

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, March 3, 2009
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Helen Cohen, School Committee Members Rod Cole, Margaret Coppe, Tom Diaz and Ravi Sakhuja. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:33 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Helen Cohen)

New officers will be appointed next time as the election was postponed due to snow.

II. Public Comment

Mary Ann Stewart (precinct 1): Thinking about stimulus money. Perhaps we could use training in technology, innovation and professional development and training for Excel in the high school.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Tom Diaz: Thanks to the chair of the Appropriation Committee for inviting us to discuss our plans for the stimulus money.

Margaret Coppe: Saturday night Leora Tec organized a *Defiance* event at the Lexington Flick with her mother who wrote the book *Defiance* and her brother who was one of the film's producers. The owner wants to do more community events. Speak to him or to Leora if you have ideas.

IV. Discussion Items

1. Relocating Part of the Pre-K Program and a LABBB Vocational Program to the School Administration Building.

Patrick Barbieri, the Executive Director of LABBB and Liz Billings Fouhy, Director of Early Childhood Education answered questions from the Committee, as did Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities for the town. The Pre-K program has grown steadily over recent years, and it now needs space in addition to its space at the Harrington School in order to accommodate all its activities. The LABBB program would use rooms next to the Print Shop

in the basement of the Central Office to carry out clerical training. (The program will no longer have to rent space outside the schools, and Lexington will provide more space for LABBB. Lexington has not provided its full share of space in recent years.) Tom Diaz believes that, if the Committee does approve these moves, that this use should be considered provisional since the Town has not yet completely decided about building use for the Central Office building.

2. Second Quarterly Financial Report for FY09. The report was presented by Assistant Superintendent Mary Ellen Dunn. There was a projected deficit of \$428,775 that was reduced to \$375K due to the revised transportation number. Legal and consulting costs for SPED make up the bulk of the deficit.

There were questions and comments from the Committee including a discussion of hiring a person with a finance background for the Student Services department. Ravi Sakhuja asked about the relationship between the superintendent and the School Committee regarding asking questions. He stated that we need to track the new SPED programs and also compare how schools provide SPED services.

Dr Ash responded that five new programs were created for FY08 and that the administration reported on them once since their creation. The programs have done better than we expected. We returned \$1,000,000 and also put \$300K in a stabilization fund.

Dr. Ash discussed possible ways to deal with the deficit: Possibly not hiring five instructional assistants or taking a close look at the expense lines. Only after exhausting these possibilities might we have to make cuts to programs or services or ask Town Meeting for money.

There were questions and comments from the audience.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent stated that budget people should be put into various departments rather than adding more employees to the Finance Department.

V. Action Item

1. Vote to Support the Selectmen's Request That the School and Municipal Departments Reduce Energy Consumption by 20% Over the Next Five Years

Presented by Steve Kropper, precinct 2, Chair of the Selectman's Energy Conservation Commission and Sean Newell, Assistant Director of Public Facilities.

Motion to adopt a five-year target for the schools to reduce BTU consumption by 20% (Diaz, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.

VI. Motion to adjourn (Diaz, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.