

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, March 26, 2009
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Julie Dobrow (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Jennifer Glass, Rob Orgel, Cynthia Nunes-Tajeron (Hanscom Representative). Also present: Mickey Brandmeyer (Superintendent), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).

Absent: Louann Robinson (Hanscom Representative), Thadine Brown (Boston Representative), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Dobrow called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

None.

III. Public Comments

Tim Christenfeld, President of the Magic Garden Preschool Board, said that the \$105,000 minimum rent in the Request For Proposals [RFP] draft process for renting the space in the Hartwell Building does not leave him confident that the comments made at the February 26 meeting will be incorporated. He asked that at the April 30 meeting the cost calculations be made public, and that the RFP make explicit the directives.

Mr. Sander responded that the RFP that he is responding to is not the current RFP. A revised RFP has not been publicly released. He said it is not constructive for the schools to make their cost numbers public for negotiation purposes. While the Committee has reviewed the cost calculations for the Hartwell lease, pressure tested these and feels comfortable with them, he thinks it is not a productive use of Committee time to get into a detailed public debate of exactly how to calculate paper towel consumption or electricity use. During the February meeting, it was agreed that the costs for custodial and other services would be extricated. He encouraged them to give more comments to the Committee and reiterated that it would be discussed April 30. Mr. Sander indicated that although he expected the revised RFP to respond to a number of the concerns of the Magic Garden community, he said that he was not sure that there would ever be consensus on this RFP. He said that at the April 30 meeting, they would hear community concerns, and if the Committee felt that further reworking was necessary, they could refer it back, and if a majority of the Committee was comfortable with the RFP as it stood, they could issue it. Ms. Dobrow said they have received many email messages and have responded to all messages. The messages have also been shared with the Administration. She said they would consider every suggestion.

Mr. Creel said they must insure that the RFP issued by the Town meets the criteria that the Town has set for them. He does not want to be accused of drafting a RFP for one proposer when they will have other bidders for the space.

Linda Hammett-Ory said that she expected the minimum rent to be lower as the bidders may be nonprofit organizations. Mr. Sander reminded her that it is not rent, it is reimbursement for the services that the school provides to the tenant, like electricity, custodial services, internet, and heat. He indicated that while this is not rent, they will bring comparisons to the April 30 meeting to show how the payment is far less than commercial tenants pay. Mr. Creel read a *Boston Globe* article which indicated Class A office space rents for \$56.60 per square foot with a triple net lease, which means that the renter pays for taxes, services, and improvements to the space in addition to the rent. He said that the Rural Land Foundation rents 1000 square feet at \$20 per square foot at the Mall, and that lease is also triple net.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. Accept Gift

The School Committee was asked to accept the donation of \$779.43 from the Friends of the Lincoln Library's proceeds from the March Book Sale to be used to purchase circulating and/or reference material for the Lincoln School Library. Mr. Orgel moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion to accept the gift. The Committee voted unanimously to accept the gift.

Mr. Brandmeyer said that the Friends have donated over \$4,400 to the School Library, and the money has been put to good use. They are very appreciative of the donations from the Friends, and he will send a thank-you letter to Barbara Low.

Cindy Matthes, Content Specialist for Technology, said that she's heard students in the hall say how much they enjoy going to the Library and she thinks that the new books purchased from Book Sale proceeds are an important part of this.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Technology Plan Progress Report and Recommendations

Mr. Brandmeyer introduced Ms. Cindy Matthes, Content Specialist for Technology, who presented the Technology Plan Progress Report and Recommendations, written by Fresh Pond Consulting. She explained they have a five-year technology plan, which is required by and submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Education. She listed the report's six benchmarks and recommendations: 1) Commitment to a Clear Vision and Mission Statement, with the recommendation that they reconvene a technology steering committee to focus on the use of technology and future planning; 2) Technology Integration, with the recommendations that they align the instructional program for students on the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses and implement an improved keyboarding curriculum for students. The third benchmark is professional development, with the recommendation that they monitor teacher proficiency to stay current with and to improve their technology skills. Benchmark 4 is accessibility of technology, with no recommendation for upgraded technology. Benchmark 5 is infrastructure for connectivity, the recommendation was considering upgrading the old computers at Hanscom and Lincoln, and also increasing network bandwidth. They are working on a plan for upgrading and the first phase will occur over April vacation, and phase two will be done over the summer. Benchmark 6 is access to internet outside the school day. They are running a pilot project to add library hours after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays on the Lincoln campus.

Mr. Schmertzler asked what they do with the older computers when they upgrade. Mr. Brandmeyer explained that the equipment is very old. They go through the state process to get rid of old computers. If the machines have value, they sell them and the money goes into the General Fund, otherwise they recycle them.

Questions were raised by Mr. Sander, Ms. Glass, and Mr. Schmertzler about how to make others more aware of how technology is being used, including having student work be shown to the Committee, having a Technology Open House, and potentially suggesting a Lincoln Journal article to Ben Aaronson. Ms. Matthes offered to give Mr. Schmertzler a tour anytime. Ms. Dobrow suggested that they provide technology updates in the principals' newsletters for parents; the Town has made a significant investment, and it is good to do a show and tell.

Ms. Glass asked about the parent portal and what was envisioned for it. Mr. Brandmeyer said that parents could fill out emergency cards online and update the vital information they have on students. Ms. Matthes said it would give parents and teachers another chance to communicate and to see what kids do on a daily basis, which takes time.

Mr. Sander thanked Ms. Matthes for the report. He asked her impression of how technology makes a difference with the students and where are we on a scale to increase technology. She said it was tough to ascertain whether the learning occurs specifically because of the technology. Anecdotally, she's seen improvements in Fast Math over several years, and they need to think of a way to measure learning. They are pleased to see how much the technology labs are used, but there is room to handle more use. The labs are used less toward the beginning of the year when the classrooms are settling into a routine, but used more in the latter part of the year.

Mr. Orgel said that the students appreciate the technology programs and asked whether students are given exposure to programming. Ms. Matthes said they have a Scratch programming elective in 6-8 grades. Ms. Dobrow thanked Ms. Matthes for her wonderful work.

B. School Choice Hearing and Vote

Mr. Brandmeyer reported on the Massachusetts School Choice Law, which requires every school district to enroll non-residential students unless the School Committee votes prior to June 1 not to participate. He recommended that Lincoln not participate on four grounds: 1) potential financial loss because of the significant discrepancy between the reimbursement figure and/or actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; 2) potential special education costs to the district; 3) commitment to maintain small class size; and 4) classroom space constraints. He said that their vote not to participate would not prohibit a Lincoln student from attending school in another district if the student wanted. Towns that do participate in the Choice program are Acton-Boxborough, Littleton, and Belmont, which also has the METCO program.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Orgel seconded, the motion to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2009-2010 school year for the reasons stated above. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Brandmeyer informed the Committee that the Department of Defense has agreed to the contract modifications for Hanscom schools for the 2009-2010 school year. September 30, 2009 enrollment figures will determine the amount of money the district will receive from the federal government.

VII. Curriculum

None.

VIII. Policy

None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$541,999.67 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$58,582.41 for a total of \$600,582.08. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants. Ms. Dobrow moved to approve the warrants, with Mr. Orgel seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants.

B. Discussion of Field House Roof Project

Mr. Creel discussed the Field House Roof Project with Robert Steinbrook, Chairman of the Finance Committee. The RFP was released, and he received a bid for \$158,000 from Reliable Roofing for the construction. Mr. Creel wants to reduce the amount needed on the Town Meeting warrant from \$230,000 (the amount the Capital Planning Committee approved) to \$190,000, noting that \$190,000 was enough money even if they had to replace rafters or substrate. He believes that the actual cost of the project may come in at \$175,000, and any money not spent would be returned to the Town. He would like to award the contract to Reliable Roofing before the next School Committee meeting, contingent on Town Meeting and voter approval. The work will start on July 1, and he wants to reserve the school's position to have it completed in the first weeks of July; the roofer needs to order the materials. In response to questions, he noted that MGL Chapter 149 requires the school to take the lowest bid. He obtained the required bid and performance bonds and has checked their references, which include positive ones from Boston and Wellesley Public Schools.

Mr. Schmertzler asked whether they could use the extra \$40,000 to maintain the roof, but Mr. Brandmeyer and Mr. Creel advised against this.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Mr. Orgel seconded, the motion to reduce the warrant request for the Field House Roof Project to \$190,000 and to award the contract to Reliable Roofing in the amount of \$158,000, contingent upon approval of Warrant Article 18 at the Annual Town Meeting and subsequent approval of the debt exclusion by vote on March 30, 2009. The Committee voted unanimously to reduce the warrant request for the Field House Roof Project to \$190,000 and to award the contract to Reliable Roofing in the amount of \$158,000, contingent upon approval of Warrant Article 18 at the Annual Town Meeting and subsequent approval of the debt exclusion by vote on March 30, 2009.

X. Old Business

A. Approve Presentation for Town Meeting

Mr. Brandmeyer asked the Committee to review the PowerPoint presentation for the March 28 Town Meeting. Mr. Brandmeyer noted that there have only been 28 hits on the school website to view the budget; this is the first year they have not mailed it to all Lincoln households. The Committee accepted the presentation for Town Meeting.

XI. New Business

A. Graduation Dates

Mr. Brandmeyer discussed the graduation dates with Principals Steve McKenna and Sharon Hobbs. They want to maintain as much teaching and learning as possible. He reminded the Committee the school must be in session for the state-required 180 days.

Mr. Schmertzler moved, and Ms. Glass seconded, the motion to have June 26 be the last day of school, Lincoln School Graduation will be June 25, and Hanscom Middle School Graduation will be June 24. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the dates.

XII. Approval of Minutes

Ms. Dobrow moved to approve the minutes of January 22, 2009 with the corrections, and Ms. Glass seconded it. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the January 22 minutes with the corrections.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Dobrow, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting. The open session adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte, Recording Secretary