

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Tuesday, January 28, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart, Carl Valente, Town Manager

Absent: Sam A. Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order:

Ms. Coppe moved, and Mary Ann Stewart seconded, that the School Committee go into Executive Session under Exemption 3, to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining for Bargaining Units: LEA Units C, D, and Tech Unit and to return to open session. Further, the Chair declared that an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the negotiating process.

A roll call vote was taken:

Alessandro Alessandrini	"Aye"
Mary Ann Stewart	"Aye"
Bonnie Brodner	"Aye"
Jessie Steigerwald	"Aye"
Margaret Coppe	"Aye"
Carl Valente	"Aye"

II. Executive Session:

Exemption 3 – To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining Regarding the Following Bargaining Units: LEA Units C, D, and Tech Unit

III. Return to Public Session and Welcome:

The Chair reconvened the public session at 7:30 p.m. and shared the timeline of the budget process. The Chair then shared that she spoke with counsel and tonight's Agenda accurately reflects the agenda that the Committee is meeting about in Executive Session. On January 7 it was voted by the Committee to not accept the automatic extension in the superintendent's contract. Subsequently, the Committee met in Executive Session on January 7, 2014 and will meet again this evening. The Committee will have more information to share on future meeting dates after tonight's meeting. Ms. Coppe shared that the Committee does not have a timeline for the negotiation process.

Ms. Steigerwald spoke to the negotiation process and how confusion might have developed.

Ms. Coppe felt she had answered the questions the Committee had received that afternoon.

The Chair invited public comment.

Theodora Martin, 60 Liberty Avenue, commented on the Superintendent's Contract. Ms. Martin spoke about honesty, veracity and trust, a public record request by her daughter, teacher morale, and Dr. Fiveash.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street, thanked Ms. Martin for her comments. Ms. Biglow asked the Committee if there would be public input before the Committee makes a decision on Dr. Ash's contract.

The Chair explained the process and shared that at this time she does not know.

Ms. Steigerwald asked the Chair if the Committee were going to have public comment to extend the Superintendent's contract.

Daniel Alessandro, 9 Cutler Farm Road shared that he participates on the Lincoln-Douglas Debate Team and wanted to thank the Committee for funding Lexington's Debate Team.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, shared her concern about making decisions on how the Executive Session was going to include discussion of process. Ms. McKenna requested that the public have an opportunity to provide input. Ms. McKenna urged the Committee to use the same process that was used in 2005 selection of the Town Manager.

IV. Public Hearing on the Superintendent's FY 15 Recommended Budget

Sharin Fray Witzer, 27 Burlington Street shared her concern about staffing at the High School now and in the future.

Holly Boker, 550 Marrett Road and Lisa Baci, 18 Fair Oaks Terrace thanked the School Committee for funding the Transition Coordinator position in the FY15 Budget. Although their children have graduated, they would make themselves available if the Committee requested.

Wendy Cordero, Math Teacher at Lexington High School shared her comments on teacher workload at the high school and asked for a reduction from five to four classes per teacher in main academic subjects.

Erin Barrett, 14 Milk Street and Social Studies Teacher at the high school shared her concerns on teacher workload being too large, teacher stress and how teacher workload is affecting students.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street shared that she would like to see Dr. Susan Offner continuing to teach the Advanced Placement science classes.

Phyllis Neufeld, Lexington Education Association President spoke to budgeting needs.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, shared her thoughts on the presentation by the Town Manager that more money was available from the tax levy and that this year the LPS have more money in the school budget to spend on programs. Ms. McKenna urged the Committee to look at other issues such as teacher workload.

Leslie Zales, 7 Page Road, came to the meeting to represent the Parent Teacher Association/Parent Teacher Organization (PTA/PTO) Presidents of the nine Lexington Public Schools as well as the teachers and staff in those schools. Ms. Zales shared that school supplies should be funded through funds that already exist within the school budget and that it should be communicated to teachers and staff that they should be requesting school supplies through the principal's discretionary spending account.

Ms. Coppe asked Ms. Zales if she would ask the PTA/PTO presidents if they would be willing to come before the Committee.

Ms. Coppe reminded everyone to come on Saturday for the next public hearing or members of the public can email their comments to the Committee.

The Chair closed the Public Hearing on the Budget at 8:15 p.m.

V. Agenda:

1. School Committee Discussion of the Superintendent's FY 15 Recommended Budget
The Committee engaged in discussion regarding (i) the Superintendent's FY15 Recommended Budget (ii) teacher workload; (iii) what would the cost be to lower teacher workload; (iv) Dr. Ash was requested by the Committee to produce what the cost would be to lower teacher workload at the high school; (v) per pupil expenditures; (vi) school supply budgets; (vii) communication specialist; (viii) Director of Planning and Assessment position; (ix) EDWIN; (x) additional meetings; and (xi) future agenda items.

Dr. Ash shared that he would be on vacation and would not have those numbers by Saturday but would work to have them available for the following School Committee meeting. Dr. Ash did not support singling out one group, but rather look at the entire district for reduced teacher load.

Anna Monaco, Principal Jonas Clarke Middle School spoke to class size at the middle school.

Thomas Martellone, Principal, Fiske Elementary School shared he found teachers sending home letters to parent requesting a long list of supplies. Mr. Martellone stated that ordering in bulk would reduce the cost of these items and he estimated the cost to be between \$5,000-\$6,000. If he had that amount in his school budget, he would spend that money on school supplies.

Dr. Ash stated that school supplies is a real issue and supports adding money into school budget to purchase these supplies that would significantly help the elementary level teachers.

Elaine Meade, Principal, Harrington Elementary School shared that she is interested in the Director of Assessment and Planning. Ms. Meade added that she would like to seek assistance with attendance, standards based report card data, and curriculum data.

Anna Monaco, Principal, Jonas Clarke Middle School, shared her thoughts on how the Director of Assessment and Planning would benefit her as a principal. She does not have the time and knowledge to compile and analyze all the data that is available.

Laura Lasa, Principal, Lexington High School shared that she has wanted this position for quite sometime and that it would help her in her role as principal in order to review and make informed decisions and be proactive.

Dr. Ash shared the bids are coming in February 6 for the modulars. The Committee is scheduled to vote the budget on February 11 and will have the number when a vote is taken.

Dawn McKenna asked if the modulars would be paid for with cash or bonded. If bonded it will not affect the FY17 budget.

Dawn McKenna shared that she heard Dr. Ash say that this is the end of the long budget process and reminded the Committee that it is the beginning of the public hearing process.

Margaret Coppe announced that the Committee will meet on Tuesday, February 4 and she will arrange for the Meeting Agenda to be posted.

VI. Superintendent's Announcements:

Dr. Ash announced the staff at the Joseph Estabrook Elementary School, working with the Department of Public Works (DPW), is doing a great job moving into the new school. The old school is 85% packed up and they have received their Certificate of Occupancy so school will be opening on time.

VII. School Committee Member Announcements:

Margaret Coppe shared (i) went to the Lexington High School Boys basketball game at TD Garden on Saturday night; (ii) last Saturday night, she attended the Cary Lecture on concussions and suggested watching the program on LexMedia; (iii) the "Faces of Lexington" a photo series by Damian Strohymeyer will be on display at the library; (iv) on February 9, "A French A Faire" will be held at the Depot from 4:00 – 6:30 pm, the proceeds will go to Antony Park and tickets are available for purchase at Wales and the Visitor Center; and (v) on Saturday, March 15 at Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Ave, Lexington, MA, Voyages en Francophone, a free, multicultural and family-oriented event that will take place.

Bonnie Brodner announced (i) in reading through the newsletters from the schools, it occurs to her that some school communities have tried to raise money for families in need; Estabrook Elementary School is collecting quarters and cards for shopping and wondered if the Committee wanted to encourage others to do the same; and (ii) Ms. Brodner participated in the Martin Luther King Day of Service and thanked Sam Zales and the whole Lexington community.

Mary Ann Stewart shared an update to (i) the Farm Bill, which pays for the supplemental nutrition program (SNAP). If passed with the proposed cuts to SNAP benefits, it would be a devastating loss to people in our town and state who rely on them; (ii) Department of Elementary Secondary Education (DESE) has seventeen advisory councils and one is a parent advisory council to finish work about the role families play in their child's education; (iii) Bill S213 no longer has lead sponsor behind it due to the special election for Katherine Clark and the Committee might want to make a few telephone calls because there are a fair number of co-sponsors.

Jessie Steigerwald provided an update to (i) the Community Center Advisory Committee (CCAC); (ii) use of the new Estabrook School gym; (iii) Policy Subcommittee about different travel policies for School and municipal employees; (iv) PTA/PTO Meeting she and Ms. Brodner attended where they were asked if they wanted them to be liaisons to specific schools; (v) the 8th Grade Mock Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 8 and shared that volunteers are still needed.

Mary Ellen Dunn reported that the new Estabrook facility might not be available for booking events. The school has a five-year lease with Lextended Day which impacts that space before 6 p.m. Anyone interested should check in with Ms. Dunn.

VIII. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Accept a \$250 Donation from Jennifer and Lee Sterne in Support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 5, 2013
3. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 19, 2013
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 3, 2013
5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of December 19, 2013
6. Vote to Approve and Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of December 19, 2013
7. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of January 7, 2014

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 7 above (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

IX. Executive Session

Exemption 2 – To Conduct Strategy Session in Preparation for Contract Negotiations with Superintendent Ash

The Chair moved that the School Committee go into Executive Session under Exemption 2, and not to return to open session and further declared that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town.

A roll call vote was taken:

Alessandro Alessandrini	“Aye”
Mary Ann Stewart	“Aye”
Bonnie Brodner	“Aye”
Jessie Steigerwald	“Aye”
<u>Margaret Coppe</u>	“Aye”

X. Adjourn

A Motion to Adjourn was made and seconded was approved and the meeting ended at 11:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the School Committee will be a Public Hearing on the FY 15 Recommended Budget and is scheduled for Saturday, February 1, at 10:00 a.m. in the Diamond Middle School Auditorium, 99 Hancock Street.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Donation Procedure for 2014 LHS Science & Engineering Fair; Lexington School Committee Draft Meeting Minutes dated November 5, 2013; Lexington School Committee Draft Meeting Minutes dated November 19, 2013; Lexington School Committee Draft Meeting Minutes dated December 3, 2013; and Lexington School Committee Draft Meeting Minutes dated December 19, 2013

Voted by the School Committee April 16, 2014