

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, January 23, 2008

Cary Hall Auditorium

1605 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee Members Helen Cohen, Margaret Coppe, Tom Griffiths, Ravi Sakhuja and student representative Gabe Schonfeld. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:42

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz)

II. Public Comment

Leora Tec: Our kids should be taught about racism. Also, what can we do about things being stolen from the gym lockers in the high school?

III. Superintendent's Announcements

A. At the Board of Education meeting they voted to approve part of our kindergarten planning grant of up to \$225K dollars to plan for full day kindergarten for next fall. Second step in the process would be to apply for an implementation grant of \$15K per classroom of full day kindergarten. We expect additional \$500K will be necessary. We need to first fund the level service budget. We cannot afford \$500K. I am committed to this goal. We have the planning grant. Can we do something between zero classrooms and full implementation? Perhaps we do a pilot program.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Tom Diaz: Thanks to those who organized the MLK day celebration.

Tom Griffiths and I went to the Appropriation Committee Meeting about using \$461K of free cash to balance the budget—they voted to do that 6-1.

Mary Ellen Dunn and other budget officials found that if the governor's budget were to prevail Lexington would get \$860K (\$260K or \$270K more than in the current budget) in chapter 70 aid. We should have a plan on what to do with it. Senator Marzilli said the governor is making an effort to fund the circuit breaker at the full 75%. Governor has proposed a 1.5 million increase in METCO aid.

Tom Griffiths: Appropriation Committee—Their approval of the \$461K reduces both Town and school budget gaps. The question going around: should the town and school budgets be cut to support a 1 million dollar contribution to the stabilization fund? There is already \$5.5 million in it. Should we invest there and sacrifice education?

Helen Cohen: Reminder about the Diversity award. The deadline is--

Bob Harris: Feb. 29th.

V. Discussion

1. FY09 Prioritized Capital Recommendation

There were questions and discussion about these items. Some could be done in FY08.

Motion to approve the prioritized capital budget reducing the food services equipment budget to \$55K (Cohen , Griffiths). The motion passed 5-0.

Tom Diaz: There are two docs from Marianne McKenna. She will come to a subsequent meeting.

2. FY08 2nd Quarterly Financial Report

Paul Ash presented this. There is a projected surplus in the FY 08 budget. Of course there are always unknowns such as the out of district SPED tuitions. The new SPED programs have been highly successful. There is a watch list for potential out of district students.

Discussion of the report included SPED transportation costs, gas prices, custodial overtime, open custodial positions and long-term substitutes.

3. FY09 Recommended Budget

The Committee discussed various aspects of the superintendent's recommended FY 09 budget.

Motion to approve from the supplemental budget 1.5 educators and 1.5 IAs for the LLP program and 3 teachers for the SPED reading program (Griffiths, Cohen).

There was a discussion about the motion.

The motion was tabled.

Scheduling another meeting of the School Committee: Monday, Feb 4th at 7:30.

VI. Action Items:

1. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 12, 2008
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 14, 2008
3. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 15, 2008

Motion to approve the School Committee minutes of January 12, 14 and 15 2008 (Griffiths, Cohen). The motion passed 5-0.

VII. Motion to Adjourn (Griffiths, Cohen). The motion passed 5-0.