

# **Lexington School Committee meeting, Monday, May 3, 2004**

Clarke Middle School - Room #107  
Stedman Road

Present: Members Tom Griffiths, Tom Díaz, Olga Gutttag, and Scott Burson;  
Superintendent Joanne Benton

## ***Agenda***

7:00 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.)

Superintendent's Comments

Members' Reports/Members' Concerns

Discussion Items:

1. Technology Task Force - T. Díaz
2. Other

Action Items:

1. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 7, 2004.
2. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 8, 2004.
3. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 10, 2004.
4. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 12, 2004.
5. Vote to approve School Committee Executive Minutes of April 12, 2004.
6. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 14, 2004.

## ***Public and Superintendent's Comments***

There was no public comment.

Superintendent Benton mentioned recent press coverage praising our basketball player Lou Finnegan and also thanked class advisers for the senior class. She also reported her recent decision to reopen the search for a high school principal.

## ***Override Structure***

From the audience, Mr. Andy Friedlich reported at this point that the Selectmen were currently discussing the structure of the override and that they were hoping a representative of the School Committee could come and express the Committee's wishes. Mr. Griffiths said this would come up under Members' Concerns.

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

Mr. Griffiths reported consensus on the reopening of the principal search. He also pointed out the Selectmen's deliberation on whether the override ballot would have a long or short form. He said Ms. Benton had considered different wordings of a long form concerning the school budget for FY05. Ms. Benton read some suggested wordings. Ms. Gutttag and Mr. Díaz discussed the advisability of mentioning restoration of specific programs. Mr. Burson cautioned that we must be careful that voters not interpret wording as a promise or "contract" to fund specific programs. Mr. Griffiths asked Ms. Benton, Ms. Gutttag, and himself to work out the proposed wording and give it to the Selectmen.

Mr. Díaz thanked Ms. Benton and her staff for providing a new estimate of FTEs for Town Meeting with quick turnaround. Ms. Gutttag thanked Joanne and staff for timely postings on the web. He also reminded the public of the public meeting the following day at 3:45 p.m. to deliberate on the selection of an Interim Superintendent.

Ms. Benton reported that the high school's Jazz Combo would be playing at Hartwell House the following Friday.

Ms. Gutttag thanked the public for the substantial feedback received from public interviews of the interim Superintendent candidates.

## ***School Override Question Wording***

Mr. Burson had left to confer briefly with the Selectmen. On returning he reported that the Selectmen had just voted to put the school question on the ballot and also that the Selectmen requested the language of the school question that night, May 3. Chairman McKenna had provided him with the language of other questions as a guide. Under these new circumstances, Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Burson asked Joanne to work on the text of the question.

Ms. Benton, later in the meeting, had read the text of other questions. She read the Library and Public Safety questions for comparison. She then read a concise but specific proposed wording for the School question. Ms. Gutttag said she believed the wording should not be made shorter because of the large amount requested for the schools; Mr. Díaz agreed. From the audience, Ms. Cathy Gill, Town Meeting member from Precinct 7, expressed the wish that the school question could have been worded first, in a joint meeting with the Selectmen. Ms. Susan Elberger stated the need for specific and precise language.

## ***Technology Task Force***

Mr. Díaz reported that he had drafted the charter for a task force, to function as a subcommittee of the School Committee, to review aspects of the school system's use of computer technology. He clarified that this had a different scope than the consulting project to review municipal and school networking support staffing and organization, for which there was already an outstanding RFP. His proposed task force as an examination of our plans to use computers pedagogically. Mr. Griffiths asked about the composition of this subcommittee. Mr. Díaz said the number was not certain but that he and Ms. Chamberlain agreed there should be parity between school staff and nonstaff and that there would be a liaison with the Capital Expenditures Committee.

## ***State Funding for METCO***

Ms. Gutttag reported the importance of continuing to lobby legislators and the Governor for the METCO budget. She explained the fact that reimbursement for METCO students is far less than, for instance, the money that flows *out* of the school system if a student attends a charter school.

## ***Action Items***

1. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 7, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0.
2. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 8, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0.
3. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 10, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0.
4. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 12, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0.
5. Vote to approve School Committee Executive Minutes of April 12, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0.
6. Vote to approve School Committee Minutes of April 14, 2004. Move to accept by Mr. Díaz, seconded by Ms. Gutttag, approved 3-0-1. (Mr. Griffiths abstained because he was not present on April 14.)

## ***Recess to Join Selectmen Meeting***

The group wanted to discuss the wording of the school question with the Selectmen, meeting at the same time. Mr. Díaz moved to recess and reform at the Selectmen meeting in room 119. Seconded by Mr. Burson, approved 4-0.

For remaining information see the Selectmen's records.