

AUBURN SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

AUBURN, MAINE

REPORT OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING OF THE AUBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Auburn Hall

February 6, 2008

Members Present: Mr. Francois Bussiere
Mr. David Das
Mr. Lane Feldman
Ms. Bonnie Hayes

Mr. Jason Pawlina
Mr. Lawrence Pelletier
Mr. Ron Potvin

Others Present: Mr. Tom Morrill, Interim Superintendent; Mr. Jude Cyr, Business Manager;
Tanya Gagne, Student Representative.

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. Introductions

Mr. Das called the meeting to order at 7:07 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Committee members introduced themselves and stated which ward they represent.

B. Communications

Mr. Pelletier shared correspondence from MSMA regarding shortfalls in projected revenue and proposed budget cuts. He also shared information on a notification for an Education and Cultural Affairs Committee meeting.

Mr. Pelletier reported that he had recently read an article in the newspaper regarding Federal Application for Student Aid (FASFA). He stated that Senator Mike Beaulieu encouraged students and parents to attend a meeting where they can receive assistance with the application process.

Mr. Das reported that he had received an e-mail from Wendy Brown regarding last week's school committee meeting. He stated that in Ms. Brown's e-mail she wanted the members to know that after watching the recent school committee meeting her ideas about the current number of administrators has changed and she now supports the current number of administrators. Ms. Brown also provided a reminder that although people are not in attendance at the meeting; they are in the television audience.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Approval of Minutes – January 16, 2008

It was moved by Mr. Feldman, seconded by Ms. Hayes and voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda for tonight's meeting.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no comments made by public. There was only one citizen other than staff members in the audience.

IV. STUDENT INFORMATION

Ms. Gagne introduced Mikael Heikkinen, a sophomore at Edward Little High School, who is interested in becoming a student representative to the School Committee. She also reported on sporting events noting that all teams are doing well. Ms. Gagne reported that a comedy show directed and presented by students is scheduled for this Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at the Great

Falls Performing Arts Center. Ms. Gagne stated that students have noticed the new lighting and appreciate it. She also reported that there was a voter drive to register seniors to vote in the caucus.

Ms. Gagne reported that Deacon Lasagne would not be able to fulfill his role as student representative and Mikael is interested in filling that role.

V. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Mr. Morrill reported that there would be a regional meeting with the Commissioner at AMS tomorrow at 4:00 PM.

A. Planning and Development

1. RETC/SOS

The School Committee members participated in a discussion regarding the relocation of RETC/SOS pursuant to vacating the property located at 154 and 180 Mount Auburn Avenue on June 30, 2008. Mr. Morrill reported on the several options explored for the relocation of this program. He also informed the members about the implications of renovating the Webster School building and provided a projected budget from Northeast Building Consultants for those building improvements. Mr. Morrill noted that the proposal for closing the East Auburn Community School would partially be dependent on the outcome of the Master Plan Committee and their recommendations. He reminded the members that it would take some time to install sprinkler systems at Webster School.

Mr. Cyr reported that the original estimate came from a walk-through of the building. He noted that this estimate came after a thorough exploration of the building and a recommendation from experts in various areas. He stated that the project budget presented tonight is simply an estimate and noted that these items will be put out to bid, published in newspapers, and all bids received will be reviewed.

Mr. Potvin expressed that he is not comfortable with the estimate presented and wondered what would happen if the actual repairs cost more than the estimated amount.

Mr. Cyr stated that this is an estimate provided by a company that does this type of work on a regular basis. He noted that in his opinion this is a high estimate. Mr. Cyr clarified that he has applied for a State Revolving Loan and explained the process for the use of these funds.

Mr. Das stated that until the bids are received, the committee would not be acting on this issue.

Mr. Cyr and Mr. Morrill answered questions from committee members and clarified areas of concern.

Mr. Potvin stated that he felt the issue should be voted on tonight and would make that motion.

It was moved by Mr. Potvin, seconded by Ms. Hayes and voted unanimously that the school committee relocate Franklin, Merrill Hill, Adult Education and the Share Center Program to the Webster School building, relocate RETC to the Chamberlain building and use the budget to make improvements on the Webster School building.

2. Budget Goals

The School Committee members participated in a discussion regarding budget goals. Mr. Morrill reported that he had been in touch with the State to determine what the numbers would look like for the School Department and was told that those numbers would be available in 2-3 weeks. Mr. Morrill reviewed potential reductions, noting that the \$475,000 budget reduction from the City Council is definite; however other reductions are preliminary at this point. He noted that there are some offsets going on and we need to wait to see what the revenue piece is before we have a complete view of available money for the School Department budget.

Mr. Cyr explained that a definition for system administration with respect to budgeting purposes has changed with the new State coding system. He reported that all duties, responsibilities, and functions of individuals in the Central Office as well as the cost of operating this building would be considered appropriate items to charge against the administration budget; however we have five technology related staff that are housed in this building but work for the schools. Mr. Cyr noted that with the new coding system it is unclear if these staff members should be considered administrative staff or school staff. He explained that there are many differences between cities and school departments with relation to who is paying for what and what department should be charged for each expense. Mr. Cyr stated that there is a lot of gray now so we have scheduled a meeting with other districts in an attempt to clarify coding and develop some consistency for budget reporting.

Mr. Morrill reviewed a Budget Goals handout reminding the members of the goals of the Auburn School Department. He noted that the remainder of the handout is a guide to help members develop the budget in an organized fashion. He also provided a handout of the proposed budget calendar noting that this calendar might be revised throughout the budget process. Mr. Morrill reviewed the proposed calendar.

Mr. Potvin suggested that a revision be made to the referendum vote so the reason for a yes or no vote on the school budget would be clear.

Mr. Das responded that we would need to seek legal council prior to changing the wording on the referendum vote.

Mr. Das noted that both legally and through long-standing practice, the School Committee duties and responsibilities are essentially created by the legislature. He stated that members have tasks they need to accomplish and they need to ensure that schools have the financial support they need. He encouraged members to review the policies and the information they received from Maine School Management in December. Mr. Das noted that the City Council traditionally has had bottom line approval of the School Department budget; however, this year they will have approval of several line items. He encouraged members not to abdicate their legal or traditional responsibilities when developing the School Department budget.

3. Get Active Grant

Luci Merin, Community Learning Center, and Kathleen Cutler, AMS Principal, presented information regarding the Get Active Grant and updated the committee on the status of the grant application. Ms. Merin reported that this program is competing for funding from grant money. She reviewed the history, purpose and goals of the Community Learning Center, noting that this is a collaborative program in conjunction with the Boys and Girls Club, the YMCA, the Auburn Public Library and the Auburn Recreation Department. Ms. Merin informed the members that the Community Learning Center has been in existence for nine years now and is totally funded by grant money with space provided by the Auburn School Department. She stated that the program gives kids the confidence and connections to grow into happy healthy adults while providing a safe place for them to gain these skills after their regular school day has ended. Ms. Merin stated that this is an alternative for students who might normally go home alone. She stated that the Get Active Grant proposal pays for 1/3 of the program at the current level. She noted that she is also looking to submit other proposals for funding and continuing to establish and maintain collaborative efforts within the community.

Ms. Gagne and Mr. Heikkinen reported that they had both had successful experiences during their participation in the program while at Auburn Middle School.

Ms. Merin answered questions from members and invited members to visit when the program is in session.

B. Business

1. Read 180 Grant

Mr. Selwood and Ms. Tremblay presented information regarding a proposal to be submitted for Community Development Block funds to purchase the READ 180 program for Washburn School.

Ms. Tremblay reviewed the proposal and clarified the intent of the Community Development Block funds. She requested authorization to submit the funding request and to authorize the Superintendent and the Business Manager to negotiate for and contractually bind the agency. Ms. Tremblay noted that Washburn School is also going to offer workshops to the parents so that both the students and their parents can learn together.

Mr. Selwood reviewed the history, focus and goals of the READ 180 program. He reported the MEA results for Washburn School noting that the READ 180 program has been helpful for increasing the scores for these students. Mr. Selwood reported that the READ 180 program is also being used at Auburn Middle, Walton, Park Avenue, and Sherwood Heights Schools and they are already seeing the results.

It was moved by Ms. Hayes, seconded by Mr. Bussiere and voted unanimously to authorize the Superintendent and the Business Manager to submit the funding request and authorize them to negotiate for and contractually bind the agency.

1. Second Reading of Policies

The Superintendent presented the following list of new, revised, or deleted policies for School Committee approval of the first reading:

1. BA – Educational Mission
2. BB – School Committee Legal Status
3. BBA – School Committee Powers and Responsibilities
4. BBAA – School Committee Member Authority and Responsibilities
5. BBBA – School Committee Member Qualifications
6. BBBAA – Student Representatives to the School Committee
7. BBBDA – Vacancy and Forfeiture of Office
8. BBBE – Unexpired Term Fulfillment/Vacancies
9. BBD – School Committee Forfeiture of Office (DELETE)
10. BCA – Committee Member Code of Ethics
11. BCB – Conflict of Interest
12. BDA – School Committee Organizational Meeting
13. BDB – School Committee Officers
14. BDD – School Committee – Superintendent Relationship
15. BDE – School Committee Standing Committees
16. BDG – School Attorney/Legal Services
17. BE – School Committee Meetings
18. BEA – School Committee Use of Electronic Mail (E-Mail)
19. BEC – Executive Sessions
20. BEDA – Notification of School Committee Meetings (DELETE)
21. BEDB - Agenda
22. BEDC – Quorum
23. BEDD – Rules of Order
24. BEDF – Voting Method
25. BEDFA - Abstentions
26. BEDG - Minutes
27. BEDH – Public Participation at School Committee Meetings
28. BEDI – School Committee Relations with the Media (DELETE)
29. BEDJ – Broadcasting/Taping of School Committee Meetings

30. BEDK – Reporting School Committee Meeting Business (DELETE)
31. BEDL – Adjournment of School Committee Meetings
32. BG – School Committee Policy Process
33. BGB – Policy Adoption (DELETE)
34. BHC – School Committee Communications with Staff
35. BHE – Communications Received by School Committee
36. BIA – New School Committee Member Orientation
37. BIB – School Committee Member Development Opportunities
38. BID – School Committee Member Compensation and Expense

The Superintendent reported that many of these policies have been updated to reflect the City of Auburn's new Charter as well as other legal implications. He noted that the Policy Subcommittee has reviewed these policies, procedures and exhibits thoroughly and recommended adjustments as necessary.

Mr. Pawlina questioned the wording regarding agenda items in Policy BE that required a majority vote at special meetings and in Policy BEDB that required a unanimous vote at regular meetings.

Mr. Morrill should be stated that the language in the policies should be consistent.

Committee members agreed that the language in both policies should read that a unanimous vote be required.

It was moved by Ms. Hayes, seconded by Mr. Feldman and voted unanimously to approve the second reading of the above listed policies as presented with revisions to Policy BE and BEDB as noted above.

VI. INFORMATION / COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Lois Snow Mellow stated that she has concerns with LD 1932 and requested a meeting with School Committee members to discuss their concerns. She noted that Ms. Sampson and Mr. Beaulieu would also be interested in attending such a meeting.

Mr. Das responded that Ms. Snow-Mellow could contact him regarding scheduling this meeting and he would make arrangements with other committee members.

- City Council Update

Mr. Potvin reported that the City had discussed the possibility of merging both sides of the house on the Finance division. He noted that the Council is actively looking at this option because they currently have an opening for a Finance Director.

Mr. Morrill stated that they will discuss this with Laurie Smith, but cautioned that there is still a need for people to do the work.

Ms. Hayes reminded the members that this was discussed at the recent joint meeting and it was determined that the City and School Departments have vastly different software and reporting systems.

- Facilities Master Plan Committee Update

Mr. Pelletier reported that this committee has been a great eye-opener and it is changing his outlook.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Regular School Committee Meeting – February 27th – 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – March 5th – 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – March 19th – 7:00 at Auburn Hall

- Regular School Committee Meeting – April 2nd – 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – April 23rd – 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – May 7th – 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – May 21st – 7:00 at Auburn Hall

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- Discussion regarding outside groups expecting funding from the School Department
- Discussion of Early Release Wednesdays
- Essential Programs and Services

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

It was moved by Mr. Potvin, seconded by Mr. Pawlina and voted unanimously to adjourn from regular session at 9:25 PM and enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations pursuant to MRSA 405 (6)(D).

It was moved by Mr. Feldman, seconded by Ms. Hayes and voted unanimously to adjourn from executive session and return to regular session at 10:22 PM. with no further business.

X. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Mr. Feldman, seconded by Ms. Hayes and voted unanimously to adjourn from regular session at 10:22 PM.

Attest, a true record,

Thomas Morrill, Secretary
Superintendent of Schools

TM/rmw