

**Lexington Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting – April 11, 2005  
Central Office Administration Building**

Members present were Tom Diaz, Olga Guttag, Scott Burson, Helen Cohen, Interim Superintendent William Hurley, and Student Representative Janette Ekanem.

Helen Cohen called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. Helen Cohen chaired the meeting as Tom Griffiths was attending the Capital Expenditures Committee meeting with Dana Ham.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

**Superintendent's Report**

**Enrollment Update**

Susan Bottan said the updated enrollment figure as of April 1, 2005 is 6,137 students. This is a net increase of four students since October 1, 2004.

**FY05 Financial Update**

Susan Bottan gave the School Committee the FY 2005 mid-year financial report and projected year-end status. She noted maintenance and facilities has taken the biggest hit and it is an ongoing battle to make this balance at the end of the year. See report attached.

There was a discussion regarding special needs services. Ms. Bottan said if a child needs additional medical services, 72% of the cost is reimbursable under the state circuit breaker after the initial \$29,000. A discussion should be had before the end of the year about where reimbursements for special needs services should be credited. Mr. Hurley said there is a problem with money coming directly to us because at Town Meeting, we are appropriated a certain amount of money. It is important to show to the town that we do generate these reimbursements in addition to what we are asking for.

It was noted the high school athletic fees have been increased to \$70 to match what the middle schools pay for fees.

Olga Gutttag asked Dana Ham for a snow removal analysis. She would like to compare the cost of custodial overtime for snow removal against what it would cost to purchase new snow blowers, and how long the pay off would take on buying new as opposed to paying overtime for snow removal.

In regard to vehicles, Ms. Gutttag asked if we were getting to the point where we need to replace vehicles rather than pour large amounts of money into existing vehicles. Mr. Hurley informed the School Committee that Maintenance had to purchase a truck that was not budgeted for this year. We should be budgeting more than we are for vehicle replacement so we do not find ourselves where someone is driving a vehicle that is unsafe. Ms. Gutttag suggested we keep the Capital Expenditures Committee apprised of these expenses.

Mr. Hurley told the School Committee that Paul Ash is taking a very active role in the administrative search process and has met with the candidates. Last Thursday afternoon he met with both search committees for the two elementary school principals. Hopefully those positions will be filled within the next two weeks. Candidates for the Director of Business and Finance position will be interviewed on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Director of Human Resources position has been filled. They are in the process of going through the applications for the Director of Student Services and Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction positions. We will also need to fill the assistant principal position at Clarke as Steve Ralston was appointed a principalship at a middle school in Lynn. Also, Bryna Davis, assistant principal at Bowman, was also appointed a principalship in Melrose.

### **Members' Reports/Members' Concerns**

Scott Burson stated the Policy Subcommittee has now reconvened and had its third meeting this morning. They are working on the Field Trip Policy and will then address the Life Threatening Allergy Policy. They should have both policies to the School Committee before the end of the school year. Considering how large the Fundraising policy is, that will not coming before the School Committee for discussion until the fall of 2005.

Olga Gutttag asked if there was any way to get the paving done at Harrington as soon as possible to eliminate the trip hazards from manhole covers. She is the School Committee representative on the sidewalk committee, which is busy working on trying to generate interest in a safe route to school program. She attended PTSA meeting last Wednesday at the high school. The topic of discussion was the merits of weighed and un-weighted GPA. Ms. Gutttag will not be voting on this because she hopes her children will be affected by some changes. She noted it is disturbing that there was a clear difference of opinion.

Mr. Hurley said he just heard today about Ms. Gutttag's feedback and some poor behavior by a few parents at the PTSA forum. He feels this behavior is inappropriate. No matter what the forum is, we have to learn to disagree agreeably. Mr. Hurley will have Dr. Jones make a presentation to the School Committee to update what discussions are taking place.

Helen Cohen announced the youth risk behavior survey results will be presented at the School Committee tomorrow night, April 12<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 p.m. at the Clarke auditorium.

**Action Items**

A motion was made to appoint Van Seasholes as the representative to the Media Center. (Diaz – Gutttag; 4-0)

Helen Cohen requested a record of all donations made by the Lexington Athletic Association to see if equity is being taken care of. As per Mr. Hurley's recommendation, a motion was made to accept with gratitude the donations from the Lexington Athletic Association. (Burson – Gutttag; 4-0)

It was Mr. Hurley's recommendation that the School Committee vote not to participate in school choice. A motion was made that the Lexington School Committee reject participation in school choice and that we ask our Chair to contact our Legislative representatives and ask them to change the presumption of the law so we do not have to go through this every year. (Burson – Diaz; 4-0)

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2004 School Committee meeting as amended. (Diaz – Gutttag; 4-0)

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 4, 2005 School Committee meeting as amended. (Diaz – Gutttag; 4-0)

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2005 School Committee meeting as amended. (Diaz – Gutttag; 3-0-1; Scott Burson abstained as he was not present at that meeting.)

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2005 School Committee meeting as amended. (Diaz – Gutttag; 4-0)

There will be an Executive Session meeting held on April 12, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. for negotiation discussions. The School Committee meeting will be following that meeting at 7:30 p.m. at the Clarke auditorium. Ms. Olga Gutttag will be attending the Permanent Building Committee meeting at 7:00 p.m. and will be arriving late to the School Committee meeting.

School Committee Meeting  
April 11, 2005  
Page 4

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:10 p.m. (Diaz – Gutttag; 4-0)

Submitted by,

Lisa McGuire

cc: William Hurley  
Tom Griffiths  
Helen Cohen  
Scott Burson  
Olga Gutttag  
Tom Diaz