

**Lexington Public Schools
School Committee Meeting – Hastings Elementary School
October 12, 2004**

The School Committee was previously in session with the Selectman's office and the Personnel Board. Discussion was with respect to the hiring of a new town manager. Tom Griffiths re-called the meeting to order at 7:38 p.m. Members present were Tom Griffiths, Olga Guttag, Helen Cohen, Tom Diaz, Scott Burson and Interim Superintendent William Hurley.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. Hurley introduced Lynne Stinson, Principal of Hastings.

Hastings School – Welcome from Principal Lynn Stinson

Ms. Stinson reported a good start to the school year. She gave a breakdown of student enrollment with number of classrooms and faculty. As of October 1st there were 497 children enrolled, 22 typical classrooms and one self-contained classroom for an intense learning program, and 85 full and part-time staff members. Ms. Stinson explained that the school was named after Mariah Hastings, who was the first woman to inaugurate a library in Lexington. She complimented head custodian, Joseph Ferranti, who was named employee of the year, for the upkeep of the school and maintaining the building in excellent condition. Hastings Elementary has a very strong anti-biased program with 20 teachers on that committee. There was discussion about the school's curriculum as well as field trips that children have gone on and upcoming trips later in the year. Ms. Stinson recommended all to visit the Hastings website to learn more about the school.

Tom Griffiths asked if it was a lot of trouble managing almost 500 children. Ms. Stinson said having the help of a half-time assistant principal has made it a lot easier this year.

Mr. Hurley attended the all-school meeting and said he was impressed with how respectful and well behaved the children were.

Facilities and Energy Update

Dana Ham gave an update on facilities, capital improvements and accomplishments that were made this summer. In regard to capital improvements, the Harrington gym floor has been completed and today was the first day children could use it. There have been major repairs done to the roof at Estabrook. Tar has been leaking down by the skylights. These are ongoing repairs and the contractor is still working on these issues. At the High

School, half of the Science building roof was completely replaced after doing infrared leak testing. Slight repairs were made to the other half of that roof. There were also repairs made to the roof of the High School gym. The High School field house in-door track is being replaced with a mondo track surface. The contractor is still in the process of laying the track and it should be finished by the end of October. The initial bid for this track came in at \$40,000 over what was appropriated. We worked with the contractor to redesign the track and we now have a first class track in area of \$145,000, which is now below the appropriated amount. The construction of the new Harrington school is running smoothly. The building is composed of three wings; Area "A", Area "C" and Area "B". Mr. Ham gave accolades to the Permanent Building Committee as they support the school system and have the best interest of the children in mind. In regard to the new Fiske building project, the bid documents are nearing completion. Mr. Ham gave an extensive list of projects that the facilities department completed during the summer months to prepare the schools for opening in September. Ongoing projects include the electric heat study and the energy awareness program. Mr. Ham informed the School Committee that the school department may spend about \$270,000 this year for oil; an increase of about \$80,000 over last year. On the upside, last year we locked in on a natural gas price for a two-year period. The lock in price is \$7.39 per therm. The current KeySpan price per therm is \$9.68. This lock in price will generate an estimated \$60,000 savings this year.

In regard to the Harrington and Fiske projects, Mr. Hurley said the original Harrington opening date was the Monday immediately following the Thanksgiving holiday. In recent meetings with the Permanent Building Committee and the administration, it is evident that the contractor cannot get us in there in that time line. Therefore, the moves will not be taking place as originally scheduled. New dates will be announced as soon as they are confirmed.

Mr. Ham said the crack at Hastings would be repaired in the spring. He also gave clarification to Helen Cohen regarding the new laws for the bid process.

Olga Guttag thanked Mr. Ham for a comprehensive presentation. She also extended thanks to the facilities department for the incredible amount of work that was done this summer. She asked when could the school department expect to start getting energy savings at Clarke if NSTAR accepts our Clarke energy reimbursement project by the end of October. Mr. Ham said he wants to first see how any construction would affect students

Tom Griffiths inquired about the cost to install the energy management system. Mr. Ham is still waiting for a quote.

Members' Reports/Members Concerns

Olga Gutttag reported on LHS PTSA and SPED PAC meetings she attended over the past two weeks.

Scott Burson reminded the community that the newly renovated Carey Memorial Library is now open for business and is a wonderful facility. There will be a ceremonial recognition of the library on November 14th from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Tom Diaz discussed the school bus accident in Stoneham. He said his heart goes out to the families involved.

Helen Cohen went to the first meeting of the youth services council. She also attended a Health PAC meeting. Health PAC deals with youth health issues.

Tom Griffiths and Scott Burson represented the school department at a meeting regarding an independent production studio in Lexington. Mr. Griffiths also attended a Process Planning Group (formerly called Gang of 8) meeting. The main topic was a request for patience from everyone regarding the budget process as it will take awhile to get a budget put together.

Tom Diaz asked if there could be discussion at an upcoming meeting of what the guidelines will be for the FY 05-06 budget. He would like to discuss what, as a committee, we would like the outcome of the budget process to be.

Tom Griffiths noted we would have an updated enrollment report at the first School Committee meeting in November.

Discussion Items

FF & E for Harrington

Olga Gutttag made a presentation about the Harrington technology deployment and raised questions about how technology is being added into the new school. She stated her concerns about the current plan. The current equipment proposal goes beyond the plan produced by the Harrington Tech Committee in 2002, yet there is not enough money in the budget for web-based security cameras. The current proposal follows the ideal in adding the best technology into every classroom. Ms. Gutttag pointed out that we have a unique opportunity at this point to revisit what technology and how we might deploy it at Harrington, but we won't have all the needed information before the move. She identified critical phases of technology deployment prior to the move that would allow time to produce a comprehensive Harrington technology deployment plan that address

her concerns. To move into the new building, Harrington will need to have a working network, and relocate existing computers and projectors for immediate use. Old equipment can then be replaced after a new comprehensive plan is in place.

Ms Guttag identified four advantages to “buying time and phasing technology into the new Harrington.” First, two years ago we did not know the system would be hiring a new IIT director who would be responsible for technology decisions and might have new ideas on how to best proceed. Secondly, the Technology Review Committee that will be reporting on best practices in April, 2005. Thirdly, our supply budget will not be set till the Superintendent prepares his budget in December. Ms. Guttag pointed out the impact of new technology purchases on operating budget will be great in regard to cost of bulbs, toner, and whatever supplies are necessary to operate the equipment. She feels it is better to not purchase the equipment if we cannot fund the supplies for it. Finally, Ms. Guttag said there is a need to produce a plan for technological equity between the new Harrington and the new Fiske and therefore she advocates to slow down the buying of technology equipment until such a plan is in place. She also identified the downside of such phasing of technology - the loss of use of the new technology between the move-in date and June, 2005.

Mr. Hurley said that because of the bid process, he did not want too much time to go by before a decision is made. Unfortunately he could not make a specific recommendation this evening but will have a recommendation at the next School Committee meeting.

Tom Diaz agreed with Mr. Hurley that this decision is worth taking two weeks before discussion at the next School Committee meeting. We are taking an existing plan and putting it on hold and reconstructing it. The Technology Review Committee will assess what the standard “equipment kit” should be that every classroom gets.

Scott Burson also agreed that the idea of slowing this down to take a look makes sense. He would feel uncomfortable moving in the direction that some schools have top of the line technology while others do not.

Tom Griffiths was amenable to receiving a recommendation in two weeks but also said the decision could be postponed for some time as we will not be able to establish technology in all schools at the same time. Some locations will be more equitable than others, but we should have a direction in place of where we want to go with the other schools.

There was discussion among the School Committee members regarding technology in both the new schools and implementing upgrades to the other schools. Olga Guttag asked how the town could pay for the technology part. If funding was available, we could upgrade technology where necessary and bring uniformity to all the schools.

Technology Review Sub-Committee Update

Tom Diaz gave an update on the Technology Review Committee. The Committee had its first full meeting on September 28th. The next meeting is scheduled for October 20th at 7:00 a.m. The Committee is broken down into three smaller working groups headed by Tom Diaz, Olga Gutttag and Tony Close. Tom Diaz is involved in technology strategy; Olga Gutttag is heading group on administrative computing as well as technical support resources; and Tony Close is working on curriculum. Tom Diaz said his group is working on coming up with a basic kit for each classroom with technical resources. The end date for the first phase of the work that has been done will be in December in which they will meet to discuss the preliminary findings. The final work product will be presented in April, 2005 where they will make recommendations for a four-year plan for submission to the state of Massachusetts. Tom Diaz will give a synopsis on what the working groups have achieved at the October 26th School Committee meeting.

Public Input on Superintendent Search

Helen Cohen reported that all focus groups have been conducted with an additional meeting held this past Monday evening. The consultant said he received good information at these meetings. There will also be time for public input at October 26th School Committee meeting as well as this evening.

A Hastings parent, Kevin Oye, attended one of the focus groups and noted the consultant did a great job. He was surprised that the total number who attended the focus groups was light. He looks forward to hearing the summaries of these group meetings.

Tom Diaz said the School Committee should have a report by end of week on the focus group meetings.

Superintendent Search Sub-Committee Update

Helen Cohen urged the community to get in touch with the School Committee with regard to the search process. The School Committee is waiting for the profile that FMS will put together from focus groups that were held. They also sent out a number of letters to people they think would be interested in the search. Tom Diaz and Helen Cohen have spent the last week and a half reading applications from citizens and putting together the committee. Ms. Cohen described the positions that need to be filled for search sub-committee. Helen Cohen and Tom Diaz will represent the School Committee; Elaine Sterzin will represent Central Office; Lynn Stinson, principal of Hastings Elementary, and Joanne Hennessy, principal of Diamond Middle will also be on the sub-committee. There will be a total of eleven people on the committee. What the School Committee is looking for in this group are parents with children at different levels of the school system and in different schools. They are looking for individuals with backgrounds in education, management or human resources, finance, special education or psychology. The

committee must be diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, and amount of time living in Lexington. Ms. Cohen listed those who were selected and said she was bringing this list to the School Committee as a proposal. Olga Guttag feels it is important for the new superintendent and town manager to have a collaborative relationship. She asked that Linda Vine, acting town manager, be on the committee or assign a designee. Ms. Cohen agreed.

Action Items

A motion was made to accept the Superintendent Search Committee list as proposed and give authority to fill the specified categories. (Guttag – Burson; 5-0)

Andre Ravenelle confirmed all paperwork for the home schooling requests was reviewed and in order. A motion was made to approve the Requests for Home Schooling. (Cohen – Burson; 5-0)

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the September 14, 2004 School Committee meeting as submitted. (Diaz – Burson; 5-0)

A motion was made at 10:02 p.m. to go into Executive Session to discuss the salary of a non-union employee and potential litigation and not return to public session. (Burson – Guttag; roll call vote was unanimous 5-0)

Submitted by:

Lisa McGuire

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