

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, February 24, 2009
Clarke Middle School Auditorium
17 Stedman Road

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

The meeting was convened at 7:42 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Helen Cohen)

II. Public Comment

Tom Griffiths (precinct 7): We are losing a remarkable woman, our Chairman, Helen Cohen. You guided us through some difficult times and the selection of a fine superintendent. On a couple of occasions you provided a moral compass for a Committee that had lost its way.

Helen Cohen: I have learned a lot.

III. Superintendent's Announcements

- A. Thanks to Helen Cohen and Ravi Sakhuja for years of dedication. They brought different perspectives to the Committee. I thank you, Helen for your leadership, intellect and academics and for that moral compass.
- B. Congratulations to the LHS boys and girls swim teams and their coaches; they won the prestigious MIAA division one sportsmanship award; and to the boys indoor track team. They also won the MIAA division one sportsmanship award. Fourteen of our students will qualify for nationals.
- C. Federal Stimulus Package. The bill allots 100 billion dollars in many categories that affect education on a national level. IDEA will get money so we will get money for SPED. On July 1 we will receive \$ 1,454,000 million dollars. Fifty percent must be spent in the area of special education and may not supplant current dollars. The other 50% can be spent on a wide array of other things. The money is a two-year grant. This is one-time only revenue. Though we will not receive any extra Title I money, we will also not lose the Title I money that we anticipated losing. There are some other grants that we can apply for, for example \$53.6 billion for state stabilization, a large chunk of which (\$39.5 billion) has to go towards education.

\$8.8 billion of discretionary money for districts that have done work in closing the achievement gap will be available through grants.

In the spring we should discuss how to really leverage these dollars.

The superintendent does not believe the stimulus money will affect the budget that is presented to Town Meeting.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Tom Diaz: I am aware of the sacrifice that Mr. Sakhuja and Ms. Cohen have made to serve the community. Thank you.

Gloria Park: I know everyone works really hard and it will be strange to see two different faces. I will miss you guys.

Helen Cohen: There will be a meeting tomorrow morning at Estabrook Hall of the new Human Rights Committee in town because the Westboro Baptist church may come to picket the high school, to spread a message of hate. Some people want to create a response to this, especially high school students.

Ravi Sakhuja: I have enjoyed all the hard work. I have learned a lot. I look forward to helping our children looking forward. Thank you to everyone and to the staff.

V. Action Items

1. Vote to Approve the FY10 Capital Budget

Paul Ash: The first request was for \$725K for things that are not public facilities.

Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, presented the capital facilities portion of this budget, pointing out three changes since it was last presented.

There were questions and discussion from the Committee on both portions of the budget. There were questions from the public as well. Answers were provided by Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent and Patrick Goddard.

Motion to authorize \$725,000 for capital requests for the FY10 school budget (Diaz, Sakhuja). **The motion passed 5-0.**

Motion to allocate \$1,193,146 for the FY10 public facilities capital budget (Sakhuja, Cole). **The motion passed 5-0.**

This is the first year that the Town and School facilities departments have been combined. **Paul Ash** recommends the School Committee portion of the facilities budget and then it is voted by the School Committee. Similarly Carl Valente will recommend the municipal portion of the facilities budget to the Selectmen and then they will be taken together and presented to Town Meeting. It is below last year's budget because of the decline in energy costs.

2. Vote to Approve the FY10 Operating Budget

There was a discussion and questions on the budget.

Motion to approve a request for \$66,956,329 for the fiscal 2010 school budget (Diaz, Coppe). **The motion passed 5-0.**

Vote to Approve the Schools' Facilities Budget

Motion to vote \$6,861,862 for the schools' facilities budget for FY 10 (Cole, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.

3. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Recommendation to Offer only Full-Day Kindergarten with a 12:15 p.m. Dismissal Option Beginning in the Fall of 2009

Discussion of 12:15 Dismissal for Kindergarten: Introduced by Helen Cohen. Presented by Carol Pilarski.

There were questions and comments from the Committee and from the audience.

Motion to approve the superintendent's recommendation to offer only full day Kindergarten with a 12:15 pm dismissal option beginning in the fall of 2009 with a proviso that we will make special efforts to emphasize the benefits of the 12:15 dismissal option and build the full-day program as an enhancement thereon (Diaz, Cole). The motion passed 5-0.

4. Vote on the Election of New School Committee Officers (10 minutes)

The election of the new School Committee officers will occur after the new members of the Board are elected.

5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 2, 2008
6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 9, 2008
7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 22, 2008
8. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 14, 2008
9. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 28, 2008
10. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 3, 2008
11. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 18, 2008
12. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 2, 2008
13. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 10, 2008
14. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 6, 2009
15. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 20, 2009
16. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 31, 2009

Motion to approve the minutes of September 2, 2008, September 9, 2008, September 22, 2008, October 14, 2008, October 28, 2008, November 3, 2008, November 18, 2008, December 2, 2008, December 10, 2008, January 6, 2009, January 20, 2009 and January 31, 2009 as amended (Diaz, Cole). The motion passed 5-0.

VI. Motion to Adjourn (Diaz, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.

