

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 26, 2015
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chairperson), Tim Christenfeld (Vice Chairperson), Al Schmertzler, Jena Salon, Peter Borden. Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Preditta Cedeno (METCO Representative), Laurel Wironen (Hanscom Educational Liaison), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Robert Ford (Director of Technology).

Board of Selectmen Present: Renel Fredriksen (Chair), Peter Braun, Tim Higgins (Town Administrator).

Board of Selectmen Absent: Noah Eckhouse.

Finance Committee Present: Peyton Marshall (Chair), Eric Harris.

Finance Committee Absent: Christian Kasper (Vice Chair), Laura Sander, Jeff Birchby, Sanj Kharbanda, Jim Hutchinson.

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

II. Review Town Meeting Presentation

Document: Draft, "Motion under Article 30, School Committee," dated March 26, 2015

Ms. Glass said that the School Committee would probably not meet on Saturday, March 28 at 8:00 am.

Ms. Glass said the Community Preservation Committee will include the multi-sport court on their package of projects to fund for approval at Town Meeting. The School Committee approved the court at their January 8, 2015 meeting. When the sport court proposal was reviewed by the Conservation Commission, however, the Commission had questions on the court's location and suggested an alternate location that Ms. Glass said would not work for the school. The Community Preservation Committee's warrant article is article 10, and the sport court project is CPA Article E, "to fund, for recreation purposes, the construction and installation of a new multisport court on Ballfield Road." Ms. Glass noted that the court's location is not part of the vote at Town Meeting. The proper Boards and Commissions will decide the court's locations if the funding is approved by Town Meeting.

Ms. Glass said this meeting was called to discuss changes to the School Committee's warrant articles on the school buildings, now warrant articles 30, 31, and 32. She noted that the articles were written originally to establish the idea that renovation of the school buildings will require a minimum expenditure of \$30 million from the

Town. Ms. Glass stated that the feedback received from the series of public forums on the school buildings indicated that residents were strongly in support of some renovation versus a strict repair option. The purpose behind warrant article 30 is to see whether the renovation options garner support.

Ms. Glass said that the second reason was to convey that there is a sense of urgency to do something to the school buildings. The Committee wants the Town to support a renovation as the Committee believes renovation is the best use of Town tax dollars. The Committee wants to find out if the Town supports a renovation project, and whether or not the Town wants to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] to fund some of that renovation. Ms. Glass said if the warrant article does not pass, the School Committee needs to go forward with choices. She noted that in recent conversations with the Board of Selectmen, the Finance Committee, and the Capital Planning Committee, those Boards and Committees were concerned with the warrant article's wording. They were concerned about whether the wording was diluting the message that they wanted to send to the MSBA. Also, if the Town only was funding a renovation, there was no agreement on the amount of money it would cost. There is always the possibility that if the Town applies to the MSBA, the Town might not be invited into the funding pipeline. If that happened, the Town would likely need to have another meeting.

Mr. Marshall said that the Finance Committee was concerned that the article not include ambiguities that might cause residents to vote no. They want to maximize support for the Town and want the Town to vote in favor of the article. Ms. Fredriksen said if the MSBA does not invite the Town into the funding process, the Town can call a Special Town Meeting.

Ms. Glass thanked Mr. Higgins and Mr. Braun for their help with editing the motion. The draft motion presented tonight states: "Moved: That the Town raise and appropriate \$750,000 by taxation, for the purpose of conducting a Feasibility Study to develop building project RENOVATION choices for the Lincoln School, located at Ballfield Road, including all costs incidental and related thereto, to MEET LONG-RANGE FACILITIES NEEDS, INCLUDE EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS, and RESPECT THE CURRENT CAMPUS CONFIGURATION, and further, NOTING that pursuing these project goals will likely require a MINIMUM Town contribution of \$30 million; provided, however, that the vote taken hereunder shall be made contingent upon the approval by the voters of the Town at an election of a "capital outlay exclusion" in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 21C (i1/2), otherwise known as Proposition 2 1/2, so called. Provided further, however, that the funds appropriated hereunder may only be expended by appropriate Town officials in the event the Town is invited to participate in the Massachusetts School Building Authority Grant Program, and then only in a manner consistent with the Town's submission to the MSBA for such purposes, which program, the Town acknowledges, is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in excess of a grant approved and received from the MSBA, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, and further, that notwithstanding the above characterization of the feasibility study and its goals, the study shall be defined in a manner consistent with any requirements imposed by the MSBA."

Dr. McFall noted that the question to be answered with warrant article 30 is whether residents want renovation or repair of the school buildings. Mr. Marshall noted that the money appropriated in article 30 can only be spent on a feasibility study for the MSBA. If the article does not pass, the money will not be spent, and even if warrant article 30 passed but article 31 for the MSBA Statement of Interest did not pass, the money appropriated in article 30 would need to be voted on again for any different purpose.

Ms. Glass said that the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee gave strong support for articles 30 and 31 and will recommend that the Town approve them at the Town Meeting. Dr. McFall noted that there was no talk about what to do if the articles did not pass or about a non-MSBA funded project.

Ms. Salon was concerned that residents not feel pressured into voting for MSBA funding again because the School Committee heard much feedback that people did not want to follow their guidelines and deadlines. She did not like the perception the changes could create but understood why the articles were reworded. Mr. Higgins said that the School Committee has kept good faith by including warrant article 32, which asks about repair projects if warrant article 30 does not pass.

Mr. Braun explained that the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee precipitated the wording changes because they feel that receiving funding from the MSBA is the best choice for the Town and is a financial opportunity. The Board and Committee members said the article needed to be clear, and a new warrant article could not be constructed on the floor of Town Meeting. Mr. Marshall noted that the Town will likely be doing different building projects if the MSBA participates or if the MSBA does not. A non-MSBA funded project is not on the warrant article menu for this Town Meeting, he said.

Dr. McFall said that the choices have not been taken off the table, but there are simply timing and process changes depending on what is chosen. She said the Committee has not determined the outcomes and has listened to the feedback.

The Committees and Board discussed the process for the articles and what could happen if 30 and 31 did not pass. A Special Town Meeting could be called if the sentiment is against articles 30 and 31. They also discussed the need for strong support from the other Town Boards and Committees at Town Meeting and to use positive language. The objective is to send a strong message of support to the MSBA.

If article 30 passes, the amount appropriated would show up in the FY2016 tax bills.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion that the School Committee sponsors warrant article 30 as presented tonight and reads, “Moved: That the Town raise and appropriate \$750,000 by taxation, for the purpose of conducting a Feasibility Study to develop building project RENOVATION choices for the Lincoln School, located at Ballfield Road, including all costs incidental and related thereto, to MEET LONG-RANGE FACILITIES NEEDS, INCLUDE EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS, and RESPECT THE CURRENT CAMPUS CONFIGURATION, and further, NOTING that pursuing these project goals will likely require a MINIMUM Town contribution of \$30 million; provided, however, that the vote taken hereunder shall be made contingent upon the approval by the voters of the Town at an election of a “capital outlay exclusion” in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General

Laws, Chapter 59, Section 21C (i1/2), otherwise known as Proposition 2 1/2, so called. Provided further, however, that the funds appropriated hereunder may only be expended by appropriate Town officials in the event the Town is invited to participate in the Massachusetts School Building Authority Grant Program, and then only in a manner consistent with the Town's submission to the MSBA for such purposes, which program, the Town acknowledges, is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in excess of a grant approved and received from the MSBA, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, and further, that notwithstanding the above characterization of the feasibility study and its goals, the study shall be defined in a manner consistent with any requirements imposed by the MSBA." The Committee voted unanimously to sponsor warrant article 30 as presented tonight and reads, "Moved: That the Town raise and appropriate \$750,000 by taxation, for the purpose of conducting a Feasibility Study to develop building project RENOVATION choices for the Lincoln School, located at Ballfield Road, including all costs incidental and related thereto, to MEET LONG-RANGE FACILITIES NEEDS, INCLUDE EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENTS, and RESPECT THE CURRENT CAMPUS CONFIGURATION, and further, NOTING that pursuing these project goals will likely require a MINIMUM Town contribution of \$30 million; provided, however, that the vote taken hereunder shall be made contingent upon the approval by the voters of the Town at an election of a "capital outlay exclusion" in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 59, Section 21C (i1/2), otherwise known as Proposition 2 1/2, so called. Provided further, however, that the funds appropriated hereunder may only be expended by appropriate Town officials in the event the Town is invited to participate in the Massachusetts School Building Authority Grant Program, and then only in a manner consistent with the Town's submission to the MSBA for such purposes, which program, the Town acknowledges, is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and any costs the Town incurs in excess of a grant approved and received from the MSBA, if any, shall be the sole responsibility of the Town, and further, that notwithstanding the above characterization of the feasibility study and its goals, the study shall be defined in a manner consistent with any requirements imposed by the MSBA."

III. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. Salon, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary