

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, April 1, 2013
Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Room
1605 Massachusetts Avenue

6:30 p.m. Call to Order and Welcome:

Public Comment – (Written comments to be presented to the School Committee; oral presentations not to exceed three minutes.)

6:35 p.m. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

6.45 p.m. Agenda:

1. Campaign to Raise Awareness of the Connection between Media and Violence – Presentation by Lexington Resident Dr. Palant (10 minutes)
2. Discussion of Town Meeting Articles (20 minutes)
3. Recommended Policy on Minimum Class Size (10 minutes)
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 2, 2013 (2 minutes)

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3, 2013, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Room, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue.

All agenda items and the order of items are approximate and subject to change.



the Lexington School Committee, who are supportive of this awareness campaign and suggested that I present this program to the Lexington School Committee to make you and the entire committee aware of this initiative and to get the support of this program. My hope is that with the support of the School Committee and the Lexington school administration, this program will be welcomed into the Lexington Schools, including Lexington nurseries and pre-schools. I recently met with Julie Fenn, the Prevention Specialist in the Lexington Schools, who agrees with the harmful association of violent media on the long-term behavioral and emotional development children and is supportive of this initiative. Julie has said that she would like to include the effects of violent media into her curriculum and has already scheduled a follow-up meeting for us to discuss this program with students she will invite to meet with us. Hopefully, we will also be able to have student participation to support and promote this effort.

This campaign is still in the formative stages, but I hope to have this awareness program introduced in Lexington in the near future. I have been promised support and front page coverage by the town newspaper, the Lexington Minuteman. Along with media coverage, I also plan to arrange a conference/talk about the effects of media violence – games, TV, movies, and other media purveyors of violence – on our children and young adults.

Dr. Carole Allen, a fellow pediatrician who has recently been appointed to the newly formed Health Policy Commission by Gov. Patrick, is supportive of this initiative and said that, "although we need a multi-pronged approach, this program not only has the advantage of being implementable right away, it also has an educational benefit." Dr. Allen also pointed out, "it is not only violent video games, TV and movies that contribute to the numbness to violence, but it is violence in the media in general, including the news ("if it bleeds, it leads"), and then the availability of firearms that permits this violence to play out in real life."

I am 100% supportive of the efforts being made regarding assault and semi-automatic rifles and large capacity magazines, but knowing that most homicides are committed with handguns (and most gun deaths are suicides), I can't help but feel that the mounting culture of violence in our society is at the root cause of these violent deaths, and this is where I am putting my efforts.

I am hoping that by educating children and their families about the negative effects of violent media, as well as pointing out parental responsibility in overseeing what their children are seeing and playing, we can address our ever-increasing culture of violence, and by extension, gun deaths in the United States.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this initiative. I look forward to the support of the school administration and the Lexington School Committee.

Sincerely,



cc: Margaret Coppe

**DANIEL I. PALANT, MD
16 SLOCUM RD
LEXINGTON, MA 02421**

March 9, 2013

Dr. Paul B. Ash
Superintendent
Lexington Public Schools
146 Maple Street
Lexington, MA 02420

Dear Dr. Ash;

Margaret Coppe has asked that I forward to you a letter explaining why I want to speak with the School Committee about a program that I plan to introduce in Lexington within the next few months.

Like most of us, I was deeply saddened by the tragic events that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School last December and have felt the need to respond to this tragedy in some way. Although I am fully supportive of the efforts to address the laxity of our laws pertaining to guns and the paucity of resources to respond to the mental health needs in our country, I have a different take on the underlying reason for what accounts for the mass killings that make the headlines in our newspapers and the thousands of other deaths due to guns that occur each year; I believe it is the culture of violence that is spiraling upward in our country that is the cause for the thousands of gun deaths that occur in the United States each year. It was for this reason, when I saw an article from the *Hartford Courant* about a boy who started a "violent video turn-in" campaign in Newtown shortly after the killings at Sandy Hook, that I contacted this family in Newtown, CT and have begun the process of introducing a similar program here in Lexington. Although not the answer, it is a beginning to address the escalation of violence in our society. <<http://www.polygon.com/2012/12/23/3797420/newton-boy-starts-played-out-asks-kids-to-toss-violent-games>>

In addition to making people aware of the relationship between violent video games (and all violent media) and gun violence, it was at this time that I did extensive research on this and spoke with Dr. Michael Rich of the "Center for Media and Child Health" at Children's Hospital to learn more about the association between media and violence. Finding a definite correlation between violent media exposure and aggressive and violent behavior, I decided to pursue a program to make people aware of this association between violent media and aggressive behavior and violence. With the support of Dr. Rich, the Lexington Police Dept, the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association, State Rep. Jay Kaufman and Lexington retailers, I want to make people aware of the known effects of violent media on children and young adults.

I have spoken with Sandro Alessandrini and Margaret Coppe, both members of

Purpose: To Add 1.2 FTE Elementary Foreign Language Teacher

Average salary: \$71,759 x 1.2 =	\$86,111
Benefit allowance:	<u>\$13,391</u>
<i>Total</i>	\$99,502

ARTICLE 4
MOTION TO AMEND
Program 1000: Education
Line Item 1100 Lexington Public Schools Personal Services

MOTION:

that the Main Motion under Article 4 be amended by increasing by \$99,502 the amount in line item 1100 Lexington Public Schools Personal Services so that it reads: \$68,748,831.

If passed will then offer the following amendment:

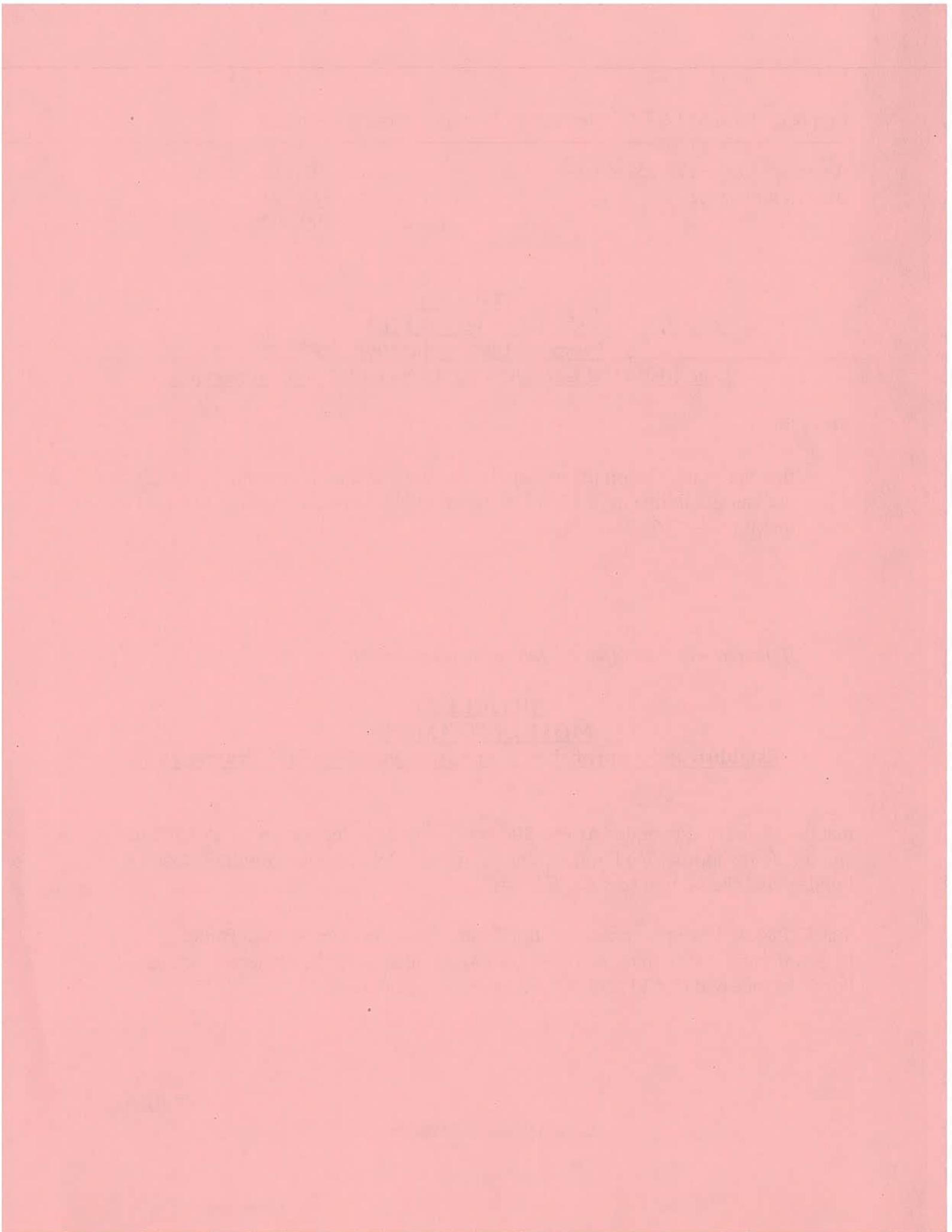
ARTICLE 20
MOTION TO AMEND
Establish and Appropriate to and from Specified Stabilization Funds

that the Main Motion under Article 20b be amended by decreasing by \$99,502 the amount being appropriated to the Capital Projects Debt Service Building Renewal Fund so that the section reads as follows:

that \$2,084,498 be appropriated to the Capital Projects Debt Service Building Renewal Fund and of that, \$850,498 be appropriated from the General Unreserved Fund Balance and that \$1,234,000 be raised in the tax levy.

4/1/2013
3:01 PM

Dawn McKenna, Precinct 6



Lexington School Committee

DRAFT Policy: Class Size – Lexington High School

Except for students with special learning problems, no single class will be offered with an enrollment under ten.

Exceptions to the policy will be made at the discretion of the principal and superintendent.

DRAFT

