



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 09-23-2003**

**The Arlington School Committee**

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, September 23, 2003

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

Superintendent:    Kay Donovan  
Asst. Supt.:        Joanne Gurry  
Budget Analyst     Janet Collins  
Special Education Director: Marilyn Bisbicos

Call to Order: 7:35 pm

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- .. Brittany Suprenard AHS Student voiced concern over the teachers possible "work-to-rule" which would limit teachers' ability to write recommendations for student's college applications.
- .. Diane Mahon, Selectman, addressed the Committee relative to school/town athletic fields and the user groups. Ms. Mahon suggested/reported:
  - .. A chain of command or common protocol to define the policy and procedure in using the fields.
  - .. The various sports groups want to work with the school committee on fundraising and to define the process.
  - .. The Board of Selectmen will hold a workshop on budgets with all town department heads on October 14<sup>th</sup>; additionally she encourages
  - .. A discussion between the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen twice a year.

### DISCUSSION OF FEES/ACTIVITIES

School Committee chair, Suzanne Owayda stated that the discussion tonight is not about whether or not we will use fees but rather to find out what our current practices are and what the current practices are in surrounding communities.

Present for the discussion of fees: Rob. DiLoreto, Director of Athletics, Cheryl Hemenway AHS, music teacher, Pasquale Tassone, Director of Performing Arts, Nancy Clark, Payroll Clerk, Robert Penta Brackett School Principal, Steve Carme, Bishop School Principal, Steve Woodcock, AHS Principal, Judi Bohn, Partners in Education Coordinator, and Linda Cohn, ACE teacher.

Mr. Schlichtman informed the committee that according to the State Ethics Commission, School Committee members who engage in discussion of fees, and who have children in the system who will be impacted by fees must excuse themselves from both discussion and any votes; however that becomes void if a majority of the committee is affected (Mr. Thrope, Ms. Sheffler, Ms. Goodman, Ms. LaMachia and Ms. Owayda) and the committee acknowledges the Rule of Necessity.

- .. Kindergarten Fee – Judi Bohn reported that in a survey, parents said they loved the program and would not want to return to a half day. They were willing to pay \$1500.00, for kindergarten, but would not want class size higher than 20 students. Currently there are 407 kindergarten students, 20 of those are half time, 272 have paid in full, 24 students are repeating, and the remainder are on some type of payment plan. Mr. Penta and Mr. Carme did not believe that

financial constraints played any part in those students attending the half day program. Ms. Bohn stated that Arlington students pay less money than many communities and offers the program to all students. Many towns offer the program by lottery only, offer only a couple of classes and at a higher fee. Ms. Sheffler offered that perhaps implementing a sliding scale fee should be considered in the future. Mr. Thrope voiced concern that by offering the full day the level of expectation is greater entering grade one. Mr. Penta responded that achievement varies in terms of kindergarteners entering 1<sup>st</sup> grade. He believed that there is no impediment in achievement but rather the biggest adjustment is building stamina for those students who have not attended all day.

.. Athletic Fees – Rob DiLoreto reviewed the athletic income and expense report. Currently students pay \$175 fee with a family cap of \$375.00. No student is denied playing on a team due to financial constraints. Participation in AHS for the 2002-2003 school year totals 1102, or 50% of the student body, the highest student enrollment in the Greater Boston League. To date the fee has not had a negative impact on participation, however there is an increase of families applying for scholarships. Rob reported that the Athletic Dept. currently collects \$118,000.00 annually and believes that additional revenue raising projects would be considered unreasonable. Every team holds fundraisers (car washes, bake sales, can drives, etc.) to offset uniform cost, equipment and support banquets. All money raised goes back to the individual team.

.. Music Fees –Pasquale Tassone reported that the instrumental music fee is \$175.00 with a family cap of \$375.00. Additionally instrument rentals run from \$175.00 to \$400.00. Students who qualify for free lunch do not pay any fee.

.. Ace – Linda Cohn reviewed the program clarifying that it is not an activity since it occurs during the school day. The results of a survey from parents indicated that while they had reservations about charging for academic work they would be willing to pay a fee to participate. Parents did indicate concern over students who would not be able to afford a fee and suggested a sliding fee schedule.

.. Facilities – Nancy Clark reported that when other Town departments request rental of facilities ( i.e. recreation, library, DPW)they are charged only the custodial fee which is based on the custodian's rate of pay @ overtime or double time. If an outside group rents the facilities they are charged a user fee and a minimum 3-hour custodial fee. The after-school programs are charged a \$75.00 per month energy fee, custodial fee based on actual wage, and a 5% administrative fee. Ms. Clark did note that most communities have a multi tier system dependent upon the type of organization renting.

Ms. Owayda thanked all the participants and stated that there would be a public hearing in the future on fees.

#### APPROVAL OF AHS HANDBOOK

AHS principal Steve Woodcock presented the AHS Student Handbook to the Committee for approval. Mr. Woodcock pointed out that there were only a few changes to the handbook, most notably the new consequences of the attendance policy that state that any tardy student receives ½ hour detention the day of tardiness unless accompanied into school by a parent. After meeting with students Mr. Woodcock agreed to modify the restriction of students outside the school building to the front of the building with students will be allowed to utilize the front lawn.

Mr. Woodcock outlined the process used in revising the handbook:

.. Faculty discipline committee reviewed the current handbook, discipline protocols, and consequences weekly during the months of February – April 2003.

.. House Deans reviewed recommendations in the areas of consistency, emphasis points, and consequences.

.. Recommendations of faculty committee accepted as revisions

.. Draft of handbook presented to AHS, School Site Council on June 2003.

.. Principal edited and updated the "draft" handbook on the recommendation of school's counsel. School Counsel approved the draft August 22, 2003.

Mr. Thrope motioned with a second by Mr. Thielman to approve the AHS 2003-2004 Student Handbook; Mr. Schlichtman amended the motion to delete the last sentence on page 21 "You must leave the school property upon completion of their school day's academic and co-curricular activities", and to amend the last sentence of Teacher Absent from Classroom on page 25 to read "One student from a classroom without a teacher should directly inform his/her House Dean". Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Thrope noted that his motion to approve the handbook was due to the fact that it was too late not to approve it; that the School Committee should have approved it before it went to print.

Mr. Schlichtman pointed out that the Committee does not need to approve the school handbooks every year; a vote is needed only if there are changes.

#### FIELD TRIP APPROVAL

Supt. Donovan brought two field trip requests before the Committee for approval.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve the AHS overnight field trip to the White Mountains, New Hampshire (October 17, 18, 19).

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted to approve the OMS 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to the White Mountains, New Hampshire.

#### APPROVAL OF WARRANTS

Supt. Donovan requested approval on the following warrants:

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant #04016 in the amount of \$154,135.55

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant # 04024 in the amount of \$121,411.74.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was unanimously Voted to approve warrant # 04035 in the amount of \$515,234.49

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was Voted that the Superintendent provide by the close of business October 10, 2003 a full and complete detail budget in order for the School Committee to discuss it and have it placed on the agenda of October 14, 2003 school committee meeting. Mr. Schlichtman amended the date of the budget book to be received by October 9, 2003 for the budget subcommittee meeting that night. 6 –1 no (Ms. Owayda voted no)

#### NOMINATION OF MASC DELEGATE

On a motion by Ms. LaMachia and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was unanimously Voted to nominate Paul Schlichtman as the Arlington School Committee delegate to the MASC Annual Conference November 12, 2003.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was unanimously Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of negotiations with no further business to be conducted upon the return to open session except to adjourn.

EXECUTIVE SESSION from 10:30 to 11:00 pm

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Mr. Thielman it was unanimously Voted to adjourn @ 11:00.

Submitted by,  
Karen Tassone  
Committee Secretary