

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Saturday, February 1, 2014**  
**Diamond Middle School Auditorium**  
**99 Hancock Street**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice-Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart

**ABSENT:** Sam A. Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 10:04 a.m.

**I. Call to Order and Welcome:**

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment.

There were no public comments

**II. Public Hearing on the Superintendent's FY 15 Recommended Budget**

The Chair explained the purpose of the public hearing for the Superintendent's FY 15 Recommended Budget and provided the timeline of the future meetings regarding this budget. The Chair then opened the Public Hearing portion of the meeting.

Judy Crocker, 15 Currier Court commented on the general budget. She did not see the need for a Transitional Social Worker position because she believes there are services in place. Mrs. Crocker believes that money would be better spent in the classroom than on a Director of Planning and Assessment. Mrs. Crocker spoke in opposition to the Communication Assistant position.

Mary McDonald, 5 Nickerson Road shared she is not in favor of the part-time Communications Specialist

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street commented on classroom sizes and believes that the class sizes are overcrowded in all levels of the school system. There is a need to make schools larger and wants more money spent on smaller classrooms.

Katie Wipke, 53 Asbury Street shared her thoughts on high school teacher workload, teacher salaries, and new students coming into town. Ms. Wipke would like to see money spent on reducing teacher workload and having smaller class sizes. Ms. Wipke is not in favor of spending money on a Communication Specialist.

Margaret Coppe shared that the Committee is already budgeting for more teachers at the high school to deal with the increased enrollment

Dr. Ash shared that there are extra teachers budgeted so class sizes do not increase.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, suggested that a budget overview be created for the public highlighting new items to the budget and explaining how the budget process works. Ms. McKenna also shared her thoughts on the Communication Specialist position which she is not in favor of, school administrators, restoring the elementary foreign language program and the budget changes. She urged the Committee to take the public comments seriously and hoped the Committee would reflect on them in their budget discussions.

Lin Jensen, 133 Reed Street, spoke about environmental concerns in all schools with respect to Styrofoam trays in the schools. Ms. Jensen asked if there was any money in the budget to replace the Styrofoam trays with other types of trays and suggested other alternatives.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street asked the Committee if there is anything in the FY15 Recommended Budget regarding reducing high school teacher workload to four classes instead of five classes. Ms. Biglow inquired what could be done to reduce the high school teacher workload.

Judy Crocker, 15 Currier Court commented on the proposed Communication Specialist position and transparency. Mrs. Crocker also suggested that the School Committee meeting materials be available online before meetings in order for the public to be prepared for the meeting in order to speak and, particularly with respect to public comments being properly represented in the minutes.

Margaret Coppe shared that she has spoken with the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen on their procedures. As soon as possible, the School Committee will begin posting agenda packets.

Ms. Coppe responded to Ms. Biglow's question regarding teacher workload and shared that it would cost approximately \$1.2 million to reduce teacher workload.

Jessie Steigerwald responded to Ms. Biglow's question that she is interested in exploring the idea of reducing the teacher workload and agreed with Ms. McKenna that this is the time the Committee gets to hear about problems and suggestions from the public. Ms. Steigerwald also shared the need to be mindful and to get input from principals, department heads and teachers.

Alessandro Alessandrini responded to Ms. Biglow's question by sharing his thought regarding teacher workload, enrollment, surplus of funds and issues that interest him. He reminded the audience that down the road, there is a need for a new elementary school and high school, and the foreign language program at the elementary school level, all of which cost money and the Committee needs to be prudent on how money is spent.

Mary Ann Stewart thanked Ms. Biglow for her comments and shared that she is interested in making our schools more sensitive for our students in the classroom and to reduce section load at the high school. There are competing priorities.

Bonnie Brodner reiterated what Mr. Alessandrini spoke about and is concerned about teacher workload and their stress. Ms. Brodner shared the Committee does have many competing priorities and the Committee needs to be able to move forward in the best way possible.

Dawn McKenna addressed the comments of the Committee and asked the Committee to make a policy decision even if it means dipping into the school portion that will end up in the stabilization fund. Believes there is enough funding to make this happen.

Judy Crocker spoke to short and long terms goals and that teacher workload should be part of the future goals of the Committee.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing portion of the meeting at 10:46 a.m. and shared that the Committee will continue discussion of the budget at its February 4 meeting. The Chair encouraged anyone who has comments to reach out to the Committee. The Committee takes public input seriously and appreciates the public for taking their time to come out today.

### **III Agenda:**

1. School Committee Discussion of the Superintendent's FY 15 Recommended Budget  
The Committee engaged in discussion regarding (i) per pupil expenditures; (ii) level service budget; (iii) per pupil allocations; (iv) 9-12 Math Department; (v) supplying packet materials on-line; (vi) Director of Planning and Assessment position; (vii) reduction of teacher workload as a future school committee goal; (viii) legal fees and how are they broken down; (ix) high school landscaping expenditures; (x) adding funds to the Landscaping Committee; (xi) mileage reimbursement by Committee and Recording Secretary; (xii) social worker position.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Business and Finance commented on per pupil expenditures, how they are calculated and instructional costs. Ms. Dunn also spoke to per pupil allocation for 9-12 Math Department which has the lowest per pupil allocation than any other department at the high school. Ms. Dunn and Kevin Kelly are working together to determine how best to calculate per pupil allocations in this department.

The Committee requested, if possible for Tuesday's meeting, would Ms. Dunn go back and apply CPI during the level funded years and recalculate per pupil allocations and then show the allocation per school. The Committee also requested Ms. Dunn to research on being greener in school cafeterias.

Dr. Ash explained 6% was added to the elementary expense budget and that is insufficient to meet the needs. He and Ms. Dunn will have to figure out the best way to calculate these numbers. Dr. Ash announced that he was withdrawing his recommendation for a Communication Specialists due to public hearing comments and does not want to take time debating this position.

The Chair suggested that if the Committee heard more about the Communication Specialist position, they might reconsider next year. The Committee thanked Dr. Ash and reminded the public that the position was \$30,000 which can now go towards other items in the budget.

Jen Robbin, 8 Clark Lane and PTA President, spoke about the work of the Landscaping Committee, fundraising, obtaining Town funds, and how the Science Department counts on the Landscaping Committee each year for students to participate. Ms. Robbin shared that she believes this work should be covered in the budget to provide the best possible support.

**IV. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**The Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 p.m.**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, February 4, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

*Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda*

Voted by the School Committee April 16, 2014