

**Lexington Public Schools
School Committee Meeting – March 23, 2005
Clarke Middle School**

Members present were Tom Griffiths, Scott Burson, Helen Cohen, Olga Gutttag and Interim Superintendent William Hurley. Tom Diaz was not present.

Tom Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Discussion Items

Capital

Mr. Hurley advised the School Committee that he spoke with Kevin Batt, an attorney at Palmer & Dodge. They discussed the proposal to capital and noted that the Capital Expenditures Committee may not be in support of their proposal for Lexington. Attorney Batt suggested Mr. Hurley speak with the chair of the School Committee and the chair of the Board of Selectman for exact wording for the proposal to present at town meeting.

Negotiations for custodians will begin soon. Don McCallion, Rebecca Bryant and Dana Ham will be holding a meeting in April 25th at 1:00 p.m. Mr. Hurley asked if a member of the School Committee would like to be present. Olga Gutttag said she would attend if the School Committee does not have any objection. She feels someone should be present as an observer. No one recalls what the procedure was the last time the custodial contract was negotiated. Since there was no objection, Olga Gutttag will sit in on the April 25th meeting. The first actual negotiation session will be held on May 11th.

In regard to capital, Tom Griffiths wanted to make an alternative proposal to the School Committee. He had discussions with the chairman of the Capital Expenditures Committee and the school liaison of the CEC. They relayed to Mr. Griffiths that they are not interested in entertaining an omnibus proposal. The idea of not passing each of the school's proposals individually would be up to CEC. Helen Cohen understands their position. Scott Burson noted an alternative would be to advise now for the white house planning to ensure sufficient funds to do what we need to do. Olga Gutttag said she has done more research and now believes \$300,000 can get us enough of a design and cost estimate to be able to go for a debt exclusion to fund the project. As part of the exclusion, we can add in additional funds to complete design. She believes for the purpose of having schematic diagrams and estimates for construction, we can actually get the support of the voters to fund this project. If we go for a debt-exclusion, the remaining money can be added into it. Dana Ham feels comfortable with the \$300,000.

A motion was made to accept \$300,000 as a sufficient amount to provide enough information necessary to go for a debt-exclusion on the white house. (Gutttag – Burson; 4-0)

Dana Ham advised the School Committee that he received a one-page report from DMJM Harris regarding the Clarke controls. That report indicated a \$445,000 estimate to replace the units at Clark with more efficient units that will be wired to a central computer station with lighting controls and motion sensors in all rooms. This \$445,000 figures is about \$100,000 to \$150,000 more than we had planned just for Clarke. Mr. Ham had a conversation with George Burnell and explained there would be a 50% pay back on this amount. As soon as NSTAR commissions Clarke, we will receive the rebate. It will also take roughly three to five years on the pay back based on the current energy costs. Mr. Ham hopes that we would be able to still go forward, whether it is doing just half of the univents or a front-end system. Tom Griffiths said he is willing to take this to town meeting for full \$445,000 noting the rebate amount should cover the cost of Diamond. As an aside, it was noted that the modular classrooms are a mess and falling apart.

A motion was made to request \$445,000 pre-rebate for the Clarke Middle School and Diamond Middle School energy upgrades with the Capital Expenditures Committee supporting \$350,000 in principal. Dana Ham feels the Capital Expenditures Committee will support this. (Gutttag- Burson; 4-0)

Olga Gutttag does not want a prioritized list. Scott Burson's fear is that we do have some items in this that are legitimately questionable as to capital operating expenses. Bill Hurley noted from the list of other things requested, an additional \$73,000 would be a very high priority. This would take care of just a few items for general maintenance. It would replace zero clearance snow blowers that had attachments with one single Bobcat. This brings it up to \$113,000, which is another \$98,000 above the \$50,000 for that line item. The \$143,000 figure we are requesting represents only 40% of what we really need to provide for our buildings.

Mr. Hurley confirmed the amount of \$1,578,000 that we should receive from capital.

Ms. Gutttag is unhappy about giving up equipment. We are shortening the life of our flooring from 25 years to probably 10 to 15 years. Tom Griffiths is proposing to come back next year for additional requests. Ms. Gutttag feels we have to start investing more in our facilities budget. We have dirty buildings; not because custodians are not working but it is hard to keep these buildings clean with a mop and bucket. If we are taking this to town meeting and asking for additional appropriation, we should be asking for the whole thing.

A motion was made by Olga Gutttag to go to town meeting and ask for the entire \$268,000 for cleaning equipment. There was no second.

A motion was made to go to town meeting and ask for \$143,000 for cleaning equipment. This represents three ride on floor scrubbers, one robotic floor scrubber and one Bobcat. (Cohen – Burson; 3-1; Guttag opposed)

Technology

Capital Expenditures approved \$250,000 and the School Committee is at \$350,000. Tom Griffiths is proposing \$300,000, which represents Steve Arnoff's recommendation. Olga noted the PTA, LEA and LEF would like a clear definition of the types of items that the school system needs but cannot provide for itself. If we provide projectors to one building, it shows we can provide them for all buildings. This makes it very hard to find private funding for other projectors for other buildings.

Helen Cohen feels comfortable with providing projectors for the high school.

A motion was made to ask for \$300,000 with regard to technology. (Cohen – Burson; 3-1; Guttag opposed)

A motion was made to adjourn at 7:35 p.m. (Guttag – Cohen; 4-0)

Submitted by,

Lisa McGuire

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