

*Arlington School Committee
School Committee Regular Meeting
Thursday, September 24, 2015
7:00 PM*

**Please note location of meeting:
Robbins Memorial Town Hall Auditorium
730 Massachusetts Avenue
Arlington, MA*

Present: Paul Schlichtman, Chair, Jennifer Susse, Vice Chair, Jeff Thielman Secretary, Judson Pierce, Cindy Starks, Kirsi Allison- Ampe, Bill Hayner

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D. Superintendent, Laura Chesson, Ed.D, Assistant Superintendent, Diane Johnson, Chief Financial Officers, Rob Spiegel, Human Resources Director, Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education, Linda Hanson, Arlington Education Association President and Representative and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant to School Committee.

Attendance: Adam Chapdelaine, Town Manager, Andrew Flanagan, Deputy Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Finance, Capital Planning, Permanent Town Building members, and Mr. Richard Fanning, Ms. Marie Krepelka, and Rep Sean Garballey.

Absent: *Arlington Education Association member*

Open Meeting

Mr. Schlichtman opened the meeting at 7:07 p.m. and informed the members and the Arlington community that we are looking at a serious but good problem that everyone wants to come to Arlington to live. Enrollments have increased from 3700 to 5300 students over the recent years and we have been warned, enrollment growth will increase another 1000 students in the next 10 years. We need to think creatively; therefore we have asked the other Town Boards, Town Meeting Members and the public to participate tonight.

Dr. Bodie spoke on the enrollment growth and said all schools are mostly at capacity, except Stratton and Peirce. Therefore we contracted HMFH Architects, Inc. to extract a space study. HMFH Architects were the architects for Thompson Elementary School. Ms. Lori Cows and Dr. McKibben, who worked with HMFH on demographics, will present tonight on enrollment forecasts and the planning process.

Mr. McKibben did the Demographic Research on Population and Enrollment Forecasts and said this is not projections and the first thing is to understand the assumptions:

- a. There will be no short term economic recovery in the next 18 months and the national, state or regional economy does not go into deep recession at any time during the 10 years of the forecasts; (Deep recession is defined as four consecutive quarters where the GDP contracts greater than 1% per quarter)*
- b. Interest rates have reached a historic low level and will not fluctuate more than one percentage point in the short term; the interest rate for a 30 year fixed home mortgage stays below 5.0%;*
- c. The rate of mortgage approval stays at 1999-2002 levels and lenders do not return to "sub-prime" mortgage practices;*
- d. There are no additional restrictions placed on home mortgage lenders or additional bankruptcies of major credit providers;*
- e. The rate of housing foreclosures does not exceed 125% of the 2005-2007 average of Middlesex County for any year in the forecasts;*
- f. All currently planned, platted, and approved housing developments are built out and completed by 2023. All housing units constructed are occupied by 2025;*
- g. The unemployment rates for Metropolitan Boston will remain below 6.0% for the 10 years of the forecasts;*
- h. The rate of students transferring into and out of Arlington Public Schools will remain at the 2010-11 to 2014-15 average;*
- i. The district's current policy on assigning schools to children living in the "buffer zones" remains the constant for the life of the forecasts;*
- j. The inflation rate for gasoline will stay below 5% per year for the 15 years of the forecasts;*
- k. There will be no building moratorium within the district;*
- l. Businesses within the district and Metropolitan Boston will remain viable;*
- m. The number of existing home sales in the district that are a result of "distress sales" (homes worth less than the current mortgage value) will not exceed 20% of total homes sales in the district for any given year;*
- n. Housing turnover rates (sale of existing homes in the district) will remain at their current levels.*
- q. The majority of existing home sales are made by home owners over the age of 55;
1 drive*
- o. Private school and home school attendance rates will remain constant;*
- p. The recent decline in new home construction has ended and building rates have stabilized;*
- q. The rate of foreclosures for commercial property remains at the 2004-2007 average for Middlesex County;*

Dr. McKibben also discussed the Arlington Mass Total Population for 2010 Census, which shows each district Bishop, and Brackett, Dallin, and Hardy, which has the highest rental properties, and where the average moves are every 18 months. Peirce and Stratton show not much of preschoolers moving in to the neighborhood. The fastest growing type areas over the 50 years, has been Thompson, which is high in rental property too. The forecasted Elementary Area Population Change for 2010 to 2020 was discussed.

Ms. Lori Cowles, HMFH Architects, Inc. explained her Space Planning Report and the enrollment forecasts overview. The report showed graphic enrollment forecasts, a 5 year change and then the 10 year change. Another step in the phase planning is to go to all the schools and access inside the buildings. Look and ask if there is a way for each of these schools to grow. Lori then explained the Use and Capacity Overview of the report, which showed the capacity for the classrooms 22 per classroom and 25 per classroom. The Space planning scheme were then discussed as were the modular's at the Stratton School. The discussion continued about looking at the Gibbs School and the availability of this building since we have very important programs for our community in place at the Gibbs which we need to consider. Various comparisons between each Space Planning was discussed and looked at such as using the Gibbs for the 6th grade which allows more room at the OMS or place all 5th graders into Gibbs and move 8th grade to high school. Or using Gibbs as a kindergarten which could be more costly due to the redo bathrooms and busing or turning the Gibbs into another middle school. There are many pluses and minus to each scenario and that's why we're planning and starting the process and asking others for idea.

Public participation included the members from the Board of Selectmen, Capital Planning, Finance Committee, Permanente Town Building, Town Moderator and the Gibbs tenants, as well as Town Meeting members and other community members. The questions asked were on the space planning, the Statement of Interest for Arlington High School, MSBA reimbursement plans and Town Costs.

Mr. Schlichtman invited the current Gibbs tenants to our next School Committee meeting to hear about each of their programs and to inform the community we appreciate the programs at the Gibbs, and want them to survive and we have a problem and we are within that context, with the Gibbs, we want to maintain the programs.

Dr. Bodie said the she and Adam Chapdelaine would like to have a Task Force to continue planning and working together on finding solutions.

***Mr. Pierce moved the 10 o'clock rule to 11:00 PM, seconded by Mr. Thielman.
Voted: 6-1, Ms. Starks opposes***

Ms. Susse noted for the record that she was not necessarily advocating for the middle school to be located at the Gibbs and is advocating for supporting the Arlington Center for the Arts.

Recess at 10:18 pm.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Bodie invited the MSBA to Arlington on Tuesday, September 29th into a senior study with school personnel and said it's a signal that they are taking our Statement of Interest for the high school seriously.

Dr. Bodie noted that the request application for the Greater Charter School is not be considered by the DESE Commissioner.

Consent Agenda

Ms. Susse moved to approve the consent agenda: Approval of Minutes: Draft minutes from September 10, 2015. Approval of Warrant: Warrant # 16039, dated September 10, 2015 Total Warrant Amount, \$332,011.12, and Approval of Trip: Foreign Exchange Program for AHS Students enrolled in French, Quebec City, Canada Trip, January 29 - February 1, 2016, dates may change slightly for Foreign Language students, second by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 7-0

Subcommittee & Liaison Reports & Announcements

Nothing to report

Ms. Susse moved to adjourn at 10:23 PM, second by Mr. Hayner.

Voted: 7-0

*Respectfully submitted by
Karen M. Fitzgerald
Administrative Assistant
Arlington School Committee*