

School Department
Winchester, MA 01890
March 13, 2001

Roll Call

Notice having been given in accordance with the requirements of law, a meeting of the School Committee was held at 7:36 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2001, in the Lynch School Library. Present were Chairperson Swiger, Messrs. Bortman and Haley, Ms. LaDow, Superintendent Eaton, and Assistant Superintendent Foster.

Student Representative

Catilin McCarthy, student representative, reported that the hockey team lost to Reading, 2-1 on Monday night. The musical *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* is currently playing at the high school. There was a faculty training session regarding prevention of hate crimes and follow-up when they occur. The Junior/Senior semiformal dance will be held on March 16th. A college-planning workshop will be available for juniors on March 14th and 15th to assist in college planning. The Rock for Youth concert will be held on Friday, March 23rd at the Town Hall.

Mr. Haley requested a follow-up on the Red and Black regarding the need for financial assistance to help continue publication.

Questions and Comments from the Public

None

Acceptance of Gift

Richard D'Entremont, representing the Sports Foundation, presented a check in the amount of \$18,000 to help support the Girl's Ice Hockey team. The Committee thanked the Sports Foundation for the generous gift.

Ms. Bodie joined the committee.

Ms. Swiger requested a moment of silence for the passing of Mr. Arthur Griffin, the noted photographer.

Ms. Swiger announced that there will be a television workshop for WinCAM. Interested parties may call 721-2050 for registration information.

Override Presentation

Ms. Bodie presented figures regarding the two override questions being placed on the March 27th ballot. Ms. Bodie stated that the property tax increase printed in a recent newspaper article indicated that the increase in taxes for residents would be \$900 for two years. Ms. Bodie presented figures that indicated that after state income tax deductions, the total deduction for two years would be \$50 for a home with an average assessed value of \$370,000 and a median income of \$100,000.

Ms. LaDow gave a summary comparison of information from towns that Winchester frequently compares themselves to. The analysis indicated that Winchester spends moderately and provides an excellent quality of education. The information was gathered from the DOE web page.

Priorities for the FY 02 Budget

Dr. Eaton provided the committee with an overview of the budget spreadsheet with and without the override. Dr. Eaton reviewed the priority of items to be gained through a successful override.

Mr. Bortman wanted to stress that the voted School Committee budget was around \$25M and even with a favorable override the school budget would have to be cut by \$700,000. If the override fails, the school budget will have to be cut by approximately \$1.7M.

Dr. Foster stated that summer work will involve student assessment. All teachers need to be recertified and will need approximately 120 hours of professional development during a five year period. The school department is obligated to provide the teachers opportunities for a cost-free professional development program.

School committee voted not to raise athletics fees. The School Committee discussed transportation fees and services.

Mr. Bortman stated that the details of shifting reductions should be discussed after the override vote.

Ms. LaDow stated that accountability on how the money should be spent is important information for the voters.

Mr. Haley stated that the issue at hand is where will the cuts fall with or without an override. The cuts will be made consistent with the goals the committee has established.

Ms. Bodie's priorities include protecting class sizes. Ms. Swiger's priorities include systemwide class size and the number of study halls at the high school level.

Recruitment of Faculty, Staff and Administration for FY 02

Dr. Eaton recommended that a job fair take place for the Winchester Public Schools for administrators and interviewing teams. The Administrative Council and Directors and Coordinators will be working the design of the job fair to help with prescreening.

Dr. Eaton had concerns regarding the vacancy of the business manager. Dr. Eaton encouraged the School Committee to offer suggestions, as that position would also be available for the job fair.

Ms. Swiger suggested a subcommittee of the school committee to discuss the business manager vacancy. The subcommittee would work in conjunction with the Town Manager and the Board of Selectmen subcommittee.

Mr. Bortman suggested having the Town Manager's plan in place before the School Committee has a subcommittee to explore the business manager vacancy.

Mr. Haley recommended drafting a letter to the Town Manager having the priorities of the School Committee available while the Town Manager considers a reorganization. Suggested needs could be transportation issues, personnel issues, and the number of days the business manager would be required to attend school committee meetings. The current job description for the business manager should be reviewed and updated. Mr. Haley will draft a letter and share the draft with the Superintendent.

Warrant Article for Staff Salary Raises for Town Meeting

Dr. Eaton and Chairperson Swiger requested that the School Committee Negotiating Team, Eli Bortman and Kathy Bodie discuss the status of negotiations in preparation for the warrant article for the salary raises. The town manager's office has submitted an article that will cover all the town and school employees in unions for a salary increase.

School Year and Snow Days

Dr. Eaton mailed a letter to the Commissioner of Education for Massachusetts, Dr. David Driscoll, requesting a waiver of the four days used by Muraco School to repair and clean the building following the burner fire. The rest of the district will be fully compliant with the state's requirement of 180 days for the school year, per the teachers' contract. The final day for all students, except Muraco at this point is: June 22, 2001 without any additional snow days. A factor to consider in making up the Muraco days is the transportation costs. Dr. Eaton will follow-up with Commissioner Driscoll for his judgement.

Status of the Buildings and Equipment Post Snow Emergency

Dr. Eaton reported that the buildings were in no way damaged by the storm or its aftermath. Dr. Eaton thanked the custodians and the DPW for their outstanding work in clearing snow in a timely fashion. In both cases, the personnel worked with snow removal equipment that was not sufficient for the heavy work involved. The manpower from the town side is stretched very thin for a storm of this magnitude. The school custodians use snow removal equipment that is outdated and too small to be effective. Sidewalk clearance is the greatest problem for the town. There are only three "Bombardiers" for the entire town, and that means that not all walks will be cleared. There are serious problems in manpower shortage and equipment during the snowstorms.

Ms. Swiger expressed the Committee's deepest appreciation for those working so long and hard to get the buildings up and running, even during emergencies.

Commendation

Dr. Eaton commended the art department for its two recent successful show openings, one at the Arlington Center for the Arts and the other at the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, MA. Dr. Eaton expressed her congratulations to the students and the very strong art staff, K-12.

Dr. Eaton thanked all who worked and attended the Beaux Art Ball.

Crisis Management

On Wednesday, February 28, 2001, the system wide crisis team was convened to discuss the status of the crisis plans throughout the system. Linda Chase, Pupil Services Administrator, chairs the system wide committee. All of the principals, Dr. Foster, Police Chief Joseph Perritano and Dr. Eaton were in attendance. The goal for the conclusion of the school year is to

have system wide protocols and procedures for the gamut of possible crises. The system wide protocols will require School Committee approval for inclusion in the policy manual.

Dr. Eaton reported that several threats have taken place in our system this past week and a protocol is being established to be system wide. Mr. Bortman stated that the union believes that this will be a collective bargaining issue.

School Committee Reports

Ms. LaDow stated that the Multicultural Network is celebrating 10 years and Peggy MacIntosh will be speaking on Friday, March 23, 2001.

Future Meetings

The next School Committee meetings will be held on March 20th and April 10th.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee

VOTED to approve the minutes of:

- Sept. 12, 2000 as amended
- Sept. 12, 2000, Executive Session - for public file
- Sept. 26, 2000 approved
- January 16, 2001 approved
- January 16, 2001, Executive Session - for public file.

Roll Call

By roll call vote, at 9:35 p.m., the Committee agreed to enter executive session in accordance with Section 23, Chapter 39, General laws, for the purpose of negotiations and a personnel issue. The Chair announced that the Committee would return to public session only for the purpose of adjournment.

At 11:00 p.m., the Committee reconvened in public session and immediately

VOTED to adjourn.