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School Committee Minutes 03/08/2005

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

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

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
CFO: Rob Addelson
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry (@8:45)
Sp. Ed. Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Call to order: 7:40

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CONSENT AGENDA

- *Approval of the regular meeting minutes of January 11, 2005
- *Approval of the executive session minutes of January 11, 2005
- *Approval of minutes recessed from January 11 to January 13, 2005
- *Approval of the regular meeting minutes of February 8, 2005
- Second reading of policies
- *JJ – Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities.
- *GCA – Professional Staff Positions.
- *GDE/GDF - Support Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies/Support Staff Hiring.
- *GDC – Support Staff Leaves and Absences
- *Approval of Warrant 05114 in the amount of \$535,730.04
- *Approval of Warrant 05123 in the amount of \$252,322.60

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted to approve the items on the consent agenda.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Mr. Schlichtman explained that the Committee could review the contract but that any discussion on the give and take of negotiations would indicate the need to enter executive session.

Supt. Search Committee chair, Suzanne Owayda reviewed the process used in creating the contract for Mr. Levenson. The Committee used language from MASS template and from the current superintendents' contract. Suzanne explained that she met with Supt. Donovan to discuss what provisions in her contract worked and what did not work. School Counsel Alan Miller sent her a contract template and Ms. Owayda reviewed the model contract from MASS (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents). The Superintendent Search Committee met with Mr. Levenson on February 28 and March 3 and came to an agreement. Ms. Owayda proceeded to read the proposed contract with the Committee. The Committee discussed and proposed changes in some of the contract language. Mr. Thrope requested that Alan Miller review the contract to ensure that the contract is enforceable. The Chair requested a motion to table and to continue further discussion in executive session.

Mr. Thielman thanked the subcommittee for their work on the contract, noting that the three-year plan, the salary components and the performance objectives are very sound and very solid

On a motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Ms. Goodman it was Voted to table discussion of the contract. 7-0:

.. **Special Dedication**

Ms. Goodman presented the following motion to the Committee:

Where as Kathleen F. Donovan has been an inspirational leader with the Arlington Community

Whereas Kathleen F. Donovan has been a dedicated superintendent of the Arlington Public Schools for 11 years, making many significant contributions to the educations and well-being of Arlington's children.

And whereas she has tirelessly and masterfully worked to ensure the restoration and renovation of Peirce Field, thereby giving generations of Arlington's children and residents an outstanding athletic facility

I move The Arlington Public Schools name the Stadium at Peirce field the Kathleen F. Donovan Stadium at Peirce Field

Mr. Thrope explained that to put the naming in historical perspective relative to the two superintendents that preceded Mrs. Donovan that the first one, Mr. Gibbs, had a school named after him, the second one,

Mr. Devine, had this room named after him, at one time there was a plaque; I guess the room got painted, this should be judged in that context for anyone who's interested in how we have done things in the past.

Motion seconded by Mr. Thielman voted by Roll Call: 7-0

Mr. Schlichtman noted that the Committee will hold a dedication ceremony when the project is complete.

Mrs. Donovan thanked the Committee.

BUDGET DISCUSSION

Finance Committee

Alan Tosti, Chair of the Finance Committee spoke relative to supporting the five-year fiscal plan proposed by Selectmen Lyons. Mr. Tosti stated the Finance Committee reviewed the plan extensively and voted Monday March 7th for \$6million override on June 11th, with no further overrides for 5 years, and supports the principles of the Selectmen's 5-year fiscal restraint plan. The Board of Selectmen plans on voting to hold a special meeting for the override on June 11, 2005 contingent on support from the School Committee and the Finance Committee. Mr. Tosti acknowledged that it will be a difficult campaign to convince the people but if all of the major boards are behind it he believes it can be done and recommends the plan to the School Committee.

Supt. Donovan stated that she met with the Executive Director of MASS who has pledged full support for pushing for and working with our legislators for more local aid. Mrs. Donovan also noted that a group of superintendents from surrounding areas along with their financial directors met at Shawsheen Tech along with Mr. Lyons to push for an increase in local aid. The Executive Board of Superintendents is in full support of the local aid plan; Superintendent Donovan will host another meeting in Arlington on March 22nd.

Ms. Goodman thinks that it is a good plan but has concerns that if things go wrong the only option for the Town is to cut services. Ms. Sheffler stated that she does not know why the Board of Selectmen and Charlie Foskett perceived that the School Committee is not committed to the plan; Sue reaffirmed that there is a real commitment from the School Committee to work with the numbers. Ms. Owayda noted for the record that the School Committee is committed and has been working on the plan and in fact secured the first contract settlement with employees to reduce the ratio on health insurance.

Supt. Donovan believes that the Board of Selectmen was looking for a motion to accept the plan as presented at the Budget Revenue Task Force meeting and to commit to the five-year plan. Mrs. Donovan recommends support of the motion

Mr. Thielman made the following motion with a second by Ms. LaMachia:

The Arlington School Committee reaffirms its support for the five-year fiscal stability plan presented by Selectman Lyons and endorsed by the committee by its vote on February 15, 2005.

The Arlington School Committee urges the Board of Selectmen to vote, at its next meeting to place an operating override question on the ballot with the understanding that the override is tied to the five-year fiscal stability plan.

The Arlington School Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen set the dollar amount of the operating override at \$6 million, that a special election should be called for Saturday, June 11, 2005.

Furthermore that the Arlington School Committee commits to meet jointly with the Board of Selectmen twice per year to discuss the Town's financial status.

Roll Call: Unanimous 7 – 0

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

Voted to request that the Board of Selectmen take a vote by roll call their endorsement of the passage a 2 ½ override for \$6 million, the five-year plan and their continued advocacy at the state level. 7-0

Budget Subcommittee

Mr. Thielman reported that at the subcommittee meeting of 2/28 CFO Rob Addelson and Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry answered questions on staffing, budget and specific lines in the budget submitted by School Committee members. Ms. Sheffler addressed her concerns, and proposed the following motions to meet the following objectives:

- More equitable resources across k-12 system; restoring cuts at AHS
- Emphasis on math and science opportunities at AHS, (beyond MCAS driven needs).
- More support to at-risk populations at AHS, thereby reducing distractions in classroom for all.
- Recognition that AHS operating budget will likely be limited to 4% max over the next several years.

1. Motion to add 2 additional teachers to AHS, to help restore and enhance science and math offerings and bring them into alignment with peer communities.

2. Motion to add 2 additional teachers to AHS to pilot "Project Connect" program (Principal Skidmore).
3. Motion to use some of AHS "general instructional support" increase to add a SPED director dedicated to AHS (?145 students).
4. Motion to remove line item for 4 additional teachers at elementary level.
5. Motion to limit hire of Dallin principal to 3 months lead time (prior to Dallin re-opening).

Supt. Donovan responded that the 2 high school teachers are already in budget as well as funds for motion 2 & 3. The Superintendent is looking at requesting some tuition money from Minuteman since they sent 10 students back to AHS after the October 1st receipt of tuition payment.

Ms. Goodman moved with a second by Ms. LaMachia to table the discussion of the budget. Roll Call:
 Ms. Goodman yes, Ms. LaMachia yes, Ms. Owayda no, Ms. Sheffler no, Mr. Thrope no, Mr. Thielman no,
 Mr. Schlichtman yes. 4-3 motion does not prevail.

Mr. Schlichtman proposed that Supt. Donovan and Ms. Sheffler meet to discuss her motions and prepare a report on the impact of the motions and respond at the meeting of March 22nd. Paul also pointed out that the School Committee would most likely need to create two different budgets.

Supt. Donovan would like to present the budget to the Finance Committee on March 21st.

On a motion by Mr. Thielman seconded by Ms. LaMachia

Voted to present the FY2006 school budget to the Finance Committee on March 21st contingent on Ms. Sheffler meeting with the Superintendent.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

MCAS Report

AHS principal Charles Skidmore reviewed the report on AHS MCAS Grade 11 Retake Scores. Mr. Skidmore noted that 87% of the students passed and cited the following reasons as to why the 13% of the students have not passed,

- .. the substantial reduction of tutoring funds from the DOE,
- .. the effects of FY2003-2004 resulting in staffing cuts,
- .. increased class size,
- .. a decrease in electives and the increase in non-directed studies.

With the increased funds made available to hire additional tutors, all students scheduled for the March retakes have been tutored in both English and Mathematics.

Peirce Field Update

Supt. Donovan reported that the new bleachers would not be completed in time for high school graduation in June; however after a meeting with the Industrial Parties it was agreed that temporary staging would be brought in to accommodate the graduation. The Industrial Parties will pay for the bleachers and have secured approval to do so by the company that is installing the artificial turf.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Thrope presented the following policies for a 1st reading

- .. Policy GCB – Professional Staff contracts and Compensation Plans
- .. Policy GDB – Support Staff Contract and Compensation Plans
- .. Policy GDBD – Support Staff Fringe Benefits
- .. Policy GCBD – Professional Staff Fringe Benefits

Mr. Thrope reported that according to town counsel John Maher APS policy JJ Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities is in compliance with Title IX. Mr. Thrope also noted that a review of Policy IL indicates that we are in compliance. The subcommittee has now completed section G of the policy manual; the next meeting will take place on April 6th at 3:30 pm.

NEW BUSINESS

None

EXECUTIVE SESSION 9:15 – 10:15

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

Voted to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations. The Committee may return to open session for a vote. Roll Call:
 Unanimous.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was unanimously

Voted to accept the contract agreement between the Arlington School Committee and Unit C Secretarial Personnel as presented by Supt. Donovan.

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

Voted to adjourn at 10:20 PM. 7-0.

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*