

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, January 8, 2019
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME: 7:03 p.m.

Chair Eileen Jay welcomed and introduced committee members.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Dr. Julie Hackett, Superintendent
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:

Kate Colburn: Ms. Colburn gave a brief update on the School Master Planning Advisory Committee meeting held on Friday, January 4, 2019. This meeting was an extra meeting that was added in order to discuss short term space solutions at the high school. Ms. Colburn commented that a Statement of Interest (SOI) to MSBA would be filed in January, but we really do not have a good sense of when a new or renovated high school would happen. In the meantime with all the new children coming in over the next few years, provisions need to be made to accommodate them.

Ms. Colburn expressed her thanks to Dr. Hackett and staff for the amount of work they did to prepare for this meeting and help make the meeting a productive one.

Kathleen Lenihan: Ms. Lenihan echoed Ms. Colburn's remarks on the School Master Planning Advisory meeting.

Alessandro Alessandrini: Mr. Alessandrini thanked the Board of Selectmen for inviting the School Committee to the groundbreaking event for the new firehouse.

Deepika Sawhney: None

Eileen Jay: Ms. Jay provided a brief report on the Recreation Committee meeting held on December 19, 2018. Discussion was had on the three options for surfacing the field:

- Synthetic
- Grass
- Hybrid

At the Recreation Committee meeting, Ms. Jay read the field surfacing recommendations that had been forwarded from Naomi Martin, LPS Athletic Director. The Recreation Committee will continue to deliberate on this issue with a final decision to be made by March 2019.

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS:

Dr. Hackett extended her congratulations to Harrington Elementary School students, staff, and school community for being invited by the Department of Education to apply for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. An invitation to apply for possible national recognition is both a tremendous undertaking and an honor.

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program is a national recognition program for American schools. The United States Department of Education has honored “successful public and non-public elementary, middle, and high schools” since 1982. The Jonas E. Clarke Middle School community has proudly displayed their National Blue Ribbon Schools Flag since 2013. On January 3, 2019, we received notification from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that Harrington Elementary School has been invited to apply for the distinguished honor.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Superintendent Hackett reported on the following:

Lexington High School Enrollments on the Rise

The School Master Planning Advisory Committee (MPC) has met several times throughout the year to discuss PK-12 master planning for the Lexington Public Schools. The last meeting held on January 4, 2019 was focused mainly on the high school in order to find a short term space solution for incoming students. The Committee created a “brainstorming chart” to look at a number of different options to be discussed. Superintendent Hackett addressed potential concerns regarding the chart and assured the community that every option is being discussed and nothing has been decided. The purpose of this exercise is to focus on the best outcome for the students and their needs.

Superintendent Hackett reported the next steps in the process moving forward:

- Consider what the best brainstorming options are and why
- Continue the process of completing a Statement of Interest (SOI)
- Submit a draft of the Statement of Interest to the Master Planning Committee and School Committee
- Vote on submittal of Statement of Interest (SOI) by Board of Selectmen and School Committee

A copy of the superintendent's full report can be viewed here: [1-8-19 School Committee Packet](#)

CONSENT AGENDA:

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS/GIFTS:

1. Donation check to LHS Health Office in the amount of \$439.00
2. Donation check to LHS Vocal Music in the amount of \$1,120.00
3. Donation check to Lexington Public Schools in the amount of \$25,000.

Mr. Alessandrini moved to approve items 1-3 under the acceptance of donations/gifts section of the consent agenda; seconded by Ms. Colburn (Approved 5-0)

PAYROLL AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT APPROVAL:

1. Payroll Period Ending December 21, 2018 (\$3,848,731.69)
2. Payroll Period Ending January 4, 2019 (\$3,727,341.77)
3. Accounts Payable Period Ending December 28, 2018 (\$959,155.14)
4. Accounts Payable US Bank Ending December 28, 2018 (\$45,302.17)
5. Accounts Payable Period Ending January 11, 2019 (\$1,000,182.34)

Ms. Colburn moved to approve the School Department's payroll warrant dated December 21, 2018 in the amount of \$3,848,731.69; and January 4, 2019 in the amount of \$3,727,341.77; and accounts payable warrant ending on December 28, 2018 in the amount of \$959,155.15; and January 11, 2019 in the amount of \$1,000,182.32; and accounts payable US Bank ending December 28, 2018 in the amount of \$45,302.17; Mr. Alessandrini seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. December 18, 2018

Kathleen Lenihan moved to approve School Committee minutes from December 18, 2018 - Deepika Sawhney seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

PRESENTATION:

Lexington Public Schools Fiscal Year 2020 Budget

Superintendent Hackett and Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business, Peter Rowe, presented the FY 2020 Level Service and Recommended Budget to the Committee. The FY 2020 Total Recommended Budget is \$113,469,614 which includes a \$5,358,169 increase. The FY 2020 request represents an increase of 4.96% over the FY 2019 appropriation.

The School Department was allocated a Revenue increase of \$5,858,731 for FY 2020 through the Revenue Allocation Model adopted at Summitt II. In addition to funding the school department budget growth at \$5,358,169, the department will transfer \$369,162 to Municipal accounts for the corresponding benefit costs of the 25.0 FTE projected benefits-eligible

positions (of the 26.3 FTE positions requested, 25 FTE are anticipated to require benefits; the remainder are additions to existing positions) proposed in this budget and \$131,400 to Municipal accounts for 1.5 FTE custodial positions and corresponding benefit costs associated with the opening of new facilities in FY 2020—Lexington Children’s Place and the new Hastings Elementary School.

The FY 2020 budget recommends that the salaries and wages line increase by \$4,738,906 (or 5.22%) to support existing position salary increases and the addition of 26.63 FTE positions included in this budget.

The recommended increase to the expense line is \$619,263 (or 3.56%) over the FY 2019 appropriations. The Recommended Budget and Presentation can be found here: [1-8-19 SC Packet](#)

There were comments and questions from the Committee, including why custodian fees would be included in the school budget rather than the town side, and questions about the requests for fee increases for Athletics, Lexington Children’s Place and Food Services. A Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on the morning of Tuesday, January 15, 2019 to discuss the recommended fees further.

Ms. Colburn moved that the School Committee communicate with the Board of Selectmen to request that the issue of pre-allocation set asides be discussed again at the next Summit Meeting - Mr. Alessandrini seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Valerie Overton - 25 Emerson Garden: Expressed gratitude for the budget process and is requesting further funding for K-6 Health Education in light of well-documented research and evidence-based benefits.

Ms. Overton thanked the Committee for making the Equity Audit Questionnaire public, but expressed grave concerns about the questionnaire. Some of the issues involve LGBTQ+ being absent from the list of equity concerns. Other flaws that are troubling include the exclusion of faith issues, inconsistent and sporadic inclusion of socioeconomic status, and other fundamental conceptual, structural, and language issues. Ms. Overton had a few suggestions/requests for the audit consultant, including bringing in additional DEI expertise, particularly on the LGBTQ+ issues, but also on modern approaches to DEI in general.

Matthew Cohen - 29 Tower Road: Mr. Cohen echoed much of Ms. Overton’s concerns regarding the Equity Audit Questionnaire.

Superintendent Hackett commented that if anyone would like to provide feedback on the Equity Audit Questionnaire, they should send an email to School Committee (school-com@lexingtonma.org) and they will follow up with the administration.

Motion to adjourn; so moved by Ms. Colburn at 9:36 p.m. (Approved 5-0)