted that the Arlington School Committee endorse in concept the five-year financial plan proposed by Selectman Charles Lyons. 7-0

**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 the Regular Meeting minutes of November 23, 2004
- \*Approval of the Regular Meeting minutes of December 14, 2004
- \*Approval of the Special Meeting minutes of December 21, 2004
- \***Second Reading of Policy JJ/JJE Athletic Equity (removed)**

- \*Second Reading of Policy GFC-R Hiring Procedure
- \*Approval of Warrant # 05101 for \$325,576.17
- \*Approval of Warrant # 05107 for \$1,005,248.45

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously Voted to approve the items on the consent agenda except for Policy JJ/JJE

## **Break**

### **SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH**

.. Report from Site Visit Committee

.. Nate Levenson

Ms. LaMachia reported out on the site visits to Harvard and Boxford on candidate Nate Levenson. The site team consisted of Ms. LaMachia, Ms. Schlichtman and Ms. Sheffler. At Harvard Public Schools the team met with school committee members, principals, teachers department heads, union representatives and the superintendent. Comments on Mr. Levenson include: That his budget insights counterbalance his lack of experience in education, he is a consensus builder, he supports accountability in everything, has done extensive work on professional development with staff, worked well with the Finance Committee. Ms. Sheffler stated that she is convinced that he could do the job.

In Boxford the site team met with teachers, department heads, school committee members and the superintendent.

Comments made on Mr. Levenson include: that he is committed to education, is fair, is willing to find the middle ground, goal oriented, pushes thinking, a leader, the capacity to be successful and sees the big picture. Ms. LaMachia continued that in comparing the Leadership Profile, Mr. Levenson scored high on personal qualities and scored 4.5 out of 7 on professional qualities.

.. Site visit on Andre Ravenelle

Ms. LaMachia reported out on the site visits to Barnstable and Lexington on candidate Andre Ravenelle. At Barnstable Public Schools the team met with principals at all levels and central office staff. Comments made on Mr. Ravenelle include: that he empowers others, supports innovative ideas, is involved in the community, possess honesty and integrity, not intrusive, would be a good fit for Arlington, town is impressed with his budget presentations, fosters potential in others, collaborates, facilitated the building of a performing arts center on school grounds. Mr. Ravenelle's tenure in Barnstable was 12 years.

In Lexington where Mr. Ravenelle has been there for only a year and a half comments include; that he has made enormous contributions so far, understands the complexities of the superintendency, and has established positive public relations with the community.

Ms. Goodman began discussion on the candidates stating that she was unclear on the roles and responsibilities of Nate Levenson in Harvard, and what was his actual job description. She voiced major concern that he had no responsibilities in hiring, firing, supervising or evaluating personnel. Further that there is no budgeted position for an assistant superintendent in the Harvard Public Schools. Ms. Goodman stated that she is confident that Mr. Levenson is an excellent project manager relative to educational studies etc. but not does see his day to day interaction as that of an assistant superintendent.

Mr. Schlichtman suggested that the Committee wait on the discussion of the candidates and enter into executive session to discuss compensation packages.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION @ 9:55 – 10:15**

On a motion made by Mr. Thielman seconded by Mr. Thrope

It was voted to enter executive session for the purpose of:

.. Conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Roll Call: 7-0

Upon return to open session the Committee resumed discussion on the candidates. Mr. Thrope stated that this was his most important vote in 12 years; as a parent he fully entrusts the education of his daughter to Nate Levenson.

Mr. Thrope made the motion seconded by Mr. Thielman to enter Superintendent negotiations with candidate Nate Levenson.

Mr. Thielman said that he was excited about the hire and what Mr. Levenson will bring to the district. He urged the School Committee to vote for Nate. Ms. Owayda believes that Nate has the leadership skills to bring the system forward and also supports Nate Levenson as the next superintendent. Ms. Sheffler agreed with her colleagues and sees Mr. Levenson as a candidate willing to take risks, do new things and supports Nate as well. Ms. LaMachia stated that after receiving feedback from town, staff and site visits she also supports Nate Levenson as superintendent.

Ms. Goodman echoed her previous concerns as well as pointing out that she did not believe that Mr. Levenson possessed the knowledge of the day to day decision making needed in a superintendent and is not convinced that he is a good match for Arlington Public Schools. In addition Ms. Goodman noted that the position that Mr. Levenson held was more of a manager to special projects and is concerned that the size of Harvard Public Schools is the size of Arlington High School in terms of student population. She believes that it is a big leap and a real reason to be concerned.

Mr. Schlichtman stated that he believes that Mr. Levenson's role in Harvard was consistent with the Asst. Supt. and also believes that the two site visits helped to clarify and give an accurate picture of his abilities. Mr. Schlichtman continued stating that if he were making the choice independent of everyone else he would lean toward Andre Ravenelle. He did not think he could make a persuasive case to the Committee members that supported Nate from him to Mr. Ravenelle; however they are both strong candidates and he would support Nate Levenson.

Vote on the original motion to enter negotiations with candidate Nate Levenson for the position of Superintendent of Arlington Public Schools. Roll Call: 6-1 Ms. Goodman with the no vote

On a motion by Ms. Goodman seconded by Mr. Thrope it was  
Voted to make the vote unanimous.

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted that the Superintendent Search Committee enter contract negotiations and facilitate an entry plan with Nate Levenson. 7-0.

Ms. Sheffler recommended that Ms. Goodman have input into the entry plan. Ms. Goodman declined stating that she would not be running for re-election for the School Committee and did not think that it would be fair to be part of the plan.

Mr. Thielman motioned with a second by Ms. Owayda to move the 11:00 rule for 15 minutes. 7-0

### **COMMITTEE VOTES**

.. Second Reading of Policy KHBA Advertising at Sporting Events  
On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to approve Policy KHBA Advertising at Sporting Events. 6-1 Mr. Schlichtman - no

.. **Vote on Make-up meeting**  
On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously  
Voted to make up the regularly scheduled meeting of January 25, 2005(canceled due to snow) on Tuesday, February 15, 2005.

.. Full Day Kindergarten Fee  
Ms. Sheffler moved with a seconded from Mr. Thielman to increase the Full Day Kindergarten fee from \$1500.00 to \$2250.00  
Ms. Sheffler spoke to the motion citing the need to completely cover the expense of the program. By doing so Ms. Sheffler proposed that the funds saved go to providing more teachers and reducing class size at the high school. Ms. Sheffler also pointed out that some other communities are charging \$2950, \$3000 and up to \$5000.00 for their full day kindergarten programs.  
Supt. Donovan opposed the increase explaining that the program provides a much-needed service to the students; further funds collected for the kindergarten program cannot be used for any other purpose.

On the motion to increase the full day kindergarten fee from \$1500.00 to \$2250.00. The vote was 1-6 Ms Sheffler with the yes vote. Motion fails.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Dr. Gurry requested that the AHS program of studies be referred to the curriculum subcommittee.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was  
Voted to refer the AHS program of studies to the curriculum, instruction and assessment subcommittee for review.

Supt. Donovan stated that she needed authorization from the school committee to sign the lease for the new student information system and requested such.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was  
Voted to authorize the signing of the lease on the new student information system by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Owayda it was voted to adjourn at 11:15PM

Submitted by  
Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary