

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, February 12, 2013
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative

The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

The Chair invited public comment.

There were no public comments.

II. Superintendent's Announcements:

The Superintendent had no announcements.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

Mary Ann Stewart reminded her colleagues that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Day on the Hill is scheduled for April 30th this year with a luncheon and afternoon programming.

Margaret Coppe queried her colleagues about their interest in bringing in a facilitator for the summer retreat/goal setting meeting. Ms. Coppe stated that last summer the Committee used Susan Beckman who is no longer available and she would look into getting a facilitator. This summer's meeting would include using the facilitator to develop goals and board organization. It was decided by the Committee that Ms. Coppe would pursue this.

Ms. Coppe then thanked the town staff and the Department of Public Works (DPW) for all their hard work on the snow cleanup work they did and are continuing to do. Ms. Coppe reported that she had seen communications with Bill Hadley, Director of Public Works from residents and he has responded to these requests.

Dr. Ash spoke about his reasoning for opening school on Monday. Dr. Ash stated that the DPW put in a huge number of hours getting the schools ready to be open on Monday. Dr. Ash explained how decisions are made for opening and closing schools and that sidewalks not being plowed is not a sufficient reason to close school. Dr. Ash stated that he had been on the telephone over a 24 hour period with Carl Valente, Town Manager, Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities and with Bill Hadley, Director of the DPW

and they reported on what the conditions looked like for a Monday school opening. Mr. Valente indicated that the Town would be in good shape with roads widened enough for safe travel around town and that all school parking lots, sidewalks on school grounds would be plowed. Dr. Ash stated that this time, he decided to extend the drop off times for the schools which allowed extra time for parents to drive their children to school. He reiterated that our DPW Department did a great job and he still believes that the roads were ready for vehicle traffic and with cooperation from parents we could open school safely. Some complaints were received.

Phyllis Neufeld, President, Lexington Education Association, inquired whether students will be counted late on Monday and would there be some leniency until all sidewalks are plowed? Ms. Neufeld thought it would be helpful to know what the policy would be this week.

Dr. Ash stated that it would take approximately three days to complete sidewalk plowing and it should be completed by Wednesday. A year ago, working with Patrick Goddard and Bill Hadley, a plan was developed as to which sidewalks would be plowed first for safety reasons.

Jessie Steigerwald, shared that she would like parents educated on the dangers of children playing on high snow banks at bus stops because they could fall into traffic and get injured.

Ms. Steigerwald also shared that she attended the Ad hoc Town-wide Facilities Master Planning Committee (AhTFMPC) public workshop on Saturday, February 2 in Estabrook Hall at Cary Memorial Building. She has also sent the last set of minutes of the AhTFMPC to the Committee. AhTFMPC generated a list of criteria of what people are looking at for the 10 upcoming projects which included the Hastings Elementary School, Lexington High School, the Police and Fire Departments and other projects such as Cary Hall. Today, the consultant had ten broader categories and a long discussion about the areas the AhTFMPC need to think about on the municipal side for every project needed in the next 10 -20 years. There are still questions about swing space at our schools and would we ever want to relocate the Central Office. One of the other issues AhTFMPC's agenda items concerns the issue of preschool. Currently, the preschool is at the Harrington Elementary School. A citizen inquired if preschool would stay at its current location or might it someday move into the Central Office location. Ms. Steigerwald stated that the Committee should consider the overcrowding preschool issues and whether it might make sense to move them over to the Central Office. One possibility is for her and Margaret Coppe to write a draft which would show two or three alternatives to save time in order to present at the next meeting to be held on February 26th. Louise Lipsitz, Principal, Hastings Elementary School suggested a statement outlining what our clear needs are and outlining the steps of the MSBA. If the Committee members are comfortable, she and Margaret Coppe could meet soon and draft a position statement in writing to go to this group that is more formal.

Ms. Steigerwald then shared that March 16th and 17th is the 300th Anniversary Incorporation Weekend and our schools K-12 will be well represented. The elementary school students will display their social studies work. The 8th grade students are invited to be in a mock town meeting at Cary Hall. The high school students will be showing projects they have done. The illustrated book developed for the anniversary has arrived and will be used in the middle school social studies classes. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

IV. Agenda:

1. Discussion of Superintendent's FY14 Recommended Budget

The Chair opened the discussion of the Superintendent's Budget and inquired if Dr. Ash had anything further he wanted to add regarding the Budget and he stated he did not.

The Committee discussed the Superintendent's FY Recommended Budget and had questions and comments regarding Professional Development funds for School Committee members, mileage reimbursement, MASC Conference, membership dues, facilitators, iPads,

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance addressed the Committee regarding the mileage account reimbursements and stated she would look into what types of reimbursement past School Committees have submitted.

Dr. Ash shared that if the School Committee wanted to add extra money but not change the budget amount that he would work with the School Committee to find the money for them and believes that this is a policy decision the Committee would make.

The Committee then discussed the bus fee and payment schedule, flexpass, Lexpress and school destination pass. Also discussed were the Avalon Bay Mitigation Fund and remaining amounts, LABB Credit, and occupational assistant position funded or not funded.

Motion to Approve the Bus Fee Schedule as Proposed (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

There was further discussion among the Committee regarding conveying to the community that if they need assistance regarding the bus fee, they should call the business office. The discussion also included the need to consider marketing and figuring out a way for families to find out information when they need assistance. The Committee also encouraged every one of our schools to have a link to bus signup forms.

Motion to Approve the Lexington Public School Recommended Budget for FY 14 in the Amount of \$81,313,963 (Stewart, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

The Committee thanked Dr. Ash and Mary Ellen Dunn for all the hard work that they and their staff put into the FY 14 budget.

2. Vote to Approve FY14 Operating and Capital Budgets

The Chair asked for any comments regarding the FY Operating and Capital Budgets.

Motion to Approve FY14 Capital Improvement Budget in the Amount of \$1,524,031.00 (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Motion to Approve the FY 14 Municipal Budget For Items That Are School Related (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

There was discussion among the Committee and Dr. Ash regarding the building renewal fund, the stabilization fund and how the money would be used each year for the municipal side and the school side.

Motion to Approve FY 14 DPF Capital Projects Municipal Budget for Items that are School Related (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

3. FY13 2nd Quarterly Financial Report

Mary Ellen Dunn presented the 2nd Quarterly Financial Report to the Committee. Ms. Dunn shared that they are predicting a surplus for FY 2013 in the amount of \$690,488 due to normal changes in staff, lower out-of-district tuition costs, and additional special education circuit breaker funds. There is a projected surplus in the amount of \$719,562 for out-of-district tuition and part of this surplus is also due to changes in student placements. The salaries and wages have a projected surplus in the amount of \$149,674. The second quarterly projection is based on current personnel information and estimated wage settlements. The district is projecting potential deficits in regular transportation, homeless transportation, special education transportation and legal services. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

4. School Committee Position Letter on Gun Safety

The Chair shared that she had received from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) a position paper and requested School Committee's draft a position letter on gun safety. Ms. Copped asked the Committee if they were in support of this letter and if they had any changes. The Chair read the position letter to the Committee. There was discussion among the Committee regarding who else should receive this letter. Ms. Coppe also inquired of Mary Ellen Dunn if there is a safety evacuation plan for disabled students and adults.

Mary Ellen Dunn responded that the schools do have evacuation plans for the hearing and physically disabled students and adults who need assistance during safety evacuations.

Motion to Authorize the Chair to draft the proposed letter and send it to President Obama, Congressman Edward Markey, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senator William Cowan, and cc Governor Deval Patrick, State Senators Barrett and Donnelly, State Representative Kaufman, the National

School Boards Associations (NSBA) and Massachusetts Association of School Committees(Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

5. Discussion of Future School Committee Agenda Items

The Committee discussed further School Committee Agenda Items which included (i) curriculum review; (ii) school improvement plans; (iii) Safe Routes to School Presentation; (iv) Ad hoc Town-wide Master Facilities Planning Committee; (v) update on REMS Grant; (vi) update on signage and traffic patterns at schools; (vii) presentation by Patrick Goddard, Director of Facilities regarding spending on school with respect to safety; (ix) Dr. Ash's presentation regarding a new vision for the District; (x) strategic planning; (xi) mission and vision statements and the beliefs of the school system statement; (xii) School Committee goals; (xiii) technology; (xiv) Lexington parent presentation on student stress; (xv) report on K-12 Guidance; (xvi) report on PreK-12 health services; (xvii) 3rd quarterly financial report; (xviii) social studies curriculum review – year 2; (xix) 2014-2015 school calendar; (xx) 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school improvement plan; (xxi) legal counsel; (xxii) curriculum subcommittees; (xxiii) elementary foreign language; (xxiv) recommended policy on minimum class size; (xxv) update on K-5 standard-based report cards; (xxvi) site council training; (xxvii) improving professional relationships; and (xxviii) SEPAC presentation regarding survey.

Dr. Ash explained the mission and vision statements and beliefs of the school systems. The Committee had questions and concerns.

Thomas Plati, Director of Education Technology and Assessment shared that Marianne McKenna, Director of IT/MI/Technology and her team are looking at security of the whole system town-wide, other facets in the technology program, educational side and technology for teachers and he shared that he is also glad to provide initial training on iPads. One of the most difficult issues is having no wireless in town office buildings.

6. Vote to Accept a Donation of Athletic Equipment Valued at \$8,000 from the Lexington High School Boys' Football Booster Club to the Lexington High School Fitness Center

Motion to Accept with Gratitude, a Donation of Athletic Equipment Valued at \$8,000 from the Lexington High School Boys' Football Booster Club to the Lexington High School Fitness Center (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

The Committee had further discussion regarding the Committee be apprised when donations come in so they can be tracked.

7. Vote to Accept a Donation of Science Lab Equipment Valued at \$2,704 from Thomas Miller to the Lexington High School Physics Group

Motion to Accept with Gratitude, a Donation of Science Lab Equipment Valued at \$2,704 from Thomas Miller to the Lexington High School Physics Group (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Margaret Coppe reminded everyone of the summit tomorrow evening, February 13th, and the next School Committee Meeting on Tuesday, February 26th.

Motion to Adjourn (Brodner, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

The Meeting Adjourned at 10:06 p.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda; Lexington Public Schools FY13 Budget Recommendation School Committee Vote dated February 12, 2013; Memorandum dated February 7, 2013 to Dr. Paul Ash and Mary Ellen Dunn regarding FY 2013 – 2nd Quarter Financial Report; Draft Letter dated February 1, 2013 from Margaret Coppe, Chair to The Honorable Ed Markey re school safety; 2012-2013 School Committee Agendas (revised February 6, 2013); Memorandum to dated January 23, 2013 to Dr. Paul Ash from Eamonn Sheehan

Voted by the School Committee March 12, 2013