

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

(Official Report)

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, December 2, 2003

Members Present: Mr. Fantini, Mr. Grassi, Mr. Harding, Mr. Price, Ms. Turkel, 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 6:05 p.m.

Presentation of the Records

The Secretary asked that the date of the Special Meeting on August 25, 2003 - 5:30 p.m. be changed to August 18, 2003. On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to accept the Minutes of the following meetings, as amended:

- Special Meeting - August 18, 2003
- Special Meeting - August 25, 2003 - 6:00 p.m.
- Special Meeting - July 29, 2003 - 5:00 p.m.
- Special Summer Meeting - July 29, 2003 - 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment on School Committee Agenda

The following individuals were heard:

- Cheryl Kennedy, Lopez St. re: web site access to documents; motion on Gore St. skating rink; promotion policy
- Richard Freirman, R.C. Kelly St. re: motion on Gore St. skating rink

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Fantini, it was voted to close Public Comment.

Reports and/or Comments from Student School Committee Members: None

Superintendent's Consent Agenda

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Ms. Walser, for adoption of Superintendent's Recommendations #03-160 through #03-167. Mr. Grassi removed #03-161, #03-163 and #03-166. Mr. Price removed #03-167. On the following roll call, the remaining items were adopted:

03-160, Contract Award for Special Education Interns: that the School Committee award a contract in the amount of \$20,000.00 to Wheelock College for two (2) Graduate Interns to work with cooperating teachers to provide Special Education services to students. Interns will be responsible to assist the supervising practitioner in the planning and implementation of curriculum for the classroom. In this capacity, the intern works under the direct supervision of the supervising practitioner and will, as the supervising practitioner feels is appropriate, assume more professional responsibilities, independently planning curriculum, testing, developing student portfolios, teaching, meeting with parents and teams of

other school professionals and all other duties and responsibilities as described in the Internship Agreement. The internship duration is a total of 182 days, based on the teacher's school year.

03-162, Approval of Home Schooling Applications for School Year 2003/2004: that the School Committee approve the home school applications for the 2003/2004 school year. The report includes information pertaining to the students whose families are seeking approval to educate their children at home. Approval of the manner of instruction in each of the home school applications is required in order for each of the children to be exempt from the compulsory attendance requirements of state law.

03-164, Settlement of Pending Action Before the Civil Service Commission: that the School Committee approve the Superintendent's recommendation relative to the settlement of a pending action before the Civil Service Commission in accordance with WR03-15. This is a negotiated settlement agreement of a pending action before the Civil Service Commission, case number D-03-187.

03-165, Service Agreement: That the School Committee approve the agreement with the following individual as indicated in the amount set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Dana Brown, Allston, in the amount of \$6,500.00, account 51201, fund 15000, org. 824147, prog. 147.

Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

Reconsideration of Votes Taken at Previous Meeting: None

Unfinished Business

The Chair moved that items **#1, 03-138**, Approval of Amendments to Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment; **#2, 03-137**, Approval of Amendments to Policy and Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication and for Management of Life Threatening Food allergies in the Schools; and **#3, 03-155**, Approval of Local 1611 Custodial Unit Contract, July 1, 2003-June 30, 2006 be removed from the Calendar and placed on a newly created category "Unfinished Business". Ms. Walser removed **#4, Motion by Ms. Walser** that the School Committee adopt the Revised Rules. Mr. Harding requested a roll call. Mr. Price raised a question on Chapter II, Section 7, Non-debatable Motions, why Members cannot speak to a motion before it is laid on the Table. Mr. Price was asked to submit language to amend the Rule in question. At the request of Mr. Harding and Ms. Turkel, Mayor Sullivan explained the difference between Calendar and Lay on the Table, and respectfully disagreed that the Rule should be amended. Mr. Price will talk with Legal Counsel regarding language for an amendment. Mr. Fantini raised a question on Chapter II, Section 20, Approval of Service Contracts and Travel. The Superintendent was heard. Mr. Fantini moved, seconded by Mr. Grassi, that the amount requiring School Committee approval be changed from \$25,000 to \$5,000 pending the election of new members. On the following roll call, Mr. Fantini's amendment failed of adoption: Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price NAY, Ms. Turkel NAY, Mayor Sullivan NAY. Ms. Turkel moved, seconded by Mr. Price, that the "Biennial" Report on Staff Travel be changed to "Semiannual". On a voice vote, the amendment was adopted. On the following roll call, it was voted to Table the 2003-2004 Rules of the School Committee: Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

The Chair moved that items **#1, 03-138**, Approval of Amendments to Non-Discrimination Policy and Prohibition Against Sexual Harassment; **#2, 03-137**, Approval of Amendments to Policy and Procedures for the Administration of Prescription Medication and for Management of Life Threatening Food allergies

in the Schools; and **#3, 03-155**, Approval of Local 1611 Custodial Unit Contract, July 1, 2003-June 30, 2006, be Tabled and placed in Unfinished Business under the new Rules. On a motion by Ms. Turkel, seconded by Mr. Harding, on a voice vote, the aforementioned items are Tabled.

School Committee Consent Agenda

Mr. Grassi moved, seconded by Mr. Price, for adoption of items #1 through #4. Mr. Grassi removed #4. Mr. Fantini removed #2. Ms. Turkel removed #1. On a voice vote, the remaining item was adopted:

#3, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi that the School Committee inform the City Council that, because of recent statutory requirements for "dispensing of medication" and "presence of medical personnel" for field trips, the City Council fully fund registered nurses at every school. It is further requested that the City Council communicate its decision back to the School Committee.

Superintendent Non-Consent Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, the following items were adopted:

#03-161, Request for Travel: that the School Committee approve the request for travel for LYNNE HALL, Early Childhood Instructional Coach, in an amount not to exceed \$585.20, to attend the Literacy for All Conference, in Providence, R.I., November 9-11, 2003.

#03-166, Consultant Agreements: that the School Committee approve consultant agreements with the companies or individuals, in the amounts set forth, funds to be provided as shown:

1. Cambridge School Volunteers, Inc., Cambridge, in the amount of \$8,671.50, account 53101, fund 15000, org. 893640, prog. 640; and in the amount of \$8,699.00, org. 893147, prog 147; and in the amount of \$68,171.50, org. 893640, prog. 640;
2. Community Learning Center, Cambridge, in the amount of \$48,866.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 859651, prog. 651, project/grant SC04610;
3. Harvard University, Cambridge, in the amount of \$50,000.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 851637, prog. 637, project/grant SC04770;
4. Karla Soule, Brookline, in the amount of \$19,250.00, account 53101, fund 25000, org. 841642, prog 642, project/grant SC03736.

Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi PRESENT, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

At the request of Mr. Grassi, the following item is placed on the Calendar: **#03-163, Cambridge Public Schools Promotion/Retention Policy:** that the School Committee approve the Promotion/Retention Policy. This is the first reading of 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 parents/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 a student is considered.

Mr. Price congratulated the makers of the grants. On a motion by Mr. Price, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on the following roll call, **#03-167, Grant Awards, FY03-04**, was adopted: that the School Committee accept and approve the following grant awards in the amounts and for the periods indicated:

1. MIT/Temperature Monitoring, Project/Grant SC04773, for the period of September 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, in the amount of \$1,000.00. This grant from MIT is to actively engage students in scientific and data collection in the discipline of Earth Science and as a complement to the current CPSD curriculum. Using Dataloggers, students will monitor the temperature of Black's Nook Pond and Fresh Pond Reservoir and use that data to predict pond 'turnover'. Students will design the investigation procedure and conduct the experimentation individually.
2. MIT/Water Quality, Project/Grant SC04774, for the period of September 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004, in the amount of \$1,000.00. This grant from MIT is to engage the Tobin School 5th and 7th grade students in scientific study. As a curriculum supplement to the Ecosystems (grade 5) and the Biodiversity (grade 7) curriculum, students will use water probes to monitor the temperature of the Black's Nook Pond over time. Students will use their data to make predictions about the life cycle of macroinvertebrates in Black's Nook and design experiments to test their hypothesis. Professional Development workshops are also funded by the grant.

Ms. Walser YEA, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price YEA, Ms. Turkel YEA, Mayor Sullivan YEA.

School Committee Non-Consent Agenda

#1, Motion by Mr. Grassi that the School Committee send a letter of condolence to Claire Rodley on the death of her mother. Ms. Turkel requested, and Mr. Grassi agreed, that the motion be made unanimously. On a voice vote, the foregoing motion is adopted unanimously.

#2, Joint motion by Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi that the School Committee make the City Council aware of the likely sale of the MDC Simone Ice Skating Rink on Gore Street. Further that the City Council take action to ensure that this recreation center/open space be maintained for access for CRLS athletic teams, the Cambridge Youth Hockey Program, as well as the public. Mr. Fantini and Mr. Grassi thanked all of those individuals for their leadership and support on the above item. On a motion by Mr. Fantini, seconded by Mr. Grassi, on a voice vote, the foregoing motion was adopted.

#4, Report of the Meeting of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Inauguration, November 24, 2003.

Called for 4:30 p.m. in the School Committee Office, Claire E. Rodley Conference Room, to take up any and all business that may properly come before the Committee.

Members present: Mr. Harding, Ms. Walser, Members-Elect Mr. Lummis, Mr. McGovern

Ms. Walser in the Chair.

A quorum of the Committee being present, Ms. Walser called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

The Committee discussed plans and ideas for the School Committee Inauguration on Monday, January 5, 2004, as follows:

1. The time for the Organization/Inauguration be 6:00 p.m., Monday, January 5, 2004 in the Henrietta S. Attles Meeting Room, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 454 Broadway, Cambridge.
2. That former School Committee Member Glenn Koocher (1996-1997), currently Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, be invited to emcee or, backup, Jimmy Tingle.
3. That former School Committee Member Henrietta Attles (1980-1983) be invited to give "Reflections" and the charge to the Committee. (Dr. Attles was invited to speak at the 2002 Inauguration but became ill at the last minute) or, backup, Ms. Barbara Ackermann, former School Committee Member (1962-1967) and Mayor (1972-1973), or Ms. Denise Maguire, Director of Cambridge Family and Children's Services.
4. That the Director of Music be asked to provide music including elementary, middle and high school students (Free Lance Players, string quartet, jazz ensemble, All City Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, saxophone player).
5. That there be no religious representation on the program.
6. That a collation for guests be served in the Main Cafeteria at C.R.L.S. immediately following the ceremony, and that the Manager of Food Services be asked to provide the collation.
7. That the Executive Secretary be authorized to proceed with the arrangements (including remembrances for outgoing Members, invitations, program, music, flowers, collation, etc.).

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Mr. Grassi thanked the Members of the ad-hoc committee for their work done on the inaugural program, and moved the following amendment: "That the School Committee Secretary include members of the Cambridge clergy representing different denominations in the inauguration program as is consistent with the inaugural ceremony of the Cambridge City Council". Ms. Walser explained that the members of the ad hoc committee agreed to have more of a civil ceremony to try to keep the program short. A question was raised how do you include representatives from all denominations and not exclude anyone. On the following roll call, Mr. Grassi's motion, seconded by Mr. Fantini, was adopted: Ms. Walser NAY, Mr. Fantini YEA, Mr. Grassi YEA, Mr. Harding YEA, Mr. Price NAY, Ms. Turkel NAY, Mayor Sullivan YEA. On a voice vote, the following was adopted, as amended:

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4. That the Director of Music be asked to provide music including elementary, middle and high school students (Free Lance Players, string quartet, jazz ensemble, All City Chorus, Vocal Ensemble, saxophone player).
5. ~~That there be no religious representation on the program.~~ That the School Committee Secretary include members of the Cambridge clergy representing different denominations in the inauguration program as is consistent with the inaugural ceremony of the Cambridge City Council.
6. That a collation for guests be served in the Main Cafeteria at C.R.L.S. immediately following the ceremony, and that the Manager of Food Services be asked to provide the collation.
7. That the Executive Secretary be authorized to proceed with the arrangements (including remembrances for outgoing Members, invitations, program, music, flowers, collation, etc.).

The meeting adjourned at 5:35 p.m.

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Executive Secretary to the School Committee

At this time, the Chair turned the meeting over to the Superintendent for a slide presentation. The Superintendent made an opening statement and Mr. Conry walked Members through the following slide presentation, "Five-Year Financial Estimates":

- Summary – Projected Revenues vs. Projected Expenditures
- Projected Revenues vs. Projected Expenditures – General Fund Budget
- 5-Year Revenue Estimates
- Estimated Revenues
- Estimated Revenues – Selected Items Impacting the Budget
- 5-Year Expenditure Estimates
- Major Budget Items as % of Budget – Base Budget FY03-04
- Major Budget Items as % of Budget – FY08-09 Projected
- Estimated Expenditure Increases & Decreases - Selected Items Impacting the Budget

The Superintendent pointed out that the plan is to have a structural balance in the budget with on-going sources of revenue equal to on-going sources of expenditures. The Superintendent and Mr. Conry responded to some of the Members questions and concerns:

- Will there be a half million dollar shortfall
- What will be done to keep buildings in good shape
- Can transportation and energy be broken out
- Deficit in 08-09 is scary – cost per student will be close to \$25,000
- Interested in at-risk alternative high school
- Interested in capacity of district to increase professional development
- Presentation raises some very serious concerns
- As soon as budget co-chairs are named, a public forum should be scheduled
- What conceivably will be the impact of a new Charter School on the Cambridge Public Schools

The Members thanked the Superintendent and Mr. Conry for the presentation and asked that it be put on the web.

The Chair recognized Cheryl Kennedy who was heard and raised questions on the quality of the presentation and the lack of copies available for the public.

Late Orders

On a motion by Mr. Harding, it was voted that the School Committee unanimously send a letter to Kwame Dixon and the C.R.L.S. football team congratulating them for a wonderful season.

On a motion by Mr. Harding, seconded by Mr. Grassi, it was voted that the Superintendent schedule a workshop presentation in January on the recommended promotion/retention policy.

On a motion by Mr. Price, seconded by Ms. Walser, it was voted to adjourn (7:33 p.m.)

Adjourned
Marilyn Y. Bradshaw
Executive Secretary to the School Committee