



**Town of Arlington, Massachusetts**  
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## **School Committee Minutes 11-14-2000**

Approved December 12, 2000  
Arlington School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Tuesday, November 14, 2000  
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

**Kay Donovan, Joanne Gurry, Marilyn Bisbicos**

**Call To Order: 7:35 PM**

### **Students From Sudan**

Rev. Goodman from St. Paul's Lutheran Church addressed the Committee asking the schools for support in resettling 8-10 Sudanese refugees in Arlington. The students will live at the parsonage and are expected to arrive before January 1st. Although Rev. Goodman was looking for a letter from the Committee accepting the students into the school system, Superintendent Donovan, along with members of the Committee had concerns regarding the students' needs and how they would be addressed. In speaking with the DOE Mrs. Donovan was informed that there was no funding available to help in the resettling of the students in Arlington. Ms. Goodman questioned how the boys were chosen and why the number of girls was so low. Ms. Goodman stated that to make this work it would take a lot of time and advance planning. She asked where it was done before, what kind of issues to be anticipated, and what kind of resources would be needed up front.

Ms. LaMachia informed the Committee that she had been in contact with Jean Woodward of the International Institute and that they would be a resource in the assessment of the needs and could focus on how to help the refugees.

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

Voted that the Arlington Public Schools express their commitment to support St. Paul's Lutheran Church to the fullest extent possible in their program to resettle the Sudanese boys. Unanimous

### **Public Participation**

Denis Sullivan and Ed Starr of the Rebuild Arlington Neighborhood Schools Campaign presented a check to the School Committee in the amount \$2,825.76. It is surplus money from the campaign and is given as a token of appreciation and to be used in a way that is best for the students or teachers. Mr. Starr emphasized that the check is in compliance with all applicable state laws.

### **Introduction of Town Manager**

Supt. Donovan welcomed and introduced Philip Farrington, who began on November 1st as the 3rd Town Manager of Arlington. Mr. Farrington stated that it is a pleasure to be here. Everybody with whom he has spoken to is very proud of the Town of Arlington. He knows the importance of education and that good schools are one of the best measures of a good community. Mr. Farrington stated that he looks forward to working with the Committee.

### **Vote On Principal's Contract**

Mr. Carey reported that at the last meeting the principals' contract was voted on in executive session and the Committee needed to take that vote in open session

Mr. Sullivan's Motion, seconded by Mr. McKenna:

Voted to approve the amended contract package for the principals

With a 4% increase across the board. Unanimous

### **Secretary's Report**

Mr. Healy reviewed the correspondence

Mr. Healy's Motion Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of September 26, 2000.  
6-1 (Mr. Carey abstain)

Mr. Healy's Motion Voted to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 10, 2000.  
Unanimous.

Ms. Goodman made note of the fact that 41 AHS students were inducted into the National Honor Society on Monday evening.

Mr. Carey reported that Ann Burns is recovering from her accident and sends her regards.

### **Report on Brackett School**

Supt. Donovan reported that when Mr. Carey became chairman he expressed his wish that each school give a presentation on what programs and activities were going on in their school. There will be a presentation once a month from each school highlighting their school's activities. Bob Penta, principal of the Brackett School introduced his team: Jill Carter past co-chair of the Brackett School Council, Joanne Koenig grade two teacher, and Mary Nolan teacher assistant. The group gave a power point presentation on their goals; Respect, Responsibility and Love of Learning. A major focus for the school concentrated on lunch/dining etiquette, learning proper table settings and graceful manners. The school will host a formal lunch on Friday where students and staff will be required to dress in formal attire and put their skills to work. Supt Donovan and the Committee thanked the Brackett Council for all their work.

### **Vote On Student Representative To The Vision 2020 Standing Committee**

Mrs. Donovan stated that Jane Howard and Alan McClennen, Co Chairs of the Vision 2020 Standing Committee, recommended two students as the student representatives to that committee.

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

Voted to appoint AHS senior, Perrin LaPlante as the student representative to the Vision 2020 Standing Committee

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

Voted to appoint AHS sophomore Sean Garballey as the student representative co-chair to the Vision 2020 Standing Committee.

### **Report on MASC Annual Meeting**

Ms. Goodman reported that Arlington's Resolution passed 137-30 at the MASC Annual Delegate Meeting on November 1st. The second resolution, presented by Amherst-Pelham was defeated in a vote of 85-45. Ms. Goodman stated that it was an honor and privilege to represent Arlington at the meeting and thanked Kay and Denis for their support at the assembly.

Mr. Thrope stated that even though the resolution passed he has concerns on how the MCAS directly effects the APS and believes that as a committee we need to have a better understanding of what the issues are. He made the following motion seconded by Mr. Healy:

Voted to request our legal counsel, Mr. Miller, to consult with the committee regarding MCAS  
at the next meeting or as soon as possible thereafter. Unanimous

Mr. Carey believed that there is enough concern about MCAS that legal counsel is in order. Mr. Healy agreed stating that he has concerns whether the DOE is in compliance with the law by not using multiple assessments as opposed to one test (MCAS).

In response to Mr. McKenna's request for an example of what the Committee would ask Mr. Miller, Ms. LaMachia stated she would like clarification on the appeals process in the event a student does not pass the MCAS. Mr. McKenna pointed out that Mr. Miller represents law, he cannot advocate violation of the law, and he cannot direct us to violate the law. He can give us clarification of what the law is and on what legal direction we can take as a committee.

Supt. Donovan asked the Committee for questions they want answered so that Mr. Miller would have an idea of what they were looking for. Mrs. Donovan continued by stating that she does not want our students to be penalized for something that is an adult issue. At an assembly for 10th grade parents the Superintendent emphasized the importance of taking the MCAS and urged parents to support their children in taking the test. Mrs. Donovan pointed out that the MCAS has improved education. She is not against the test, only the use of it as a single graduation requirement.

Results should be received either Friday or Monday and parents will receive them during the week of November 20, 2000. Because of the high school boycott, Mrs. Donovan believes that those scores will be low; she expects the 4th and 8th grade scores to be good.

Ms. Goodman proposed that the position paper '**Teaching to the Standards or the MCAS?**' be the statement of the school committee and disseminated to parents and the press.

On a Motion by Ms. Goodman and second by Mr. Sullivan

**Moved** that the '**Teaching to the Standards or the MCAS?**' become the statement of the Arlington School Committee on this issue and to disseminate it widely to parents, the public and the press. No Vote

In response to Mr. Healy's question on the difference between draft 1 and 2 Dr. Gurry explained that with the exception of adding Foreign Language it was mostly editing changes. Mr. Thrope indicated that he does not feel comfortable voting on the paper tonight and made the following motion seconded by Mr. McKenna:

Voted to postpone until the next meeting the position paper '**Teaching to the Standards or the MCAS?**' Unanimous.

### **Report on PTBC**

Mr. Thrope reported that at the Hardy School 99% of asbestos removal is complete, boilers are in place, and issues brought up at the walk-through are being addressed. At the Bishop and Brackett Schools there are a small number of issues being resolved.

### **Notice of Grant Award**

Supt. Donovan asked that this item be laid on the table until the next meeting.

On a motion made and seconded it was **Voted** to lay on the table the Notice of Grant Award until the next meeting. Unanimous (Mr. Sullivan not present)

### **Operation Recognition**

Mrs. Donovan reported that 15 honorees were granted their diplomas at a ceremony on November 9th. It was a mini graduation with a dinner for the honorees and their families.

### **2000/2001 School District Priorities**

Ms. LaMachia reported she had a meeting with Supt. Donovan and Hardy principal Gerald Carmody on how to integrate School Committee and School Council goals. Dr. Carmody will work on a system based plan with a flow chart and a time line to define a long term process. In the interim we will tentatively meet with the principals and school councils on November 28th (the next scheduled meeting) to establish priorities for the current year.

### **Capital Planning Budget**

The School Committee heard a report from the Superintendent on the Fiscal Year 2002-2006 Capital Requests. In it Mrs. Donovan outlined the proposals and her recommendations for: major repairs and renovations, infrastructure improvements, maintenance of vehicles, equipment replacement, and photo copier lease program.

On a Motion made by Mr. Healy and seconded by Ms. Goodman it was  
Voted to support the Capital Planning FY2002 requests as presented by Supt. Donovan. Unanimous (Mr. Sullivan not present)

### **New Business**

.. Ms. Goodman set a Community Relations subcommittee meeting for Monday, November 27th at 7:00 PM to discuss the Ottoson Survey.

.. Supt. Donovan announced that she will hold a seminar on Tuesday, November 21st on retirement for staff who are planning to retire in June.

.. APS has received a check in the amount of \$15,000.00 from RCN as part of the initial agreement for the use of school property.

.. Mr. Healy requested that the Superintendent speak relative to redistricting at the next meeting to establish ideas and general concepts.

On a Motion by Mr. Healy and seconded by Mr. Thrope it was  
Voted to enter executive session for the purpose of a legal and personnel issue RC: Unanimous  
(Mr. Sullivan not present)

### **Executive Session 10:30 10:40 PM**

On a motion made by Mr. Thrope and seconded by Ms. LaMachia:  
It was unanimously voted to adjourn at 10:40 PM

Respectfully submitted

Karen Tassone