

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, January 31, 2012

Cary Memorial Building, Cary Hall Auditorium
1605 Massachusetts Avenue

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

The minutes were taken by Jean Curran.

The Meeting Convened at 7:10 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 received a letter from Thomas Scott, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), sharing news that the Governor's proposed FY2013 Budget increases the amount of state aid by \$145,000,000 or 3.6%. The Governor's budget also proposes level funding for the special education circuit breaker account at \$213 million, which is a major source of revenue for the district. The FY13 Budget Book contained assumption for reimbursement at 60%. In the current year we are being reimbursed at 65%. The additional 5% is about \$500,000 dollars.

Dr. Ash provided an update on the report being prepared by Bruce Wellman, the consultant hired to improve professional working relationships. Dr. Ash announced that he has viewed an outline of the report giving him an idea of what might be contained in the report. The plan is to present the report to the Committee on March 13th. The day before this meeting, Mr. Wellman and the Steering Committee will present the findings to the entire faculty and will be available to answer questions. This report will become a public document after that time so that the general public can comment on the results.

Dr. Ash restated why he hired the High School principal without conducting a national search. He stated that Ms. Lasa understands LHS and the students' needs, is an exceptional manager, and is well liked among faculty and students. He further stated the need for stability at the high school at this time. Conducting a national search would have been costly, both in time and money. He is convinced that Ms. Lasa is the absolute best person going forward.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

Alessandro Alessandrini was glad Dr. Ash brought up the subject of the hiring of Ms. Lasa as the new high school principal. While he recognizes that Dr. Ash has the absolute right to hire, he stated he would have preferred to have had a heads up. He wishes Ms. Lasa all the best in her new position.

Jessie Steigerwald thanked Dr. Ash and stated she also prefers to be part of the process. She looks forward to a strong leadership period at the high school. She then announced that she had attended the Chinese American Association of Lexington's Bi-Annual Chinese New Year Banquet held on Saturday, January 28th. She was asked by attendees if the next Site Council training could be held on an afternoon.

Margaret Coppe wanted to know from Dr. Ash if it would be possible for the Committee to receive a copy of the Wellman Report earlier than the Friday before March 13th, so that the Committee can thoroughly review the report prior to the March 13th meeting.

Mary Ann Stewart attended the Board of Selectman's meeting to formally request authorization for a Special Town Meeting to be held on April 2nd. Special Town Meeting will be held within the Annual Town Meeting and will ask Town Meeting to appropriate funding for the new Estabrook School, assuming the project meets the approval of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Board on March 28th.

IV. Agenda:

1. Estabrook School Building Project

Ken DiNisco, President, and Donna DiNisco, Vice President of DiNisco Design, presented the Schematic Design for Estabrook. Ken stated that DiNisco is seeking the Committee's approval on a design to be submitted on this coming Thursday, February 2, 2012. Ken showed all the floor designs, the green roof plan, the roof garden, bleachers, rain gardens for storm water management, the overall site plan, and 3-D views. Ken described the LEED-S Scorecard and that this earns the town a 2% or \$750,000 reimbursement. All of these plans are needed for the MSBA submission. Ken was seeking a vote for the net program area. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Betsy Sarles, Turning Mill Road resident and Estabrook PTA Co-President, had questions about the design approval process. She also had questions regarding staff parking, and the availability of parking spaces for after school events, roof garden, and greenhouse.

Beth Zonis, 4 Gould Road, questioned construction access to Robinson Road.

Kenneth Laxague, 37 Bertwell Road, had questions regarding the ideal orientation of classrooms and school capacity.

Motion to Approve Schematic Design as presented. (Stewart, Brodner).
The Motion was approved 5-0.

2. Public Hearing on FY13 Superintendent's Recommended Budget

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, urged the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages in the Elementary Schools in the FY13 Recommended Budget.

Ashley McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, urged the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level in the FY13 Recommended Budget.

Beth Zonis, 4 Gould Road, urged the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level in the FY13 Recommended Budget.

John Patrick, 2030 Massachusetts Avenue, urges the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level in the FY13 Recommended Budget. He also spoke about Lexington's sister city Antony, France.

Una Gillis, 449 Waltham Street urged the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level in the FY13 Recommended Budget.

Ilene Benghiat, 5 Sunny Knoll Avenue and President of the Backers of Lexington Debate, Inc. (BOLD, Inc.) thanked the Committee for including funding for administrative support for the debate program at the High School and urged the Committee to pass a budget for funding the entire debate program.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street supports administrative support for the debate program and urged the Committee to provide the necessary funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level.

Harvey Simkovits, supports BOLD, Inc. He also urged the Committee to provide funding for elementary foreign language in the FY13 Recommended Budget

Marsha Traber, 106 Maple Street, urged the Committee to provide funding for foreign languages at the elementary school level in the FY13 Recommended Budget.

John Patrick, 2030 Massachusetts Avenue, announced *A French 'A Faire'*, event being held on Sunday, February 12, 2012 at the Lexington Depot.

3. Adjustments to the FY12 and FY13 budgets

Dr. Ash was informed by Town Manager, Carl Valente about a decrease in Minuteman High School's Town assessment. This would mean an additional \$274,223 for LPS. He provided updates on the elimination of the fee for full day

kindergarten, the elimination of the music fee and the costs of reducing the bus fee by one-half at the Estabrook School during construction, as well as technology funding. Dr. Ash also announced that he would not lay off any OTs and corrected his statement from the last meeting that there is no requirement for an OT to be at a school 100% of the time. He is recommending two items be paid for out of FY 12 funds (i) Diamond ILP Program and (ii) a hearing study to be conducted to accommodate students with hearing disabilities. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

4. Discussion of Superintendent Evaluation Process

Mary Ann Stewart reviewed an updated evaluation form and Survey Monkey questions. There were questions and comments from the Committee, including discussion of who should participate in the process.

Public Comments:

Harvey Simkovits, had comments about the survey.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, had questions about the evaluation process.

Dori Martin, 60 Liberty Ave, expressed her views on the survey and had questions regarding anonymity for teachers.

5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 3, 2012

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 3, 2012, as amended. (Brodner, Alessandrini). **The Motion was approved 5-0.**

6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 17, 2012

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 17, 2012, as amended. (Brodner, Alessandrini). **The Motion was approved 5-0.**

Motion to Adjourn. (Steigerwald, Brodner). **The Motion was approved 5-0.**

The Meeting Adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda: Memorandum from Tom Scott, MASS Executive Director to Mass Colleagues re: FY13 Education Budget Release; Letter from DiNisco Design Partnership dated January 27, 2012 to Dr. Paul Ash re: MSBA Schematic Design Option; LPS FY12 and FY13 Budget Adjustments, Revenue Offsets, and Memorandum from Carl Valente and Rob Addelson to Dr. Paul Ash dated January 27, 2012 re: Proposed FY 13 Budget and Revenue Adjustments; Draft form for Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent by the Lexington School Committee; Draft SC Minutes dated January 3, 2012 and SC Minutes dated January 17, 2012.

Voted by the School Committee _____ February 28, 2012