

Winchester Public Schools
Winchester, MA 01890
April 5, 2005

Roll Call

Notice having been given in accordance with the requirements of law, a meeting of the School Committee was held at 7:10 p.m. on Tuesday, April 5, 2005, in the Lynch Elementary School Library. Present were Ms. Bodie, Ms. Swiger, Mr. O'Connor, Dr. Kounaves, Mr. Schindelman, Director of Finance Mr. Rippin, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Kerble, and Superintendent Marini.

Reorganization of School Committee

Dr. Marini convened the meeting for the purpose of reorganization of the school committee. Dr. Marini entertained a motion for the selection of a new chair for the school committee.

On a motion by Dr. Kounaves, seconded by Ms. Swiger, the committee unanimously

VOTED to re-elect Ms. Bodie as chair of the school committee for another term.

Dr. Marini entertained a motion for the selection of a vice-chair for the school committee.

On a motion by Ms. Swiger, seconded by Dr. Kounaves, the committee unanimously

VOTED to elect Mr. O'Connor as the vice-chair of the school committee.

Ms. Bodie began the meeting by welcoming the new member of the school committee, Mr. Michael Schindelman. Mr. Schindelman stated he was excited to be on the committee and is committed to maintaining the excellent school system we now have.

Mr. O'Connor stated that being a member of the school committee is rewarding work. Mr. O'Connor also stated that the committee is working for "the best of causes – the kids in our school system" and wanted this to be communicated to the community.

Public Comment

None

The school committee extended their condolences to the family and friends of Senator Shannon who passed away this morning.

Student Representative

Meg MacCaughey joined the committee and reported on the current activities taking place at the high school. Congratulations went to Paul Bedward who was voted Mr. WHS last weekend. The Junior college fair will take place April 12 and 13 at the Bayside Expo. Gregory McGuire, author of the book "Wicked" will be visiting the English department for a book signing. The 3rd annual Michael Dunlevy road race will be held on May 1st. Resource Office Dan Perenick has been working with the students regarding guidelines for safe driving and parking due to the increase of students with cars. The sophomores will be taking the MCAS test Wednesday, April 6, 2005. All other classes will begin school at 11:00 a.m. on that day to allow less disruption in the school. The freshman dance was a great fundraiser and a huge success with over 200 students attending.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Marini attended an EDCO collaborative forum and there is a proposal for state legislature to consider increasing funding for Chapter 70 funding because many of suburban communities are feeling the pressures of increasing costs.

On Tuesday Dr. Marini will be traveling with Principal Gwin and Principal French to China through the China Exchange Initiatives.

National Council on Economic Education Study Tour

Ms. Libby Porter, a social studies teacher at the high school, has been invited to travel to Belarus and Lithuania through the National Council on Economic Education Study Tour. Each of the two countries is undergoing its own unique transition from a planned to a market economy model. One goal of the study tours to emerging economies is to provide participants with an opportunity for professional development through personal observation of both the educational reforms underway and the realities people who live in countries undergoing economic transition face in their everyday lives.

The tour will take place April 14-26 and is funded by The United States Department of Education Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools in Coordination with the U.S. Department of State. Upon Ms. Porter's return, she will be invited to a school committee meeting to share her experiences with the committee as well as participate in a forum.

The Promise Fund Update

Caron Connolly from WFEE provided the committee with an update of The Promise Fund. As of this morning \$159,000 has been donated. The goal is \$660,000, which will support the hiring of core teachers for next year. For additional information you may visit the WFEE website - www.wfee.org. Donations may be mailed to:

The Promise Fund
P.O. Box 1005
Winchester, MA 08190

There will be a fundraiser in May with the hopes of achieving additional contributions. Dr. Marini will be airing on WBZ next week regarding The Promise Fund.

Update on Cleanliness of School Buildings

Sam Rippin reported on the follow-up with respect to the lack of cleanliness at some of the school buildings, namely Ambrose and Lincoln Elementary. Recommendations from both the DPW and Chartwell Food Service were outlined for the improvements.

Mr. O'Connor spoke of the need for the proper channels of communication when issues arise in the school buildings. Ms. Bodie would like the Town Manager involved in the discussion regarding the custodial help and requested to have a policy in writing for situations that arise due to illness or injury and the lack of coverage in the buildings.

Move from Parkhurst to Ambrose

Lisa McManus, principal of Ambrose, joined the committee. Dr. Marini stated that the target date from providing tours of the Ambrose School to parents and staff will be the middle of May. Ms. McManus has suggested completion of the move back to the new Ambrose to take place in the spring. Ms. McManus is requesting that the last day of school for Ambrose to be June 17th to allow for the move to be completed. This would provide a smooth transition in September for all students, including the redistricted Lincoln students moving to Ambrose.

Dr. Marini has received some requests from Ambrose parents to arrange activities for students during the five days in June that the students would be out of school. Dr. Marini has contacted Joe Connelly, Director of the Recreation Department, to see if it would be feasible to organize a program for students with structured, supervised activities. Dr. Marini will continue to be in touch with Mr. Connelly for an update of the progress and report back to the school committee.

A discussion took place around the students missing five days of school and whether they will meet the 990 hour requirement from the Department of Education. It was also pointed out that for any future move-backs the parents be notified far in advance of any change in the last day of school for planning purposes.

On a motion by Ms. Swiger, seconded by Mr. O'Connor, the committee unanimously

VOTED to authorize Parkhurst at Ambrose to close early in order to move to the new Ambrose School. The closing date for Parkhurst at Ambrose will be June 17, 2005.

Mr. Rippin scheduled a meeting for Lincoln and Ambrose parents along with Principal McManus and Safety Office Brud Hollihan to discuss the proposed bus routes and crossing guard assignments. There will be dedicated routes servicing the Lincoln district and it is anticipated that the students will be on the bus no longer than 30 minutes.

The crossing guards are under the jurisdiction of the Police Department due to budget constraints and the department will be losing eight crossing guards for the 2005-2006 school year. This is a concern for parents. Safety Officer Hollihan will be at the April 26th school committee meeting to report further on the proposed bus routes and crossing guards.

Principal McManus stated that there is work to be done to finalize the pick-up and drop-off areas for buses and cars at the Ambrose School. There will need to be signage in place to assist motorists. Ms. Swiger was approached by neighbors in the area with concerns around parking along the side of the roads near the school.

2005-2006 School Calendar – First Reading

Dr. Kerble stated that he has been working with the Leadership Team and the WEA to finalize the school calendar for the 2005-2006 school year. Dr. Kerble reviewed all the dates professional development are scheduled for, and how the dates were determined. There was concern around the dates of elementary report card distribution and the coordination of parent/teacher conferences.

The Commissioner of Education has indicated that school systems should discuss starting the school year prior to Labor Day due to the amount of snow days that occurred this year. The Commissioner indicated that he would not be granting waivers for snow days that occurred over the winter. Dr. Marini would like to consider the possibility of either eliminating Good Friday as a day off, or perhaps having it be a ½ day for students. This would allow for an earlier date for the last day of school in June. Dr. Marini will explore the consensus of staff further and report back to the school committee.

There was also some discussion around the possibility of beginning school prior to Labor Day. Dr. Marini indicated that this would need to be bargained for with the teachers union.

School Committee Reports

Ms. Swiger reported on the recent EDCO forum that took place indicating the need for school committee members to review a handout she has provided. After reviewing the information the committee should discuss and voted on the issue at the next school committee meeting.

Mr. O'Connor attended his first meeting of the Fields Management Committee. The committee reviewed the success of the ice rink on Manchester Field and it was indicated that the rink will be provided again next year. There will be a public hearing to gather input on the future renovations of Manchester Field. The meeting will take place on May 4th. It was unclear who had jurisdiction of Manchester Field and Dr. Marini will obtain the information for the next meeting.

Ms. Bodie reported that continued meetings have taken place for the purpose of looking at a civic center. The timeline of the civic center parallels with the EFPBC study and the future of the high school. Part of the decision will involve looking at geological studies of Ciarcia Field. The hope is that by next year at this time a clear sense of whether Ciarcia Field has the capability of building a school on its location will be known.

Ms. Swiger stated that Capital Planning is meeting Wednesday, April 6, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. to review the changes with the school building authority regulations.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Ms. Swiger, seconded by Dr. Kounaves, the committee unanimously

VOTED to approve the school committee minutes of the March 22, 2005 meeting, as amended.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the school committee will take place on April 26, 2005.

Roll Call

A roll call was taken for an executive session for the purpose of litigation.

Adjournment

The committee adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

V. James Marini

Student Representative

Meg MacCaughey joined the committee

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the school committee will be March 22, 2005.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

V. James Marini
Secretary