

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, January 8, 2013**

**Lexington Town Office Building**

**Selectmen's Meeting Room**

**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald, and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative**

**The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary**

**The Meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, had follow-up questions from the last Committee meeting regarding how many full day Professional Development days were in a school year. He asked why we have these Professional Development days scattered through the year because he has heard from parents who are having difficulty finding babysitting for these full day sessions and inquired if they could be held at the beginning of the school year.

Margaret Coppe inquired of Mr. Radulescu-Banu if next week would be okay with him for an answer to his questions and he stated yes.

Judy Crocker, Ad hoc School Transportation and Safety Study Committee Member announced that one of the principle websites for school transportation picked up an article that the Safety Committee had published in the Lexington Minuteman and put it on their e-newsletter. This is a national association for pupil transportation and will be seen around the country. She copied the page of the newsletter including the article in case anyone missed it, entitled "The Middle School Balancing Act." She also included the article that should be coming out this week in the Lexington Minuteman, "Building upon 2012 Transportation Successes."

**II. Superintendent's Announcements**

Dr. Ash had no announcements this evening.

**III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns**

Alessandro Alessandrini announced that on January 29, 2012 at Cary Hall from 7:00- 9:00 p.m. there will be a Panel Discussion entitled "AP Courses and Other Myths about What Colleges Really Want" with college admission officers and community question and answer session. This panel will be moderated by Linda Wertheimer of the Boston Globe.

Jessie Steigerwald shared an update that on Monday she attended the Social Studies Middle School Professional Development Training with Team Leader Matt Mehler. She viewed a 15-minute video that the teachers put together which included some excerpts from Annual Town Meeting 2012 and Article 17. Nancy Corcoran-Ronchetti, Chair of the Town Meeting Members Association and Ms. Steigerwald suggested it might be worthwhile to view it at a future TMA Information Session. She also reminded parents of 8<sup>th</sup> graders to save the date for the March 16<sup>th</sup> community mock town meeting.

Mary Ann Stewart announced that she will be unable to attend this Thursday's Permanent Building Committee (PBC) Meeting at 7:00 p.m. at the Hadley Public Service Building and inquired if Margaret Coppe would attend in her absence. Ms. Stewart wanted to remind the Committee that the State Legislature kicked off their new session which included our new Senator Mike Barrett of Lexington. Ms. Stewart wanted to raise awareness that the Committee should keep an eye on some of the bills that will be filed and re-filed, particularly "The Act to Invest in our Communities" and "Media Literacy." Also, Ms. Stewart announced to community members that she will hold her monthly coffee session from 2:00-3:30 at Panera Bread in Lexington Center. She will be available discuss policy issues or other issues relative to our schools. Ms. Stewart then announced that Committee members had a meeting with some parents from the Debate Program and found it an insightful and informative meeting and will be reviewing that input as they go through the budget process.

Margaret Coppe stated that she would be able to attend the PBC meeting on Thursday evening for Mary Ann Stewart. She also announced that she needed to add an item to tonight's agenda and would have this item first this evening.

#### **IV. Agenda**

##### **1. Metropolitan Area Planning Council Grant**

Margaret Coppe shared that a request to write a letter of support for a Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) Grant came last Friday at 4:00 p.m. and this letter needs to be in MAPC's hands by this Friday, January 11, 2013. The Committee must decide tonight whether to write a letter of support for the Safe Routes to School to evaluate and recommend school zone signage which the Committee was going to be looking at and they are delighted to have the opportunity to defray some of these costs through this grant. The DPW is currently drafting a request for a consultant transportation engineer to conduct this study and they are looking for the grant to cover the cost of between \$6,800 and \$9,350. Eight Lexington Schools would be covered by the grant but the high school would not be covered by the grant because the grant is only for grades K-8. There is a possibility that three private schools: the Cotting School, the Waldorf School and the Lexington Montessori School would also be covered. Mrs. Coppe asked the Committee to consider drafting the letter and authorizing the Chair to sign it on their behalf because of the timing of submission to MAPC. Judy Crocker, Coordinator of the Safe Routes to School program needs this by Thursday, January 10<sup>th</sup>. There was discussion by Committee members.

Judy Crocker, Coordinator Safe Routes to School program took questions and comments from the Committee regarding the amount of money being applied for which is \$6,800 for 8 public schools which becomes \$850 per school. The Safe Routes to School Committee will be applying for a grant to study school zone signage that would include crosswalks, pavement markings and physical signage. The additional \$2,550 would be for the three private schools. The DPW budget would pay for the study if we did not get the grant and has a 3-year capital plan for signage and improvements under that plan. Dr. Ash, the Board of Selectmen, Chief Mark Corr and the Sidewalk Committee have already provided letters of support. Mrs. Crocker wanted to thank publically Michelle Ciccolo, Clerk of the Planning Board who put this grant in front of them.

**Motion to Authorize the Chair to Draft a Letter in Support of a Grant Offered by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council and submit by Friday, January 11, 2012 (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**2. Four and Ten-Year Enrollment Forecasts**

Dr. Ash presented the four and ten-year enrollment forecasts. The first report presented was the Enrollment Report which affects Dr. Ash's recommended budget to the Committee, setting the context for his recommendation. Lexington has collected data back to the 1980s and has historical information. Dr. Ash explained how he determines the four year and ten year forecasts. The presentation included (i) summary of K-5 forecasts (a) four-year K-5 forecast, and (b) ten year K-5 forecast, (c) summary of grades 6-8 forecasts, (d) summary of grades 9-12 forecasts, (e) limitations of the study, and (f) assumptions; (ii) historical information (a) number of Lexington births per year, (b) historical birth-to-kindergarten progression rates, (c) comparison of births and kindergarten enrollments, and (d) historical progression rates for grades 6 and 9; (iii) long-range enrollment projections which were based current enrollment numbers, actual and projected birth numbers, and current school district lines; (iv) four-year enrollment projection which were based on current enrollment numbers, actual pre-k census numbers and current school district lines; and (v) each elementary school broken down separately.

Dr. Ash announced that he will be making a recommendation that the Committee request at a Special Town Meeting next October/November to have modular classrooms at the high school. He stated that he does not yet know the number of modular classrooms and how much they will cost but knows that there will not be enough space in the coming years. Dr. Ash made no recommendations to add on additional space at either of the middle schools. The elementary school levels will be okay once construction and renovations are completed. Dr. Ash thanked the Committee and the community for the Bridge, Bowman and Estabrook projects. Dr. Ash noted that next year will be tight in terms of enrollment. Dr. Ash then showed and discussed the "Lexington Public School 2013-2014 Projected Enrollment Chart" that he brought with him to the meeting.

There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding (i) capacity at the high school in comparison to the numbers in 1970s and how the educational space is now being utilized and classroom size; (ii) the condition of the modular's currently located at the Diamond Middle School; (iii) redistricting committee; (iv) high school modular units and types of space use; and (v) school enrollment numbers.

### **3. Superintendent's FY2014 Recommended Budget**

Dr. Ash presented the FY2014 Recommended Budget in lieu of Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance who was not present. He thanked Ms. Dunn, along with her entire team, for producing the budget book. Discussion focused on budget guidelines that were voted, the major FY14 drivers, highlight aspects of the budget and talk about the capital budgets.

The presentation included (i) guidelines that the Committee voted last October; (ii) the budget summary which showed that the FY13 budget was \$75,628,356 and Dr. Ash recommended a \$5,295,987 increase for FY14 for a total of \$81,924,343. This represents a 6.91% increase from last year; (iii) the four major drivers (a) collective bargaining, (b) new positions (legal requirements), (c) new positions (enrollment increases), and (d) new positions (program improvements); (iv) k-12 curriculum, instruction, and professional development summary; (v) pre k-12 student services summary; (vi) elementary k-5 summary; (vii) middle school summary; (viii) high school summary; (ix) personnel costs; (x) expenses by program; and (xi) Legal Mandates/Enrollment/Program Improvement Request. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development took questions and comments from the Committee regarding text book replacement plans.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, thanked the Committee and Dr. Ash for funding \$65,000 for the Debate Team. He spoke about how much parents are asked to contribute and this will help a lot and make it easier for students to participate in debate. Mr. Radulescu-Banu also questioned how often and what are the costs for licenses for textbooks.

Bonnie Brodner clarified the money for the Debate Program will offset what parents have to pay but will not increase the number of students taking debate.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street had questions (i) why the \$65,000 for the debate was shown on two different items and wanted to know if the total is \$65,000 or \$130,000; (ii) replacing computers and inquired how many computers are in the entire school system at this point in time; (iii) urged the Committee to keep the print shop affordable because others, such as the Tourism Committee utilizes these services; (iv) shared her thoughts on setting up elementary interaction with Lexington's sister city Antony, France.

Thomas Plati, Director of Education Technology and Assessment responded to Ms. McKenna's question that there are 3,400 computers (desktop and laptop stations). In the Capital Requests \$490,000 of the \$540,000 is to replace aging 5-6 year old computers and not just 6 year old computers.

Noah Coolidge, Outlook Drive, questioned the status of hiring the Director of Special Education and what the plan is for the future.

Dr. Ash responded that the position is being advertised and once a number of candidates are identified, interviews will be set up.

Margaret Coppe shared that the public hearings on the budget will be held on January 30<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. in the Harrington Elementary School cafeteria and also on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. in Battin Hall.

#### **4. LPS Facility Master Plan Update**

Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities updated the School Committee on various short and long range facility issues and their current status which included (i) the Report by the School's Ad hoc Facility Committee (October 16, 2009) – key recommendations and current Massachusetts State Building Association (MSBA) status projects at Lexington High School, Bridge and Bowman Elementary School renovations, Estabrook Elementary School building project, Hastings Elementary School capacity issues, and needed capital funds needed to keep schools and town buildings in proper repair; (ii) LPS 10-Year Master Plan; (iii) Final Town-wide Facilities Master Planning Committee Final Report which is expected to be delivered in the Spring of 2013; (iv) announcement that The Cecil Group was hired by the Town to conduct a study of municipal buildings; and (v) presentation which had been made to the Board of Selectmen (BOS) on December that identified best uses of the Scottish Rite property which includes a senior center and/or a community center. Mr. Goddard requested that the School Committee make a recommendation to the BOS about whether the Committee may wish to purchase this property. There were questions from the Committee.

**Motion to Recommend that the School Committee support the Recommended Building Renewal Funding Building Plan as referenced by Project #869 put Forward by the MFP (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

Patrick Goddard shared that the School Committee should prioritize plans for the school buildings and put the high school after the Hastings Elementary School project is completed pending the outcome of a feasibility study. He believes this study would show that we need a new school in plan in place. Also discussed was what was the earliest the town would support the Hastings Elementary School renovation.

**Motion to Amend and Extend the School Committee's Master Plan to present the School's 10-year Master Plan and to Request to Fund a Feasibility Study in 2015 for the Hastings Elementary School at the Annual Town Meeting in 2015 and to Request to Fund a Feasibility Study in 2019 for the High School at the 2019 Annual Town Meeting (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

There was discussion by Patrick Goddard and the Committee regarding the Townwide Master Plan and the Scottish Rite parcel and that the Master Planning Committee is looking to purchase that parcel by the town to be used either as a senior center and a community center. That report was given to the Board of Selectmen on the January 17<sup>th</sup>.

5. **Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 13, 2012**  
**Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 13, 2012, as amended** (Stewart, Steigerwald) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

6. **Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 4, 2012**  
**Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 4, 2012, as amended** (Stewart, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

7. **Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of November 27, 2012**  
**Motion to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of November 27, 2012** (Steigerwald, Brodner) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

8. **Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of December 18, 2012**  
**Motion to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of December 18, 2012** (Brodner, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

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

**The Meeting Adjourned at 11:00 p.m.**

*Documents: Meeting Agenda; Four and Ten-Year Enrollment Forecasts by Paul B. Ash, Ph.D. Superintendent of Schools dated January 8, 2013; Lexington Public School 2013-2014 Projected Enrollment Chart; Fiscal Year 2014 Superintendent's Budget dated January 8, 2013; Memorandum from Pat Goddard to Dr. Paul Ash dated January 3, 2013 regarding 3<sup>rd</sup> Agenda Item, January 8, 2013 School Committee Meeting; Ad Hoc Townwide Facilities Master Planning Committee Description; Memorandum from Ad Hoc Facilities Committee (AHFC) to Members of the Lexington School Committee dated October 16, 2009 regarding Final Report to the School Committee; 10 Year Facility Master Plan; Final Report of the Community Center Task Force dated November 26, 2012; Lexington Municipal Facilities Master Planning Scottish Rite Assessment dated December 17, 2012; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated November 13, 2012; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated December 4, 2012*

Voted by the School Committee February 26, 2013