

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, October 14, 2010
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Joe Connell (Hanscom Representative), Deb Leister (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator of Student Services).
Absent: Debbie John (Boston Representative).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm. She welcomed Lincoln Selectmen Sara Mattes and Noah Eckhouse, who were there to appoint a new School Committee member.

II. Public Comments

None.

III. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Interview Candidates and Vote to Fill Vacancy on School Committee

Jason Felsch

Jen James

Documents: 1) E-mail message dated September 22, 2010 to School Committee and Board of Selectmen from Jason Felsch RE: Candidate for Interim Appointment to School Committee, 2) E-mail message dated October 4, 2010 to School Committee from Jonathan Hoch RE: Letter to Recommend Jason Flesch [sic] as interim committee member, 3) E-mail message dated October 4, 2010 to School Committee from Jen James RE: School Committee Statement of Interest, 4) Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 41, Sections 11 and 107, 5) School Committee Policy BBBE, Procedures for Filling School Committee Vacancy, 6) Memorandum dated September 8, 2010 to School Committee from Mickey Brandmeyer RE: Recommended process to fill vacant School Committee seat, 7) Letter dated October 7, 2010 to Jason Felsch and Jen James from Jennifer Glass with Schedule of Interviews, 8) Jason Felsch resume, 9) Jen James resume, 10) List of Questions for the Candidates

Ms. Glass acknowledged Mr. Rob Orgel's assistance and contributions to the School Committee. She thanked him for his service, noting that he had resigned for family reasons and that the replacement candidate will serve the remainder of Mr. Orgel's term, which expires in March 2011.

Jason Felsch indicated that he wanted to advocate for balance in the educational program, to embrace the community, and to have fiscal oversight. He stressed his skills in collaboration and negotiation and noted that he was a product of public schools and has two children at the Lincoln school. He believed that his scientific background and local civic experience on the Ad Hoc Traffic and Roadside Committee and several school activities would bring a different perspective.

Jen James pointed out her interest in education and literacy and fascination with watching learning taking place. She believes that school committee members need to ensure that there is something for all types of learners. She believes that her experience opening the children's bookstore Wordsworth, being Director of the Food Project, and Codman Farm Director led her to bridge differences between people. She feels that the Committee's purpose is to take the long-term view and guide parents and the administration through the decision-making process. She has three children who attend the schools.

Ms. Glass thanked the candidates and said that regardless of tonight's outcome, they value the involvement of each person in the schools. The committee members and the Selectmen reiterated her sentiments.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to ask Jen James to serve for the interim term as a member of the School Committee. The Committee voted as follows: Ms. Glass, aye; Mr. Schmertzler, aye; Mr. Sander, aye; Mr. Christenfeld, nay; Ms. Mattes, aye; Mr. Eckhouse, aye.

IV. Old Business

A. Consolidation Update

Document: None.

Ms. Glass said Sudbury is not pursuing a consolidation model with the Sudbury K-8 superintendent for all Sudbury K-12 schools, but is considering two other options: 1) to regionalize all of the Lincoln and Sudbury schools; and 2) to restructure the Lincoln K-8 and Sudbury K-8 School Committees so that they become part of the LSRHS School Committee. Mr. Eckhouse said it is a grave issue, and there is much discussion. He said Sudbury's taxpayer sentiment is tricky as they have not passed overrides, but the full regionalization discussion cannot happen in time to help them with their budgeting issues for the current fiscal year. Ms. Mattes said Lincoln has to be careful in how to proceed, and they need to let Sudbury know what Lincoln wants, as Sudbury has been disrespectful and unconcerned about Lincoln's needs.

Ms. Glass said the Committee wants to remain informed and is happy to help in the continuing conversation.

Ms. Mattes and Mr. Eckhouse left the meeting at 8:40 pm.

V. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

None.

VI. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

Document: Letter dated October 1, 2010 from Laura Regrut, PTA President to School Committee

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to accept the donation of \$8,000 from the Lincoln PTA to be used as follows: \$2,500 for the Principal's Discretionary Fund, \$1,000 for the Teacher's Fund for picnic tables, \$2,000 for the Lincoln School Library, \$2,500 METCO Discretionary Fund for late buses to help students attend after school events. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

Mr. Brandmeyer will send a thank-you letter to the PTA for their generous donation.

VII. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer said they heard from DoDEA [Department of Defense Education Activity] and the School Building Team, and there will be a design charrette to kick off for the Hanscom Middle School building project. The Lincoln School Building Committee [SBC] will meet next Tuesday to report on Construction Managers at Risk and to finalize enrollment projections and the project size for the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA]. The SBC is organizing companies' submissions, and there will be an information session for interested designers on October 18.

A. Update on Lincoln's Race to the Top Proposal

Documents: 1) Draft Outline of Lincoln's Race to the Top Implementation Plan, dated October 14, 2010 from Mr. Brandmeyer, 2) Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE], Race to the Top in Massachusetts: Guidelines for responses to the Year 1 Request For Proposals, dated September 20, 2010, 3) PowerPoint Presentation by DESE given at the Statewide Leadership Meeting at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School on October 1, 2010

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on the Race to the Top Implementation Plan. Massachusetts was selected in the second round, received the highest score, and will receive \$250 million from the federal government. \$125 million will go to Title I districts. 275 school districts are participating, and 65 of them will receive less than \$25,000; 16 of them will receive \$1 million or more. Lincoln's allocation will be \$12,177, paid over four years. He reviewed his draft, noting that despite the small amount of money it makes sense to submit the plan to participate in and to shape projects that they will have to do anyway. Massachusetts is leading the initiative for national education standards. If the high Massachusetts standards remain stronger than the national standards, they will most likely continue to work with the Massachusetts ones. He will add to the memo the Mass TeLLS initiative on climate and working conditions in schools for teachers. He noted that the district has components of the Mass TeLLS initiative, especially the mentoring programs for teachers. They also support teachers who would like to obtain their national board licenses. He will discuss this memo with the Teacher's Association on Monday and ask them to vote on it. If the memorandum is approved, he will submit it to the DESE by the October 22 deadline.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to accept the draft to submit to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] for the Race to the Top initiative and to continue to endorse the district's plan. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the draft.

VIII. Curriculum

Documents: None.

Ms. Sterling reported that she attended four classes. She went to a kindergarten class that was learning about writing with the prompt, "Write about something that you enjoy doing." It was fun to see the students' ideas. In 5th grade Spanish, she observed students reviewing their Spanish from the previous year and saying their birthdays. She said the students have quick facility with the language. She found the 2nd grade morning meeting, a Responsive Classroom technique, wonderful to observe. Students greeted each other and focused on their connections. She is impressed that these students understand what stereotypes are and are talking about gender bias at this early age. Finally, the 6th grade engineering class was working on transportation systems, using universal design principles to draw different models.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

IX. Policy

A. Financial Assistance Policy: Second Reading and Vote

Document: Draft: Student Financial Assistance, File JLB, undated

Mr. Brandmeyer reviewed the proposed policy on student financial assistance that is needed because of the establishment of the Legacy Fund and the increase in the number of requests for financial assistance for fee-based programs and overnight field trips. He noted that they have strong financial support. The policy will be published if approved.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to approve policy JLB Student Financial Assistance as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the policy.

X. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$604,214.52 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$144,358.39 for a total of \$748,572.91. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they approve them. He thanked Mr. Creel for his thorough and prompt answers. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Sander seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. FY 2011 Fiscal Report: First Quarter

Documents: Memorandum dated October 6, 2010 to School Committee and Mr. Brandmeyer from Buck Creel RE: FY11 First Quarter Report, 2) Status Report, FY2010 Operating Budget, First Quarter, as of October 6, 2010, 3) FY2011 Operating Budget-Key Budget Line Tracking, First Quarter, as of October 6, 2010

Mr. Creel reviewed his memorandum and reports, saying that with 10% of the school year over and 25% of the fiscal year over, they are in good position. He asked permission and received it to defer discussion of the Hanscom fiscal report until DOD has validated the information on the enrollment band.

The school pre-purchased special education tuitions. They encumber the monies paid to teachers, but they do not encumber the funds used to pay long- and short-term substitutes, custodian overtime, or facilities expenditures. Encumbered monies are set aside to be paid at a future date. Should there be additional funding cuts from the state, they have monies that could be used to offset those cuts.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

XI. Old Business

B. Finance Committee's Recommendation for FY2012 Budgets

Document: Memorandum dated October 8, 2010 to All Budgeting Agencies of the Town of Lincoln from the Lincoln Finance Committee

Mr. Brandmeyer reported that the Lincoln Finance Committee has given all town departments a 2% growth from FY11 to FY12. Mr. Brandmeyer indicated the increase is larger than last year's. The Finance Committee does not want departments to submit preferred budgets, so there will be only a base budget, not a preferred budget.

C. Update on Lincoln School Grade 3

Document: None.

Mr. Brandmeyer informed the Committee that they are currently interviewing candidates for the fourth 3rd grade teacher to meet the class-size policy guidelines. They are prepared to go to four sections of students and have met with parents, half of whom are supportive of the move. The students will be divided into four classrooms instead of the current three. He stressed that they will hire a teacher who meets high standards. The Finance Committee supports whatever solution works out best for the students.

Mr. Steve McKenna, Lincoln's K-4 principal, said they are strongly considering one candidate who has completed the teaching demonstration, but he needs to check the person's references. They will have two more third grade students starting in November. They may not get a recommendation out of this, and it could take three weeks to a month before they have a person to teach a new section. He reiterated that he is looking out for the best interests of students, and they are not just looking for a teacher for the year. The majority of the applicants are not veteran teachers.

Mr. Sander asked that the item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting for definitive action one way or another, regardless of whether they have found the right teacher so the process does not continue to drag on. Parents Sheila Webber and Judy Pistorio informed the Committee of their surprise that it is taking so long to find a qualified teacher.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

XI. New Business

A. Response to Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee

Documents: 1) Memorandum dated October 1, 2010 to School Committee from the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee RE: Implementation of the CLRP, 2) Undated document listing Recommendations and actions in the Comprehensive Plan designated as School Committee responsibility

The Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee [CPIC] is charged with implementing the Comprehensive Plan [CLRP] approved by Town Meeting in March 2010. The CLRP recommended that partnerships be encouraged between the town's cultural institutions to integrate local cultural programs into the district's curriculum. Mr. Brandmeyer stressed that they want to work with the community, and they need to find ways to get opportunities into the school curriculum for students, but they are required to teach many other things. The recommendation will be maintained as a low priority, but they are informally reaching out and will include the recommendation in next year's work plans.

Ms. Glass asked that they put off the focus group until next year. Mr. Christenfeld noted that the PTA handles many of the outreach items and should be recognized for that work. Mr. Brandmeyer said they will align the enrichment activities within their curriculum frameworks. He will draft a memorandum to the CPIC about their current activities.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Schmertzler, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Mr. Connell, yes, Ms. Leister, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary