



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 10-10-2000**

Approved November 14, 2000  
Arlington School Committee  
Tuesday, October 10, 2000  
Regular Meeting  
7:30 PM

**Present:** Wm. A. Carey, Jr., Chair  
Joani LaMachia, Vice Chair  
Michael T. Healy, Secretary  
David W. McKenna

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

Joanne Gurry, Marilyn Bisbicos

**Call To Order: 7:40**

### **Public Participation**

Bob Sprague, Communication Specialist, expressed publicly his appreciation to the Arlington Advocate for the two-page coverage on the Arlington Public Schools in this week's newspaper.

Mr. Thrope stated that Mr. Carey's absence was noticed by all and wished Mrs. Carey continued success with her recovery.

Mr. Carey took the opportunity to thank fellow committee members and the administration for their support via flowers, fruit basket, cards and phone calls.

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Healy reviewed correspondence.

On a motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. LaMachia it was

Voted to approve the Special Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2000. 6 yes 1 abstention (Mr. Carey)

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

Voted to approve the Regular Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2000. 6 yes 1 abstention (Mr. Carey)

### **Vote on AAA Contract**

Mr. Carey stated that the AAA contract was approved at the last meeting during executive session and stated that the committee needed to vote that motion in open session.

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

Voted to accept the three-year AAA contract as presented. 5 -1-1: Roll Call: Mr. Carey-yes, Ms. LaMachia-yes, Mr. McKenna-yes, Mr. Thrope-yes, Mr. Sullivan-yes, Mr. Healy-abstain, Ms. Goodman-no.

### **Plan For Opening Of The Bishop School**

Steve Carne, Principal of Bishop School, announced that the official opening of the school would be October 22, from 10:00 AM-2:00 PM with the ceremony commencing at 11:30 AM. Invitations have been sent to School Committee Members past and present, Town Officials, Members of the PTBC, State Representatives, and neighbors abutting the property. The day will be similar to that of the Brackett School opening last year with performances by the Town wide Orchestra and the Bishop Fifth Grade

Chorus.

### **Mentoring Program**

Dr. Gurry stated that Bob Lynch was unable to attend tonight's meeting but emphasized that both he and Steve Carme have made the mentoring program in Arlington a reality. They wrote the grants, published the books, and held the meetings. The Department of Education has stressed the benefits and importance of mentoring programs to facilitate the transition into teaching, to promote job satisfaction and to retain new teachers in the profession.

Steve noted that every new teacher in Arlington in the past three years has had a mentor even though the grant is an elementary grant. The intent of the grant was two fold; to have experienced veteran teachers share their expertise and to feel valued, and to also help the newly hired teachers feel welcome, supported, and to promote their longevity in Arlington. The new teacher orientation meeting now in its 3rd year supplies teachers with a lot of needed basic information on the schools and the Town.

Mentors must undergo some training and do receive a stipend. There are different meetings during the year including building support meetings, topic specific meetings at midyear, and end of the year to receive feedback.

Steve noted that Kay has been very supportive of the program, supplementing it in its 2nd year and currently including it in the schools' operating budget. He stressed that Arlington is one of the few communities in the State to provide for mentoring in its budget. The DOE as well as other communities have recognized Arlington for its mentoring program.

Committee members echoed the importance of the program and stressed that it is critical for recruitment and retention of teachers. Ms. Goodman requested that the Administration come back with a presentation for implementing a similar program at the secondary level.

### **Kindergarten Grant 2000-2001**

Dr. Gurry introduced Judi Bohn and Linda Hanson to speak on the Arlington Quality Full Day Kindergarten Grant. Judi Bohn explained that the grant was made available last February in the amount of \$161,000. The DOE claims that this will be a multi year program, tentatively set for 5 years. Arlington has since received \$276,000.00 in its 2nd year into the grant and with this money it is hoped that the parent program fee for next September will be eliminated. The grant has enabled Arlington to hire Linda Hanson as a specialist in early childhood and reading and Rose Udics as a math-science specialist.

Judi reviewed the Long Term goals of the Multi-Year DOE Grant:

- .. Eliminate the fee charged to parents for the second half of the full-day kindergarten program
- .. Offset the hiring of additional kindergarten teachers to meet increased enrollment needs.
- .. Develop research-based curriculum for kindergarten.
- .. Ensure continuity of curriculum across preschool, kindergarten and grade one.
- .. Provide professional development for primary level teachers
- .. Add materials and supplies to support developmentally appropriate, individualized learning.
- .. Support the NAEYC accreditation process.

Linda Hanson stated that she is enthusiastic and excited about the program. As part of her duties she meets with principals and kindergarten teachers, provides professional development for teachers, chairs the Kindergarten Grant Advisory Group, and facilitates and coordinates with the Title 1 and Reading departments.

### **Student Acceptable Use Policy**

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

Voted to suspend the rules in order to discuss the Student Acceptable Use Policy. Unanimous.

Dr. Gurry explained to the Committee that the changes recommended are minor. Joanne noted that no incident has precipitated the change but believes that the language change is a more encompassing statement. The suggested change is on page 2 paragraph 5.3 and would replace the existing text that reads "**no e-mail is confidential**" to "**all e-mail is considered public record**"; and to include "**The Superintendent of Schools, Telecommunications Technology Specialist or designee shall have the right to access e-mail.**"

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

Voted to accept the amendments on the Student Acceptable Use Policy as presented by Asst. Supt. Gurry (Page 2, item 5.3); to also include as part of the amendment "**the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum**". (to also codify the policy) Unanimous.

In response to questions from the Committee whether all students receive the policy, if there is follow up and if there is a parallel policy for the staff, Asst. Supt. Gurry stated that although the policy has not been sent out pending the approval from the School Committee, all students are required to sign off on the policy. In addition the policy that the teachers sign is a town wide policy.

### **Graduation Ceremony For Veterans**

AHS principal, Charlie McCarthy gave a report on the upcoming ceremony scheduled for November 9th. Mr. McCarthy stated

that the ceremony would honor veterans who had their high school careers interrupted to serve their country in the armed forces.

With the help of John Collins from the Veterans Group there are currently 13 veterans who have been identified to receive their high school diplomas. The requirements include proof that they attended AHS during that time and that they were honorably discharged. The evening will be a mini version of the AHS graduation in June with Supt. Donovan, School Committee Members, and Town officials in attendance along with music from the orchestra and the madrigals.

## **Recess**

### **Report On School Council Workshop**

Ms LaMachia reported that the school council workshop given by Paul McGowan was held at the Bishop School on September 26th. The workshop focused on the roles and responsibilities of the school councils within the school system. The feedback to date has been positive and members of the school councils indicated that they would like to discuss the concept of the school improvement plan at the joint workshop.

The follow up meeting is scheduled for October 16th from 7-9PM at the Ottoson Middle School Media Center. Mr. Sullivan noted that he would be unable to attend on Monday evening.

### **Permanent Town Building Committee**

Mr. Thrope gave an update on:

- Hardy School - was finishing up the asbestos removal, new plumbing has been started, the arch windows have been removed with replacement windows expected next week. A new sanitary sewer line has been installed. PTBC voted to replace the roof on the older section of the building.

- Bishop – opened with a temporary occupancy permit; requirements for the permanent occupancy permits have been completed and that permit is forthcoming.

- Brackett – the noise abatement issue will be discussed at a future meeting.

- Peirce & Dallin – the PTBC looked at a draft of a request for proposals for construction management services which is a preconstruction review.

Ms. Goodman stated that she has heard complaints on the brightness of the lights on the building and the clock and asked Mr. Thrope to bring up the issue at the next PTBC.

### **MASC Delegate**

Asst. Supt. Gurry informed the Committee that the MASC Annual Business Meeting would be held on November 1st and that the committee needs to vote an official delegate.

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

Voted that Barbara Goodman represent the Arlington School Committee as the official delegate at the Annual MASC business meeting on Wednesday, November 1, 2000. Unanimous

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

Voted the Denis Sullivan be named as alternate delegate for Arlington School Committee at the Annual MASC business meeting. Unanimous

### **New Business**

Mr. Carey handed out a survey by Mass Insight Education on the MCAS and asked that committee members fill out the form and send it to the office. Joanne explained that Mass Insight is a collaboration of private businesses that is looking to raise standards in the workplace, which has turned into support for the frameworks and the MCAS. They have run a series of meetings for assistant superintendents and principals to begin to use the data from the MCAS to make changes in school systems.

Mr. Thrope emphasized that when MCAS are discussed in general they are cast as black and white, but are not black and white. In his opinion the problem with MCAS is not MCAS per se, but that MCAS has been stretched to do too much. It is not an issue of people being opposed to high standards; but MCAS used as a source of data and a way to help school systems understand how well they are doing, and if used to adjust their standards would be a wonderful place to stop. When MCAS are used as a threat, punishment, distortion of the system, an anxiety generator for everyone involved and at the exclusion of all of the other possible ways of measuring the performance of children - that is too much.

Ms. Goodman concurred and also stated that even though the testing is flawed, it does not mean that everything is flawed. She is pleased that Arlington's resolution addresses that specific issue (the fact that students will be hurt by the accountability system before we as adults, educators, and legislators have resolved it); we have taken a defensible and strong position on the MCAS.

Mr. Healy emphasized that School Committees do not in fact have the clout to change the MCAS. We (the committee) have sent numerous letters to our legislators, DOE and the Commissioner of Education to look at the conditions of the MCAS.

Mr. McKenna announced that there would be a traffic supervisor position created for the Ottoson at the intersection of Gray Street, Quincy Street, and Fountain Road. It would be a temporary position from now until after the 1st of the year. The situation will be evaluated at that time. Mr. McKenna made note of the fact that students in the Middle School seldom cross with a traffic supervisor.

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

Voted to post a traffic supervisor at the intersection of Gary Street, Quincy Street & Fountain Road, the intent being that it is a temporary position from now until the 1st of the year. The Superintendent of Schools, the Safety Officer, and the Principal at the Ottoson will evaluate it with feedback at that time. 6 yes 1 present (Mr. McKenna voted present)

Mr. Sullivan announced that the Safety Task Force meeting will be scheduled within the next two weeks and will address the traffic/safety issue.

Mr. Healy noted that a Policy and Procedure subcommittee would be meeting on Tuesday, October 24th at 3:30 PM to meet with Jim Harding from MASC.

Ms. Goodman announced that the Curriculum & Instruction subcommittee would meet Tuesday, October 17th at 4:00 PM. Also that the Community Relations subcommittee is scheduled to meet Wednesday, October 25th at 3:15 PM with an alternate date of October 24th at 6:30, dependent on Kay's availability.

On a motion by Mr. Sullivan and seconded it was unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:10

Respectfully submitted

Karen Tassone