

OPEN SESSION

SHARON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 26, 2006

Administration Building

One School Street

Sharon, MA 02067

Present: Mr. Mitchell Blaustein, Mrs. Jane Furr, Ms. Suzanne Gervais,
Mr. Donald Gilligan, Mr. Sam Liao, Mr. Andrew Nebenzahl

Absent: Dr. Barbara Dunham

Also present for the Open Session meeting: Dr. Claire Jackson, Glenn Allen, Sue Lechter, Joel Alpert, and a member of the community

Mr. Nebenzahl called the Open Session meeting to order at 7:40 p.m.

ADMINISTRATIVE/REGULAR ITEMS

Correspondence

There was no correspondence to come before the Committee at this time.

Approve Minutes

MOTION: (Furr/Gilligan) Moved to approve the Open and Executive Session minutes for the March 15, 2006 meeting as corrected. Vote was six in the affirmative.

MOTION: (Gervais/Blaustein) Moved to approve the Open and Executive Session minutes for the April 5, 2006 as drafted and submitted. Vote was six in the affirmative.

Student Representative

Lior Haas, Student Representative, updated the Committee on events at the High School:

- Student Council had a successful dodge ball fund raising event. Proceeds from the event would go toward purchasing a new speaker system for the gymnasium.
- Advanced Placement exams will be taking place within the next two weeks.
- The Junior Prom will be held on April 29th.
- Students received the results from the National Latin Exam. Out of approximately 15,000 students who took the exam, 952 students received perfect scores – two were from Sharon High School.
- A team of students from Sharon High School entered the World Robotic Championships.

Announcements

Kindergarten enrollment is almost complete. To date 204 students have enrolled for the 2006-2007 school year as compared to 203 for the 2005-2006 school year. One hundred forty have registered for full day kindergarten and 64 students will be attending half days

Dr. Jackson distributed the latest enrollment figures for Committee review.

SUPERINTENDENT'S ITEMS

Update on School Committee and Superintendent's Goals

This item was tabled until a meeting in May.

STRATEGIC PLANNING/POLICY ITEMS

Vote not to Participate in the School Choice Program

Dr. Jackson outlined the concept of school choice and explained that due to limited classroom space, Sharon has not participated. She has requested the Committee to vote not to participate in the School Choice Program for the 2006-2007 school year.

MOTION: (Gilligan/Gervais) Moved to accept the recommendation of Dr. Jackson and voted not to participate in the School Choice Program for the 2006-2007 school year. Vote was six in the affirmative.

Report on "Day on the Hill"

Suzanne Gervais distributed materials and presented a brief overview from her participation in "Day on the Hill." She said that Chapter 70 funding was the most discussed topic as well as providing student transportation, continued funding for the METCO program, special education circuit breaker funds, "pot hole" money and Medicaid reimbursement. Dr. Jackson, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Suzanne for such an informative and thorough update.

Vote to Approve the relocation of the Early Childhood Program

Dr. Jackson stated that CHARMS have finalized all the legalities for transferring the modulars at East Elementary to the Sharon Public Schools. A vote by the School Committee is needed in order to move the Early Childhood Program from the High School to the modulars at East. Dr. Jackson has met with the Early Childhood Coordinator to discuss the move and future meetings on this subject are anticipated. Dr. Jackson said that if the entire move cannot be executed by the middle of August, she would recommend not moving for the upcoming school year; however, at this time, a vote still needs to be taken by the Committee endorsing the move. Preliminary cost estimates are around \$40,000.

MOTION: (Blaustein/Gervais) Moved to accept the recommendation of Dr. Jackson to endorse the move of the Early Childhood Program from the High School to the East Elementary School. Vote was five in the affirmative. Mr. Liao was not present when the vote was taken.

Vote on the Michael J. Connolly Bus Bid

Dr. Jackson requested the Committee to vote on a three-year bid proposal submitted by Michael J. Connolly & Sons Bus Company for a three-year contract for student transportation.

MOTION: (Gilligan/Gervais) Moved to approve the three-year bid for student bus transportation as submitted by Michael J. Connolly & Sons, Inc. of Walpole, MA and to further authorize the Chair to sign documents on the behalf of the School Committee. Vote was six in the affirmative.

Dr. Jackson stated that a vote couldn't be taken on the bus fees on until the exact number of buses have been determined. This will be an agenda item in May.

Update on the Priorities Committee Meeting and Review of Warrant Articles

Mr. Nebenzahl and Mr. Gilligan, who are the School Committee representatives on the Priorities Committee, presented a brief overview of the revenue estimates that were discussed at the meeting. The most recent revenue forecast, which is dated April 25th, is posted on the Town's web site.

The Committee reviewed the articles for the May 1st Town Meeting and their effect on the School Department:

Article 5 – Budgets for all Town Departments

Mr. Nebenzahl explained that the Finance Committee has entered into the Warrant an option for the School Department budget without consulting School Department administration on their recommendation. The option put forth by the Finance Committee would result in a reduction in force of 52 employees. The budget amount for '07 is less than '06. Dr. Jackson expressed her concern that it would be impossible to effectively operate the school system under the Finance Committee's recommended option.

Article 13 – Capital Outlay Requests

All School Department requests were approved by the Capital Outlay Committee and were placed on the warrant.

Article 18 – Land Acquisition

The Conservation Commission and the School Committee is seeking to acquire property previously owned by Horizons for Youth. The parcel the School Department is seeking would abut property already owned by the School Department. This would make the parcel large enough for future school construction.

Article 21 & 22

These articles are reserve fund transfers for repairs to the Middle School.

OTHER BUSINESS

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the possibility of requesting Town Meeting to reallocate \$100,000 from the Contingency Fund to the School Department budget if the over-ride vote was not favorable.

MOTION: (Gilligan/Gervais) Moved to request town Meeting to reallocate \$100,000 to the School Department non override budget rather than the Contingency Fund. Vote was six in the affirmative

There was a discussion regarding the addition of \$80,000 in the town budget for a new position of Finance Director. Mr. Nebenzahl asked if the Committee would support a motion to reallocate \$80,000 to the School Department non-override budget rather than support the added position of Finance Director.

MOTION: (Blaustein/Liao) Moved that the Town Meeting reallocate \$80,000 to the School Department non-override budget rather than allocate \$80,000 for a Finance Director. There was a discussion on the motion.

AMENDED MOTION: (Blaustein/Liao) Moved to authorize the Chair to make a motion on Town Meeting floor to reallocate \$80,000 to the School Department non-override budget rather than allocate \$80,000 for the Finance Director position. Vote was five in the affirmative. Mr. Gilligan voted in the negative.

MOTION: (Liao/Gervais)) Moved to adjourn the Open Session meeting. Vote was six in the affirmative. The meeting was adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

Submitted on behalf of the School Committee by: Helen Campanario, Recording Secretary