

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, May 27, 2014**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald, Judy Crocker and Mary Ann Stewart

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. 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

There were no public comments.

**II. Superintendent's Announcements**

Dr. Ash shared that a former Lexington High School (LHS) student along with a Belmont High School student made shooting threats on Thursday May 22, 2014. As a result of those group text messages, it was determined to dismiss high school students at 1:00 p.m. Those text messages referenced the massacres at Columbine High School and Newtown Sandy Hook Elementary School. They also wrote that they would start with the "LABBB Kids". LHS houses the LABBB Collaborative, an area program for students with special needs. Dr. Ash invited Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development to share the events of that day.

Carol Pilarski shared that an emergency event at Lexington High School occurred last Thursday. Under the leadership of Principal Laura Lasa, the emergency protocols were executed as planned. Ms. Pilarski thanked the students who reported the incident and the leadership, cooperation and collaboration with the police department. Transportation was put in place and the police department helped guide traffic out of the school area. The Pop's Concert scheduled at the High School had been rescheduled.

Ms. Coppe thanked Carol Pilarski, Laura Lasa and the school personnel and students. Ms. Coppe learned this afternoon that Whitson Culinary Group was serving third lunch when this incident happened and that the employees came in at 4:30 a.m. Friday to clean the kitchen and prepare for the day's meal.

Jessie Steigerwald shared that at Pops Night, Jeff Leonard took the time to praise the way Ms. Lasa handled the school emergency situation. He said Ms. Lasa's calm approach gave confidence to the staff. Ms. Lasa received a standing ovation from the Pops audience and students.

### **III. School Committee Member Announcements**

Judy Crocker (i) thanked Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent whose help was instrumental on Friday and then thanked all the principals and staff; (ii) thanked C&W Transportation and Elaine Celli for swiftly setting up the transportation; (iii) Bike N' Walk Week had over 20 families participate in the school bus open house; at Discovery Day over 100 families participated and 20 students participated in Grade 5 Smart Bike Education Program; (iv) to date 2800 students have registered for the bus; FY 15 Bus Registration Period has officially ended for those wanting to take advantage of the full subsidy; there are still a number of distance eligible families that need to be registered; (v) she attended the Community Center Planning Committee meeting in Ms. Steigerwald's absence; and (vi) the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Facility Meeting architect submissions have been received. Do we want to talk about the Clarke parking and traffic incident?

Margaret Coppe shared that the School Committee packets have been on the LPS Website but the goal is to get the packet also on the town website.

Alessandro Alessandrini commented that at our last meeting a change in Resource Teacher Program at the high school was reported. He thanked Laura Lasa, Principal, LPS High School and Ellen Sugita, Director of Special Education who felt that we should delay the program until there is more community feedback. The Resource Teacher Program will stay the same next year.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that she and Mark Sandeen, Chair of the Sustainable Lexington Committee attended the BOS meeting a week ago to provide an update on the work Ameresco Solar has been performing. Ms. Stewart shared technical updates are in process and some buildings will not be able to support solar and some buildings may only be able to support a smaller amount of solar than was originally anticipated. The structural analysis should be completed within the next week.

Margaret Coppe shared (i) tomorrow night at 5:30 the Committee will be meeting with the BOS and others for Open Meeting Law training; (ii) the High School Graduation is Sunday, June 8 in Lowell; (iii) the next Committee meeting will be held June 10; and (iv) Steve Frymer from the Massachusetts Chess Association announced that Mica Brattain of Milk Street won the 2014 State Chess Championship and he previously won the State High School Chess Championship and anchored the high school team. At the age of 15, he is the youngest state champion ever.

Jessie Steigerwald shared (i) she attended the Read Aloud Day at the Estabrook Elementary School with the first grade class and appreciates being invited; (ii) gave thanks to everyone who made Pops possible, including the Friends of Lexington Music Art and Drama Students and other groups in town; (iii) thanked the community organizations that provide scholarship money for juniors and some seniors; (iv) thanked Suzie Barry and the Celebration Committee for the Memorial day programming; and (v) Lexington Youth and Family Services (LYFS) is Holding a follow up event on Wednesday, June 11 at the First Parish Church where they will bring a small group of parents and professionals together to discuss "Communicating with our children and teens, a parent to parent dialogue". The public must register for the event with Timothy Dugan at LYFS.

#### **IV. Agenda**

##### **1. Discussion of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 School Improvement Plans**

Dr. Ash shared that the principals of each of the nine schools are here this evening to answer any questions the School Committee has on the individual School Improvement Plans. These documents represent the highest priority in academic achievement and pro social goals. These goals do not represent all of the incredible work that is performed in each of the schools. If there is anything left out, it was not intended as it is impossible to capture everything during an entire school year.

Each of the nine principals took questions and comments from the Committee beginning with the (i) elementary schools, (ii) middle schools and (iii) high school.

##### **2. Vote to Approve 2015-2016 Recommended School Calendar**

The Committee engaged in discussion of the two FY 2015-2016 recommended school calendars with one beginning before Labor Day and the other beginning after Labor Day. The Chair recommended that in the future she would like to see one calendar recommended instead of two. The Chair thanked Dr. Ash and Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, for moving the Professional Development day scheduled in November to the Friday before Columbus Day weekend. The discussion consisted of those responses the Committee received for either before or after Labor Day. Also discussed, if the school began before Labor Day would it be possible to hold four full class days because it would be easier on parents who work full time. A possible subcommittee was discussed to review the matter. The Committee appreciated the community feedback but the majority of the Committee was in favor, this year, of beginning before Labor Day.

Phyllis Neufeld, President, Lexington Education Association (LEA) shared with the Committee that the LEA did a survey and they received 384 responses; 43% of the LEA members and out of the 43%, 328 stated they wanted to begin before Labor Day and 56 were in favor of beginning after Labor Day and 14.6% of teachers begin before Labor Day and students after Labor Day.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street shared her thoughts on why there had been discussion originally. For years school started after Labor Day and Dr. Ash said people were leaving after school, but she does not think data supports that

#### **Motion to Approve the 2015-2015 Recommended School Calendar beginning before Labor Day (Stewart, Alessandrini)**

There was further discussion by the Committee. Ms. Steigerwald explained why she would not support motion.

#### **Motion to Approve the 2015-2016 Recommended School Calendar beginning before Labor Day (Stewart, Alessandrini)**

Ms. Steigerwald said she would not support the motion tonight and requested instead to work with the administration to try to address parent requests to make the first week of school a more

full academic week for students. Ms. Neufeld said she thought it would take more time to plan, and that it could be helpful for her work with Ms. Pilarski to review the idea for the following calendar year.

**The Motion was Approved** (4-0-1) Steigerwald abstained.

Dawn McKenna requested that in the future the Committee vote earlier in the year and she also put a plug in for the Committee to consider a vacation around Patriots Day.

### 3. FY 2014 Financial Transfers

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Business and Finance presented the FY2014 Annual Request for making Budget Transfers. These transfers are balancing out program budgets within a program and any over-expenditure

Also provided are two transfers and one that she just got which are under the Superintendent's \$50,000 transfer policy. The amount for the Central Administration K-12 Guidance Director move is \$27,500. The items under the \$50,000 Transfer Policy and just received the dollar amount for the K-12 Guidance Director move from the High School to the Central Administration Office is \$27,500; the Diamond Middle School Department Head Office Reconfiguration, she does not have a number yet and will probably happen under fiscal year 2015; and (iii) moving expenses from Estabrook Elementary School for the furniture that was reallocated to the other elementary schools and is approximately \$9,000, but this item still needs to be vetted.

Dunn also provided a reminder sheet of what the Committee approved at the April 29 and May 13 meetings.

Ms. Coppe clarified that the Committee did not need to vote tonight on the Superintendent's \$50,000 Transfer Policy.

There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding (i) transfer vote; (ii) are there any limits on the transfers and what are the practices of transfers; (iii) what happens when certain department budgets are in deficit; (iv) if there is something more than \$50,000 will you have to come before the Committee; and (v) comment regarding school policy and work needs to be done in the future.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street shared that she values Mary Ellen Dunn's work but pointed out to School Committee she is very concerned the way the School Committee's policy is being interpreted at the moment. Having sat through all the discussions at the time that policy was developed; the policy was developed because this is exactly the type of thing that is happening. At year end, one department who thought they had a certain amount of money suddenly have that money because they needed it for another department. Ms. McKenna stated that it may be too late for this year's process, but going forward next year, she hopes the Committee will read their policy and understand that there should be no reassessing of the year-end budget and moving things around. This is about the Committee sets a budget at the beginning of the year and the Committee and Town Meeting approve that budget and expects that the money will be

spent in those areas. If for some reason there is a legitimate answer and the reason they came up with the \$50,000 number is because there are a lot of things that change over the course of a school year and you want to be able to change. However, if something is more than \$50,000 that is a significant policy change. That is a new teacher being hired or a new program being put into place that wasn't contemplated when the budget was voted on. Ms. McKenna is concerned that the School Committee is not following their School Committee Policy.

Dr. Ash shared that the School Committee is following their School Committee Policy. There have been no expenditures made in violation of the policy. We are talking about very small amounts of money. Dr. Ash wanted to make it crystal clear that he has brought to the Committee every transfer request that falls within the Committee's policy and he has attempted to be extremely transparent when he needs to spend additional amounts of money that were not in the original allocation. He has brought it to the Committee for their review and approval. Dr. Ash then shared that the need to be very clear that the Committee policy is being followed.

Judy Crocker commented on Ms. McKenna's statement regarding school policy and shared that the Committee is listening and that the policy does need to be reviewed annually.

Alessandro Alessandrini commented that the Committee is not writing a blank check and that anything over \$50,000 needs to come before the Committee to be voted on. Mr. Alessandrini stated that the Committee is following their policy and not giving a blank check.

Jessie Steigerwald questioned whether the \$50,000 is cumulative or not and would also like to understand the program budgets end. Ms. Steigerwald also shared that she will vote no because she would prefer to have the Fourth Quarter Financial Report before voting on any transfers.

Dr. Ash shared that this is a bookkeeping change at the end of they and does not create any new money being spent. The fourth quarter budget will show the program budgets and any program to program changes.

Ms. Dunn shared that this activity does not address or cover any additional expenditures. We have already identified whether a program is in deficit or not. This is really about internal balancing so that we can clean things up and execute the decisions that have already been made. The fourth quarter closes on the 30<sup>th</sup> and then the Fourth Quarterly Financial Report is completed.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that every year he has been on the Committee; the report has always been received after the close of the fourth quarter. Mr. Alessandrini reviews the Fourth Quart Report and has found no dramatic transfers. He would prefer to see the books clean and expects to see the Fourth Quarter Report showing the differences in expenditures.

**Motion to authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Operations to transfer funds among accounts and special revenue funds to balance the FY 2014 Operating Budget with a summary of transfers provided in the final Fourth Quarter Report (Stewart, Alessandrini)**

There was further discussion by the Committee.

**Motion to authorize the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Operations to transfer funds among accounts and special revenue funds to balance the FY 2014 Operating Budget with a summary of transfers provided in the Fourth Quarter Report (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (4-1) Steigerwald opposed**

4. Vote to Request that the June Special Town Meeting Appropriate \$250,000 for the School Building Facility Study

Margaret Coppe shared that the Committee needs to vote for funding for a school building facility study. The Committee discussed the use of school building space and the need to work with the custodial staff when working with outside groups.

**Motion to Request that the June Special Town Meeting Appropriate \$250,000 for the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee Study (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

5. School Committee Input to Board of Selectmen Goal Setting

Margaret Coppe shared that the Board of Selectmen (BOS) is looking for the Committee's input on goal setting and that it needs to be in by this Friday. They also requested that we prioritize our input because there are dozens of committees in town submitting their input.

The Committee discussed their individual priority goal setting which included (i) school building program be taken into account as the BOS builds their budget and make their plans; (ii) WIFI be placed into the Town Office Building; (iii) find ways to support interdepartmental collaboration; (iv) training or direction on committees working with other committees with a clear process developed; (v) interdepartmental communication; (vi) biannual meeting with the BOS and the School Committee; (vii) working collaboratively with respect to capital Master Plans; (viii) working collaboratively on enrollment issues if we need funds for school; and (ix) support capital budget and enrollment.

The Committee's final input on BOS goal setting is (i) school building program and enrollment issues; (ii) interdepartmental communication/cooperation and installation of WIFI in Town Buildings; (iii) joint use of building space.

*Ms. Steigerwald left the meeting at 10:42 to attend to a family issue.*

6. Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy – Second Reading

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding the Second Reading of the Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy updated by Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Business and Finance. The discussion included (i) best practices of what management techniques are used to manage traffic; (ii) the policy looks different from other town's policy because it is specific to Lexington; (iii) the hours of enforcement on school property will be from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; (iv)

training program for those directing traffic; (v) domesticated animals on school property and whether there will be pet friendly areas set up;(vi) cell phone usage while driving on school property; and (vii) the need for the Committee to provide guidance to the principals who are the property managers of these school sites.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street shared her suggested changes on the Second Reading and the need to address event parking on school property.

There was further discussion and the Committee decided to postpone a motion on the Second Reading.

7. Vote on the Updated Charge for the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee  
Ms. Coppe shared that the Committee is inviting members of the Permanent Building Committee and Board of Selectmen to the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee which will also include the Superintendent and Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities as members.

**Motion to Approve the Updated Charge for the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee (Stewart, Crocker) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald absent**

8. Vote to Appoint Peter Kelley as the Board of Selectmen Representative on the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee

**Motion to Appoint Peter Kelley as the Board of Selectmen Representative on the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee (Alessandrini, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald absent**

9. Vote to Appoint Carl Oldenburg and Jon Himmel as the Permanent Building Committee Representatives on the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee

**Motion to Appoint Carl Oldenburg and Jon Himmel as the Permanent Building Committee Representatives on the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee (Crocker, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald absent**

## **V. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald absent**

**The meeting adjourned at 11:22 p.m.**

*Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum dated May 23, 2014 from Dr. Ash to Lexington School Committee attaching all 9 schools 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans; Lexington Public School Draft Calendar starting before Labor Day and Draft Calendar starting after Labor Day; Memorandum dated May 23, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re FY 2014 End of Year Transfer Request; Letter dated May 18, 2014 from Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities to Dr. Ash re 2014 LPS Facility Master Plan; Memorandum dated May 23, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re Second Reading: Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy; and Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee Description and Criteria for Membership*

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 10, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Voted by the School Committee September 30, 2014