

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, September 14, 2006

Jonas Clarke Middle School Auditorium

17 Stedman Road

**Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, Members Helen Cohen, Tom Griffiths, Olga Gutttag, Ravi Sakhuja and student representative Toni Maeck.
Minutes taken by Leora Tec.**

The meeting was convened at 7:41 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

II. Public Comment

Student Editor of The Musket at LHS: We are not funded by the town this year. We are a very committed group of students. It reaches a lot of people. We won't be able to print as often and maybe not at all if we don't get money from the town. We are open to suggestions.

Dawn McKenna (precinct 6): This is not the first organization that suddenly lost its funding this year. I am concerned about this. If this is the result of a shortfall from the summer then there needs to be discussion about this.

Jim Goell (precinct 7): Plans on the White House. Thank you for the schedule.

Masha Traber (LHS parent, son on Musket): They will push for subscriptions. Students spend too much time fundraising. I would like a guarantee that there will be a Musket.

III. Superintendent's Report:

1. Opening of School – Remarks (10 minutes)

Paul Ash: Mary Ellen Dunn will be the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. We will not have finance person for the last few weeks in November. Mary Ellen Dunn and Ann Giombetti will overlap a few days a week in the first half of November, but Mary Ellen will be in Natick a few days in December.

[Paul Ash discussed her background.]

We had a terrific opening of the school year. This happens with hard work over the summer by many staff members.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns: (20 minutes)

Toni Maeck: I started my senior year. The impact of the budget cuts is very real.

Tom Griffiths: Olga Guttag and I went to the PBC meeting on Tuesday.

Olga Guttag: Playing fields: Carl Valente has called together all parties who are impacted by the construction of new buildings. Issues of fields at the new Fiske were discussed. Some work will be done on Harrington fields.

Tom Griffiths: The rest of the PBC meeting: Fiske is 93-95% complete. There are no floor tiles because it is too humid to lay tiles. They expect substantial completion by the end of December but the move may not be then. But when we hit substantial completion we will start to pay for heating etc.,...Also there is a field irrigation plan on the table that included \$38K of non-school expenses. The Fiske sidewalk is open for passage through Fiske property (so Diamond students can get to school safely). The Harrington safety sidewalk is expected at the end of the month. They are still working on the Harrington closeout: wells, faucets, switches etc.,...They talked about funding for the LHS auditorium and the boiler room in the science building, what kitty should those expenses come out of? Perhaps we will need to go to Town Meeting; perhaps there will be residual secondary construction money. A consultant has been hired to look at issues at the middle schools.

The Council on Aging met in Cary Library with interviews with older members in town.

Ravi Sakhuja: I attended the No Place for Hate and Energy Conversation Committees and worked with Bill Hartigan. I am taking a course on how to be a School Committee member. A lot of things I am doing I shouldn't be doing. It is very helpful.

Helen Cohen: Becky Rushford is the coordinator of the Youth Services Committee. Twice a year there are middle school programs on half days; January 11 is snow tubing. I have to find chaperones. It's from 11:30-5:00.

Tom Diaz: On September 21 there will be a Summit meeting with the Board of Selectmen and two the finance committees for those interested in the budget. We've been having a discussion with the municipal side about whether consolidation of maintenance functions town-wide would be a good thing? There are pros and cons.

Tom Griffiths: To clarify a mistaken perception: There is no shortfall from the summer.

Tom Diaz: There is a surplus.

Olga Guttag: I was away for several weeks and received 3000 emails to most of which I will not be able to respond. I attended the PTA presidents' meeting; it was very positive. The PTAs will help disseminate information we need to get out to the

public about redistricting and about public hearings on that and on the budget. At LHS the Science Olympiad team will not be offered this year, so hearing about the Musket is the second unintended override consequence we were not aware of. Can we have a list of these unintended or surprising side effects of the failure of the override?

V. Discussion Items:

1. Update on Master Planning Process/Redistricting (30 minutes)

David Finney (Design Partnership)

Paul Ash: Design Partnership was hired to look at the four elementary schools together with enrollment numbers to determine options and cost estimates. We are also looking at the Central Office. Embedded in the whole plan is the determination of the **Optimal Educational Capacity** for each school.

The Nov 6th meeting is the tentative time for a report from Design Partnership.

David Finney: We looked at the needs of the school system 10 years into the future. The approach to redistricting should work for what will be happening 3 years and 10 years from now.

1. confirm enrollment projections
2. develop elementary education program requirements
3. assess existing buildings and sites
4. develop system-wide conceptual elementary school options including Central Office
5. cost estimating
6. analyze system-wide elementary school options including phasing and swing-space implications
7. assist with school capacity determinations for school redistricting
8. meet with PBC and school administration
9. meet with town Boards and community groups
10. assist in presentation to Town Meeting

We will assess the building of new schools vs. renovating old schools.

ENROLLMENT:

There will likely be a dramatic decrease in K-5 enrollment by projections already done. We did our own projections using state records instead of local ones. We agree with the superintendent that there is still a probability of decrease.

Some communities also show reductions. Enrollment can change in communities unrelated to birth.

Tom Diaz: Did you study the old Harrington?

David Finney: We are looking at the old Harrington. It may be possible to free up one of the existing schools for swing space eventually perhaps for FY2010.

Ravi Sakhuja: Harrington School was designed for 500 students.

David Finney: Actually 450 because of district-wide programs housed there.

2. CORI Policy – First Reading (15 minutes)

David Horton and Robin Digiammarino presented the CORI policy.

Discussion and questions on the policy.

3. Enrollment Update – Projected vs. Actual (5 minutes)

Paul Ash: Enrollment overall increased by 28 students. Bowman increased by 15 students, the only elementary school that increased. K-2 numbers are lower than 3-5.

VI. Action Items:

1. Vote to Approve 2006-2007 School Committee Meeting Calendar (10 minutes)

Discussion of dates.

Motion to approve the calendar with the addition of November 14 at 7:30 and March 6 at 5:00 (Gutttag, Cohen). **The motion was approved 5-0.**

2. Vote to Approve 2006-2007 System Goals (15 minutes)

Paul Ash discussed the system goals. Proposed changes: add autism spectrum disorders to 1C; say “not only students with special needs” in 1C.

Motion to approve goals with changes as proposed (Cohen, Griffiths) **The motion passed 5-0.**

3. Vote to Accept \$285.00 in Donations to the Lexington Children’s Place for a Playground (5 minutes)

Motion to accept \$285.00 in donations to the Lexington Children’s Place (Sakhuja, Griffiths) **The motion passed 5-0.**

Motion to adjourn (Cohen, Griffiths). **The motion passed 5-0.**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 26, 2006, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.