

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, February 15, 2011
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Rod Cole, School Committee Members Sandro Alessandrini, Margaret Coppe, Jessie Steigerwald, Mary Ann Stewart and student representative Noah Coolidge. Minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:01 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Rod Cole)

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Our Science Team competed in a competition run by the Department of Energy. Two of our four teams made the cut to compete with twenty-five other schools. Our A team and our B team were in the finals going head to head. They were tied and there was a playoff. The B team won and will go to the National Competition. Congratulations to the team members and their coaches.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Jessie Steigerwald: Mary Ann Stewart let the School Committee know that the Harrington PTA has announced a fundraiser to purchase six ELMOs -- which suggests that it would conflict with our policy. We recently granted an exception to Bridge and Hastings PTAs that was related to ELMOs. In that instance the schools had funds, asked principals what the needs were and they were asked to consider buying ELMOs. Those PTA/PTOs requested an exception prior to purchasing the technology. The process may not have been clear, but any PTA that anticipates purchasing technology should be coordinating with the appropriate staff people and the School Committee Chair. It would be unfortunate to raise the money and then find it wasn't a permissible expense.

Dr. Ash responded that he spoke with the Harrington principal, Elaine Mead, who said the school will not spend more than \$2,500.

Jessie Steigerwald responded that she did not want to have a chilling effect on the fundraising which is why she hoped the Chair would be in touch with the PTA to outline the appropriate steps for them to take if they would wanted to purchase ELMOS to make an even number with other schools -- and the cost were to exceed \$2,500. She preferred to have the PTA make the request clear to the Chair now, even if it exceeded \$2,500.

There was a gift of \$10K from the Fiske PTA to buy a book closet. Could Dr. Ash ask the principals how much the PTAs and PTOs give to their schools per year?

Margaret Coppe: The Clarke Middle School production of *Mulan* was very well done; I was particularly impressed with the tie-in to the curriculum.

Rod Cole: Dr. Ash and I finally got together with Ruth Berdell who is an expert on enrollment projections. The census data that we have has many problems with it so we have decided to try to tackle the problem of cleaning up the data before using it as a basis for projections.

Margaret Coppe: I am the liaison to the 20-20 Committee in town. The realtor on the Committee has said that they cannot divulge where children are coming in and leaving. Many people do not list their children who are not of voting age on the census.

IV. Action Items

1. Discussion and Vote on the FY12 Operating and Capital Budgets. Presented by Dr. Ash. The FY 11 second quarterly report projects a surplus at the end of the school year, part of which we will use to pay off the transportation revolving account deficit. If this occurs we will have \$180K to use for another purpose. Due to this development I am recommending that we do not reduce the speech position that I recommended cutting earlier. Also, there will be no retirements in this department this year. We will be studying this department over the next year.

The instrumental music fee: Long term I would like to reduce the fee. Previously I did not have a funding source. We may receive funds for SPED from either the State or the federal government but we will not know how this will play out until June. The most prudent approach would be to wait until June to decide whether we want to fund the instrumental music program.

There were questions and comments from the Committee. Topics discussed included: the instrumental music fee and middle school electives.

The Committee supports the elimination of the instrumental music fee and they agreed to decide in June whether to allocate money for this purpose.

Motion to vote in favor of the budget that was presented tonight (Steigerwald, Stewart).
The motion passed 5-0.

2. Vote to Accept \$250 in Donations to the William G. Tapply Memorial Fund.
Motion to accept \$250 in Donations to the William G. Tapply Memorial Fund (Alessandrini, Coppe). **The motion passed 5-0.**
3. Vote to Accept a \$300 Donation from the Lions Club of Lexington, Inc., to the 2011 LHS Science and Engineering Fair.
Motion to accept with gratitude a \$300 Donation from the Lions Club of Lexington, Inc., to the 2011 LHS Science and Engineering Fair (Coppe, Alessandrini). **The motion passed 5-0.**

4. Vote to Accept a \$300 Donation from the Massachusetts Port Authority to the Lexington Public Schools/Science Club.
Motion to accept with gratitude a \$300 Donation from the Massachusetts Port Authority to the Lexington Public Schools/Science Club (Stewart, Alessandrini). **The motion passed 5-0.**
5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 26, 2010
Motion to approve School Committee Minutes of October 26, 2010 as amended (Steigerwald, Stewart). **The motion passed 5-0.**
(Amendments: a typo and the spelling of a name).
6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 30, 2010
Motion to approve School Committee minutes of November 30, 2010 (Stewart, Alessandrini). **The motion passed 5-0.**
7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 29, 2011
Motion to Approve School Committee minutes of January 29, 2011 (Steigerwald, Stewart). **The motion passed 5-0.**
8. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 8, 2011
Motion to approve School Committee minutes of February 8, 2011 (Alessandrini, Stewart). **The motion passed 5-0.**

V. Discussion Items

1. Superintendent's Evaluation.
Chairman Rod Cole explained the process. There were comments and questions from the Committee. The evaluation process itself was also discussed.
2. FY11 2nd Quarter Financial Report. Mary Ellen Dunn stated that currently the budget projection shows a surplus of approximately \$200K. However, with half the year to go and the possibility of changes in out-of-district special education placements, that number is subject to change.

There were questions from the Committee.

VI. Motion to adjourn (Stewart, Alessandrini). **The motion passed 5-0.**

Documents: *Meeting agenda; Lexington Public Schools FY12 Budget Request; letter from Massport to Whitney Hagins, Science Department Head, LHS, re: \$300 donation to LHS Science Club; draft of School Committee minutes of: 10.26.10, 11.30.10, 1.29.11 and 2.8.11; FY11 Second Quarter Report.*