

## **Arlington School Committee Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, December 2, 2021**

**6:30 p.m.**

### **Approved:**

The regular Arlington School Committee meeting was held on Thursday, December 2, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. via remote participation over Zoom. Mr. Hayner, the Chairman and Dr. Allison-Ampe, Secretary were in attendance in addition to School Committee Members: Ms. Exton-Vice Chair, Mr. Kardon, Ms. Morgan, Mr. Schlichtman, Mr. Thielman as well as Dr. E. Homan-Superintendent, Mr. MacNeal-Assistant Superintendent, Mr. R. Spiegel-Director of Human Resources, Ms. A. Elmer-Director of Special Education, Mr. M. Mason-Chief Financial Officer, Jenna Fernandes AEA Representative, Matthew Janger, AHS Principal, B. McCarthy, Assistant AHS Principal, Tom Zierk, Ottoson Teacher and AHS Student Representative, M. Carmody, E. Diggins, Administrative Assistant.

### **6:30 p.m. Open Meeting**

Mr. Hayner opened the meeting at 6:30 p.m. with the following attendees present: Ms. Exton, Mr. Schlichtman, Dr. Ampe, Mr. Thielman, Mr. Kardon, Ms. Morgan, Dr. Homan, Mr. Mason, Mr. Spiegel, Ms. Elmer, M. Carmody, Student Rep, Jenna Fernandes, AEA Reps, Sean Keane, ACMI, M. Janger, B. McCarthy,

### **6:35 p.m. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **AHS Representative (Megan Carmody)**

Ms. Carmody announced that the first Student Wellness Workshop was held and two more will follow. She also announced that the Student Counsel is preparing for Spirit Week to be held at the end of December.

### **6:35 p.m. Re-approval of International Trip (Tom Zierk)**

Mr. Zierk, a retired Ottoson Teacher, presented a request for an Ottoson trip to Belize after two previously approved trips had been cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic. Superintendent reiterated that this is the same trip that was approved previously by the School Committee but due to the pandemic no discussion has been taking place until now. She also mentioned that the informational meeting was very well-attended by families who want their children to attend which indicates there will be a waitlist. Within 15 minutes of posting the trip opening, the 30 spots open were filled and there is now an extensive waitlist. The trip will take place during April Break of 2023.

A motion was made by L. Kardon to approve the trip and seconded. Roll call vote: Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Dr. Ampe, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, no, Mr. Hayner, yes (6-0-1) vote.

#### **6:40 p.m. AEA Budget Requests – Ms. Fernandes**

Ms. Fernandes discussed the AEA budget priorities for the 2022-2023 school year and acknowledged that their priority is to fill a number of open positions using salary increases to keep up with the cost-of-living increases and competition for new candidates, in addition to adding two new positions (full-time team chair at Menotomy Preschool and a counselor/social worker to help with increased need due to the pandemic challenges). Ms. Fernandes said that the Special Ed workload is being handled separately by a Subcommittee. Ms. Fernandes feels that we can't rely on the idea that benefits outweigh the salary, but instead we need competitive salary. Ms. Fernandes requested that Dr. Homan share this need with her teams specifically. Dr. Homan commented that she will be doing this as she has also heard echoes of these same needs during her recent budget meetings. It was determined that no vote is needed on this topic.

#### **6:46 p.m. Arlington High School Improvement Plan – Matt Janger**

Dr. Homan thanked the AHS Administration for a successful opening and introduced Dr. Janger. The building project and returning from the pandemic are the priorities for this year. After his introduction, Dr. Janger explained that the building project and returning from the pandemic are the priorities for this year and proceeded with his presentation. He discussed the AHS Wins which included a safe and supportive school environment throughout the pandemic including a constant level of attendance and grade improvement overall. There are currently 1487 students, up from 1411, with increases yearly. Dr. Janger noted various challenges being faced at AHS which included rising levels (90%) of social emotional distress (pandemic, racial justice, political environment, achievement) and the impacts of the aging facility. Dr. Janger discussed his priorities – Heterogeneous Grouping Initiative, Curriculum Equity Review, Collaborative Problem Solving, Student Affinity and Anti-Bias Groups in addition to the Building Project. Hoping to increase membership in the Student Affinity and Anti-bias Group Leadership for improved School and Student Culture. A time line was presented with the move-in details for the newest building of the construction project. Dr. Janger expects the increase in enrollment will increase a need for roughly 4.2 FTE

Some of the School Committee members, as well as Superintendent Homan, commented on the SIP and thanked Dr. Janger and the AHS community for their work this past (challenging) year. Mr. Schlichtman moved to approve the SIP, and it was seconded. (NOTE: No roll call vote was taken).

#### **7:23 p.m. Policy – BEDL – Land Acknowledgement – Paul Schlichtman**

In a Town Meeting vote of 222 to 1, it was encouraged to celebrate and recognize the heritage of peoples indigenous to Massachusetts by creating a new policy which suggests that the land acknowledgement be read at an organizational meeting, the first meeting in October, and at graduation

#### **7:25 p.m. Policy – KFD – Amendment – Paul Schlichtman**

The Community Relations Subcommittee presented a change to maintain some sort of a financial accountability for the after school programs as they receive discounted space from the district. This amendment would streamline the process and receive a transparent reporting of the policy. Members were concerned that specific salaries would be identified. A discussion continued regarding the transparency of the information using an amendment saying "all salaries" vs. specific salaries (e.g., not itemized).

### **7:31 p.m. Monthly Financial Report – Michael Mason**

Mr. Mason apologized for the lateness of his documents and asked to have his presentation pushed to the December 16 meeting. Len Kardon asked a quick question on open positions – Mr. Spiegel doesn't have an exact number but noted that there are quite a few.

### **7:45 p.m. Superintendent's Report – Liz Homan**

Dr. Homan shared the case rates of COVID-19. Cases have increased, partially unvaccinated and vaccinated cases. Precautions are being taken and testing continues. Strain on supplies will be challenging.

Dr. Homan announced that APS received a grant for funds for electric school buses, including charging stations. December Culture and Climate Survey has been launched. Leadership Instructional Rounds at Gibbs were held on 11/30 and will take place at Ottoson on 12/8. An Equity Audit RFP and Strategic Planning Update

Enrollments – no major changes.

Ms. Morgan asked for an update on Stratton and Bishop RFP – Mr. Mason reported that the bids are due December 6.

### **7:51 p.m. Consent Agenda**

Warrant #2219, November 23, 2021, \$777,204.28

Motion to approve made by Dr. Ampe and seconded. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Kardon, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Dr. Ampe, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Hayner, yes.

### **7:52 Subcommittee Reports**

**Budget** - Dr. Ampe reported that the Budget Subcommittee met on November 30 and discussed end of year report, reviewed Esser III –with information gathered and reviewed for long-range plan as well as the possibility of changing the structure of athletic fees.

**Community Relations** – Ms. Exton discussed that a CHAT is scheduled for December 11 at 11:00 a.m. for K-5 grade.

**Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability** – Mr. Kardon reports that the Committee is looking to schedule a meeting later in the month to discuss formative and mental health outcomes and both heterogeneous initiatives at Ottoson and AHS.

**Facilities** – Mr. Thielman reported that this Committee met on November 22 and discussed the Stratton school as a carryover from the SIP presented to the SC as well as the playgrounds. It was a good discussion with Dr. Mr. Hanna and Dr. Homan outlining some of the steps that will be taken at Stratton and the pressure on the building.

**Policies and Procedures** – Mr. Schlichtman reported that there are Draft Minutes in Novus. No plan for an additional meeting at this time.

**AHS Building Committee** - Mr. Thielman reported that there is a Meeting Tues, Dec. 7. Project continues to go on schedule and upcoming forums will be for the general public.

A motion was made to move into Executive Session by Mr. Hayner and seconded. Roll Call Vote: Dr. Ampe, yes, Mr. Schlichtman, yes, Mr. Thielman, yes, Ms. Exton, yes, Mr. Kardon, yes, Ms. Morgan, yes, Mr. Hayner, yes.

8:00 p.m. – the Regular School Meeting was adjourned to Executive Session

Respectfully Submitted,  
Elizabeth M. Diggins  
Arlington School Committee  
Administrative Assistant