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School Committee Minutes 10-11-2001

ARLINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY OCTOBER 11, 2001
REGULAR MEETING
7:30

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

Supt. **Kay Donovan**
CFO **David Kale**
Asst. Supt. **Joanne Gurry**
Dir. SPED **Marilyn Bisbicos**

Call to Order: 7:40 PM

Public Participation

Lynnette Culverhouse voiced concern that the Arlington CARE group has not been placed on the School Committee agenda. Ms. Culverhouse emphasized that the CARE group wants to be part of a process which makes room for serious dialogue about the MCAS issue, which is of enormous importance to parents, students, and teachers. It was requested that the CARE group be placed on the next school committee agenda.

Superintendents Report

Update on MCAS Dr. Gurry reported that schools have only received the raw scores for students in grades 3 and 10. The scaled scores are expected next week and the district scores are expected to be posted on the internet during the week of October 19, 2001. At the high school there were only 56 failures in math and 32 students who failed both the math and English.

After working with Steve Woodcock, a tutoring program will be in place next Monday at the high school to prepare students for the first focused retake test which will take place in December.

Grant Money - Supt. Donovan reported that the schools are constantly applying for grant money to support the school budget. Since the last school committee meeting we have received:

- \$276,000.00 in kindergarten money
- \$25,000.00 in emerging immigration funding
- \$524,000 in Title 1 funding
- \$690,000.00 in Special Education funding
- \$43,000.00 in professional development
- \$44,000.00 in early childhood funding

Town Meeting Report - The Special Town Meeting voted to pay \$170,000.00 for the playground at the Hardy School

The Hardy School Open House will be held on Sunday, October 28th from 12:30 PM to 3:00PM, with the dedication ceremony starting at 1:00 PM.

PTBC Update

Mr. Thrope reported that the PTBC is implementing a tracking system to account for the percentage of expenditures and the percentage of remaining funds.

Supt. Donovan reviewed the report submitted to the Finance Committee and the PTBC on school capacity at the Dallin, Thompson, and Stratton Schools. Suzanne Owayda created the analysis and reported the factors used in the report:

- I. Enrollment
- II. Capacity of school prior to Rebuild
- III. Current Role in Rebuild Process
- IV. Results after redistricting
- V. Impact of any possible redistricting

Mr. Thrope stated that he believed that we must take a systemic approach in determining the size of the schools to account for any variables that could be worked into the last three schools, offered a model and volunteered to help.

Superintendent Evaluation

Chair, Joani LaMachia reported that every member participated in the evaluation including the two new members. Overall the School Committee evaluated the accomplishments of the Superintendents goals and objectives as exceeding expectations.

Committee Members acknowledged that Mrs. Donovans two strongest areas are 1) credibility with the leadership of the town, voters and town meeting members and 2) highly effective in moving the school renovation project in a timely manner. In other areas:

Community-Superintendent Relations: Members stated that the Superintendent "exceeded expectations" and that Mrs. Donovan maintains the highest standards of professionalism in her relations with the school committee. Members noted that timeliness in communication with the committee could be improved.

Educational/Professional Leadership: The Superintendent received an "exceeds expectation". Mrs. Donovan was praised for new and innovative programs.

Personnel Relations and Management: The Superintendent was evaluated by the committee as exceeding expectations. Accomplishments included the hiring of a Personnel Director, the facilitation of early retirement and the organization and management of sick leave buy back for staff.

Community Relations: The Superintendent was evaluated as exemplary in this area.

Business and Finance: The Superintendent was evaluated as exemplary. Overall members identified this as one of her greatest strengths.

Supt. Donovan thanked the Committee for their report.

Subcommittee Report

Community Relations

Ms. Goodman reported that the subcommittee voted to sponsor a forum during National Education Week to focus on "U.S. Involvement in Afghanistan and Central Asia What We Should Know and What We Should Tell Our Children". The forum will focus on the history and geography of Afghanistan and Central Asia and will concentrate on how to help parents and the community deal with issues of safety and well-being. The panel will consist of a child psychologist, a visiting professor from Northeastern University and committee member Denis Sullivan, Chairman of the Political Science Department at Northeastern University. Mr. Thrope noted that if there were any excursion into foreign policy it is critical that all points of view be presented, otherwise it would be viewed as biased. Mr. Sullivan stated that a similar assembly held for AHS students was well received by students and staff. Mr. Woodcock stated that this was the best thing we could have done for 1100 students; it was well presented and received positive remarks from staff as well. It is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday November 14th at the Ottoson Middle School.

Policy & Procedures

Mr. Thrope reported that at its last meeting the subcommittee completed work on the last of the outstanding policies. It was decided that Ms. Owayda would continue proofreading the manual for typing errors. Mr. Thrope stated that he had expected the corrected policies from MASC, but since there was a short turn around time they were unavailable, he asked if the Committee would be willing to vote the policy manual at this time or wait until the completed changes were made.

He pointed out that Policy BCB School Committee Conflict of Interest, would change the length of time (from two years to six months) that a school committee member must be off the committee before he can accept a job in the Public schools. Mr. Thrope voiced concern over the appearance of impropriety when it comes to the issue of integrity and ethics and stated that we need to err on the side of caution and avoid all appearance of anything that looks like personal gain. Mr. Thrope then stated that he needed assurances from members of the committee that they will not personally benefit from the change of this policy (from two years to six months).

Mr. Thrope moved the adoption of the revised policy manual; after discussion the motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Sullivan commented that Mr. Thrope seems to be the only one questioning the impropriety and integrity of School Committee Members.

Ms. Owayda stated that when writing policy for the school system it is with the presumption that current and future committee members are honest, she believes that the six months that was voted by the subcommittee is appropriate.

Ms. LaMachia pointed out that since the vote was taken and approved by the subcommittee it does not even need to be discussed by the full committee, however, to question the integrity or honesty of any School Committee Member is beyond what is acceptable.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Schlichtman it was
Voted the adoption of the revised policy manual. 6 yes 1 present (Mr. Thrope voted present)

Recess

Executive Session 9:20 10:40

Secretarys Report

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded Mr. McKenna it was
Voted to approve the emergency minutes May 1, 2001 6 yes 1 abstention (Mr. Thrope)

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was
Voted to approve the special meeting minutes of June 5, 2001. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 12, 2001. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was
Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of June 26, 2001. Unanimous

New Business

Supt. Donovan referred the Committee to a request from AHS teacher Nanci Ortwein, asking permission for a field trip to France & Spain during April vacation. Both Mrs. Donovan and Mr. Woodcock do not recommend approval at this time. Mr. Thrope pointed out that before any money is collected for trips it must have school committee approval.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was
Voted to deny the field trip to France & Spain at this time, however Nanci Ortwein may resubmit the request in January for the Committees reconsideration. 6 yes, 1 present (Mr. Sullivan voted present)

Ms. Goodman requested that at the next meeting Members review the proposed resolutions for the upcoming MASC annual delegate meeting and provide some guidance as to how they would like her to vote.

Ms. Goodman proposed that the system wide goal setting process is rescheduled for October 23rd. The school committee will come prepared with their goals prioritized, will meet from 6:00 to 7:30, and also have a light dinner.

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was unanimously voted to schedule the meeting of October 23rd for school committee system wide goals at 6:00 PM.

Mr. McKenna moved that the School Committee apologize to the Superintendent. No second.

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. Thrope
Voted to adjourn the meeting at 11:10 PM Roll Call: 2 yes 4 no Motion Fails. Mr. Schlichtman and Mr. Thrope voted yes, Ms. Goodman, Ms. Owayda, Mr. McKenna & Mr. Sullivan voted no

On a motion by Mr. Schlichtman and seconded by Mr. McKenna it was
Voted to adjourn at 11:15 PM. Unanimous

Submitted by,
Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary