

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE

### (Official Report)

**Regular Meeting**

**Tuesday, February 3, 2004**

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser,  
Mayor Sullivan

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

A quorum of the School Committee being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Also present: Student School Committee Member: Adrienne Leslie

### **Presentation of the Records**

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the Minutes of the following meetings be accepted as presented:

- Regular Meeting - December 16, 2003
- Regular Meeting - January 20, 2004
- Special Informal Meeting - January 20, 2004

**#04-020, Approval to go into Executive Session** for the purpose of discussing strategy for collective bargaining; and for the purpose of considering the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining, litigation and negotiation positions of the School Committee. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Harding, on the following roll call, it was voted to go into executive session for the purpose stated: Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis ABSENT, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA. The Chair announced that the Committee will reconvene in open session and that no votes will be taken in Executive Session.

### **Executive Session**

Members present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern, Ms. Walser,  
Mayor Sullivan

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

Also Present: Thomas Fowler-Finn, Superintendent  
Carolyn Turk, Deputy Superintendent  
Barbara Allen, Executive Director, Human Resources  
James Conry, Chief Financial Officer  
Maureen MacFarlane, Legal Counsel  
James Maloney, Chief Operating Officer

Members received an update on contract negotiations from the Superintendent and Legal Counsel. Deputy City Manager Richard Rossi joined the meeting at this time. Members discussed the use of the Longfellow building with the Deputy City Manager. The Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

Mayor Sullivan in the Chair.

The Chair reconvened the meeting and announced that no votes were taken in Executive Session.

### **Public Comment on School Committee Agenda**

There being nobody signed up, on a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to close public comment.

### **Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members**

Adrienne Leslie was heard regarding interest in seeing the report on students suspended out of school and asking that alternative ways be used to deliver notifications to students besides the "Did You Know".

**Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting:** None

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Tabled Matters**

On a motion by Ms. Walser, it was voted to remove tabled item #03-173, Use of Vacant School Buildings. On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to substitute Recommendation #03-173 with Recommendation #04-022. Mayor Sullivan asked the Superintendent to speak to the recommendations. The Superintendent was heard and proposed the following amendment to the last sentence in Item B: It will not be until the completion of "that study and an additional study of the Longfellow completed by the Cambridge Public Schools" that the Superintendent would prepare a recommendation for the School Committee regarding the use of the former Graham & Parks building on Upton Street." On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adopt the Superintendent's amendment. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Ms. Walser, on the following roll call, Recommendation **#04-022, Substitute Language, Use of Vacant School Department Buildings**, was adopted as amended: That the School Committee grant authorization for the City to utilize the former Longfellow School on Broadway to the full extent the City determines is necessary for a temporary main library during the renovation and expansion project at the main library. Remaining unused space in the building, upon conferral between the Superintendent and City Manager, will temporarily be allocated for community programs and school department use. Upon completion of the Library renovation project, the Longfellow building will revert to the School Committee for a determination on the future use of the building.

That the School Committee authorize the Superintendent to retain a space planner to work with the District in determining the proper amount of square footage needed for central office, including the School Committee Office and meeting room. Further, that the space planner work with the District to analyze how much square footage for variable use as central office and other uses is available at the school on Upton Street. It will not be until the completion of that study and an additional study of the Longfellow completed by the Cambridge Public Schools that the Superintendent would prepare a recommendation for the School Committee regarding the use of the former Graham & Parks building on Upton Street. Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, for suspension of the Rules for the purpose of moving reconsideration of the foregoing vote. The Rules having been suspended, a motion to reconsider the foregoing vote, hoping the same would not prevail, failed of adoption.

### **New Business**

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Lummis, for adoption of items #04-020 through #04-030. Mayor Sullivan removed #04-025 and #04-027. Ms. Walser removed #04-023. Mr. McGovern removed #04-021

and #04-030. Mr. Harding removed #04-028. #04-022 was adopted earlier in the meeting. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

**#04-024, Special Needs Contract for Residential Services** Not Available from the Cambridge School Department: that the School Committee award a contract to the institution listed below, in an amount not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget. Placement of students in Private Schools for Implementation of education plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

<u>1 contract</u>	Melmark Home Inc, 2600 Wayland Road, Berwyn, PA.	<u>\$165,900.48</u>
1 contract		\$165,900.48

**#04-026, Consultant Agreement:** that the School Committee approve the consultant agreement with the following company, in the amount set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Cambridge Community Service in the amount of \$33,967.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 858626, prog. 626, project/grant SC04691.

**#04-029, Letter from Representative Alice K. Wolf** regarding a joint hearing of the House Ways and Means Committees on the Governor's fiscal year 2005 education budget.

Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

### Non-Consent Business

**#04-021, Cambridge Public Schools Promotion/Retention Policy.** Mr. McGovern moved an amendment, seconded by Mr. Fantini, that the Superintendent report back to the School Committee by the last meeting in June with what services are in place to support this policy. On a voice vote, Mr. McGovern's amendment was adopted. Mr. Harding thanked the Superintendent for the workshop and asked that summer school be continued as a support. On a voice vote, **#04-021, Cambridge Public Schools Promotion/Retention Policy**, is referred for a second reading and placed on the table, as amended, as follows: Further, that the School Committee approve the Promotion/Retention Policy as detailed in the document. Further, that the Superintendent report back to the School Committee by the last meeting in June with what services are in place to support this policy.

The information includes a revised district wide Promotion/Retention Policy. Key recommendations are as follows:

- The Cambridge School Committee recognizes that each child develops socially, emotionally, and intellectually at a rate unique to that child and that each child must be afforded the opportunity to progress continually through school community environments that meet their individual needs. A student who struggles to be successful in school may advance to the next grade when in the judgment of the principal, based upon input from school staff and parent/guardian, advancement is in the best interest of the student.
- Students are expected to progress through the grade levels. When a student struggles to meet grade-level standards, school staff, students, and parent/guardians will work together to customize support services to help the student succeed. Retention should be considered a last resort and will take place only after very careful consideration and implementation of a retention intervention plan. With the exception of kindergarten students who due to age may remain in the same grade for a second year a student may be retained no more than once prior to entering high school. Decisions made regarding students with IEP's must be consistent with the IEP team

findings. The decision to retain a student shall be made by the Building Principal K-12, in consultation with appropriate staff members and parents/guardians. At the elementary level, should the parent/guardian disagree with the principal's decision, the principal will write a letter to be placed in the student's cumulative folder attesting to the recommendation of the principal while allowing the parent/guardian to have the final decision. At the secondary level, the accrual of appropriate credits determines the student's status of grade enrollment unless otherwise determined by the IEP team findings.

- No student who has completed a grade successfully shall be retained or allowed to repeat a grade in order to improve his/her ability or lengthen his/her eligibility to participate in extra-curricular athletic programs.
- The Superintendent shall establish administrative guidelines to implement this policy and establish administrative procedures that are to be followed by teachers when retention of the student is considered.

Ms. Walser pointed out that there are five opportunities in the budget schedule for the public to speak. Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, that the March 30 meeting be moved to April 6. On a voice vote, the foregoing motion was adopted. Mr. Fantini moved that the March 16 meeting be moved to March 11. Mr. Lummis raised a question on why a Regular Meeting date would be moved. Mr. Fantini was heard regarding having a conflict on the 16<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Harding raised a question on whether it is a law that a Saturday hearing be scheduled. Mayor Sullivan was heard in the negative. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that **#04-023, FY04-05 Budget Schedule**, be adopted as amended: that the School Committee approve the schedule for the FY04-05 Budget process, including Special Meetings on March 11, 2004 with a presentation of the Superintendent's recommended budget; March 23, 2004 for a Public Hearing on the budget; and April 6, 2004 for adoption of the budget. The Schedule has been developed in conjunction with the Budget Sub-Committee Co-Chairs, Ms. Walser and Mr. Fantini.

On the following roll call, **#04-025, Special Needs Contracts for Day Program Services** not available from the Cambridge School Department, was adopted: that the School Committee award contracts to the institutions listed below, in the amounts not to exceed the shown rates, having been approved by the Operational Services Division of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funds to be provided from the general fund budget. Placement of students in Private Schools for Implementation of education plans in accordance with Chapter 766.

2 contracts	Bay Cove Human Service Inc., 66 Canal Street, Boston, MA;	\$94,354.18
1 contract	Beacon High School, 74 Green Street, Brookline, MA;	22,791.07
1 contract	You Inc., 83 Hospital Road, P.O. Box 38, Baldwinville, MA;	60,909.00
1 contract	Compass, 26 Sunnyside Street, Jamaica Plain, MA;	34,766.97
1 contract	Dr. Franklin Perkins School, 971 Main Street, Lancaster, MA;	65,393.22
1 contract	Judge Baker Children's Center, 3 Blackfan Circle, Boston, MA;	42,300.00
1 contract	LABB Collaborative, 123 Cambridge Street, Burlington, MA;	47,150.00
1 contract	Learning Center for Deaf Children, 848 Central Street, Framingham, MA;	25,749.00

5 contracts	McLean Hospital, 115 Mill Street, Belmont, MA;	383,964.05
3 contracts	Schools for Children Inc., 20 Academy Street, Arlington, MA;	123,019.07
2 contracts	The Walker Home and School, 1968 Central Avenue, Needham, MA;	122,533.00
<u>1 contract</u>	Willow Hill School, 98 Hanes Road, Sudbury, MA.	<u>41,174.91</u>
20 contracts		\$1,064,104.47

Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern PRESENT, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Mayor Sullivan asked that mechanisms other than the "Did You Know" be used to get information out to students as suggested by Student School Committee Member Ms. Leslie. On a voice vote, the following was adopted: **#04-027, Motion by Mayor Sullivan** that the Superintendent utilize all available means to notify Cambridge Public Schools' students and teachers about the Democratic National Convention Committee's essay contests for young people across America: **Speak Out for the Future** for young adults and **Gavel in the Future** for younger middle school and high school students (please see attached information). Winners of **Gavel in the Future** will gavel open the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston and winners of **Speak Out for the Future** will deliver their winning speech during the Convention on prime time national television.

Mr. Harding asked that representatives from the high school be present at any scheduled meeting to answer questions that may arise. On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, the following was adopted: **#04-028, Motion by Mayor Sullivan** that the Superintendent report back to the School Committee, within one month, relative to the status of CRLS. Further, that said report should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Current issues
2. Process for addressing said issues
3. Timeline for completion

Further, that if necessary, the Superintendent shall schedule a workshop for presentation of the report.

**#04-030, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Mr. Lummis.** Mr. McGovern was heard in support of the motion. Mr. Harding was heard in support of the motion and thanked his colleagues for bringing it in. Mr. Lummis thanked Mr. McGovern for bringing in the motion. Mr. Grassi said that School Committee Agenda should be used to focus on its issues and he will not support the motion. Mr. Fantini was heard saying the school system is not the place for this motion and he will not support the resolution. Ms. Walser was heard in support of the motion and thanked her colleagues for bringing it in. Mayor Sullivan was heard in support of the motion and thinks it is appropriate to come before the Committee. On a motion by Mr. Lummis, seconded by Mr. McGovern, on the following roll call, **#04-030, Joint motion by Mr. McGovern and Mr. Lummis**, was adopted as follows:

That WHEREAS: The City of Cambridge is a diverse and mutually affirming community; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee as an elected body in the City of Cambridge respects and welcomes all families and students; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge School Committee believes in equal rights and equal treatment of all individuals; and

WHEREAS: The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court on November 18, 2003 issued a decision in *Goodridge vs. the Department of Public Health* holding that the Massachusetts Constitution prohibits the denial of the protections, benefits and obligations of civil marriage to same sex couples; and

WHEREAS: The Cambridge City Council and the Cambridge legislative delegation have affirmed the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision in *Goodridge*;

NOW, THEREFORE: Let it be ORDERED that the Cambridge School Committee go on record as respecting and welcoming all individuals and families and supporting their equal rights under law; that the Cambridge School Committee supports the decision of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court in *Goodridge vs. the Department of Public Health*.

Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Lummis YEA, Mr. McGovern YEA, Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini NAY, Mr. Grassi NAY, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

#### **Late Orders**

On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mayor Sullivan, it was voted to cancel the Regular Meeting of March 16, 2004.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee send a letter to the Mid-Cambridge Conservation Commission asking them to approve the plans for the new library and to help us expedite construction of the library.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee ask the Superintendent to insure that the revised budget process and schedule be sent home in backpacks and that it be put on the web.

Mr. Lummis moved that the Superintendent apprise Members of the dates of regularly scheduled School Council meetings. The Superintendent was heard. On a voice vote, the motion was adopted.

Mr. Harding thanked the Superintendent and his staff for the prompt attention to the King building concerns.

Mr. Fantini thanked the Superintendent for resolving tuition reimbursement issues raised in Ms. Spinosa's letter of January 9.

Mr. Lummis thanked the Superintendent and his cabinet for welcoming him and Mr. McGovern. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. McGovern said he was impressed with the consistency that things are moving in a positive direction across the board.

On a motion by Ms. Walser, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted to adjourn (7:00 p.m.).

Adjourned  
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee