



Town of Arlington, Massachusetts
730 Massachusetts Ave., Arlington, MA 02476
Phone: 781-316-3000

webmaster@town.arlington.ma.us

School Committee Minutes 07/18/2005

**THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 18, 2005
7:30 PM**

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

Superintendent: Nate Levenson
Assistant Superintendent: Kevin Hutchinson
Special Education Director: BJ Cataldo

Call to Order: 7:30 pm

Minutes taken by Suzanne Owayda, Secretary of the Arlington School Committee.

Public Participation

Mrs. Sheffler spoke about the sister-city exchange trip to Japan that a group from Arlington participated in during early July.

Robert D'Auria, 41 North Road, Bedford, MA
Paul Krepelka, Arlington resident
Bob Geribo, Arlington resident
Virginia Fuller, former AEA president
Peter Rufo, Arlington resident, teacher and member of the search committee
Glenn Fratto, Arlington resident

All spoke to the process used in the hiring of the AHS football coach.

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 Warrant #05161 in the amount of \$477,541.77**

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman seconded by Mrs. Owayda it was voted to accept the consent agenda. Motion passes 7 – 0.

Public Memorials Committee Vote

Ms. Lovelace presented a series of votes relative to the naming of the Arlington High School football stadium.

1. On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was voted:

The School Committee's March 8, 2005 vote was intended to honor Superintendent Donovan by naming the AHS football stadium for her. A lack of public input into the vote, subsequent confusion regarding the distinction between Peirce Field and the stadium, and the recent vote of the Public Memorial Committee, however, have created a climate contrary to the Committee's original intent. The School Committee recognizes the dispute over the stadium naming is not about Mrs. Donovan's contributions to Arlington but about public participation in municipal decision-making. Having her name on the stadium was an honor Mrs. Donovan never sought. We note that a formal dedication and placing of the name on the new stadium as mandated by School Committee Policy FF/FFA/FFB has not taken place. It is therefore moved the March 8, 2005 vote, which reads:

"...the APS name the Stadium at Peirce Field the Kathleen F. Donovan Stadium at Peirce Field."
is rescinded.

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

2. On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was voted:

The School Committee acknowledges the recommendation made on June 29, 2005 by the Public Memorial Committee and is grateful for that committee's work.

Motion passes 5 – 1 – 1. Ms. Owayda abstained, and Mr. Schlichtman voted no.

3. On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was voted:

Naming the stadium be postponed until such time as the project is completed, and all cost overruns are resolved, At such time, the School Committee will embark on a public process that engages full participation by all in the community interested in the naming of the stadium. The School Committee's vote does not disqualify Mrs. Donovan's name from being recommended through this process and subsequently considered by the Committee.

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

4. On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was voted:

The Community Relations Subcommittee of the Arlington School Committee report by no later than February 28, 2006 on the following:

- a. A definition of Peirce Field. What are its dimensions? What does the public understand it to mean?*
- b. Any current names of the track and other athletic fields behind AHS.*
- c. Appropriate signage (e.g., the name Peirce Field, etc.) for the new athletic facilities behind AHS.*
- d. An analysis of whether selling naming rights for the stadium will yield sufficient income and are appropriate for the AHS athletic fields.*
- e. A public process by which the School Committee shall solicit input from the public for the naming of the football stadium.*
- f. In the event the aforementioned process does not result in naming the stadium for Mrs. Donovan, an appropriate naming opportunity that recognizes Mrs. Donovan's service to Arlington.*

During discussion, Ms. Owayda amended to add a (g.) and (h.).

- g. Get further clarification from the Public Memorials Committee about the criteria used at each level of naming (buildings, fields/playgrounds, rooms etc).*
- h. Request that the School Committee liaison to the Board of Selectmen, look at ways to make the Public Memorials Committee more diverse so that all perspectives are included when considering naming public spaces.*

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

SCHOOL DEPARTMENT TRANSITION

On a motion by Ms. Owayda and seconded by Mr. Thrope is was voted:

That the School Committee establishes a subcommittee to meet with the Payroll Department to review the vacation records of former Superintendent Donovan. The subcommittee shall report to the full committee on August 11th and at subsequent meetings as needed. The subcommittee shall include Jeff Thielman, Susan Lovelace, and Martin Thrope. It shall dissolve upon acceptance of the vacation records of the former Superintendent by the full committee.

During discussion Ms. Owayda amended to include appropriate back-up for the retirement application, specifically the life insurance provision.

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

Also included under this agenda item was the 1st reading of proposed changes to policy CBD/CBE.

HIRING PROCESS FOR THE AHS FOOTBALL COACH

Mr. Jack Duranceau, chair of the AEA Grievance Committee presented grievance G02-05 concerning the 21-day posting of the position for AHS head football coach.

School Committee members had the opportunity to ask Mr. Duranceau questions.

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

That the Arlington School Committee endorses and affirms the longstanding interpretation of Article XII Paragraph A of its

contract with the AEA Unit A that defines the 30 - day period specified therein as the minimum length of the posting period for applicable vacancies.

Roll call vote: Mr. Garballey—yes, Ms. Lovelace -no, Mr. Schlichtman—no, Mr. Thrope – yes, Ms. Owayda – no, Ms. Sheffler – no, Mr. Thielman - yes

Motion fails 4 – 3

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

To recommend to the superintendent to repeat the process based on representation inappropriate to the prominence of the position and the unilateral decision to deviate from the 30-day requirement.

Roll call vote: Mr. Garballey – yes, Ms. Lovelace – no, Mr. Schlichtman – no, Mr. Thrope – yes, Ms. Owayda – no, Ms. Sheffler – no, Mr. Thielman – yes

Motion fails 4 – 3

The first part of the meeting dealt with issues from the previous administration. Mr. Thielman introduced Mr. Levenson, the new superintendent, Mr. Hutchinson, the new assistant superintendent, and Ms. Cataldo, the new special education director.

Committee took a 10 - minute break.

Mr. Thielman formally introduced and officially welcomed Superintendent Levenson. Mr. Thielman stated that he and the committee are excited about the new energy Mr. Levenson has brought to the Arlington School System. He also presented Mr. Levenson with a signed (by current School Committee) official World Series baseball since Mr. Levenson is now our new starting pitcher.

Superintendent Levenson gave a brief review of what he has seen, heard, learned about the APS, and where the system needs to go. He also spoke about the many positive aspects of the APS as well as the challenges we must face as we journey from a good school system to a great school system.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Levenson thanked former Superintendent Donovan and Assistant Superintendent Gurry for leaving very few loose ends and for hiring very dedicated and talented staff.

Updated the Committee that the hiring for the 2005/2006 school year was going well.

Mr. Levenson informed us that he jump- started a common planning time initiative (building a schedule so similar teachers are free at the same time). He stated that this is not his normal operating procedure but during his entry plan many teachers and administrators spoke about this need. The process needed to be started now so that the common time could be implemented during this school year.

COORDINATED PROGRAM REVIEW

Mr. Levenson, Mr. Hutchinson, and Ms. Cataldo gave brief presentations about the results from the CPR.

School Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions and make comments.

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

The Final Coordinated Program Review by the Massachusetts Department of Education, dated June 29, 2005, documented areas of serious and persistent noncompliance with state and federal education law, particularly in the regulated program areas of special education and English Language Learners. The School Committee is disappointed to learn that written assurances made to the Department of Education by the APS following Coordinated Program review in 1998 and 2002 were not implemented. The School Committee directs the Superintendent and his staff to take all steps necessary to adhere to the standards and recommendations articulated in the 2005 report.

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

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

The Superintendent provide the School Committee with quarterly reports during the next 12 months on the implementation of the corrective action plan following the Coordinated Program Review.

Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

Mr. Schlichtman moved a reconsideration of the warrant since it was a unanimous vote but at the June 28th meeting 3 out of the 5 members present were conflicted. Second by Ms. Owayda –voted reconsideration 7 – 0.

Moved the warrant number 05161 in the amount of \$477,571.77, second by Ms. Owayda. Motion passes 5 – 0 – 2 with Mr. Thielman and Mr. Garballey abstaining.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

“ **Community Relations** – Ms. Lovelace reported out on a subcommittee meeting held on Friday, June 24, 2005.

On a motion by Ms. Lovelace seconded by Mr. Thrope it was voted:

In conjunction with the town’s focus on wellness and promoting physical activity including walking to school and in light of the SC’s commitment to ensuring fiscal constraint and equitable distribution of resources, it is moved that the Superintendent work with the principal of the Bishop School to develop a plan by August 11th that allows the Bishop buses to continue as a means of financial support for the school system as a fee for service for parents that covers the cost of providing said transportation.

Motion passes 6 – 1, Ms. Owayda voted no.

Mr. Levenson asked for clarification on what the committee actually voted. After some discussion, the secretary said that the committee voted to eliminate the Bishop bus unless there are enough parents who are willing to pay the fee that will support the current bus. Mr. Levenson and Mr. Carme were to come up with a fee schedule and method for implementing and administrating.

“ **Policy and Procedure** – Mr. Thrope reported out that Atty. Alan Miller’s office had responded to the expulsion/long-term suspension due process question. Mr. Thrope will take up the letter at the next Policy and Procedure subcommittee meeting scheduled for 7/26/05.

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

To move the proposed changes after a second reading of policy BDAA, Election of School Committee Officers. Proposed change includes the additional paragraph to the current policy –

“For purposes of this policy, any member who will have last held the office of Chair or Vice-Chair, respectively, seven or more years previously shall be deemed to have not held the office. The will ensure that the committee’s more senior members will have the opportunity to serve as Chair or Vice-Chair at least once each seven years.”

Mr. Thrope stated that the intent of the change was to rotate the chairmanship through new members as well as the more senior members.

During the discussion Mrs. Owayda proposed that the Policy & Procedure subcommittee and the full committee think about a method in which the chair and vice-chair are determined by the members who receive the most votes and support of the committee.

During the discussion Mr. Thrope amended his motion. The amended motion requires a school committee member to serve for a period of 2 years prior to becoming vice-chair and to serve 3 years prior to becoming chair. The Vice-chair would automatically become the chair.

Mr. Garballey seconded the amendment.

Mr. Thrope stated that this would address the issue of more senior members getting a second chance to become chair.

During the discussion Mr. Schlichtman moved to end the debate, seconded by Ms. Owayda. Motion passes 7 – 0.

The motion as amended failed on a roll call vote: 5 – 2

Mr. Garballey – yes, Ms. Lovelace – no, Mr. Schlichtman – no, Mr. Thrope – yes, Ms. Owayda – no, Ms. Sheffler – no, Mr. Thielman – no.

During the discussion Mr. Schlichtman moved the 11:00 pm rule, second by Ms. Sheffler. Unanimous vote 7 – 0.

The main motion failed on a roll call vote 4 – 3.

Mr. Garballey – yes, Ms. Lovelace – no, Mr. Schlichtman – no, Mr. Thrope – yes, Ms. Owayda – no, Ms. Sheffler – no, Mr. Thielman – yes.

On a motion by Ms. Owayda, seconded by Ms. Lovelace it was voted:

To direct the Policy & Procedure subcommittee by Oct 15th, to survey using the MASC how other committees determine who serves as chairperson.

The motion failed on a roll call vote 4 – 3.

Mr. Garballey – yes, Ms. Lovelace – yes, Mr. Schlichtman – no, Mr. Thrope – no, Ms. Owayda – yes, Ms. Sheffler – no, Mr. Thielman – no.

*.. **Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment** – nothing to report.*

*.. **Budget** – nothing to report*

*.. **Selectmen Liaison** – the Board of Selectman gratefully received the Transportation Advisory Committee report concerning the Dallin School.*

Secretary's Report – nothing to report

Overview of Workshop/Retreat – change of meeting place from the OMS to the Whittemore – Robbins House. Start time 8:30 am. Mr. Levenson stated that we would have a facilitated retreat to review what is the best role for the School Committee, and how the School Committee should interact with the rest of the system so that the system can move from good to great.

New Business – Mr. Thrope requested informal approval by the full committee to work with the cable company to improve the speakers in the School Committee room. Approval granted.

On a motion by Ms. Sheffler seconded by Ms. Owayda it was voted to adjourn at 11:15 pm. Unanimous vote 7 - 0