

**Lexington Public Schools
School Committee Meeting – April 13, 2005
Central Office - Administration Building**

Members present were Tom Griffiths, Helen Cohen, Olga Guttag, Tom Diaz, Scott Burson, and Interim Superintendent William Hurley.

Tom Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

Public Comment

None.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Hurley said they are in the process of conducting interviews for the administrative position. One has been filled so far. Steven Adler has been appointed the new principal of Hastings Elementary School. Dr. Ash made him the offer today and Mr. Adler has accepted. On April 29th, a principal candidate will visit Bowman Elementary. Also, Central Office staff will interview the first round of candidates for the Director of Business and Finance position on April 29th.

Members' Reports/Members' Concerns

Ms. Guttag said she attended the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) meeting on April 11th. She reported that there should be a sufficient number of bids for the Fiske project as it is her understanding that nine general contractors and 140 subcontractors have requested bidding documents. Final paving on the Harrington site will be done this summer. The architects conducting the study on the white house gave their impression demonstration on the historical design. The new building design will incorporate the main house with removing all existing additions. They have a preliminary okay from the Historical District, as the only part worth saving is the main house. They are awaiting the engineering report with the hopes that they can keep the existing foundation without having to lift the house for a new foundation. The new building will have superb handicap accessibility. The new design will eliminate all front and side parking spaces but they will try and reconfigure the parking lot in the back to reclaim these lost spaces. The architects are meeting with the Historic Commission on April 25th. By that time, the PBC will have from the architects a construction estimate. The PBC will then take the construction costs and add to it the soft costs and come up with a full budget. The packet will include a drawing view from Massachusetts Avenue with the landscaping to get a sense of what the area will look like.

Tom Diaz suggested the School Committee post meetings for April 25th and 27th if they have not already been posted.

Helen Cohen attended a meeting of the Youth Service Council yesterday along with Elaine Sterzin. They are working on pulling therapists together in the area to see how they can help or provide resources.

Scott Burson wanted to let the School Committee know that, as trustees of the library, there are continuing issues that still need to be addressed and corrected.

Tom Griffiths said he and Helen Cohen attended the German Fest. He also attended the production of MacBeth at the Bridge Elementary School. The children did a fabulous job with putting on the play. Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Diaz attended Jazz Night at the high school, which was superbly done. Tom Diaz said it was one of the best performances he has ever heard.

The question was raised that since the School Committee has been discussing the white house on the TMMA list, was this in line with the open meeting law. Mr. Burson said he does not believe there was any inconsistency with the action as we were just providing information at town meeting. There was no attempt of intra-committee deliberation. The School Committee was just posting the information on the website. Tom Diaz does not concede that the open meeting law is applicable to that list. Mr. Burson said because the emails of School Committee members on School Committee business are public records, there is an actual log that is maintained of anything that is sent to the School-com email address. Ms. Guttag noted the TMMA list is accessible to anybody.

Discussion Items

2005-2006 Proposed School Calendar

Andre Ravenelle provided the School Committee with the attached proposed calendar noting the only change from the prior version was to December 15th. Mr. Ravenelle said he has addressed whatever parent concerns have come up this past year regarding the calendar. The biggest concern to parents was that last year's calendar was difficult to read. He feels this version is more convenient to use.

It was Mr. Hurley's recommendation to accept the calendar presented tonight. The best change that could be made would be to shorten April vacation next year if necessary. The five-year plan makes a great deal of sense. The biggest issue is whether to have a before or after Labor Day start.

Helen Cohen volunteered to write an article for the Minuteman regarding the five-year school calendar plan.

With the hopes for a light upcoming winter and the DPW clearing the roads, it was proposed to accept the calendar presented. A motion was made to accept the school calendar for 2005-2006 as presented at tonight's meeting. (Guttag – Diaz; 5-0).

Given the change in leadership at the Central Office, Mr. Hurley recommended waiting until Dr. Ash and his staff is on board to reconvene the school calendar committee.

A motion was made that the committee to work on the school calendar be reconvened to develop a five-year calendar beginning next year. (Cohen – Diaz; 5-0)

Action Items

Mr. Hurley recommended the School Committee accept the \$1,000 donation from a family whose children attended Bowman Elementary School but has now returned to Japan. A motion was made accept this donation with gratitude. (Guttag – Burson; 5-0)

There was discussion regarding the content and length of the School Committee minutes. Mr. Hurley indicated the main purpose of minutes is to have a history of the topics under discussion on record with a brief synopsis of such. It is most important that the wording of motions made and actions taken be very accurate.

Tom Diaz is not comfortable with this. He would like to talk to Dr. Ash at a later meeting about buying a recorder to have an audiotape of School Committee meetings to keep on file.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2005 School Committee meeting as amended. (Diaz – Cohen; 5-0)

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:15 p.m. (Burson – Diaz; 5-0)

Submitted by,

Lisa McGuire

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