

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

February 2, 2004 REGULAR MEETING

February 2, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 7:00 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Mayor Curtatone, Ms. Bauer, Alderman Provost, Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Taylor, Ms. Foster, Ms. Bastardi, Ms. Harris and Ms. Rossetti.

No one was absent.

SUSPENSION OF THE RULES

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bastardi, to suspend the rules to take the item of New Business out of order: Signing of Contracts with the Somerville Teachers Association and the Somerville Clerical Employees.

The motion was approved by voice vote.

The Superintendent of Schools recommended that the Chairman of the School Committee be authorized to sign the below listed Agreement(s):

- 1) The Somerville Teachers Association, Unit A
September 1, 2004 through August 31, 2006

Somerville Teachers Association President, Linda Vitiello and Vice President, Kate McCarthy, together with Somerville School Committee Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti, signed The Somerville Teachers Association Agreement.

- 2) The Somerville Clerical Employees, AFSCME, Council 93, Local 2070
July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2005

Somerville Clerical Employees President, Therese Hayes, with Somerville School Committee Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti, signed The Somerville Clerical Employees Agreement.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There were no minutes submitted for approval this evening.

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Maya Nitzberg was not present this evening.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. Provided to members this past week were the Somerville Public Schools School Improvement Plans, as submitted by the eleven site-based Principals. Included, as requested by school committee members last year, is a school profile, which can be found at the beginning of the program plans.

Informed committee members and the public there is a change in date for two schools the evening of the Long Range Planning Committee meetings, School Improvement Plan presentations as follows: Wednesday, February 4th at 7:00 – John F. Kennedy School
Thursday, February 5th at 7:00 p.m. – Cummings School.

2. A Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, 2004 at 7:00 p.m. Discussion will include FY05 budget preview and considerations/plans that will be taking place in the coming months. Last week in the Governor's budget report, Chapter 70 funds were level funded and every community that has a charter school received an increase in funding except for the city of Somerville. Senators Shannon and Barrios are checking this matter to see if it was an error. At this point, without going before the House and Senate, our Chapter 70 funds are level funded from the Governor's budget at \$19 million.
3. Provided to members is the Somerville Public Schools Manual, on blue sheets of paper, instead of booklet form, as previously done.
4. The *Tier II Standards and Indicators* document from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Educational Quality and Accountability Office is enclosed for members. Page 13 was missing from the report and has been placed at members seats this evening.
5. The second Community Forum will be held next Monday, February 9, 2004, at 6:30 p.m. at the Somerville High School auditorium. Translations and headsets will be available.
6. Enclosed is a memorandum from Francis Russell, SHS Supervisor of Testing, to Mr. Robert Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, regarding the November 2003 MCAS Retest results. Tomorrow, Governor Romney and Commissioner Driscoll will be releasing a report of the information on the classes of 2003, 2004 and 2005 for all cities and towns. The document is approximately fifteen pages and will be provided to school committee members in next week's packet.
7. As a follow up to questions asked by members Ms. Bastardi and Ms. Provost at the last meeting, Dr. Argenziano provided the committee with the January 27th membership and briefly discussed the information reported.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

8. Enclosed are copies of Job Descriptions for Guidance positions, as requested by the School Committee at the January 21, 2004 Ed. Programs and Instruction Subcommittee meeting.
9. Enclosed is the 2004 Spring Pool Program and Fee Schedule, provided by Mr. Richard Cheney, Pool Facilities Director.
10. Enclosed for members is a letter received from Mr. Karl Weiland with notification that this is his last year as Director of Child & Family Services at the Somerville Mental Health Association. Dr. Argenziano publicly thanked Mr. Weiland for the tremendous amount of work and outstanding services he has provided to the students and staff of the Somerville Public Schools over the past twenty years and wished him well in his future endeavors.
11. Enclosed is a flyer that has been distributed regarding the 2nd Annual Brian Higgins Trivia Night, which will take place on Thursday, March 11th.
12. Enclosed are the School Council Minutes for December 2003 for Somerville High School.
13. Provided to members is the Somerville Public Schools *Calendar of Events* for February 2004.
14. Enclosed is an invitation to the second annual Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration for February 5, 2004, from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at The Elizabeth Peabody House.
15. Governor Romney and the Department of Education have recognized Mr. Puopolo's program on MCAS Remediation. On one of the following days, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday during the February vacation, the Governor and Department of Education will be taking a walk through the high school while visiting the program. If more information becomes available, school committee members will be notified.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

A. Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: Ms. Harris (Jan. 29)

Subjects discussed:

✓ Tufts University Request

Ms. Harris gave an update of the discussion that took place concerning the diesel elect generator that is located on Tufts property, forty feet from the building near the sidewalk and the parking lot between Head Start play area and the side TAB (Tufts Administration Building) entrance. Tufts University personnel have been in contact with Michael Foley, Joseph Voutour, Bob Trane and Fire Department personnel. Mr. Trane and Tufts personnel would like to have a meeting with parents of Powder House Community School and community members, possibly at the TAB building in late February and early March.

✓ Somerville High School Graduation Ceremony

Ms. Harris reported the discussion that took place regarding Somerville High School Graduation and whether or not the ceremony would take place indoors at Gancher

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

Hall or outdoors at Fletcher Field. After discussion regarding the location of the graduation ceremony, the consensus of committee members was to ask the Somerville High School Officers to discuss this matter with the senior class to see what their preference would be, indoor vs. outdoor. Previously discussed at the last school committee meeting was the concern of a fee for using the parking garage. Ms. Harris informed the community there would be no charge for the use of the parking garage.

✓ Building Utilization Request

Approved motion from subcommittee:

- To approve the use of the Eugene C. Brune Field House at Somerville High School by the SHS Cheerleaders for a Cheerleading Tournament on Sunday, February 15, 2004, provided that the SHS Cheerleaders submit proof that they have secured an official police for the event, and waive the Field House building use fee.

✓ Billrolls

Approved motions from subcommittee:

- To approve the FY2003 billrolls, as submitted.
- To approve the FY 2004 billrolls, as submitted.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. **Policy Manual**

Ms. Cardoso provided to school committee members a listing of sections of the Somerville Public Schools Policy Manual the committee will be reviewing. The next Rules Subcommittee meeting is Wednesday, March 24, 2003. Ms. Cardoso asked that members review the sections assigned to them, make the necessary changes and have the material ready for discussion and also for submission to the Superintendent.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

Item (A) was presented earlier this evening, under Suspension of the Rules:

A. **Bargaining Unit/Contract Signatures**

The Somerville Teachers Association, Unit A
The Somerville Clerical Employees, AFSCME, Council 93, Local 2070

B. **Tufts University School of Medicine Program**

Ms. Rossetti informed members about a program at Tufts University that was brought to her attention by a Ward resident who is also a Professor at Tufts. It is called Tufts

IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

University School of Medicine, High School Students/Teachers Program. This is a seven-week summer program for students interested in the science field, where high school students, grades 11 and 12; and grade 10 if qualified, have the opportunity to become involved in a research project. Applications are now available; the deadline is March 15, 2004. Tufts University accepts thirty five in-state students. Ms. Rossetti expressed this is a great opportunity for our students and asked Dr. Argenziano to share this information with Mr. Robert Siggins, K-12 Coordinator of Science, to find out how many students would be interested in participating in this program.

C. MCAS RETEST DATA

Mr. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment responded to Ms. Rossetti's questions regarding the MCAS Retest Data information concerning the total number of seniors (9) who have yet to pass the Math MCAS retest and the total number of seniors (5) who have yet to pass the ELA MCAS retest.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Foster

1. Encouraged students to attend and participate in next Monday's Community Forum, February 9, 2004 at Somerville High School Auditorium at 6:30 p.m. She expressed this is the students opportunity to share input with the school committee regarding the high school or any of the other schools in the city.
2. Reminded the community that the Boys Basketball fundraiser is Saturday, February 7, 2004 at the On the Hill Tavern at 7:00 p.m. There will be food, music, and raffles.

Ms. Taylor

1. Reminded the community that the Duhamel Education Initiative Breakfast is this Saturday, February 7th, 8:30 – 11:00 a.m. at the First Congregational Church, 89 College Avenue.
2. Informed committee members and the public that Healey School students art work is being displayed at the Caldwell Banker Brokerage Firm on Massachusetts Avenue in Cambridge. The opening exhibit is Sunday, February 8th at 5:00 p.m.

Ms. Cardoso

1. Title I is having an emergency PAC meeting Tuesday evening, February 3^d, at 7:00 p.m. at the Winter Hill Community School to review the parent surveys and the parent policies.
2. The Lincoln Park Community School PTA is Thursday, February 5th, from 2:45 – 4:45 p.m.; conferences only, there will be no meeting.
3. The Lincoln Park Community School Council is Wednesday, February 11, 2004 at 1:00 p.m.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

4. The Lincoln Park Community School is having their Annual Valentines Day Flower Sale Fundraiser on Friday, February 13th. Sales will take place all day.

Alderman Provost

1. Alderman Provost discussed concerns she had regarding conversation that took place at the last school committee meeting about the Edgerly Education Center lease. She referred to a letter sent to the Board of Aldermen on June 26, 2003 and also to a Homans Building & Edgerly School Overview document. Following Alderman Provost's comments, Ms. Rossetti referred this item to Finance and Facilities for further discussion.

Mayor Curtatone

1. Briefly discussed that in the Governor's budget Chapter 70 Aid was level funded for FY05. The Mayor did not want the public to be confused or deceived by this; he explained that this is not good for cities such as Somerville, where fixed costs, health care, pensions, contractual obligations continue to rise and our revenues don't match that level of a rising cost. Mayor Curtatone informed the community that we are facing some very difficult challenges and there will be tough choices to be made in the months ahead. The Mayor will be working closely with the school committee, the school department, and all departments to try to maintain and preserve all our staff and level of programs, as the number one priority.

Ms. Harris

1. Requested Finance meetings, during the budget season, meet as Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole.

Ms. Bastardi

1. Reminded the community that the 2nd Annual Brian Higgins Trivia Night will be held on Thursday, March 11th at 6:00 p.m. at Good Times Emporium.
2. The Michael E Capuano Early Childhood Center PTA is Wednesday, February 4, 2004 from 2:45- 4:45 p.m.

Ms. Rossetti

1. Reminded the community that the Community Forum is Monday, February 9, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. at the Somerville High School Auditorium.
2. Wednesday, February 4 and Thursday, February 5, are the Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole meetings where school committee members annually meet with School Principals while the Principals present their school improvement plans.
3. The Powder House Community School PTA is Tuesday, February 3rd at 2:45 p.m.
4. The West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA is Wednesday, February 11th at 6:30 p.m.

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X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

5. The West Somerville Neighborhood School will be having their presentations of every student's science fair project in grades K-8 on Thursday, February 12th in the gymnasium at the West Somerville Neighborhood School.
6. Reminded and encouraged the community to attend the upcoming Finance and Facilities Committee meetings to hear discussion concerning the FY05 budget.
7. Reported that the Girls Basketball Team is in first place in the GBL and they are having an important game this Friday, February 6th where they will be challenged by Cambridge. Pre-game ceremony will take place at 6:40 p.m. where the girls and their parents will be presented with recognition for the years that they have played sports at the high school.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

There were no items of communication this evening.

XII. PERSONNEL

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

XIII. MOMENT OF SILENCE

A moment of silence was observed for the following person and a letter of sympathy will be sent to the family:

1. Jean L. Cook, (Jan. 25), retired Paraprofessional, Somerville Public Schools.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m., by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary