

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 18, 2014
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), Patricia Kinsella (Assistant Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

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

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chairperson, called the meeting to open session at 7:03 pm. She thanked David Trant and Jim Cunningham for taping the meeting.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld thanked Dr. McFall and Mr. Creel for attending yesterday's Finance Committee forum.

Ms. Glass thanked Peyton Marshall, Chair of the Finance Committee, for his explanation of how Town finance works. The Finance Committee plays an advisory role based on their assessment of all the Town's departments' needs.

Ms. Glass saw steel being erected for the new Hanscom Middle School building.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

Document: Letter to Dr. Rebecca McFall from Michael Lueders, President of Lueders Environmental, Inc., dated December 9, 2014

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Christenfeld seconded, the motion to accept a donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc. in the amount of \$75.00 to the Lincoln Public Schools to be distributed through the Legacy Fund to support tuition reduction for overnight field trips, athletic fees, or in-school music lessons. The Committee voted unanimously to accept a donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc. in the amount of \$75.00 to the Lincoln Public Schools to be distributed through the Legacy Fund to support tuition reduction for overnight field trips, athletic fees, or in-school music lessons.

Ms. Glass thanked Lueders Environmental, Inc. for their generous contribution, and Dr. McFall will send a thank-you letter.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. 2015-2016 School Calendar: Second Reading and Vote

Documents: 1) Draft of Options for 2015-2016 Academic Calendar (Revised 11/7/14); 2) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 1 Before Labor Day Draft

(Revised 11/7/14); 3) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 2 After Labor Day Draft (Revised 11/7/14); 4) Lincoln Public Schools, 2015-2016 Option 3 After Labor Day Draft (Revised 11/7/14)

Dr. McFall said that the Lincoln Teachers' Association voted "yes" to begin the 2015-2016 school year before Labor Day, which is Monday, September 7.

Dr. McFall said that she has not received any feedback since presenting the three calendar options for the 2015-2016 academic year at the December 4 school committee meeting. Dr. McFall recommended Option 1, which has students starting school on August 31, before Labor Day.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to approve Option 1 for the 2015-2016 academic calendar as presented. The Committee voted unanimously to approve Option 1 for the 2015-2016 academic calendar as presented.

B. FY16 Budget Discussion

Documents: 1) Memorandum to Lincoln School Committee and Becky McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance, Subject: FY16 Budget Guidelines, dated September 11, 2014; 2) Lincoln Public Schools, FY16 Budget Development Timeline, undated; 3) Budget Process and Communication Timeline, undated; 4) Memorandum to All Budgeting Agencies, Town of Lincoln, from Lincoln Finance Committee, Re: FY 2016 Budget Guideline, dated October 7, 2014; 5) Lincoln Public Schools, FY16 Preliminary Budget Book

The Lincoln Finance Committee has recommended a 2.5% increase over the FY15 budget for FY16. Dr. McFall said that the cost to maintain level services—this year's program projected at next year's costs—is projected to be higher than the increase, leaving the Lincoln schools with a budget gap. As presented at the November 6 meeting, the Lincoln base budget is \$10,619,439, with an additional \$156,333 in improvement initiatives, leaving a gap of \$260,490. The budget for the operation of the Hanscom schools assumes that there will be 550-599 students, which will trigger a payment at the Band 3 level, as specified in the contract. The Hanscom base budget is \$12,735,861, with an additional \$222,042 in improvement initiatives, leaving a gap of \$947,845.

At the November 20 meeting, Dr. McFall presented three lists of possible items to cut in order to close the budget gaps on both campuses. The Committee asked her to put the \$7,500 for the improvement initiative for peer observation for each campus back into the budget. Dr. McFall said that they also added back the \$3,075 for coaches for the B basketball team into the budget. Mr. Creel explained that in addition to making cuts, they have allocated additional funds from revolving funds for athletic fees and transportation to close the Lincoln budget gap.

At Hanscom, Mr. Creel said they want to keep the improvement initiative of \$80,000 for a Board-certified behavioral specialist [BCBS]. He said that the revised gap, which can be covered by the Reserve Fund, is now \$667,966, but the Committee did not have to vote on the Reserve Fund transfer this evening.

Dr. McFall said that the preferred budget added \$47,432 and \$58,692 in technology replacement improvement initiatives, \$11,118 for professional development, and \$3,500 to restore library book purchases. Dr. McFall asked for guidance and said

that they will have more information from the Finance and Capital Planning Committees at the next meeting. Ms. Glass noted that the Finance Committee meets on January 5.

Lincoln parent Nicholas Covino said the 3rd grade parents feel that they have been well received and would like a change in the class size policy. He suggested a task force be put together to go over the policy and review the literature, noting that 20 students per section was a good number.

Ms. Glass said that the current 3rd grade class is close to the cut off point for another section, and they will continue to monitor it. If more 3rd grade students move into the district, they will decide what to do using the class size policy. She also asked the parents to join them in the spring for the discussions on the district priorities and the strategic plan. Dr. McFall said at the January 9 PTO meeting, they will discuss the survey and the district strategic plan.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to continue with the preferred budget as presented by Dr. McFall at the December 4 meeting and not to include a fourth section of 4th grade for FY16. The Committee voted unanimously to continue with the preferred budget as presented by Dr. McFall at the December 4 meeting and not to include a fourth section of 4th grade for FY16.

The budget discussion continues at each Committee meeting; the Committee is currently scheduled to vote on the FY16 budget at its January 22, 2015 meeting. The FY16 preliminary budget in full detail is posted on the website, www.lincnet.org.

Ms. Glass thanked Dr. McFall and the administrative team for their tireless work.

C. Tools for Evaluating Effectiveness of Technology—Embedded Lessons (B2)
Document: None.

This item was postponed to the next meeting.

D. Preparation for Town Meeting—Discussion of Lincoln School Building Project

Document: None.

Ms. Glass showed a PowerPoint presentation of the questions they will ask at Town Meeting on Saturday, March 28, 2015 regarding what should be done with the Lincoln school buildings. She said that these issues will be discussed with the Finance Committee at their January 5, 2015 meeting. The slides had flow charts with the timelines, and she noted the timelines were ambitious.

The first question is “Should the School Committee and Board of Selectmen submit a Statement of Interest [SOI] to the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA] or not?” If the answer is yes, the timeline to know if the MSBA invites the Town into the process is November 2015 to January 2016. In the fall of 2016, Ms. Glass suggested a Special Town Meeting to vote for a preferred option, with the Annual Town Meeting in March 2017 to have the vote on the bond, with construction beginning in 2018. Ms. Glass noted that the Committee and the Board are not required to ask for a vote on the SOI, but they would like to demonstrate support to the MSBA for a building project.

The second question is, “If the MSBA invites the Town into the process, or if the Town decides to fund a project on its own, will the Town approve money for a feasibility study to develop either project?”

The third question is, “if the MSBA does not invite the Town into the process, or the Town votes no to submit a SOI, in which direction should the Town go to fix the school buildings? Ms. Glass summarized that there are three sets of options: repairs, renovations, or a larger project. While the Committee cannot take any of the three sets of options for the school building out of the picture, they can recommend the one set they like.

The Committee wanted to build on the momentum gained from the SBAC and public forum process which showed that there was more support for projects that were in the range of renovations to larger projects from the people attending the forums and the State of the Town Meeting. The feedback has been that people placed a priority on the educational vision and what they will receive for the money spent on the school buildings. If the Town votes not to fund any feasibility study, that gives the SBAC and Committee much information.

Ms. Glass said they did not have to decide on the issue this evening, but the Committee will endorse which path to take and will figure it out during discussions. All agreed that they will ask for a specific amount of money for the feasibility study. They will ask the question about whether to submit a SOI. She said they will pursue an idea for how to elicit in which direction to go if the Town does not vote to submit the SOI at subsequent meetings. Mr. Christenfeld noted that the SBAC meets next on January 6.

Additional Reports:

Food Services – Report Only

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

Mr. Creel will provide the participation rates, noting that they would be ecstatic with a 70% participation rate. Dr. McFall said there is a need for the hot lunches.

Mr. Creel and Dr. McFall commended Ms. Cathleen Higgins, Director of Food Services, and her staff for their work.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Higgins and her staff for their work.

Extracurricular Activities – Report Only

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Stephanie Powers, Administrator for Student Services, Re: Report on Student Participation in Extracurricular Athletics, Music and Drama Programs, dated December 10, 2014

There were no questions on the report.

Ms. Glass thanked Ms. Powers for her work.

VI. Superintendent’s Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall gave her time to Mr. Creel, who showed pictures on the progress of the Hanscom Middle School building project. Mr. Creel said the steel is up, there is a second floor, and they have poured the concrete for the foundation walls. He received the 48-page approved schedule, and the school should be completed in April 2016. Mr. Creel also announced that they have the final design plans for the Hanscom Primary School, which are ready to be released for bids in February 2015.

Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Ms. Kinsella said they have started the Peer Observation program with 19 great educators who volunteered from both campuses. There are five groups, and they spent 2 and 1/2 hours, and the feedback is great. Starting in January, the educators will observe each other in classes.

Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VIII. Policy

A. Discuss Class Size Policy

Document: Lincoln Public Schools, File IIB, Class Size, Revised at School Committee Meeting of December 6, 2007

Ms. Glass said the Committee will decide whether to begin a review of the class size policy and whether a review would give them more updated information since the 2007 review. She asked if the current policy was achieving what they wanted it to achieve and said that the policy gives them predictability and is financially responsible. She said the policy has to fit into the larger picture of the Town's finances. She said while it is hard to measure the impact of changing one item like class size, they have heard parents' concerns on whether students receive individual attention and the workload of teachers.

The Committee discussed considerations such as whether there is new, relevant data, which other factors impact learning (and to what degree), the financial impact of changing the policy, and peer-town policies.

Ms. Glass said they need to develop a proposal for a class-size policy review subcommittee, and Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Borden will collaborate and bring a draft to the January 22 meeting or a February meeting. Ms. Glass said that no administrators' or teachers' time would be used. Mr. Schmertzler suggested that they let parents know that they are acting on their request.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrant totaling \$734,854.97 and the accounts payable warrant totaling \$107,069.53 for a total of \$841,924.50. Mr. Schmertzler

reviewed the warrants and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Schmertzler moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. School Building Advisory Committee [SBAC] Update
Document: None.

In March 2014, Town Meeting approved funding for consultants to develop possible options for a Lincoln School building project. After a careful selection process, the SBAC recommended Dore & Whittier Architects, and the School Committee awarded the contract to Dore & Whittier Architects at its July 23 meeting. The contract with Dore & Whittier Architects gives the option to add tasks if needed, and it is proposed that their work will finish in mid-January.

There have been three public forums and the State of the Town Meeting, and Dore & Whittier has led the Town through a process to prioritize the needed items in a project, and the Town learned their approaches to cost estimates and different ideas. Dore & Whittier used the feedback and estimates to build the scopes and options for potential building projects. Dore & Whittier will have a summary of the results from the December 2 forum; the audience weighed in on their preferences. There was one option that got the most votes if the MSBA invites the Town into their funding pipeline, and one option that got the most votes if the MSBA does not invite the Town into the funding pipeline.

Ms. Glass said the final public forum will be held on Tuesday, January 13, 2015 at 7:00 pm in the Reed Gym. Dore & Whittier will present their final report. The SBAC will meet on Tuesday, January 6 to discuss the final report.

Ms. Glass thanked the SBAC for their work.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Ms. Salon, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:25 pm. The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 8, 2015 at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte

Recording Secretary