

cpMINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, January 23, 2014
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative). Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services).

Absent: Jen James, Robert Ford (Director of Technology), Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Ms. Glass announced that there will be a joint Board meeting with the School Committee, Selectmen, and Finance and Capital Planning Committees on Wednesday, February 12 in the evening with the exact time and location to be announced.

Ms. Glass, Mr. Creel, and Dr. McFall attended the budget workshop for the Finance Committee.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Food Services Report

Document: Memorandum to School Committee, Superintendent, Administrator for Business and Finance from Cathleen Higgins, Director of Food Service, Subject: School Committee Update, dated January 8, 2014

Mr. Creel congratulated Ms. Higgins for receiving the Level 3 Certification from the School Nutrition Association. Ms. Higgins presented her report and highlighted the accomplishments of the food service staff. The Hanscom cafeteria was awarded the Silver Level for the Healthier U. S. Schools Challenge [HUSSC], and the medal presentation will occur next Friday at 9:00 am at the Hanscom Schools. The medal is good for five years, and the district will need to keep consistent standards each day. There are only 1,100 school districts nationwide that have received these awards.

Ms. Higgins thanked Mr. Creel for his assistance getting ServSafe training and certification for her staff. ServSafe is a national food safety and sanitation certification.

USDA Food Code requires that one person who is ServSafe certified be in the cafeteria at all times, and the district has two ServSafe certified workers in each kitchen.

Ms. Higgins mentioned the Farm to School Program with Drumlin Farm that brings beautiful fresh vegetables and herbs to the cafeterias; the produce is picked in the morning and eaten the same day! She noted that the students are very excited and have especially enjoyed the rainbow carrots. They look forward to more produce in the spring.

Ms. Higgins informed the Committee that the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service [FNS] will eliminate the weekly grain and meat/meat alternate maximums. This change will make it easier for Food Service to serve larger portions of whole grains and lean proteins. The district also needs to maintain menus that have low sodium levels, low calories, and low fat.

Mr. Creel said the district does not anticipate any financial challenges: the Food Service program is in the black, and the revolving fund is working well. The district will need to upgrade their Point of Service [POS] terminals in the cafeterias, which currently run on an obsolete version of Windows XP. The upgrade will be done in the next few months. He noted the Food Service department is working on arrangements for feeding students and faculty at the Hanscom Middle School during construction, which will be tricky.

Ms. Higgins noted that the participation rates at the Smith and Brooks Schools have increased, and the Hanscom Schools' participation rates have been steady. She thanked her team for their hard work.

Dr. McFall thanked Ms. Higgins and her staff for the delicious meals on Institute Day and for the work that they do each day.

Ms. Glass congratulated Ms. Higgins and the Food Service staff for their many accomplishments and thanked them for their work.

B. FY15 Budget Discussion and VOTE

Documents: 1) Lincoln Public Schools, FY 2015 Preliminary Budget Book; 2) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY15 Budget Guidelines, dated September 12, 2013; 3) Lincoln Public Schools, FY15 Budget Development Timeline, undated; 4) Memorandum to All Budgeting Agencies, Town of Lincoln from Lincoln Finance Committee, Re: FY 2015 Budget Guideline, dated October 11, 2013

Dr. McFall and Mr. Creel updated the Committee on the Concord Area Special Education [CASE] assessment, noting that the increases in the CASE tuition rates were not quite as high as anticipated. Mr. Creel said that the deficit for the Lincoln schools was now only \$15,923, and not the \$21,765 that they reported it would be at the December 19 meeting. He recommended that the Lincoln budget would be \$10,258,812, a 2 1/2 percent increase over FY14. For Hanscom, another student now needs CASE services, making the total deficit \$262,846, and not the \$230,925 they reported it would be at the December 19 meeting. Mr. Creel said that the enrollment at Hanscom is currently in Band 4, and they anticipate that the FY15 enrollment will also be in Band 4, though it is close to the Band 3 maximum. If the enrollment ends up in Band 3, the district will need to use \$620,785 from the Reserve Fund, but if the enrollment stays at Band 4, the district will only need to use \$241,354 from the Reserve Fund.

Ms. Powers said that the number of students with disabilities is the same, but the intensity of their needs has increased.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to request \$10,258,812 from the Town and to allocate \$12,257,725 from the Hanscom contract for the FY15 budget. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the request and the allocation for the FY15 budget.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their months of hard work.

C. Update on 2014-2015 Calendar

Documents: 1) Calendar Option A: After Labor Day, Holidays Off; 2) Calendar Option E: After Labor Day, Holidays Off

Dr. McFall said the difference in the two 2014-2015 calendars presented this evening is whether to have the full day of parent conferences, which would be on Tuesday, October 14. Both calendars start school after Labor Day.

At the January 9 meeting, Dr. McFall presented survey results, and the majority of the survey respondents thought eliminating the full day of parent conferences was a good idea. The conferences have been scheduled on evenings and Wednesday afternoons on Calendar Option E. The Lincoln Teachers' Association [LTA] would need to approve the change and is currently in negotiations on this point.

Dr. McFall said that after the LTA votes, she will come back with a calendar for the Committee to approve.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

D. Superintendent Evaluation Process

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Dr. Becky McFall, Superintendent, and School Committee Members from Jennifer Glass, Re: Formative Assessment Process, dated January 23, 2014; 2) Policy: Procedures for Superintendent's Evaluation, File CBI-R, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985; 3) Policy: Evaluation of the Superintendent, File CBI, Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Ms. Glass said the School Committee is currently at step 4, the formative assessment/evaluation, in the cycle of the superintendent's evaluation using the Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation. She noted that the Committee wants to support and to protect human capital and the challenge is how to get useful information that is needed at mid-year and at year's end. The Committee will evaluate Dr. McFall at the next meeting with the information that it has received. The next meeting is currently scheduled for Thursday, February 6.

Ms. Glass included three templates for the formative assessment feedback and noted that other districts do not include written feedback at this point, but Lincoln may want to give written feedback. Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Sander were concerned about the measures that would be used to determine the outcomes and whether the district was moving forward, but they like the template and do not want Dr. McFall to spend much time documenting everything. Mr. Sander and Ms. Cedeno suggested that Dr. McFall refer to certain reports in her documents. Mr. Sander was inclined not to give written

feedback unless something was really not going well, or Dr. McFall wanted written feedback. Mr. Schmertzler and Ms. Glass did not want any end of year surprises with the final evaluation.

Ms. Glass said that their current policies on the evaluation, CBI and CBI-R, were last updated in 1985, and she would like to update them to have a process in place. She suggested that they could have an informal conversation at mid-year and use the standards and priorities that have been set. Dr. McFall said it is a chance to coach her and ask whether anything needs to be adjusted. Is the work that the administrative team doing appropriate and on track? Ms. Glass said the Committee will have a discussion, which will set the table for the negotiation on her contract.

Dr. McFall said the members need to look at the standards and priority elements and figure out what other information is needed for this mid-year evaluation. She noted that the feedback should be focused on coaching her on how to improve and on reinforcing what they like and want to encourage. Ms. Glass said the Committee will vote on the negotiation process at the next meeting.

Mr. Christenfeld said that Dr. McFall was doing a great job.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall for the information she has provided and for her work.

E. Lincoln Agency Annual Report: Progress Update

Document: Draft of the Lincoln Agency Annual Report, by Tim Christenfeld

Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Sander have drafted this report. Mr. Christenfeld said they are updating last year's report with this year's statistics and will highlight that the district's spending per pupil has decreased by 5 percent a year, while the state average spending per pupil has increased by 2 percent. Mr. Sander noted that Lincoln's per-pupil expenditure is above all the surrounding communities except for Weston. Mr. Christenfeld said the report includes the information for the Lincoln schools only as the Town funds the Lincoln schools and not the Hanscom schools, which are funded by the federal government.

Mr. Creel suggested that they adjust the grants column as he and Town Finance Director Colleen Wilkins are reviewing the costs attributed to the schools—some of those costs are currently double counted—and he will send the DESE the modified numbers. Dr. Sterling asked that they note that the MCAS scores and outcomes are for Lincoln only and not the district; she will submit revisions for inclusion in the report.

Mr. Sander said the enrollment trends show that kindergarten and 1st grade are increasing again, the 8th grade graduated a large class, more families are moving into the district, and there are students leaving the district. Mr. Christenfeld said the Finance Committee wants the report by the end of the month.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall reported that there is a ten-person search committee for the Assistant Superintendent hiring process. The application period closed on Monday, and the search

committee has identified the candidates for interviews, which will happen the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. Following the first round of interviews, the search committee will select the finalists, who will come to the district for a full day and will meet with parents, administrators, faculty, and students. The School Committee will interview the finalists at the February 6 meeting. Dr. McFall asked that the Committee assume there will be three finalists, and the parents' sessions for the Lincoln campus will be February 3, 4, and 6 from 8:15-9:00 am in the Story Room. The parents' sessions for the Hanscom campus will be February 3, 4, and 6 from 2:00-2:45 pm.

Dr. McFall asked the Committee members to come up with interview questions and to leave 20 to 30 minutes to ask them. Ms. Glass asked them to submit questions to her; there will be six questions that will be the same for each candidate. The Committee will provide feedback to Dr. McFall on the strengths and concerns of each candidate and will discuss each with Dr. McFall at the February 6 meeting. Dr. McFall will make the hiring decision and offer to the best candidate.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling will give the Institute Day report at the next meeting. The theme was teaching students to ask their own questions to get them thinking and focusing on learning. Asking good questions empowers students. The focus of the day was on only teaching, and she was very pleased about that. Teachers are refining their practice. They also worked on new math standards for the youngest students.

Dr. Sterling attended an 8th grade math enrichment group that was discussing the number of unknown variables. She said it was fun to be in the class and watch the students puzzling through the questions.

Ms. Glass said that Dr. Sterling and Terry Green attended the Community Preservation Committee meeting to discuss the boardwalk through the wetlands. The CPC supported the allocation of monies for the boardwalk project and will support it at the March 29 Town Meeting. If the boardwalk project is approved at Town Meeting, construction will begin in the fall, and they would like community participation.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$655,094.57 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$87,370.45 for a total of \$742,465.02. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. FY14 Fiscal Report: Second Quarter

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent of Schools, from Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY14 Second Quarter Report, dated January 11, 2014; 2) Lincoln Campus, FY 2014 Operating Budget—Status Report, 2nd Quarter, as of January 7, 2014; 3) Hanscom Campus, FY 2014 Operating Budget—Status Report, 2nd Quarter, as of January 7, 2014; 4) FY 2014 Operating Budget—Key Budget Line Tracking, 2nd Quarter, as of January 7, 2014

Mr. Creel reviewed his report and said all was well. The utilities were relatively straightforward through January. They are watching the numbers for long-term substitutes for teachers on maternity leave. The district has a significant amount of uncommitted assets to address any extraordinary expenses.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

C. Review Town Meeting Warrants/Capital Projects

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee, Becky McFall, Superintendent, and Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance from Jennifer Glass, Re: Lincoln School Building Project/2014 Town Meeting Warrant, dated January 23, 2014; 2) Capital Project Five Year Plan, December 2013, prepared by Buckner Creel and Michael Haines

Ms. Glass reviewed her memorandum and said the multi-board meeting with the Board of Selectmen and Finance and Capital Planning Committees is scheduled for Wednesday, February 12 to start discussion on whether to submit a Statement of Interest [SOI] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] for a comprehensive project and to try to ascertain whether doing that is what the Town wants. It is not an option to apply to the MSBA's Accelerated Repair Program because the Lincoln school buildings have needs that go beyond "roof, windows, boilers," and four studies have confirmed that.

Ms. Glass asked what they can do to demonstrate to the MSBA that the Town wants a project, which is important for the MSBA to see when determining which towns to invite into the project pipeline. She wants a linear path for the responsible stewardship of the school buildings if the decision is made not to submit an SOI, or if a Lincoln project is not accepted by the MSBA into the pipeline.

Ms. Glass laid out two paths for possible action, and both of them assume that Lincoln will not submit an SOI in April 2014. She proposed that the School Committee and other town boards discuss whether to ask for a Special Town Meeting in the fall of 2014 to ask two questions: 1) should Lincoln submit a SOI in April 2015, perhaps with a ballot question to generate a firm Town answer on this question; and 2) would the Town appropriate money to study a number of Lincoln-funded options?

Dr. McFall said rushing the next step could do more harm than good unless the School Committee is very clear on the use for the funds. Mr. Creel thought the Committee should pursue a process that ensured the strong support of Town leadership. Mr. Schmertzler and Mr. Christenfeld noted that the buildings need to be taken care of

and that it is costly to patch them. They need to convince Town residents in the next six months of the need for a project. Mr. Christenfeld did not want to delay the process because it would make it look like the problems with the buildings are not urgent when they are.

The placeholder warrant for \$650,000 for an additional School Feasibility Study that the Capital Planning Committee [CapCom] approved may need to be revised as the Town was not invited into the MSBA pipeline. Ms. Glass asked whether they should ask for that money now or not; if the Town votes for it at Town Meeting, that support could be used as evidence that they want a project.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to withdraw the \$650,000 placeholder warrant for feasibility studies from the Annual Town Meeting warrant for the March 29, 2014 meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw the \$650,000 warrant article.

Ms. Glass noted that the Committee will work on a campaign to build support to fix the school buildings.

Mr. Creel discussed the CapCom list for FY15. CapCom has approved the classroom rehabilitation warrant for Town Meeting. The Community Preservation Committee has approved a warrant for the substantial replacement of the kindergarten playground, which will go to Town Meeting; the community uses it after-school hours. The district has standards and architectural drawings for designing the playground. Mr. Creel recommended that Mr. Steve McKenna, parents, and faculty be involved in designing the new playground instead of a community-based committee. If the playground is approved at Town Meeting, the goal is to have it constructed during the summer. Mr. Sander asked if one or two parents could provide feedback on the options.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Creel for his work.

Mr. Creel said that the CapCom asked the schools to submit a list of the repair projects that needed to be done in the next five years. He and Michael Haines prepared one that included the roofs, exterior envelope, heating and ventilation, and the building management system. The CapCom did not approve \$164,000 that was presented to them for FY14, and those projects also move forward. Mr. Creel said from FY15 to FY19, they have a rough estimate for needed projects of \$8.45 million, and that amount does not include items that would be needed as a result of code items. When projects are treated separately, many trades are involved; each one requires a design and has more construction costs. They have very rough estimates for the costs. The Town will have to vote for overrides each year to pay for these separate projects, which will also require temporary quarters and project management monies. He noted that his document does not resemble a project.

Mr. Creel said the Brooks smokestack would cost roughly \$100,000 and is rotting. They have done some quick repairs but do not want to replace it now as they do not know if it is in the right place, and they do not want to invest in it when they do not know what will happen with the building. They will do their best to keep things going.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

X. Old Business

Document: None.

Dr. McFall noted that the Secretaries Association would like to draw from the sick leave bank, and she would like to establish a committee to look at the issue. Dr. McFall would like Ms. Powers and Mr. Creel to serve on the Committee.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to appoint Stephanie Powers and Buckner Creel to serve on the Committee to address the sick leave bank with the Secretaries Association. The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Ms. Powers and Mr. Creel.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

Documents: 1) Letter to School District Director from Leah Schmidt, SNS, School Nutrition Association President, dated January 16, 2014; 2) Certificate of Level 3 Certification Revised for Cathleen Higgins, expires December 31, 2014

These items were not discussed. The documents are for the Committee's information.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of negotiations with the Lincoln Teachers' Association and for the POD C license agreement. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. Cedeno, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:55 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 6, 2014 at 7:00 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary