

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 9, 2018
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Executive Session adjourned and the committee returned to open session at 7:05 p.m.

Welcome:

Chair Eileen Jay introduced committee members and gave a brief recap of the new agenda structure.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Eileen Jay, Chairperson
Kate Colburn, Vice-Chairperson
Kathleen Lenihan, Clerk
Deepika Sawhney
Alessandro Alessandrini
Rosanna Jiang, Student Representative

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Dr. Julie Hackett, Superintendent
Dr. Christine Lyons, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development
Peter Rowe, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

The minutes were taken by Kristen Cronin, Executive Assistant to the School Committee and Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Kathleen Lenihan: Ms. Lenihan reassured families that if they have a concern or issue with any of the schools their child is attending and at the same time wish to remain anonymous, they can always contact a School Committee member and have a confidential conversation over the phone or in person, preferably not in an email since email is public record.

Rosanna Jiang:

- Thursday is Back to School Night at Lexington High School. Prior to Back to School Night at 7:00 pm Dr. Stephens and Assistant Principal Mr. Baker will be having a discussion of what's going to be new this year.
- On Wednesday evening at Cary Hall, there will be an informational session on vaping and e-cigarettes open to the public.

Deepika Sawhney: Ms. Sawhney congratulated Diamond Middle School administration, staff and Principal Turner for an amazing job on Back to School Night.

Kate Colburn: Ms. Colburn announced that during the first School Master Planning Advisory Committee meeting, a suggestion was made to add a representative from the Planning Board to join the committee. Committee members agreed it would be helpful to have planning expertise on the Mater Planning Committee and that it would be a useful communication tool between the master planning efforts and what is happening with the Planning Board. Charles Hornig has volunteered his services to be on the committee.

Kate Colburn motioned to appoint Charles Hornick as a member of the School Master Planning Advisory Committee - Kathleen Lenihan seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

Next meeting of the School Master Planning Advisory Committee is this Friday, October 12, 8:30-10:30 in the public facilities training room. This meeting is open to the public and all who wish to attend are welcome.

Eileen Jay - Ms. Jay announced that she will be running for re-election to the School Committee in the March 2019 election.

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS:

- Dr. Hackett acknowledged the groundbreaking celebration in honor of Lexington Children's Place (LCP) and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the completed project at Clarke Middle School.
- Dr. Hackett extended her congratulations to Kevin Silvia, Food Service Director for Lexington Public Schools. Mr. Silvia was awarded Whitson's Culinary Group's Pineapple Award for Food Service Directors who exemplify business excellence in school food service and who go above and beyond the typical day to day business.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Hackett addressed the following topics in a written report:

1. A NEW AND IMPROVED LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE LAB PLAN:

Dr. Hackett gave a brief review of the two options that were considered last year for the Science Lab plan and reviewed the new budget friendly option that will reduce the \$1.1 million request to approximately \$150,000 in total. The \$150,000 would be an FY2020 expense based on the following anticipated costs:

- \$25,000 for microscopes and portable cabinetry and a possible \$125,000 for a hood, ventilation, and other needs. We will have better numbers to share once Mike Cronin, Director of Public Facilities, obtains an itemized list from Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MEP)

Dr. Hackett noted that Option #3 is not an ideal solution for the Science Department; however, we would do our best to support their short-term needs as we work toward the possibility of a new or renovated high school in the future. In light of a new "Option 3: Space Reconfiguration Plan" and given the October 4, 2018 deadline for warrants, Dr. Hackett has requested that Acting Town Manager, Kelly Axtell, remove the previous \$1.1 million LHS Science Lab request from the warrant for the Special Town Meeting in November. At this time, we anticipate that the associated costs of the \$150,000 estimate would be funded through the operating budgets of the School Department and Public Facilities.

2. STATEMENT OF INTEREST TO BE SUBMITTED FOR LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

Dr. Hackett reviewed the process of submission for a Statement of Interest (SOI) and is making the following recommendations:

- October - Superintendent outreach to MSBA
- November - recommend we seek support for formal votes early from the School Committee and the municipality authorizing the Superintendent of Schools to submit a SOI in January. Since we are early in the process, per MSA guidelines, we will need to refer to the SOI as follows:
 - “the SOI that will be submitted to the MSBA by no later than Friday, April 6, 2019 for consideration in 2019” in the text of the votes
- November/December/January - The Superintendent and the Director of Public Facilities gather the necessary documentation to complete the SOI submission in January when the MSBA opens the portal.
- January - Obtain the MSBA required signatures from the Superintendent, the Town Manager and the School Committee Chairperson prior to submission. Once signatures are obtained, the Superintendent of Schools will submit the SOI, per guidelines set forth by the MSBA.

Dr. Hackett went on to clarify the difference between a “Statement of Interest” (SOI) and the “Preliminary Design Program” .

PRESENTATION:

Inter-Municipal Agreement between Minuteman High School and Town of Lexington on a Proposed Athletic Complex

Melissa Battite, Director of Recreation and Community Programs for Lexington, introduced the following personnel: David Pinsonneault, Director of Public Works, Carolyn Kosnoff, Assistant Town Manager of Finance, Peter Coleman, Assistant Director of Recreation, and two representatives from the Recreation Committee, Chair, Rick DeAngelis, and Co-Chair, Lisah Rhodes.

Ms. Battite provided the School Committee with background information on how this proposal came to be over the past several years of meetings and discussions. Over the last two years, conversations moved towards a public/private partnership with the Town of Lexington. Minuteman High School is planning to construct an athletic complex on their grounds and would fund the basic construction costs of \$12M. In a potential Inter-Municipal Agreement, the Town of Lexington is being asked to contribute \$8M in construction costs to upgrade to the full build plan, which includes artificial turf for two fields, tennis courts, grandstands and concession stands, in exchange for exclusive use rights by the Town for up to 50 years. In order for the partnership to move forward, Minuteman had to create special legislation, which was done in July, 2018, allowing the district to go into a long-term agreement with the town for up to 50 years, to lease/share the property. A working group of municipal/school staff and committees has been formed to further investigate and collaborate on this project.

Ms. Battite explained that the purpose of tonight's presentation is to share information about the potential partnership, what it includes or doesn't include, and to allow the School Committee to ask questions. The team would like bring feedback and information back to the working group, as they develop the inter-municipal agreement should the town decide to move forward. It is anticipated that the Minuteman athletic complex will be open for business and use by September 2020.

Some members had questions for Ms. Battite regarding hours of operations for the fields and whether Lexington students would have access to the fields after 5:30 p.m. or on the weekend. Another member had a question about the funding source for this project.

Ms. Battite offered to come back to the Committee and share updates and overviews as often as they like. She indicated that she wants to make sure the information is accurate and be sure everyone has the opportunity to ask questions prior to going to Town Meeting.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Rich DeAngelis of 123 Marrett Road. Mr. DeAngelis, who is Chair of the Recreation Committee, indicated that he is happy to hear that the School Committee is engaged in the process, along with the Recreation Committee. He stated that there are still a lot of things that need to be worked out but he sees the public/private partnership as a great opportunity for the Town.

CONSENT AGENDA:

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS/GIFTS:

NONE

PAYROLL AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT APPROVAL

- Payroll Period Ending September 28, 2018 (\$3,751,543.21)

Alessandro Alessandri motioned to approve the School Department's payroll warrant dated September 28, 2018 in the amount of \$3,751,543.21 - Kate Colburn seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- May 8, 2018
- May 22, 2018
- September 25, 2018

Kate Colburn motioned to approve School Committee minutes from May 8, 2018, May 22, 2018 and September 25, 2018 - Deepika Sawhney seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

NEW BUSINESS:

ATHLETIC TRACK AND FIELD/LHS SWIMMING POOL

Naomi Martin, Director of Athletics, provided an update to School Committee on the Center Track project:

- The Center Track is still in the design phase, the lighting project will begin in the next few weeks on the baseball and soccer fields.

- The goal is to finish mid-May 2019 and have the full spring season at Center Track for Clarke, Diamond and Lexington High School.
- The hope is to have normal program activities in all new facilities by spring of 2020.
- There are still some questions on design at Center with regard to the surface and whether it will be synthetic or hybrid. Fence and field events are still being worked out and will rest with the Recreation Department and the architects.

Ms. Martin then gave a brief update on the options available to accommodate displaced swimmers next year. She noted the following:

- The relocation of the swim team continues to be a hot topic and one that we are all hoping to resolve.
- It is difficult to rent 12 months in advance when we are unsure of high school start times, and she understands a decision will be made soon.
- Hanscom will be the most viable option for swimmers; however, there will be some restrictions for meets.
- Fall season is easier to manage since Bedford and Minuteman do not offer fall programming.
- Winter will become more of a challenge with Bedford's co-ed team, Minuteman's program, and our Lexington boy's team.

School Committee members had further discussion and questions for Ms. Martin around this topic.

With respect to Ms. Martin's philosophical framework relating to a future vision for athletics, Dr. Hackett noted that the solutions being discussed are community solutions, not just school-based solutions, and she stated that she did not want that point to get lost in the discussion. She emphasized that we need to collectively determine how we meet the needs of the young people in the community.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

None

LHS SCIENCE LAB PRESENTATION:

Dr. Andrew Stephens provided an update to School Committee with an Option 3 for the Science labs space:

- Turn 418 (offices) and 301 (staff room, academic support) into classrooms
- Clean out/reorganize 1st floor storage room
- Provide 6 classrooms each for Earth Science, Biology and Chemistry
- 5 classrooms for physics

Year One (2019-2020): Add One Biology Room

- Costs estimate (furniture, technology) \$25,000.00

Year Two (2020-2021): Add One Chemistry Room

- Costs include chemical fume hood & ventilation, eyewash, minor plumbing upgrades in 420, in addition to furniture requirements as in Year One

Pros of New Proposal:

- Removes a large capital request from Town Meeting

- Significantly lower cost than original
 - approximately \$130-150k over 2 years vs. \$1.1 million
- All Earth Science teachers on first floor
- All Physics teachers on second floor
- All Chemistry teachers on second floor

Cons of New Proposal:

- Doable, but not ideal
- Biology will be on two floors
- Earth Science teachers will need to swap classrooms for labs that require sinks/water
- No Biology prep room on first floor
- Some equipment, furnishings needed in new/repurposed rooms

As noted in the Superintendent's report, the new Option 3 proposal eliminates the need for a \$1.1M capital request at Fall 2018 Special Town Meeting and instead will incur an approximate cost of \$150,000 from the FY202 operating budget.

Dr. Hackett and School Committee thanked all who took the time and worked on this new proposal.

PROPOSED SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2019-2020

Dr. Christine Lyons, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning, reviewed the Proposed 2019-2020 Calendar to be approved by School Committee at a future date. Dr. Lyons noted that the administration is currently in the process of seeking input from Lexington Public Schools administrators and union leadership.

School Committee members suggested all grades starting at the same time, instead of the usual staggered start days. Another member suggested having the Friday before Labor Day as a regular school day. There was some question around the Professional Development Day in November and whether it could possibly fall on the week of Veteran's Day in order to enable families to have a four-day weekend for the 2019-2020 school year.

There was some discussion around Religious Holidays. Other school districts have dealt with this issue and some School Committee members feel that it's time for Lexington to take a look at the religious holidays in a comprehensive manner, as well. It was noted that our community is rapidly changing and some of the holidays that many of the people in our community celebrate are not actual holidays from school.

A School Committee member noted that it would be helpful to get more feedback from families, students, and staff on the staggered start days and how to weigh the benefits of those days, as well as the Friday before Labor Day.

Dr. Lyons will send out a survey to get a sense on the staggered start day and report back to School Committee at the next meeting on October 23, 2018.

DISCUSSION AND VOTE OF MASC DELEGATE

Motion to Approve Deepika Sawhney as the Official Voting Delegate and Alessandro Alessandrini as the Alternate Voting Delegate to the MASC Annual Business Meeting. - second (5-0)

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

NONE

Motion was made to adjourn at 9:36 pm and seconded