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School Committee Minutes 09-12-2000

Tuesday, September 12, 2000

Regular Meeting

7:30 PM

Present: Joani LaMachia, Vice-Chair
Michael T. Healy, Secretary
David W. McKenna

Martin J. Thrope
Denis J. Sullivan
Barbara C. Goodman

Kay Donovan, Joanne Gurry, Marilyn Bisbicos

Absent: William A. Carey, Jr., Chair

Call To Order: 7:40 PM

Ms. LaMachia chaired the meeting in Mr. Carey's absence. She stated that Mrs. Carey is seriously ill and asked everyone to keep Mrs. Carey in their thoughts and prayers. Ms. LaMachia welcomed committee member Dave McKenna back and congratulated him on his return to work next Monday.

Ms. LaMachia stated that the School Committee had a tour of the newly renovated Bishop School before the meeting. The facility is wonderful and she congratulated everyone on their hard work.

Public Participation

Evelyn Smith-DeMille spoke as a representative of the **Elizabeth and George L. Sanborn Foundation for the Treatment and Cure of Cancer, Inc.** It is based in Arlington and was established in 1998 to provide financial support for the treatment and cure for cancer. One of the main objectives is prevention of cancer. The foundation would like it to be known that they would entertain proposals pertaining to the prevention of cancer and be involved in any educational programs that are forthcoming.

Personnel Announcement

Principal Hardy School

Superintendent Donovan introduced Dr. Gerald Carmody as the new Principal of the Hardy School.

Dr. Carmody received the unanimous vote from both the search committee and the finalist committee. Dr. Carmody stated that he is pleased to be in Arlington, he has a terrific staff and is looking forward to serving as principal of the Hardy School

Athletic Director

Rob DiLoreto was presented to the School Committee as the new athletic director of AHS. He has been teaching Social Studies for the past four years. Mr. DiLoreto stated that he was very proud of all our teams and looks forward to the job ahead.

Ms. LaMachia thanked Rob for the wonderful job in assisting with the new lights. She also acknowledged the Selectmen, AYA, Mr. Healy, and everyone else who worked hard on making the lights happen. Mr. Healy asked if a letter could be sent to the DPW employees who worked on readying the field.

Secretary's Report

Mr. Healy reviewed correspondence.

On a Motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was

Voted to accept the regular meeting minutes of May 23, 2000.

Motion passes, 4-yes; 2 abstentions (Ms. Goodman & Mr. McKenna abstain).

On a Motion by Mr. Healy and second by Mr. Thrope, it was

Voted to accept the regular meeting minutes of June 13, 2000. Unanimous

Mr. Thrope asked if Mr. Healy would check to see if it was appropriate to approve any executive session minutes from past meetings.

Report on Opening of School 2000-2001

Superintendent Donovan reported a smooth opening for the first day of school-all the schools looked great. There were 4,250 students along with 41 new teachers on the first day. Mrs. Donovan announced that because she received additional grant money and saved money from

hiring newer teachers she was able to secure enough money to start advertising for the human resource position.

Mr. Thrope would like to know who left, what kind of turnover it represented and how many teachers we lost at the last minute to other communities offering more money.

Mrs. Donovan reported that some of the new hires were needed because of increased class offerings, increased kindergarten enrollment and expanded programs such as elementary Spanish.

Other news reported:

- .. The Superintendent announced that she would like to place a permanent substitute teacher in each elementary school.
- .. Supt. Donovan will recommend that the policy & procedures subcommittee look into developing a policy outlining who can use the field and at what cost if any
- .. Receipt of \$50,000.00 from William Armstrong of Armstrong Ambulance to improve Peirce Field.
- .. A request for funding from the Sanborn Foundation for the tobacco monitors at AHS since funding fell through at the state level
- .. Implementation of an Alternative Education Pilot Program at the Ottoson
- .. Arlington will seek accreditation for all of its kindergarten programs.
- .. Continuation of the accreditation process at AHS
- .. Implementation of the new reading program
- .. Application of the National Teacher Certification for Evelyn DeRosa
- .. Fifth grade science camps will be held during the fall
- .. 9 AHS students as recipients of the Stanley Koplik's Certificate of Achievement
- .. Changes in the procurement laws in the bidding process.

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

Voted to accept the Superintendent's recommendation for hiring permanent substitutes at the elementary level, the numbers and placement to be at the Superintendent's discretion, and that the permanent substitutes receive the salary and benefits consistent with the permanent sub pay scale. Unanimous.

On a Motion by Mr. McKenna and seconded by Mr. Sullivan it was

Voted to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for the Ottoson Alternative Education Program as a one-year pilot program. Unanimous.

In response to Ms. Goodman's question on the criteria used in identifying students eligible to the program, Bonnie clarified that these are students with behavioral problems as opposed to emotional/behavioral disabilities-they need support but not necessarily intensive remediation.

Town/School Payroll Collaboration

John Bilafer, Town Treasurer was present to answer questions from committee members on the payroll collaboration. Kay reported she and John Bilafer have been working together for some time looking at ways to combine services between the town and schools for greater customer service and efficiency. They would like to try collaboration between the town and the schools under the auspices of John and herself. It would consist of a centralized payroll office housed at the high school that would be responsible for all town/school employees.

The School Department would house the machinery and create a payroll supervisor position. The supervisor position would oversee the day-to-day supervision and implementation of the school/town

employees under The Superintendent. A memorandum of agreement has been drafted for review by Town Counsel. Mr. Bilafer stated that he is delighted to work with Kay on the collaboration and because of personnel changes in Town payroll department it is a good time for a change. Funding presently in the Treasurer's budget would be transferred to the school budget and would provide for the funding of the payroll supervisor position.

Committee members supported the idea but voiced some concerns on the memorandum of agreement; would it spell out all of the budgetary funding provisions necessary to safeguard the school budget. It was suggested that since this service would be provided to all town employees that some safeguards be in place to prevent this becoming part of the school budget. In response to Mr. McKenna's question on the transition of town to school employees, Mr. Bilafer acknowledged that current town employees would become school employees and that issue still needs to be worked out. Committee members believed that it was a good idea; it was a tribute to the expertise of school department and the individuals of that department.

Kay stated that she would provide a job description and look into if the new position falls under civil service.

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

Voted to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools and Town Treasurer Mr. Bilafer to collaborate on the payroll department of both the school department and the rest of the town employees under the direction of the Superintendent and the Town Treasurer. 5 yes-1 present

(Mr. McKenna stated that his 'present' vote was due to the fact that he is a town employee). Motion passes

Mr. Bilafer wanted to take the opportunity as Chairman of the Millennium Committee to publicly thank Kay for the schools' cooperation in the various Millennium celebrations through out the Town.

Updated Cherry Sheet Report

Mrs. Donovan informed the committee that Arlington did receive \$175.00 per student rather than the \$125.00 per student. But since Alan Tosti factored that figure (\$175.00) into our budget, we do not have an 'extra' \$170,000.00. The Superintendent explained how the state determines the foundation budget. Ms. Goodman asked given the demographics of our community, what is our foundation budget; how much is the state asking the taxpayers of Arlington to spend; and how much are we actually spending. The Superintendent stated she would have the information at the next meeting.

Report on Summer Workshops

Summer School

Co-Directors Don Miller and Colleen Gorman reported on the elementary summer program. It was a four-week program running Monday through Thursday from 9-12:00 pm. The program was held at the Brackett School with 6 teachers and forty-five students enrolled. The students were engaged in art, academics, computer, and gym. The students were motivated and the parents are requesting that it be offered again next summer.

Jon Beverly, director of the Ottoson summer program reported that there were 22 students from grades 7-10 enrolled and three instructors. The subjects covered were math, social studies, English, (which were taught as trip planning, stock market analysis, Olympic games and power point presentations).

Although the students indicated at the beginning of the program that they were enrolled because of their parents, they did indicate that they would consider enrolling in the program again next summer.

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

Voted that the summer program in Arlington be offered next summer. Unanimous

Mentoring Program

Mrs. Donovan reported that Bob Lynch and Steve Carmen were the coordinators of the mentoring program. Currently there are 43 teachers signed up as mentors and every new teacher has a mentor. She stated that it is a great program and a huge success.

Professional Development

Assistant Superintendent Gurry reported that APS offered 49 seminars/workshops this summer- that does not include the additional workshops that teachers took through colleges, seminars or EDCO offerings. Many of the workshops were funded by grants but most of them through Arlington Public Schools.

Update on Grant Awards

Supt. Donovan updated the committee on additional grants received since our last meeting.

.. \$ 8,100.00	Gifted and Talented
.. 23,932.00	technology
.. 5,000.00	Improvement Grant
.. 5,000.00	PALMS
.. 10,000.00	Italian Program
.. 150,000.00	METCO

Also the increased Chapter 70 funds and the kindergarten grant money.

Recess

Report on PTBC

John Cole, Chairman of the PTBC, was present for the report/discussion.

Bishop

Mr. Thrope reported that some members of the committee took a tour of the Bishop before this evenings meeting. He stated that the building is stunning and a quality facility. The Bishop is moving to closure quickly, there are bids out on some of equipment (custodial, shades & screens).

Mr. Healy had concerns that the Bishop is being used at capacity at this point with the science, art, and music and community rooms in use as classrooms. He questioned if this would be ongoing for the next 4-5 years as the remaining schools are being renovated and is this the wisest choice. He suggested that perhaps we should look into all of our resources for housing our students elsewhere. He has concerns on what the Stratton will look like after housing all of the students from other schools

Mrs. Donovan responded that the only alternative would be mobile classrooms, which are very expensive; she believes that the current system is working very well and that we will need the money for the four remaining schools.

Mr. Healy stated that maybe we should revisit redistricting, start talking about what the district lines would look like and have a more definitive date on when it will begin. Ms. Goodman stated that although she is happy with the way the elementary system is working, we are approaching midway, and an evaluation of where we are with the system should be addressed.

Kay stated that she would meet with Alan McClennen and Kevin O'Brien to look at the geographical makeup to see who is moving in where the children live.

Mr. Sullivan agreed with Mr. Healy that we do need to have a discussion on redistricting issues but he would also like to look at the global picture. Mr. Thrope stated that he believes that we are more than half way through the process. We have two schools in design and only two more yet to be designed, he feels that is an important thing to keep in mind, we are running out of variables that we can tweak when talking about the size of our buildings.

Brackett

Mr. Thrope reported that there were two issues at the Brackett School. The issue of the unsatisfactory noise levels at the school has been addressed by the PTBC who decided that the best approach was to hire a consultant to analyze the situation and to recommend solutions.

There were some problems with leaks due to defects in inadequate caulking and masonry defects. Both have been resolved. Kay reported that there are also a few furniture problems that need to be addressed.

Peirce

The design process is moving along well and the Peirce will be ready to go out to bid in the spring. There have been some key decisions in the design and we are trying to cut costs where they will not adversely affect the end result. The PTBC authorized the architect to do the final contract documents to go to bid.

Stratton/Thompson

The PTBC has approached the Stratton & Thompson with the model in mind that things could change to our disadvantage when the rules change. Any school submitted by June and approved could go by the old rules of 63% reimbursement. The PTBC has authorized preparation for the request for proposals for architectural design services for those two schools so that we can get the process going. It does not commit us to go through the process but does preserve for us the opportunity to get into the current cycle if that is more advantageous. Mrs. Donovan stated that the PTBC would like permission from the School Committee to go ahead with the design of Stratton/Thompson. The Superintendent also informed the committee that the State has published an incentive list that could give Arlington the opportunity to receive a higher reimbursement rate; she will investigate the requirements and explore all possibilities. If the figures come out that we could receive more than a 63% reimbursement then she will not submit the schools until after June; if the figure is 63% or less she would recommend that we submit prior to June.

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

Voted that the School Committee authorizes the Permanent Town Building Committee to proceed with the architectural design for Stratton and Thompson Schools. Unanimous

Dallin

Supt. Donovan informed the Committee that since construction costs have come in higher than expected at the Dallin, the PTBC requested that the School Committee confirm that they want to keep the size of the Dallin at 380 students or consider the possibility of reducing the size of the school to a 320-340 range. Mrs. Donovan recommended that it be constructed at 380. It has been approved by the State for 380 students and since the square footage would change for a smaller amount building it would have to be resubmitted at the revised size. It would also mean having children crossing Park Avenue something she would like to avoid.

Mr. Cole believed it was important that the School Committee be kept aware of rising construction costs. He stated that the total cost of the seven schools could go from the original figure of \$34.5 million to \$41 million. The reason for the increase stems from the Big Dig project and the demand for services which has inflated the prices. Schools renovating or rebuilding in the western part of the state are not experiencing the same problem. Three strategies that the PTBC looked at were: 1) the size of the school; 2) aligning with other districts and petition the State for a different reimbursement formula; or 3) go back to the voters/Town and ask for more money.

The committee discussed the amount of money saved if the size was reduced, the need to be responsible to the voters, and the need to address the funding formula with the State. Mr. Thrope suggested that we wait to vote and revisit the issue at a later meeting. Mr. Sullivan asked how much money we would save by reducing the size of the school

On a motion by Ms. Goodman and second by Mr. Sullivan it was:

Voted to ask the Superintendent to work with our legislators and any other necessary groups to address the issue of square foot reimbursement. To also ask the Superintendent to update demographics and to come back with recommendations and alternatives on how to size the schools. Unanimous

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded it was voted to move the 11:00 rule for ten minutes. Unanimous.

Ms. Goodman suggested that we take up the remaining two items at the next meeting. Mr. Healy stated that the policy on special dedication has been around for a while and he would like a minute to take a vote on it.

Policy & Procedure Vote

Mr. Healy stated that we would like to recommended **File FF/FFA/FFB Policy for Special Dedications of School Facilities** to the committee for approval.

On a motion by Mr. Thrope and second by Mr. Healy it was **moved** to accept File FF/FFA/FFB.

Ms. Goodman voiced her opposition to the statement that **'the Chair will place such a proposal before the committee not later than thirty (30) day after the request has been made'**. She questioned why this policy takes precedence over any other issue/policy we have. Mr. Thrope suggested adding to that sentence **'or as soon thereafter as possible'** which was agreeable to the Committee. Mr. McKenna stated that the full committee never discussed this policy; it was on a previous agenda with two other policies but was subsequently tabled. The committee also voted not to implement any new policies until our Policy & Procedure book was revised. Continuing Mr. McKenna stated that he took offense to the first paragraph and disagrees with the last paragraph which states that we (the current committee) should not dictate what future committees can and cannot do. He feels that we do not need a policy. Mr. Healy stated that any policy can be changed, although some of the wording was at the suggestion from MASC, he is open to changes. Mr. Sullivan stated that although he did vote to pass the policy in subcommittee after reconsideration and listening to Dave's argument he also has problems with the policy. Ms. Goodman asked what the difference was between naming/renaming or dedicating-she had problems with it.

On a motion by Mr. McKenna and second by Mr. Healy it was

Voted to end discussion on the motion. Unanimous

Mr. Thrope amended his motion to eliminate the first and last paragraphs and to add **or as soon thereafter as possible**. 2 yes, 4 no motion fails Roll Call: Ms. Goodman-no, Mr. Sullivan-no, Mr. Thrope-yes, Mr. McKenna-no, Mr. Healy-yes, Ms. LaMachia-no.

On a Motion made by Mr. McKenna and seconded it was

Voted to adjourn at 11:20. 5 yes, 1 no Roll Call: Ms. Goodman-yes, Mr. Sullivan-yes, Mr. Thrope-yes, Mr. McKenna-yes, Mr. Healy-no, Ms. LaMachia-yes.

Respectfully submitted

Karen Tassone
Committee Secretary