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School Committee Minutes 01-14-2003

THE ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
JANUARY 14, 2003
7:30 PM

Present: David McKenna, Chair Joani LaMachia
 Suzanne Owayda, Vice-Chair Denis Sullivan
 Paul Schlichtman, Secretary Martin Thrope
 Barbara Goodman

Superintendent: Kay Donovan
Chief Financial Officer: David Kale
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos
Student Representative: Nathan Band

Absent: Joanne Gurry

Call to order: 7:45 pm

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Rescheduled for the next meeting

Committee Member Denis Sullivan read a statement announcing that he would not seek re-election in the upcoming School Committee race.

VOTE/TUITION INCREASE MENOTOMY PRESCHOOL

Kerriane Cronin, Director of Menotomy Preschool spoke to the Committee relative to an increase in tuition at the preschool. The proposal includes an increase of \$50.00 per child in the half-day program and \$100.00 per child in the full day program, with an increase of \$50.00 to \$100.00 per child for out of town students. The increase would help to offset costs due to DOE Office for Child Care Services minimum ratio requirement of 12 children to every 1 teacher. The preschool currently has 26 students enrolled, and would need to reduce enrollment to 24 to meet the regulations and accreditation criteria.

The Committee discussed the merits of increasing the tuition just enough to cover costs and requested a break down of the total cost, income reports, outlay and allocation for indirect costs for review. The Committee will vote this item at its next meeting (January 28th).

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Mr. Schlichtman reviewed correspondence

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to approve the Regular meeting minutes of November 26, 2002

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to approve and hold the Executive session minutes of November 26, 2002

APPROVAL OF WARRANT

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant #03082 in the amount of \$917,853.15.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- .. Opening of Peirce School – Supt. Donovan reported a smooth opening of the Peirce School on January 2, 2003; the official open house is scheduled for Sunday, March 2, 2003 at 1:00 PM.
- .. Compliance Report FY2002-2003/Net School Spending – The Superintendent stated that the Arlington Public Schools are in compliance with spending requirements for FY 2002 and FY2003.
- .. FY2002End of Year Grants – APS were in receipt of \$1,654,560.00 in Federal Grants and \$1,021,525 in State Grant money for FY2002.
- .. Update on No Child Left Behind – New goals received from the Federal Government on the NCLB requires changes in how schools report out achievements;
- .. DOE Special Education Shortfall FY2003 – Schools have been notified by the DOE that Special Education residential tuitions will not be funded and local schools must absorb the payment. DOE stated that they would reimburse communities in 1st quarter FY04. The cost to APS is \$70,000.00.
- .. New Regulations on CORI Checks – Supt. Donovan referred the new regulations requiring CORI checks on volunteers to the Policy & Procedures Subcommittee.
- .. Notification of School Committee Member Regulations – Newly elected school committee members must fulfill new professional development requirements.
- .. Opening of the Warrant until 1/16/03- Supt. Donovan recommended the following articles for submission:
 1. Authority to file for grants
 2. An education reform legislation
 3. Accept any permissive legislation relative to Special Education, Regular Education, and anything pertaining to the operation of the School Department.
 4. Accept any permissive legislation relative to Early Retirement
 5. Accept the FY04 Operating Budget
 6. Authority to continue our revolving funds, such as kindergarten and babysitting
 7. To request a change of zoning on the Gibbs School parcel
 8. To see if the Town of Arlington will vote to sell the Gibbs School with the recommendation that the proceeds be used in part to fund any portion of the elementary renovation project not funded by the previous debt exclusions. .

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman, seconded by Mr. Sullivan, and amended by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to accept the 6 warrant articles recommended by Superintendent Donovan with the addition of articles seven and eight.

.. All State Finalists – The Ottoson Select Chamber Ensemble and the Ottoson String Orchestra have been selected to perform a concert at the Massachusetts Music Educator's All State conference in March.

PTBC UPDATE

- .. Ms. Owayda reported that at its meeting of December 17th the PTBC voted to proceed with the final design phase of the Dallin School; the vote was 6-2.
- .. PTBC will meet on Wednesday, January 15, 2003 to review the proposal, cost, and design of the Stratton and Thompson Schools.
- .. The Park Circle Fire Station is still in the design phase.
- .. Dallin School parents building committee and the Sustainable Arlington schools team will meet on Thursday, January 16th to discuss green design strategies at that school.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

.. Budget Subcommittee – Joani LaMachia reported that the budget subcommittee attended a workshop January 4th & 5th where the budget process was reviewed in detail line by line, along with the FY04 draft budget, and a preliminary review of reductions. At

its meeting tonight Alan Tosti, chair of the Finance Committee discussed the history of the O'Neill formula on which allocations are based; Mr. Tosti assured the Committee that every budget would be scrutinized for revenue.

.. Full Day Kindergarten – Supt. Donovan requested an increase in the full day kindergarten program from \$500.00 to \$1500.00. Mrs. Donovan reviewed the cost of the program, local aid reduction, and no kindergarten grant money as reasons for the increase. The Superintendent acknowledged that her goal, as well as that of the Committee was that there would be no program fee at this juncture, but pointed out that to keep the full day program the increase is a necessity.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was Reluctantly voted to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the amount of \$1500.00 as the program fee for the full day kindergarten program for the 2003-2004 school year. (6 – 1) With his no vote Mr. Thrope stated that full day kindergarten is an integral part of the program.

Ms. Owayda as well as the rest of the Committee echoed Mr. Thrope's concern but pointed out that the only options are to increase the fee, return to a half-day program or cut \$600,000.00 elsewhere. Ms. Owayda noted that at an EDCO meeting she learned that many communities cannot afford to implement a full day program, some communities that do offer a full day are only able to do so on a lottery basis that results in only a portion of the population that can attend, with some fees as high as \$315.00 per month.

.. Policy & Procedures - Supt. Donovan requested that the policy & procedures subcommittee review the policies on notification of non- custodial parents file KBBA, new CORI requirements, and School Committee policy on HIV/AIDS. Changing physical education requirements in grades 11 and 12 was referred to the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment subcommittee.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to refer the three items to policy and procedures subcommittee and the physical education requirement to the curriculum and instruction subcommittee.

.. Community Relations - Barbara Goodman presented a model for the School Committee to host a financial forum that would discuss a better way to fund public Schools. The forum titled "Paying for Public Education: A Taxing Challenge" would include discussions with experts in the field of education finance who can provide different perspectives on the topic. Possible guests include Peter Enrich of Northeastern University, Peter Nessen Secretary of Education, Caroline Hoxby of Harvard University School of Education, and Representative Jay Kaufman as moderator. Tentative dates are February 26,27 or March 4,5, or 6th. It was also suggested to invite local school committees, town officials, representatives, and the new Lt. Governor.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was unanimously: Voted that the Arlington School Committee through the subcommittee host a community forum titled" Paying for Public Education: A Taxing Challenge" to explore alternative ways to fund public education.

Break

INITIAL PRESENTATION OF FY 2004 BUDGET

Supt. Donovan presented the proposed FY2004 school budget. In her opening statement Mrs. Donovan stated that the budget will please no one and it does not satisfy any of our education or philosophical beliefs; however we can change the budget with a successful override. Our mission is to share our budget, to ask for help from everyone in the town of Arlington and to move forward as a united group.

CFO David Kale presented the Town's financial picture, reviewed revenues, expenditures, and the allocation of the deficit arrived at through the O'Neill Formula.

Currently the Town is looking at \$2.8 million dollars in reductions and the schools are looking at \$5.1 million dollars. Mr. Kale pointed out that the total \$8.2 million assumes a reduction of 10% in State Aid and that a revised projection may include a higher percentage reduction in Sate Aid revenue. Supt. Donovan and Mr. Kale reviewed the \$33.9 million "present level budget" and the list of reductions to schools, personnel, and

programs.

Committee members discussed at length the impact of the cuts, the need to impress upon the Board of Selectmen the importance of placing an override on the ballot, and the hard work necessary to ensure that the override passes. In addition Members of the Committee supported Ms. Owayda's suggestion to create a third budget that the School Committee could support and were insistent that they must fulfill their roles as advocates for education.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously Voted to notify the Board of Selectmen that Superintendent Donovan and CFO David Kale wish an appropriate amount of time to present the FY2004 proposed School Budget at the Board of Selectmen meeting Monday, January 27, 2003. Roll Call: Unanimous

On a motion by Ms. Owayda and seconded was unanimously:
Voted to ask the Board of Selectmen to place an override on the ballot in the spring with the full endorsement of the School Committee.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously
To employ the good offices of our MASC officer in residence to bring our message to our association for the purpose of exploring whatever collective action on the part of the association and its members might be appropriate and effective.

NEW BUSINESS

None

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was
Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of contract negotiations and legal issues with no further business to be conducted upon return to open session except to adjourn
RC: Unanimous

EXECUTIVE SESSION 11:00 – 11:55 pm

On a motion made and seconded it was unanimously
Voted to adjourn at 11:55 pm.

Submitted by
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary