

Arlington School Committee  
School Committee Regular Meeting  
Thursday, May 28, 2020  
6:30 PM

Conducted by Remote Participation

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/order-suspending-certain-provision-of-open-meeting-law/download>

Present: Mr. Len Kardon, Chair, Ms. Jane Morgan, Vice chair, Mr. Paul Schlichtman, Secretary, Dr. Allison-Ampe, Mr. Bill Hayner, Mr. Jeff Thielman

Kathleen Bodie, Ed.D. Superintendent, Roderick MacNeal, Jr. Assistant Superintendent, Michael Mason, CFO, Alison Elmer, Director of Special Education, Marion Nolan AEA and Karen Fitzgerald, Administrative Assistant.

Absent: Rob Spiegel, Human Resource Director

Ms. Jennifer Susse arrived at 9:08 p.m.

**Open Meeting**

Mr. Kardon chair, confirmed the School Committee meeting was being held remotely on Thursday, May 28, 2020 read the Mass.Gov rules and started the meeting at 6:34 p.m. Mr. Kardon conducted a roll call to confirm the presence of members.

**Public Comment**

Members of the public are asked to send written comment to [kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us) or can register to speak via the webinar by emailing [kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us) by 5:00 p.m. Thursday, May 14.

The committee received the following public comments from David Levy. Mr. Kardon stated that the committee does not respond to public comment and read the following question. In preparation for potential remote learning in the fall, how is the District planning to address the inequities experienced this spring that prevented full-scale remote learning from taking place?

**COVID-19 update and Remote Learning Plan update**

Dr. Bodie gave an overview and responded to a motion made at the May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting by Mr. Morgan and Mr. Thielman. That, in order to test and learn about best practices for future remote learning and to meet the request from many parents in the district, the Superintendent is directed to develop a plan with additional synchronous weekly video meetings during which time teachers have the option to pilot live instruction (while concurrently providing asynchronous materials).

Dr. Bodie said we are almost in phase 3 on the school closure and students are moving in a good rhythm per our school principals with our curriculum and accountability. Both Gibbs and

Ottoson middle schools have three levels of student grading criteria and the high school students have the option to sign up to audit the course or not. It was noted that the student's participation rates in all levels have increased since grades are now being counted. The concern from the school committee members is still for the students not turning in materials. It was said those students have been identified and teachers, staff and counselors have reached out to those students and parents.

Dr. Bodie had Dr. Roderick MacNeal speak on his work with teachers on setting up pilot synchronous teaching as requested by the motion from the School Committee at our last meeting by Ms. Morgan.. Dr. MacNeal set up study groups and put together some action steps after speaking with curriculum leaders and teachers representative from all academic areas. They created a document with questions, set up a meeting and met with teachers at all levels of learning. We have teachers already piloting online teaching academic content, and teachers identify challenges and speak about success and best practices, also they are conducting live synchronous lesson plans. Teachers will go out and pilot strategies for the remainder of the school year.

The School Committee members inquired how students would be graded on their work, Dr. Bodie explained that grading process. Dr. Bodie pointed out some impediments for synchronous learning such as internet connections, children at home by themselves, and students at the elementary level it is hard to manage a large group of students for 30 minutes in a remote learning environment, and having the whole class together at the same time.

Dr. Bodie said she is planning for the return to school for next year however more details will be discussed over the next two meetings. Dr. MacNeal spoke that teachers are concerned if their own children need to report to school and if we have a hybrid situation here in Arlington it could be difficult but he will include questions like this into a survey being sent out to teachers next week. Ms. Keys noted teachers are having technology difficulties making it hard to do synchronous learning as well as scheduling can be challenging due to what is going on in their own households.

The committee members pointed out that they would like to move to open onsite for next year, but noted we cannot risk the safety of the elder adults and risk the entire community too. Many students are thriving right now and we should capture the positives too especially for those who were not thriving before this.

Dr. Bodie said the state is looking for data that is important to have and share for a way to identify best practices and share outcomes of how each district is doing on remote learning plans. Arlington public schools continue working collaboratively with local towns on what we are all doing well and what we are struggling with. The more we learn from each other the better.

Ms. Morgan suggested having additional data in a chart on the percentages of students participating and turning in materials versus students not doing the work. She asked about what could happen in September if we have remote learning and students don't show up, this could

affect Arlington's state aid. Mr. Kardon would like additional data on who is participating in google hangouts, and who is turning in materials to teachers and suggested that the committee be provided with more details on how things are working and what is not before the next meeting.

### **Special Education Professional Development Update**

Ms. Elmer and Dr. Orkin from Crafting Minds Consulting along with Dr. Keefe has been working collaboratively for the past three years and established a goal to appropriately provide differentiate specialized instruction for students on IEPs for reading. Dr. Orkin has provided monthly professional development workshops and school based consultation for about 20 workshop hours to Arlington teachers and students who struggle to read and have dyslexia. The presentation can be found in Novus.

### **FY 21 School Budget Update**

Dr. Bodie and Mr. Mason spoke about the state budget impact to Arlington, and has met with the Long Range Planning committee to discuss the effects on state, local receipts and Chapter 70. They continued to work together with the town and the Finance Committee to discuss FY 21 budget reductions.

The documents provided reducing the FY 21 budget increase by 10% which would be \$460,000, and also provided details to show changes of about seven positions we planned to hire. Dr. Bodie said the other proposal was a level funded budget for FY 21 would remain the same as FY20, but noted we need to do contract negotiations increases and the third document was additional cuts, but it was noted that we cannot operate with that. Mr. Kardon and Dr. Allison-Ampe said the Long Range Planning went with the first proposal. At our next meeting on June 11th the School Committee will need to vote to modify the budget.

### **Authorization to proceed with a contract with MASC**

Mr. Schlitchman, Ms. Susse, and Dr. Allison-Ampe, members of the Superintendents Search Process Subcommittee, recommended the full committee to move forward with the proposal presented by the Massachusetts Association of School Committee.

On a **motion** by Dr. Allison-Ampe, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner it was **voted** to authorize the School Committee Chair to sign a consultancy agreement with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees for a fee of \$10,500, plus expenses not to exceed \$500 without the further approval of the School Committee.

Roll Call: Mr. Hayner, Yes; Dr. Allison-Ampe, Yes; Mr. Thielman, Yes; Mr. Schlitchman, Yes; Ms. Morgan, Yes; Mr. Kardon, Yes. Dr. Susse was not present. (6-0)

Mr. Schlitchman suggested moving forward aggressively to begin community outreach, to hold focus groups and send out a survey written by MASC. The subcommittee will meet on June 2 at 10:00 to continue the process which the full committee supports.

## **EDCO Update**

Dr. Bodie provided the background on EDCO Collaborative that they had a deficit this year and that the members of the collaborative need to help pay their share of the assessment which would cost Arlington \$21,500. Two towns that are members of the EDCO want to withdraw and a surprise by Lexington was the suggestion to dissolve EDCO. Dr. Bodie would not recommend this and asked the school committee to affirm Arlington's intent to remain members of EDCO. The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on June 4th a vote could be taken by the member districts to dissolve EDCO.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Mr. Hayner, it was **voted** to direct Superintendent Bodie to vote, in her role as a member of the EDCO Board of Directors, to support Arlington's continued memberships in EDCO, and to oppose the dissolution of the EDCO Collaborative.

Roll Call: Mr. Hayner, Yes; Dr. Allison-Ampe, Yes; Dr. Susse, Abstained; Mr. Thielman, Yes; Mr. Schlichtman, Yes; Ms. Morgan, Yes; and Mr. Kardon, Yes. (6-0-1)

## **Monthly Financial Report**

Mr. Mason presented the April financial reports which showed safety expenses due to Covid-19.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Bodie is pleased to announce that Fabienne Pierre-Maxwell will join the Arlington Public Schools as the next Principal of Gibbs School, Arlington's town-wide Grade 6 school. She will replace Kristin DeFrancisco, who is leaving to take an Assistant Superintendent position at Groton-Dunstable Public Schools and will meet the School Committee members in the fall.

Dr. Bodie mentioned planning on having summer programming and providing it virtual mode and will present the plan at our next meeting.

Dr. Bodie informed the committee that Kindergarten assessments will be done in the fall and we will continue to monitor that enrollment over the summer at Peirce, Stratton and Bishop.

Dr. Bodie said the AHSBC and subcommittee on exterior and landscaping is moving forward.

Dr. Bodie congratulated all of our high school seniors, after vetting plans with the Board of Health and Arlington Police Department the seniors will come together in cap and gowns to take a picture of them receiving their diploma. ACMi is streaming this virtual ceremony. A caravan will go through Arlington on Sunday, June 7 where teachers can cheer them on.

A remote learning survey for students in Grades 6-12 will go out and one to parents on June 8th to help improve school for now and next year.

## **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Hayner **moved** to approve the consent agenda:

- Warrant Number 20283, Dated May 19, 2020, Total Warrant Amount \$394,676.75
- Approval of School Committee Organizational Meeting, June 11, 2020 at 6:15 p.m.

**Seconded** by Dr, Allison-Ampe

Roll Call: Mr. Hayner, Yes; Dr. Allison-Ampe, Yes; Dr. Susse, Yes; Mr. Thielman, Yes; Mr. Schlichtman, Yes; Ms. Morgan, Yes; and Mr. Kardon, Yes. (7-0)

## **Subcommittee/Liaison Reports/Announcements**

Budget: Kirsi Allison-Ampe (Chair), reported during the meeting.

Community Relations: Jennifer Susse (Chair), said she will recommend appointing Stewart Deck to the Poet Laureate Committee at the next meeting.

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability: Jane Morgan (Chair), no report.

Facilities: Bill Hayner (Chair), no report.

Policies & Procedures: Paul Schlichtman (Chair), no report.

Arlington High School Building Committee: Jeff Thielman (Chair) and Kirsi Allison-Ampe, no report.

Superintendents Search Process Committee: Paul Schlichtman (Chair) reported during the meeting.

Calendar Committee: Jennifer Susse (Chair), no report.

Election Modernization Committee: Jennifer Susse (Chair), no report.

Traffic Negotiations: Jane Morgan, Bill Hayner, no report

AEA Negotiations: Len Kardon, Paul Schlichtman, no report

## **Liaisons Reports**

None.

## **Announcements**

Mr. Hayner would like to thank the OMS for their video for Memorial Day. Mr. Kardon recognized Ms. Jennier Susse years of service to the School Committee board.

## **Correspondence Received:**

Warrant 20283 dated, May 19 2020 School Committee minutes, none SC Finance April 2020 Memo and Report Email Mr. Hayner Perkins School of the Blind Alternative Learning OMS Memorial Day 2020 YouTube MASC Cost Proposal MASC Superintendent Search Timeline MASC Summary, Explanation and Analysis of Superintendent Contract Provisions

Superintendents Search Process approved minutes Jan 15, 2020 and May 6, 2020 Town of Arlington Legal Dept Supplement-Remote Meeting Checklist and Guidance <https://www.mass.gov/doc/open-meeting-law-order-march12-2020/download> Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the meeting, contact the Administrative Assistant to the Arlington School Committee Karen Fitzgerald at [kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us](mailto:kfitzgerald@arlington.k12.ma.us) in advance of the meeting.

Adjournment

On a **motion** by Mr. Hayner, **seconded** by Mr. Schlitchman **voted** to adjourn at 9:46 p.m.

Roll Call: Mr. Hayner, Yes; Dr. Allison-Ampe, Yes; Dr. Susse, Yes; Mr. Thielman, Yes; Mr. Schlichtman, Yes; Ms. Morgan, Yes; and Mr. Kardon, Yes. (7-0)

Respectfully submitted by

Karen M. Fitzgerald

Administrative Assistant

Arlington School Committee