

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, May 28, 2013**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative**

**The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary**

**The Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order**

The Chair called the meeting to order and moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Exemption 3 – Collective Bargaining Pertaining to LEA, Unit A, Grievance Hearing

**A roll call vote was taken:**

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

**II. Executive Session**

Exemption 3 – To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Litigation

**The Chair moved to return to Public Session and a roll call vote was taken:**

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

**III. Return to Public Session and Welcome**

The Chair called the Public Session to Order at 7:36 p.m. and invited public comment.

There were no public comments.

**IV. Superintendent's Announcements**

Dr. Ash had no announcements this evening.

**V. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns**

Margaret Coppe shared that Sam Alpert has been a wonderful addition to the Lexington School Committee. He will be graduating on Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup> and will be attending the University of California Santa Barbara. The Committee is very happy for him and he will be missed. Ms. Coppe presented Mr. Alpert with a Certificate of Appreciation for outstanding service and lasting contribution as Student Representative to the School Committee along with a gift. Sam Alpert thanked the Committee and stated he has enjoyed his time on the Committee.

Margaret Coppe inquired if Sam Alpert knew who the new student representative would be.

Bonnie Brodner stated that Sam Lehn will be the 2013-2014 Student Representative to the School Committee. Ms. Brodner also inquired if the Committee knew if the liaisons for the PTA Advisory Council would stay the same next year.

Margaret Coppe responded to Ms. Brodner that the liaisons will stay the same until the fall when the Committee will appoint new liaisons.

Alessandro Alessandrini attended the World Language award ceremonies held at the High School. He congratulated all the students, teachers and staff involved, along with Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, Dr. Paul Ash and Laura Lasa, Principal, Lexington High School who were also in attendance. Mr. Alessandrini stated how this shows how important foreign languages are to our school system.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that she distributed the Five Year Strategic Plan (Plan) for the Cary Memorial Library which was concluded this past week. The Board of Trustees approved the Plan and did not know what the next steps would be or if anyone will be distributing copies so she picked up some copies and believes it will also be posted on the Library's website soon. If anyone has any questions about the Plan they can contact Ms. Stewart or Dr. Koren Stenbridge, Director of the Library.

Ms. Stewart shared that she participated in the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) Advocacy Day this past Tuesday at the State House. The Day on the Hill, which is a much more formal production for MASC, was postponed and rescheduled because of the Primary Election held on April 30<sup>th</sup>. This was an opportunity to meet with legislatures to talk about issues impacting school committees such as overregulation, compliance and reporting of all kinds which tends to take away from improving student achievement. Ms. Stewart stated that she was able to meet with all of Lexington's legislators or someone from their staff.

Ms. Stewart extended a thank you to Matthew Mehler, Jonas Clarke Middle School Social Studies Department Head who sent a copy of a DVD on local government to all members of the Committee.

Jesse Steigerwald announced that Matthew Mehler will be moving to another school system and she wished him all the best.

Ms. Steigerwald shared that the Ad hoc Townwide Facilities Master Planning Committee (AhTFMPC) meets again tomorrow. AhTFMPC has an updated Executive Summary Report (Report) which will go to the Board of Selectmen (BOS), and shared that she emailed the Report to Committee members but did not have time to make copies. Ms. Steigerwald then asked the Chair if she could read the four sentences in it so she can get input from the entire Committee and Louise Lipsitz, Principal Hastings Elementary School. Ms. Lipsitz is here tonight to comment about the Hastings Elementary School portion in order to make an agreement on how the

summary should be worded. Ms. Steigerwald showed the paper visually to the Committee and the public. Ms. Steigerwald stated that each of the ten reports has been broken down with a small picture and a tiny summary. She shared what the AhTMPFC said about the high school “*Keep the high school replacement project within a ten year planning horizon to prepare for the project and ensure that it is completed.*” Ms. Steigerwald shared that the AhTMPFC moved on to other projects prior to the high school to smooth the financial burden to the community before the project starts. This means trying get the police and fire station done quickly enough that we can increase how much we can borrow and then bring that amount down before the Town takes on a much larger debt burden to do a new high school. For the Hastings Elementary School, the AhTMPFC report states “*Replace the Hastings School as soon as it is practicable and in the feasibility phase consider options for places and programs.*” This statement, Ms. Steigerwald felt, was inadequate and we have spent a considerable amount of time in our meetings with either Ms. Lipsitz or herself presenting information and several members came and took a tour of the school. If the Committee and Ms. Lipsitz agree, Ms. Steigerwald is going to advocate strongly having the report show more about the urgency of the Hastings project.

Ms. Coppe inquired if we should talk about this now or wait until the school improvement plans further on in the agenda item.

Ms. Steigerwald stated that she believes that if everyone feels that this language is fine she will be okay, but if not then we will need to reword the sentence to convey the Committee’s urgency. Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, feels that we can file for an SOI for Hastings in January, 2014.

Bonnie Brodner agreed that the language should make it sound more urgent. Ms. Brodner’s other question was about replacement because it is her understanding that we will see what the state will pay for.

Margaret Coppe stated that she believed that the Committee was getting into a discussion that is not an agenda item and she is concerned.

Dr. Ash agrees with the Chair and others that this is under the section of announcements and concerns, but there is a solution to the problem of bringing this up if you will agree. Since the School Improvement Plans are on the agenda and the Hastings document refers to the replacement of the school, we bring it up under that agenda item and we will be in compliance with the Open Meeting Law.

Jessie Steigerwald then shared that she attended the Pops Concert on both Thursday and Friday. The 300<sup>th</sup> Anniversary had its closing concert, and Jeff Leonard and Janet Haas had both participated. Ms. Steigerwald wanted to check in with Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance regarding the bus sign up date.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Superintendent of Business and Finance, stated that the bus date had been extended from the May 11 to the 18 and are now in the next phase of the bus fee of \$500 which closes on July 1, 2013 and her office sent out many emails, regular mail, and phone messages alerting parents to that extension. From May 11 to the 18 they did a lot of outreach.

## **VI. Agenda:**

### **1. Discussion of the RFP Process for Solar Panels**

Shawn Newell, System Director of Department Public Facilities came this evening to discuss a proposal for the development of a Request for Proposal (RFP) for Solar Power Purchase Agreement for the Town which would include school buildings. Over the past year he has been working with the Lexington Solar Task Force to study the installation of photo uptake energy cells on municipal buildings to see if they would be of benefit to the town of Lexington. The Task Force concluded that it would potentially yield energy savings for the town but first a change of bylaws would be required which the Task Force went forward with at the April Town Meeting where it was passed unanimously. The Task Force developed a broad based RFP which would be issued to identify benefits of installing panels on various buildings, including schools. The RFP does not commit the Task Force to installing any system but would provide the Task Force with information so a decision could be made. A response is expected from that RFP by mid-July. The Task Force is hoping to pass this through the Town Manager's Office and Town Counsel and get this out by mid to late June.

There were questions and comments from the Committee including (i) would responses received be forwarded to the Committee; (ii) has solar energy technology improved enough to be used in New England; (iii) will the RFP be looking at all town building; (iv) how are the energy savings identified; and (v) are the school roofs strong enough to hold the panels.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 8, questioned what would be done for the school buildings that may be rebuilt or replaced.

2. **Discussion of 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans**

Dr. Ash invited the 8 principals to come forward and announced that Laura Lasa, High School Principal will be coming to the meeting late tonight due to an award event for athletics at the high school. Dr. Ash recommends that the Committee talk about the FY 2013 School Improvement Plans first and then talk about FY2014 School Improvement Plans last. Dr. Ash complimented the principals and site councils in both developing these plans and the success they have achieved in showing clarity of the schools moving collaboratively and uniquely. A year ago the Committee saw everything except the results and now results are filled in. Dr. Ash turned the meeting over to the Committee.

There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding (i) uniform font size used on each plan from each of the schools; (ii) including the names of Site Council members who worked on the plans; (iii) mid-year update to the Committee halfway through the school year; (iv) the principals' sense of enrollment and space needs and how they impact goals; (v) concerns regarding the Ad hoc Townwide Facilities Master Planning Committee (AhTFMPC), with respect to the Hastings Elementary School language in the AhTFMPC Report Summary Sheet; (vi) concerns regarding Special Education (SPED) referrals; (vii) concerns and support for one level math for sixth graders; (viii) mentor programs;

(ix) teacher websites and training for teachers on their websites and the content; (x) Youth Risk Behavior Survey; (xi) limiting homework on school program nights; (xii) upcoming school improvement plans; (xiii) how will two-way conversations be encouraged; (xiv) technology and student access to technology; and (xv) questions regarding policies on social networking between teachers and students.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street and also a Diamond Middle School parent, questioned the Committee regarding the curriculum change at Diamond Middle School and enrichment programs.

Mary Anton, Principal of Bowman Elementary School and Meg Colella, Principal Estabrook Elementary School provided construction updates on their schools and shared that both of them had created contingency plans for the opening of school in September 2013. They each recognized their staff members and the custodial staff for all their hard work.

The Committee thanked everyone for all their hard work.

**3. Recommended Process to Study Elementary Foreign Language**

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. Ms. Pilarski shared that she and Alessandro Alessandrini met to discuss the study of elementary foreign language. Ms. Pilarski and Mr. Alessandrini agree that a world language study will begin in 2013 and will study the feasibility of study at the elementary school level. Ms. Pilarski shared the proposed membership and what the proposed committee will review and investigate, what the goal of the program will be, when during the day it will take place, and how it will be articulated to the middle school and high school for transitioning.

The Committee had questions and comments regarding (i) the composition of the committee; (ii) concerns about creating more homework and student stress; (iii) interference with music and arts; and (iv) what is the difference from a curriculum review.

Leslie Zales, 7 Page Rd., thanked Ms. Pilarski and Mr. Alessandrini for including parents and inquired if METCO students may be impacted if the program is held after school hours. Ms. Zales also shared her thoughts on the membership composition.

**4. Vote to Approve 2014-2015 Recommended School Calendar**

Phyllis Neufeld, President Lexington Education Association (LEA), stated that the Committee had asked her for input from the LEA based on the 2014-2015 recommended school calendars. Ms. Neufeld shared that she sent out a survey to LEA members and the results from that survey included 241 in favor of starting

school before Labor Day and 107 for beginning school after Labor Day. The Committee had questions and comments.

Dr. Ash presented the two different proposed calendars to the Committee. Dr. Ash shared that in light of the LEA survey results and other feedback from parents it is his recommendation that the 2014-2015 school calendar begin before Labor Day.

There were comments and questions from the Committee.

**Motion to Approve 2014-2015 Recommended School Calendar as recommended starting before Labor Day (Stewart, Brodner)**

The Committee had further discussions regarding the recommended 2014-2015 recommended school calendar.

**The Motion was Approved (4-1) Steigerwald Opposed**

**5. Lexington High School Class Size Policy – First Reading**

Margaret Coppe presented the Lexington High School Class Size Policy – First Reading. Ms. Coppe thanked Alessandro Alessandrini for doing all the research on this agenda item and shared the reason for this policy. Ms. Coppe then read the policy to the Committee. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

**6. Transfer of FY 2013 Funds**

Dr. Ash shared that the district is in good financial shape and should have a surplus of funds. Dr. Ash requested the following surplus funds to be used for the following: (i) \$87,371 to purchase technology as described on a back up sheet showing what those dollars would purchase; (ii) \$96, 372.06 to purchase furniture, training and equipment; and (iii) \$100,000 for the total cost of Facilities' safety request.

Patrick Goddard, Director of Facilities shared that the schools can not have a lockdown with the current system. His department has looked at options to have a deadbolt or a lanyard key for the entire school district for every single lock to be used only inside of a room. The cost would amount to approximately \$240,000 and there is currently \$50,000 in the budget left over to offset this cost. Mr. Goddard is seeking a motion from the Committee to allow the transfer of these funds as allowed in Memorandum dated May 22, 2013 from Patrick Goddard to Dr. Paul Ash regarding update on safety recommendations for classroom lockdown.

**Motion to Authorize the Transfer of \$283,843.06 to be applied Toward the Purchase of Technology (\$87,371.00); Furniture, Training and Equipment (\$96,472.06) and Facilities (\$100,000.00) (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald Absent.**

**7. Vote to Reappoint Mary Ellen Dunn as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Procurement Officer for Three Years**

Dr. Ash shared that Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Procurement Officer has agreed to a three contract beginning July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016. Dr. Ash stated that Ms. Dunn has done a wonderful job and is a pleasure to work with. Dr. Ash recommended that the Committee authorize the Superintendent to reappoint Mary Ellen Dunn as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Procurement Officer for three years. The Committee was very happy that Ms. Dunn will be with the Lexington school system for the next three years.

**Motion to Authorize the Superintendent Reappoint Mary Ellen Dunn as Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Procurement Officer for Three Years (July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2016) (Brodner, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald Absent.**

**8. Vote to Accept Lexington Education Foundation Grant Awards**

Margaret Coppe shared that the Lexington Education Foundation has gifted to the Lexington Public Schools (i) Program Grants totaling \$196,421 which will support various initiatives such as blended learning, iPad technology in various departmental programs, Common Core Standards in reading, etc.; and (ii) Community Grants awarded to Lexington elementary schools (\$7,000) per building; middle schools (\$10,000) per building; and high school (\$15,000) totaling \$77,000. The total amount of the Program grants and the Community grants total \$273,421.

**Motion to Accept with Gratitude, Lexington Education Foundation Grant Awards (i) Program Grants (\$196,421.00) and (ii) Community Grants (\$77,000.00) (Alessandrini, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald Absent**

**9. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 23, 2013**

Alessandro Alessandrini had changes to the minutes which will need to be made in Executive Session. The Committee decided to postpone the vote until after the next Executive Session.

**10. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of May 14, 2013**

**Motion to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of May 14, 2013 (Brodner, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald absent**

Margaret Coppe agreed to send the editorial correction to Miriam Sousa.

**Motion to Adjourn (Alessandrini, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Steigerwald Absent**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:48 p.m.**

*Documents: Meeting Agenda; Letter dated May 22, 2013 from Shawn Newell to Dr. Paul Ash re Solar RFP; Lexington Public School Improvement Plans FY 2013; Lexington Public Schools Improvement Plans FY2014; Memorandum dated May 28, 2013 to Lexington School Committee from Dr. Paul Ash and Carol Pilarski re Recommended Process to Study the Re-Investment of an Elementary World Language Program; Lexington Public School Calendars for 2014-2015; Lexington School Committee Policy on Class Size; Memorandum dated May 23, 2013 re Allocation of FY 13 Surplus Funds; Memorandum dated May 22, 2013 to Dr. Paul Ash from Pat Goddard, Director of Public Facilities re Update on Safety Recommendation for Classroom Lockdown; Memorandum of Agreement dated May 28, 2013 between the Superintendent of Schools and the Assistant for Finance and Business Operations and Chief Procurement Officer; Memorandum dated May 28, 2013 to Lexington School Committee from Carol Pilarski*

Voted by the School Committee August 27, 2013