



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 03/22/2005**

*THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2005*

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

Superintendent: Kay Donovan  
Chief Financial Officer: Rob Addelson  
Asst. Supt. Joanne Gurry  
Sp. Ed. Director Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: Sue Sheffler

Call to order: 7:10

### **RECOGNITION**

Chairman Paul Schlichtman announced that tonight's meeting was the last for members Barbara Goodman and Joani LaMachia. Ms. Goodman has served on the Committee for twelve years and Ms. LaMachia for six years. Supt. Donovan as well as each member of the Committee along with Supt. Donovan had the opportunity to speak on the contributions that each member has made. In addition Debbie Botos spoke on Barbara Goodman's behalf and Judi Bohn on Joani LaMachia's behalf. Both Ms Goodman and Ms. LaMachia were presented with flowers and a chair engraved with the Town of Arlington's logo.

### **Break**

### **PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FY2005-2006 SCHOOL BUDGET**

Mr. Schlichtman called the public hearing on the FY2005-2006 to order stating that the hearing had been legally advertised in the Arlington Advocate.

Supt. Donovan presented the school budget for 2005-2006 school year pointing out that it is still a working budget and that the final booklet will come at a later date. Mrs. Donovan announced that this would be the last time she would present the School Budget and that she had presented it to the Finance Committee the previous evening where it was approved. The Superintendent stated that she is looking for a six percent (6%) increase for the next fiscal year. The recommended budget is \$34,280,902, an increase of \$1,943,235 over the FY05 budget.

Supt. Donovan explained what the increase would cover:

- .. Salary increases, cost of living adjustments, step increases, lane changes and longevity
- .. 4 elementary, 2 middle school, and 2 high school teachers to accommodate anticipated enrollment changes
- .. New Dallin School principal and secretary for ½ year
- .. Utility costs at Dallin School
- .. Hiring one electrician

Under recommended goals and objective items

- .. Data Director
- .. 2 certified elementary ELL teachers
- .. Open Circle training for elementary teachers
- .. 4 tutors for skills training for AHS freshman and sophomores
- .. Stipends for summer workshops for aligning curriculum with NCLB requirements
- .. Staff stipends for integrating District Accommodations Plan with existing models

Supt. Donovan noted concern over the fact that as of October 1<sup>st</sup> there were 151 Arlington students attending Minuteman, (at 20,000.00 per student) After October 2<sup>nd</sup> (after the receipt of tuition) 10 students were returned without any reimbursement of tuition and no Chapter 70

funds available to Arlington on those students. Mrs. Donovan will meet with the Superintendent of Minuteman to discuss the situation but noted that the Town must also be aware of the situation and follow up on it.

In the event that the override does not pass the administration is working on putting together another budget that will include a \$2.6 million cut to the school budget.

Supt. Donovan stated that the budget is still a working document and that the Committee may make changes including line item changes.

Community member Cathy Saleh-Clemens questioned if there would be any available funds to increase the lunch aids from 3 to 6 (as was previously) stating that she believed that it was a safety issue. Mrs. Donovan acknowledged the need but noted that there were no funds in the budget for that. However Kay was hoping to have the kindergarten assistants help to supervise during lunch.

Supt. Donovan answered questions by Glenn Fratto who requested clarification of the possible reduction in Title I funds and from Stratton parent Annalise LeMer who voiced concern over poor communication between elementary librarian and the library aides.

Mr. Schlichtman asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the budget (three times as required). There were none.

Mr. Schlichtman then asked if anyone wished to speak against any part of the budget (three times as required) There were none.

Mr. Schlichtman declared the public hearing on the school budget closed at 9:00pm.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Before the start of public participation Mr. Schlichtman apologized to his colleagues for communications they have received due to his website on Charter Schools. Mr. Schlichtman noted that it is a personal website hosted along with school committee members from other communities. The site is sponsored by the Massachusetts Taxpayers for Accountable Spending.

Mr. Schlichtman stated that this would be his last meeting as chair; as chair Paul stated that he tried to put people in positions where they would excel regardless of personal preference. He is looking forward to working with Jeff Thielman as the next chair.

Mr. Schlichtman informed the audience that public participation is limited to twenty minutes with a 3 minute limit per person; he also reviewed the policy on Public Participation noting that the Committee can not respond to issues presented, only take under advisement.

Glenn Fratto – AHS graduate spoke relative to the article in the Arlington Advocate reporting the naming of Donovan stadium. Mr. Fratto stated that he was disappointed that there was no procedure followed. Mr. Fratto also took exception to Mr. Schlichtman's website on Charter Schools noting that he is currently the director of finance at one of the largest charter schools in the state.

Fred Sophis – also a AHS graduate and citizen asked the Committee to rethink their decision relative to the naming of the stadium and to or explain why it was done.

Steve Moniak Arlington resident stated that the override is an important issue in Town and is at risk due to the naming of the field. Further Mr. Moniak would not vote for the override if the process and procedure of the renaming were not reconsidered. Mr. Moniak requested that the Committee reconsiders their vote; if not he urged Supt. Donovan to withdraw her name on the stadium and that the School Committee impose a two year moratorium on the naming the stadium.

Jack Burns applauded the school committee for its decision to name the stadium in honor of Kay Donovan emphasizing that the naming of the stadium is theirs to make. Mr. Burns explained that Mrs. Donovan has been privately raising funds for a hockey rink at Peirce Field with the intent of naming it after Ed Burns.

Mr. Thrope requested The Chair to move the item of Old Business up to discuss while the interested community members were still present.

Mr. Schlichtman stated that he would entertain doing so after the vote on the consent agenda if the committee so desires.

**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 February 15, 2005

\*Approval of the executive session minutes of February 15, 2005

\*Approval of the emergency meeting of March 3, 2005

Second reading of policies

\*Policy GCB – Professional Staff contracts and Compensation Plans

\*Policy GCBD – Professional Staff Fringe Benefits

\*Policy GDB – Support Staff Contract and Compensation Plans

\*Policy GDBD – Support Staff Fringe Benefits

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

Voted to adopt the Consent Agenda as presented. 6-0

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

Voted to advance the item of Old Business as the next item to be on the agenda. 6-0

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Thrope stated that the Committees' well-intentioned attempt by Ms. Owayda to honor Mrs. Donovan has created some controversy that is not in the best interest of the schools in light of the override in less than three months. Mr. Thrope noted that the School Committee policy mandates a two week delay between a proposal and vote on naming school facilities and in hindsight Mr. Thrope commented that it is clear that he made a mistake in not asking that the Committee slow the process to satisfy the relevant constituencies involved in the process.

Mr. Thrope then stated his intent as follows:

To reconsider the March 8<sup>th</sup> vote of the school committee to name the stadium at Peirce Field, the Kathleen F. Donovan Stadium and noted that if the motion is successful would offer the following three motions:

1. To postpone action on naming the stadium until after Mrs. Donovan is no longer employed by the Arlington Public Schools.
2. To work in conjunction with the Public Memorials Committee to solicit their advisory opinion and to develop an inclusionary process to determine how to honor Mrs. Donovan

3. To refer Policy FF/FFA/FFB, Policy for Special Dedications of School Facilities, to the Policies and Procedures Subcommittee for review and possible revision

Mr. Schlichtman ruled the motion out of order citing that a motion to reconsider must be enacted within a meeting and that this is a new meeting.

Mr. Thrope made a point of order referencing the NASB leader bulleting 1994 that allows his motion.

The Chair ruled that the motion of reconsideration is limited to the meeting where it takes place; if Committee would like to suspend the rules it would require a 2/3 vote.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted to suspend the rules in order to discuss the motion. 5-1 Mr. Schlichtman no

Mr. Thielman seconded the motion made by Mr. Thrope to reconsider.

Ms. Owayda spoke to the issue.

Ms. Owayda explained that she was the one who took the first steps in the naming of Donovan Stadium. at Peirce Field.

1) The why- was due to the deep sense of gratitude, appreciation and respect for Kay Donovan. Suzanne stated that she thought that this was a very appropriate way to acknowledge someone who went above and beyond the call of duty. Although a team of people worked on the negotiations for the Peirce Field, the Superintendent was the driving force and vision behind what is being implemented today. This summer the construction of the field is scheduled to be complete and it is a fitting tribute to the Superintendent who gave unselfishly her time and energy. Additionally Superintendent Donovan was responsible for the new construction or renovation of 6 out of the 9 schools in the Town of Arlington.

2) Procedurally and in terms of process Ms. Owayda contacted Town Counsel, John Maher who advised Suzanne that it would be appropriate for the School Committee to follow its own policy. Ms. Owayda made it clear that there was no intention of renaming Peirce Field but rather to name a particular area of the field. There was no mention of any advisory public memorial committee and Suzanne was unaware that any entity existed. Ms. Owayda approached the chair and requested that the item be placed on the agenda.

Ms. Owayda recommended that policy FF/FFA/FFB be referred to the policy & procedures subcommittee for review and to include a public process and feedback component.

Mr. Thielman acknowledged community members in attendance, who called and emailed voicing their concern, stating that it is important that the public know that the Committee prides itself on public input in critical decisions. In the past the Food allergy policy, the field trip release policy, and budget workshops have all been a public process; the committee values and seeks input before making important decisions. And Mr. Thielman stated that he believed that the School Committee made the right decision in naming the stadium at Peirce Field after Mrs. Donovan; is not in favor of reversing the decision but will refer the policy for review on the practice and process in naming public facilities.

Mr. Thrope noted that the motion to reconsider is not about Kay but about the process and clarified that the motion before the Committee was one to reconsider and if the motion prevails it would be to slow down the process and revisit the issue in a manner where everyone feels heard.

On the motion by Mr. Thrope seconded by Mr. Thielman it was:

Moved to reconsider the March 8<sup>th</sup> vote of the school committee to name the stadium at Peirce Field the Kathleen F. Donovan Stadium

Roll Call: Ms. Goodman-no, Ms. LaMachia-no, Ms. Owayda-no, Mr. Thrope yes Mr. Thielman-no, Mr. Schlichtman-no,. Motion fails. 5-1

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

Voted to refer Policy FF/FFA/FFB, Policy for Special Dedications of School Facilities, to the Policies and Procedures subcommittee for review and possible revision 6-0.

Mr. Schlichtman took the opportunity to point out two facts:

1) That the School Committee was in receipt of a letter by Town Counsel, John Maher that stated that while it would be nice to involve the public memorial committee in anything we might do, they are an advisory committee only and points out that under MGL the facilities of the school department are at the hands and discretion of the school committee ( it is also further outlined in the Town Manager Act. )

2) That while he (Mr. Schlichtman) was a Town Meeting Member for several years he does not recall in any instance seeing any reports, agendas, notice of meetings by the Public Memorial Committee.

Mr. Thielman pointed out that any loss of votes on the override is not a loss for the schools but it is a loss for the entire town. It is not a school override but a Town override.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**Job Description** Supt. Donovan presented the job description for Supervisor of Specialized Programs and requested approval from the School Committee.

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

Voted to approve the job description of Supervisor of Specialized Programs as presented by Supt. Donovan. 6-0

.. **Update on Community Education**

Donna Eidson, director of Community Education gave an update on the new programs and changes made in the program. The mission of the Community Education is to provide quality, affordable education and enrichment courses for children, teens and adults; the program is supported completely through course fees. To date Ms. Eidson has designed a new brochure, and added 45 courses, in addition there have been a total of 850 participants in the various offerings.

.. **Germaine Lawrence Approval as Private School**

Dr. Gurry reported that Germaine Lawrence School upon completion of their 3 year DOE review discovered that the original documentation from the ASC granting approval the school as private was missing. The letter was written sometime in the 1970's. Dr. Gurry conducted a site visit, reviewed the curriculum and received all pertinent certificates and descriptions of the school's services. Dr. Gurry requested that the School Committee approve the Germaine Lawrence School as a private school and that notification of the approved vote is sent to the Executive Director as soon as possible.

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia seconded by Ms. Goodman it was

Voted approval of the Germaine Lawrence School, located at 18 Claremont Avenue, Arlington, MA 02476 as a private school by the Arlington School Committee. 5-1-0 (abstention by Ms. Goodman who is a member of the corporation).

.. **Alternative Program-GreenTree**

Supt. Donovan reported that Green Tree is an alternative group home whose students attend AHS. Mrs. Donovan explained that we are trying to service the students who present various needs. She met with the directors to ensure that the students try to align with our school system.

.. **2005-2006 Grant Money**

Mrs. Donovan stated that APS would continue to check on all available grants; additionally she will remind the new Superintendent to do so.

.. **Report on Finance Committee**

Supt. Donovan presented the FY 2005-2006 school budget to the Finance Committee the previous evening March 21<sup>st</sup> and was informed that it was approved by the Finance Committee.

.. **Discussion on Alternative Budget**

Mrs. Donovan stated that the principals and department heads would meet next week to work on an alternative budget. Using the O'Neill formula the schools will face a \$2.6 million dollar cut.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

.. **Budget Subcommittee Report & Discussion**

Mr. Thielman reported on the meeting of March 18<sup>th</sup>. The subcommittee heard a report by members of Sustainable Arlington relative to the possibility of using wind power to send energy to some of our buildings. Supt. Donovan was agreeable to let the group have access to our data for the purpose of research.

The School Committee will have Workshop on AHS in April: the subcommittee voted to have Mr. Thielman meet with AHS principal Charlie Skidmore to further develop questions for that meeting.

Supt. Donovan will present an alternative budget to the school committee at its meeting of April 12<sup>th</sup>

Mr. Thrope pointed out that with Mrs. Donovan leaving and Mr. Levenson just beginning that the Committee leave some of the details on decisions made in the budget and on positions filled until Mr. Levenson is on board.

Mr. Schlichtman noted that we have one superintendent until June 30<sup>th</sup> Supt. Donovan noted that Mr. Levenson requested that Mrs. Donovan go ahead and advertise the positions.

.. **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment**

Ms. Goodman reported that the subcommittee was charged with creating a document and an inventory on all the programs through the safe school task force. Dr. Gurry along with Cindy Bouvier and Judi Bohn worked on the project and Dr. Gurry reviewed the document. The inventory chart will give the next CIA subcommittee and Superintendent a point of reference on the Safe Schools programs.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT**

Ms. Owayda reported that all of the revisions suggested by the Committee and legal counsel Alan Miller have been incorporated into the contract: as noted in the fax sent by Mr. Miller. Ms. Owayda reviewed the pertinent changes and stated that Mr. Levenson was in agreement with the changes with the exception of the date of the systems goals, he would like it to remain as the suggested date of August 1<sup>st</sup>.

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

Voted that the Arlington School Committee employs Nathan Levenson as the Superintendent of Schools.

Roll Call: 6-0

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

Voted to approve the side letter to accompany Mr. Levenson's contract. Roll Call: 6-0

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

Voted that Sue Sheffler replace Joani LaMachia on the superintendent search committee for the duration until the ad hoc committee is dispersed.

**SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Correspondence reviewed by Mr. Thrope

**NEW BUSINESS**

Supt. Donovan reported that she went before the Board of Selectmen to seek approval of the Home Rule Petition removing the clerical staff from Civil Service. The Board vote 4-1 (Ms. Mahon against)

*The committee thanked Paul Schlichtman for his tenure as Chair of the Committee.*

*On a motion by Ms. Goodman seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was  
Voted to adjourn @ 10:35 pm.*

*Submitted by  
Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary*