

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, November 3, 2014
Jonas Clarke Middle School, Auditorium
17 Stedman Road

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, Chair Margaret Coppe, School Committee Members Jessie Steigerwald, Alessandro Alessandrini, Judith Crocker, Student Representative Abigail Schwartz

The minutes were taken by Christine Ashness, Recording Secretary

The meeting convened at 7:40 pm

Call to order and welcome: Chair Margaret Coppe welcomed everyone and introduced Christine Ashness as the new recording secretary.

Superintendent's Announcements:

There is no school for students tomorrow, November 4, it is a Professional Day for staff. Carol Pilarski explained the Professional Day: Lexington Learns Together. 764 professional staff members will learn from each other at Lexington High School. It will be a day for educators, by educators. There will be 92 courses (141 sessions) led by 174 volunteers. Feedback is said to be very exciting.

School Committee Member Announcements:

Jessie Steigerwald is very grateful for the Professional Development Day and said Lexington is lucky to have the resources to do it. Trick or Treating in downtown Lexington had over 1400 children in attendance. Thanks the Lexington Retailers' Association and the entire community for providing it.

Judith Crocker reminded all that the LHS art show is now at the Lexington Arts and Crafts Center. Figures for FY15 bus ridership are at 47% which is up 4% from last year. Lexington High School is at 36%. The highest ridership is at Clarke which is 73%, followed by Bowman and Estabrook at 56%.

Margaret Coppe: The LEF Trivia Bee is on November 12th at 7:00pm in the LHS auditorium. 7pm. She reminded everyone to vote tomorrow.

Vote on Options to Reduce K-5 School Overcrowding

Margaret Coppe explained how the meeting will be run tonight. She assured everyone that all emails sent to the committee have been read regarding tonight's issue. She also explained the open meeting law.

Dr. Ash explained projected enrollments for Elementary (K-5). In 2019 it should be approximately 3196 students, 268 more than in 2013.

Phase 2 of the Master Plan for Elementary Schools was presented:

Task One:

- Relocate space from the Harrington Elementary School to the Central Administration Building (Old Harrington)

Task Two:

- Relocate the entire Pre-K program from the Harrington Elementary School to the Central Administration Building (Old Harrington)
- Convert former Pre-K program space in Harrington Elementary School to K-5 Program space

Task Three

- Lease two classroom-sized modular units at each of the Fiske, Bowman and Bridge Elementary Schools

Members asked questions about each of the tasks.

Judith Crocker showed a presentation on the basics of what they hope to accomplish tonight and in the coming meetings. Immediate, short term and long term needs; decisions/choices the committee has; establishing priorities and policy; short and long term options; positive and negative outcomes; outside costs.

Jessie Steigerwald showed her views and the 5 year projection for elementary space needs.

Committee members commented and discussed.

Public Comments:

Andrea Strimling 23 Byron Avenue; Alison Stevens 1373 Mass Avenue

They are representing the Bowman site council and encourage the committee not to move forward. Bowman's challenges will not be solved, and a temporary solution is not fiscally responsible. Requesting a more comprehensive plan would allow Bowman to address educational needs in all areas.

Bill Hurley, 33 Young Street

He questioned if we are at a point where we are beyond our capacity. If yes, why wait as it will only get worse. He urged the committee to go forward.

John Boiney, 533 Lowell Street

He asked if the modulares were a onetime cost. He asked why it is so difficult to project enrollment, saying there needs to be a system in place to get the numbers right. He doesn't support going to town meeting. He supports redistricting.

Leslie Levitan, 10 Adams Street

She stated there is a lot of research showing that redistricting can have negative effects. All elementary schools will be crowded soon. Don't move kids around due to lack of planning. There are plenty of other options.

Alissa O'Shaugnessey, 6 Brooklyn Road

Fiske parent. She has a child who receives PT/OT and is often paired with children from the Pre-K program. She did her own number crunching and by renovating the old Harrington, the cost per student for creating 90 additional students in Pre-K is \$216 per student. The cost per student for modulars would be \$1454 per student. She doesn't see any harm in asking for help, and is strongly in favor of 2 modulars at Fiske. Having 29 kids in a classroom is not working.

Gretchen Reisig, 9 Victory Garden Way

She is representing group of parents and is asking for a Special Town Meeting. She supports what has been said tonight, adding that getting modulars gives people time to examine redistricting and come up with a good plan.

Umesh Shelat, 34 James Street

Agrees that getting modulars and buying time, is key. The idea of modulars is critical and a sensible redistricting would be valuable.

Stephanie Mitzenmacher, 30 Cary Avenue, Cathy Spence, 32 Muzzey Street

They are from Bridge, and thanked their principal and the committee for their views. Their PTA supports class size goals and keeping specialist's space. They support temporary modulars and agree there must be some type of small redistricting using a buffer zone for people coming in, not current students. They strongly support a new Hastings School. In the long term they would consider broader redistricting looking at the whole population.

Tom Diaz, 354 Waltham Street

Supports Stephanie's views (above) and believes there needs to be a Plan B if the Town and Selectmen say no. The focus should first be on Bridge, then Fiske, then Bowman. Reconditioning/reusing the old Harrington is something he supports.

Sue Kingsbury, 9 Middle Street

Bridge is losing a lot of parking spots, blacktop area with modulars. It is a safety issue with a building jetting out into a parking lot.

Sharon Olofsson, 36 Hill Street

Supports a proposal of K-2, and 3-5 schools. Without redistricting, it could work with no construction costs.

Malka Berndt, 57 Spring Street

She had questions on energy costs with modulars. Will the budget allow for these costs? Requests that if phase 3 will look at cost of building one new school rather than remodeling others.

Members discussed the best way to word the motion. Dr. Ash did not recommend putting the Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy move to the Central Office in the motion and stated that the town will want a plan.

Motion to request the Board of Selectmen hold a special town meeting in January to appropriate the funds to install up to six modular classrooms; up to two at Fiske, up to two at Bridge, up to two at Bowman with appropriate site work and appropriate funds for site work or take any other action necessary to additional space (Coppe, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

Vote School Committee Position on 2014 Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) Conference Resolutions and Proposed Amendments to MASC By-Laws

Committee members had some questions and comments.

Motion to support MASC Conference amended resolutions (Alessandrini, Steigerwald)

Motion was approved 4-0.

Margaret Coppe stated that there are a number of sets of minutes that need to be submitted for approval and asked that members review them.

Motion to adjourn (Alessandrini, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45pm.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; Lexington Public Schools Ad hoc Schools Master Plan Committee School Committee Progress Report, Phase 2 – Elementary Schools; Town of Lexington Ad hoc School Master Planning Committee Minutes; Report of the Resolutions Committee; Handout from J. Crocker on FY12 v FY15 School Bus Ridership; Handout from J. Crocker on Overcrowding, Handout from Jessie Steigerwald on Overcrowding

Voted by the School Committee January 6, 2015