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School Committee Minutes 05/24/2005

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2005
7:30 PM

Present: *Jeff Thielman, Chair* *Susan Lovelace*
 Sue Sheffler, Vice chair *Paul Schlichtman*
 Suzanne Owayda, Secretary *Martin Thrope*
 Sean Garballey

Superintendent: *Kay Donovan*
CFO: *Rob Addelson*
Asst. Supt. *Joanne Gurry*
Sp. Ed. Director: *Marilyn Bisbicos*

Call to order: 7:30 PM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

SPECIAL EDUCATION PAC REPORT

Trish Orlovsky, chairperson of the Arlington Special Education Parent Advisory Council, gave a presentation on the special education parent advisory council; who is involved in the council, what their role is, accomplishments to date and future goals.

Duties of the special education Pac include:

- .. To meet regularly with school officials to participate in planning, developing and evaluating of the school district's special education programs*
- .. To advise the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities*
- .. To conduct at least one workshop within the school district on the rights of students and their parents and guardians under stated and federal education laws (in cooperation with the district).*
- .. To create a structured pac with the election of officers and to establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures.*

Doreen Arcus, member of the special education pac gave a power point presentation on who the special education students are, how much money is spent and how good the services are. Ms. Arcus presented:

- .. 13.7% of APS are on IEP's compared with 15.6% in Massachusetts*
- .. The school committee is responsible for educating students with special education needs*
- .. Students should be referred to as students with disabilities or students with special needs instead of special education students*
- .. APS spends \$1.00 per pupil for regular education compared to \$1.03 for students with special needs*
- .. Compared funds spent on out of district students and students educated in specialized programs within the district.*

Ms. Orlovsky looks forward to working with the new director of special education, the assistant superintendent and the new superintendent in supporting better education programs for all children in the Arlington Public Schools.

There was a discussion on the validity of some of the figures used in the presentation and the source of the information presented.

Ms. Owayda stated that the presentation should have been a more collaborative effort between the special education pac and the school administration.

ATHLECTIC BUDGET

Rob DiLoreto AHS Athletic Director made a presentation to the School Committee outlining the scenarios of applying the proposed cuts of \$150,000.00 in the athletic budget if the override fails.

The report included the estimated cost of each individual sport arrayed from most to least expensive, the estimated cost of each individual

sport displayed by level – freshman, junior varsity, varsity and other – and by gender, athletic participation by gender, grade and sport, and athletic participation by sport.

Scenario 1: Elimination of all freshman and junior varsity sports and selected other programs. The goal was to preserve the integrity of all varsity programs.

Scenario 2: Elimination of sports with the lowest participation rates. The goal was to impact as few students as possible

Scenario 3: Elimination of the most expensive sports first.

Mr. DiLoreto stated that there is no way to make reductions of \$150,000.00 without devastating and dramatic cuts; it will dismantle the athletic program at AHS. Rob further noted that students experience a smoother transition from middle school to high school when participating in a team sport.

Supt. Donovan explained that students would not have the same high school experience as enjoyed by current students.

Mrs. Donovan is concerned that some families may decide to move or that students will attend Minuteman Regional or other private schools that offer sport programs; the Superintendent emphasized that the public needs to hear what the cuts will be.

Supt. Donovan requested that the School Committee not vote on any of the proposals but rather review and consider them.

Ms. Sheffler explained that if the cuts are not made they must cut somewhere else and that there is nowhere else to cut. Sue questioned the possibility that the booster clubs in Town would be able to contribute funds. Mr. DiLoreto stated that the booster clubs already work hard to help fund equipment, uniforms and banquets and to raise \$150,000. under these time constraints would be impossible. There also are no big businesses in Town to support large donations. In terms of fees Rob noted that at \$225.00 we have the highest fees in the GBL and that fees would have to increase to \$500. to \$600.00 to offset costs.

Mr. Schlichtman was not in favor of advancing fees and believes that the cuts will be a major loss in the quality at Arlington High School and for students; it is a critical part of the high school experience.

Mr. Thielman reported that the cost of the override averages out to \$1.16 per day based on a house assessed at \$409,000. He along with the rest of the Committee urged the community to support the override.

ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

AHS principal, Charles Skidmore requested School Committee approval on the proposed changes in the Arlington High School Student Handbook. The revisions have been approved by the AHS School Council. Mr. Skidmore reported that there is little change in the context of the handbook, but that the changes give a clearer sense of suspendable offenses, specifically what procedures to be followed and what the ramifications of each suspension are. In the revision of the Code of Discipline, Mr. Skidmore requested that long-term suspension and expulsion power be granted to the principal with appeal rights to the Superintendent. Currently the policy states that only the School Committee has long-term suspension and expulsion powers.

Mr. Thrope noted that Mr. Skidmore's request is consistent with MGL but is not consistent with school committee policy which stated that the school committee has long-term suspension and expulsion powers; Mr. Thrope was uncomfortable that there would be no further recourse after the appeal to the superintendent and believed including the school committee would offer counterbalance.

Both Mr. Schlichtman and Ms. Lovelace agreed that the expectation would be that Mr. Skidmore (or any administrator) would be held accountable to ensure that the policy and process would be followed; any issues, concerns or questions could be reflected in his evaluation.

Mr. Schlichtman made a motion seconded by Mr. Garballey to accept the recommendations presented in the AHS student handbook.

Mr. Thrope requested that the three proposals be voted on separately.

On a motion by Mr. Garballey seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to approve the revisions proposed in I : the inclusion of regulations for fan behavior. Unanimous vote.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to approve the revisions proposed in the AHS student handbook under II – an update to the Records Policy, based on new FERPA guidelines. Unanimous vote

Mr. Schlichtman moved, with a second by Ms. Lovelace
To approve the revisions proposed in the AHS student handbook under #III; code of discipline to include that long-term suspension and expulsion be granted to the principal with appeal right to the Superintendent.

Mr. Thrope made a motion to amend, with a second by Ms. Owayda to add the School Committee to the appeal process. 6-1 motion fails Mr. Thrope with the no vote

On Mr. Schlichtman's motion To approve the revisions proposed in the AHS student handbook under #III; code of discipline to include that long-term Unanimous vote.

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 Minutes: Regular meeting minutes of April 26, 2005

*Approval of Warrant #05151 in the amount of \$288,130.10

*Approval of Field Trip (Math Nationals)

On a motion by Ms. Owayda seconded by Ms. Sheffler it was Voted to approve the items on the Consent Agenda as presented.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

.. **Town Meeting Update** – Supt. Donovan reported that the Home Rule Petition on Civil Service was passed by Town Meeting by a vote of 153-10. At the Town Meeting of May 16th the school budget was presented, with the override and the cuts expected in the “no override” budget. Mr. Thielman gave the State of Schools address and Madrigal Singers performed and opened the meeting. Mrs. Donovan also requested an increase in the maximum amount allowed in the revolving accounts ,i.e. kindergarten and general funds.

.. **Financial Report (Policy DI)**

Supt. Donovan reported on the FY05 School Budget Report: Budget vs. Actual Spending as of 5/17/05. Mrs. Donovan explained that the deficit for out-of-district will be offset by the use of state reimbursement through the Special Education circuit breaker program.

.. **Windstor Update**

Mr. Addelson met with Gary Westerhome of Windstor and discussed the economic benefit of the project at the Brackett, Peirce and Stratton schools. Mr. Addelson stated that there were issues of liability on school property, the impact on neighbors and the noise factor in the classrooms. The next step is to determine if the sites in Arlington are viable.

PTBC UPDATE

Mr. Thrope reported that the PTBC has concerns that the contractor has only a short period of time to complete some major work. The PTBC and contractor did agree to a set of milestones to be reached that will be reviewed at the PTBC meeting on June 21st. Mr. Thrope did report that project costs would not be an issue at the Dallin School.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

.. **Budget** – Ms. Sheffler reported that the next meeting is scheduled for June 13th at 12:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for June 1st at 3:00 pm.

.. **Community Relations** -

.. **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment** - Ms. Owayda reported that five school committee members attended a workshop given by Douglas Reeves, of the Center for Performance Assessment, on transforming research into action. .

.. **Policy & Procedures** - Mr. Thrope reported that at its meeting the subcommittee agreed to target sections I & J in policy manual over the next twelve months. Mr. Thrope noted that time driven policies to be reported out on in June are BCI; DI; GCBA (July 1st), B DFA and JJ.

The following policies were presented for a 1st reading.

Policy HA/HB – Negotiations Goals/Negotiations Legal Status – make corrections to properly reference the Arlington Administrators Association by change “AEA (Units A and AAA), II-A, III, XXIV” to read “AEA (Unit A) and AAA, II-A, III, XXIV”.

Policy HC – Scope of Negotiations – make correction to properly reference the Arlington Administrators Association by “AEA (Units A and AAA), II” to read “AEA (Unit A) and AAA, II”.

Policy HK – School Committee Negotiating Powers and Duties – make corrections to properly reference the Arlington Administrators Association by changing “AEA (Units A and AAA), II-C” to read “AEA (Unit A) and AAA, II-C”.

Policy HE/HF – School Committee Negotiating Agents/Superintendent's role in Negotiations – policy modified by the change in paragraph two to read “ The chairperson of the School Committee shall appoint one or more negotiating teams as needed subject to approval of the full committee. Any negotiating team shall consist of no more than three School Committee members”.

Policy HG – Method of Determining Staff Negotiating Organizations (And Recognized Units)

Corrected to change “(Unit AAA)” in the first line of the third paragraph to read “(AAA)”, to deleted the words “Civil Service certified” from the first paragraph in the sections entitled Support Staff and to change the contract reference “AEA (Unit A and B), I” to read “AEA (Unit A) and AAA, I”.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

.. **Correspondence** – reviewed by Ms. Owayda.

NEW BUSINESS

Student representative Amanda Formica informed the Committee that on Wednesday June 8th the students who attended the Holocaust field trip would be hosting a reception showcasing their photos from their trip to Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland. The event will take

place in the AHS media center at 7:00 pm.

*On a motion a by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations and a legal issue with no further business to be conducted upon
return to open session except to adjourn. Roll Call: Unanimous
Executive Session 9:50 – 10:10 PM.*

*On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. Owayda it was
Voted to adjourn @ 10:10 PM.*

*Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary*