

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**October 20, 2003 REGULAR MEETING**

October 20, 2003

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:05 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Present were Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Harris, Alderman O'Donovan, Ms. Bauer, Mr. Sullivan Ms. Taylor, Ms. Murray and Ms. Rossetti.

Mayor Gay was absent.

**III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS**

Ward I School Committee member, Dennis M. Sullivan, presented a Resolution to Somerville High School Head Boys Basketball Coach, Richard Melillo. The Resolution can be found on page 250. Mr. Melillo briefly addressed the school committee expressing appreciation to them, and also acknowledged his colleagues and his family.

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

September 29, 2003:

- Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

October 1, 2003:

- Personnel Committee of the Whole Meeting

October 6, 2003:

- Regular Meeting

**V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

Student representative, Maya Nitzberg, was not present for this evening's meeting.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. As a follow-up to the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting held earlier this evening, the Superintendent of Schools continued discussion on the subject of additional staff. Dr. Argenziano reminded members and the community, that at the last school committee meeting he had asked for the committee's support concerning an additional ESL person at Somerville High School and a second SEIP person for the K-8 Program. A written proposal was provided to the committee, explaining the need for two additional staff members at a

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)**

cost of \$65,400.00. Lengthy discussion took place among the School Committee members, the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Aldermen President, Mr. O'Donovan. A request was made by Ms. Rossetti to have Finance Chair, Ms. Murray contact Mr. White, Board of Aldermen Finance Chair, to arrange for a meeting between members of the School Committee and the Board of Alderman. After discussion, the following motion took place:

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Murray, to request from the Board of Alderman, a supplemental budget appropriation in the amount of \$65,400.00. for two ESL teachers at the instruction level of low incidence, as stated in the memorandum of Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano.

The motion was approved by a roll call vote of: Yes—7—Cardoso, Harris, Bauer, Sullivan, Taylor, Murray and Rossetti; Present—1—O'Donovan; Absent—1—Gay.

2. In preparation for the Somerville Schools educational audit visit scheduled for February 24 – 26, 2004, a letter from Mr. Joseph Rappa, Executive Director of the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability is enclosed for members.
3. Provided to members is the annual Halloween safety letter which is going to all PreK-8 Parents/Guardians.
4. Provided to members is a copy of *News from Citizens for Public Schools*, the topic is Somerville Charter boasts huge cash reserves, while public schools face cuts. Dr. Argenziano thought members would find this article of interest and also mentioned that the President of the Somerville Teachers Association, Linda Vitiello, is quoted in the article.
5. Enclosed is a memorandum from Mr. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, regarding upcoming meetings with the Principals, Assistant Principals, Directors, Coordinators and Supervisors, on the professional development meeting scheduled for October 29, 2003.
6. A Somerville High School News Release is enclosed for members. Dr. Argenziano extended his congratulations to the following nine students, our alumni as well as our present students, for being recognized for outstanding work in Advanced Placement: Daipan Lee, Alexander Huth, Lia Aiello, Max Bauer, Kyle Baxter, Lisandra Costiner, John Dante, Steven Favaloro and Justin Hillis.
7. The Title I Parent Advisory Council Membership for 2003-2004 is enclosed for members.
8. The Family Network Calendar of Events for October, November, December 2003 is also enclosed.
9. The Superintendent reminded everyone of the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center Dedication to be held on Sunday, October 26, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. where we will be honoring twenty of our city contributors.

**VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)**

10. A copy of the Urban Superintendent's Statement regarding MCAS support – MCAS improvement after school, before school, and summer camps is enclosed for members information.
11. Reminded members and the public that 88% of the City of Somerville has cable with Comcast. Ch. 15 is for education, Ch. 16 for Board of Alderman and School Committee meetings. Effective October 31, 2003, for the 12% of the city who do not have Comcast, but have RCN, Ch. 16 will be Ch. 13.

**VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

**A. *Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:* Ms. Murray (Oct. 20)**

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Facilities Update - Mr. Robert Ciampi
- ✓ Outdoor Facilities - Mr. Robert Ciampi, Mr. Gerald Knight
- ✓ Billrolls

Requests made by the committee:

The committee requested that Mr. Gerald Knight, Coordinator of Athletics & Intramural Sports, provide information on the following:

- a comparison of the current status of the sports teams with the majority of them being played elsewhere and the cost of this, versus, if there were enough fields in the city, the home games played here and half the games played away, what this cost breakdown would be.
- where our practices and games are currently taking place, home games/away games.

The committee requested that the Superintendent of Schools send a letter to Mayor Gay asking for updated information regarding the use of Trum Field and the possibility of expanding that use for other sports besides baseball and softball.

Approved motions(s) from subcommittee:

- To send a letter to the State Legislators to inquire about the money that was designated to rebuild Dilboy Field and request the release of this money to rebuild the field so we have it for our sports teams in the city. Included in that letter ask what may be the first step in exploring taking over Dilboy Field on behalf of the city in order to move forward to make it our own field.
- To accept the FY02 billrolls, as submitted.
- To accept the FY03 billrolls, as submitted.
- To accept the FY04 billrolls, as submitted.

**VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. **Personnel Committee of the Whole:** (Mr. Sullivan, Vice Chair) Oct. 1

Ms. Harris reported the following motion:

Approved motion from Committee of the Whole:

- To develop an assessment tool for the Superintendent of Schools Performance Appraisal based on the recommendation of the October 1, 2003 Personnel Committee of the Whole meeting.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS**

- A. **Field Trips** – Approved by voice vote.

**Nov. 21, 2003:** Winter Hill Community School, Grade 8, to New York City, NY.  
Transportation by bus at a cost of \$75.00 per student.

**Oct. 31 - Nov. 1, 2003:** Somerville High School, Grades 10, 11, and 12, to New England Council PDCA Convention, Newport, RI. Transportation by school vocational van at a cost of \$100.00 per student.

- B. **Park Lights To Remain On During Halloween Night**

Ms. Cardoso requested that the Superintendent of Schools send a letter to Commissioner Dow, Department of Public Works, asking to keep the lights on in the various schoolyards, playgrounds and parks throughout the city on Halloween night.

- C. **Crosswalks To Be Painted**

Ms. Cardoso requested that the Superintendent of Schools send a letter to Commissioner Dow, Department of Public Works, requesting that the crosswalks be repainted at Springfield Street and Concord Avenue.

- D. **MCAS – New Appeal For Students With Disabilities**

Ms. Rossetti requested that an Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting be scheduled for discussion relative to the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System Tests. This information/material was recently provided in members packets. Brief discussion took place. Ms. Bauer responded that this item would be put on the November 12, 2003 Agenda for Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting.

- E. **Potential Ballot Question for November 4, 2003**

Ms. Rossetti referred to an article received regarding a ballot question that would repeal the automobile excise tax in January 2005, halfway through the next fiscal year. Ms. Rossetti briefly discussed the article explaining this revenue is the second largest municipal revenue source in the state and it helps communities pay for education and public safety. Supporting this reduction would cripple municipal budgets and services.

**IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)**

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bauer, to have the Superintendent of Schools forward communication on behalf of the Somerville School Committee, to the area state legislators, documenting the committee's concern and opposition to a potential ballot question which would repeal the automobile excise tax beginning January 2005. A copy of this communication should also be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

**F. Article – News from Citizens for Public Schools**

In light of financial data of the Somerville Charter School reportedly profiting more than \$370,000 last year, adding to its already reported substantial reserve amount, the following motion was made.

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris, to have the Superintendent of Schools forward communication on behalf of the Somerville School Committee, to the area state legislators, documenting the committee's concern relative to the Charter Schools profiting in our times of extreme cut backs and request such legislation act on the committee's behalf. A copy of this communication should also be forwarded to the Board of Aldermen.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS**

**Ms. Murray**

1. There will be a celebration at Nathan Tufts Park, Powder House Square, on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. commemorating the restoration of the park. A variety of activities will take place; light refreshments will be served. Ms. Murray encouraged the public to attend.
2. Congratulated Catherine DeCola, Grade 1 teacher at the Brown School who was nominated for a Disney nominee for Teacher of the Year. Ms. Murray expressed best wishes to her and mentioned what a wonderful job she has done.

**Ms. Cardoso**

1. Reminded everyone to attend the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center Dedication on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. Ms. Cardoso also congratulated Ms. Ellie Blute who is having the Parent's Resource Room dedicated in her honor that day, a well-deserved honor for all the work she has done for the city.
2. The Lincoln Park Community School is having a Halloween Parade on Friday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, at 1:30 p.m.

**X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)**

3. Books for Bingo will take place on Wednesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at the Winter Hill Community School.
4. Wished everyone a safe and happy Halloween.

**Ms. Harris**

1. Today, October 20<sup>th</sup> is Senior Day of the last home meet for the swim team. The team has done well over the last four years and Ms. Harris mentioned the six seniors who have graduated from the swim team. She recognized them as follows: Jeniffer Rosa and Katie Harris, Captains, and Ashley Sciarappa, Ariana Sciarappa, Alicia Querusio and Cristina Rodrigues. The next swim meet will be held on Wednesday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, against Lawrence.

**Mr. Sullivan**

1. On Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, the Somerville Conservation Committee met at the Capuano Early Childhood Center and Dr. William Moomaw, Environmental Policy Professor from Tufts University was the keynote speaker. He discussed the dangers of the high use of fossil fuel that we have in this country. He heralded the Capuano Center for being an environmentally friendly building, using less fuel, and for being a green building, meaning environmentally friendly – something we should all be proud of.
2. Reminded the community that the Michael E. Capuano Early Childhood Center Dedication will be held on Sunday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

**Ms. Taylor**

1. There is a meeting of the Somerville Special Education PAC next Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 p.m. at the Kennedy School. The *Turning 3 Workshop* will be presented by the Federation for Children with Special Needs.
2. Gave a brief reported on the Kennedy School Open House she recently attended for parents of Kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. Ms. Taylor stated it was a very nice presentation and commended the teachers and paraprofessionals for putting this together for the parents.

**XI. COMMUNICATIONS**

There were no items of communication this evening.

**XII. PERSONNEL**

There was no personnel report submitted for this evening's meeting.

**XIII. RESOLUTION**

**Richard Melillo**

WHEREAS, Rich Melillo, who has served the Somerville School Department for the past 17 years as the head boys basketball coach at Somerville High School, leading the Highlander quintet to the post-season tournament the past three years, is retiring from his coaching position to devote more time to a growing family, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Melillo, who presently is a school attendance officer for the Somerville schools, a position he has held since 1984, has dedicated a great portion of his life to the sport of basketball as a player at Somerville High School and at Fitchburg State College, as a coach at Fitchburg for three years, and as the head mentor at S.H.S. since 1985, and

WHEREAS, He concluded his Somerville High coaching career on a fulfilling and successful note, qualifying for the Division I North Tournament in the past three seasons while compiling an overall record of 39 victories and 20 defeats while playing in the competitive Greater Boston League, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Melillo was an outstanding player for Somerville High School in the 1970's when he averaged 16 points per game, leading S.H.S. to a 17-3 record his senior year, and

WHEREAS, He had a productive and successful four-year playing career at Fitchburg State College, emerging as a 1,000 point scorer, and was a unanimous selection for the college's Athletic Hall of Fame, therefore be it

RESOLVED: That the Somerville School Committee proudly and publicly praise Rich Melillo for his 17 years as head basketball coach at Somerville High School, and wish him and his family health and happiness in the ensuing years, and be it further

RESOLVED: That these well-earned Resolutions be recorded in the minutes of tonight's meeting, and that a framed copy be presented to Mr. Melillo.

**XIV. MOMENT OF SILENCE**

The superintendent reported with regret the death of the following person. A moment of silence was observed and a letter of sympathy will be sent to the family.

1. Agnes H. Murphy, (Oct. 18), retired Somerville High School teacher.

**XV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano  
Secretary