

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
MELROSE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
December 6, 2011**

A meeting of the Melrose School Committee was held this date in the Aldermanic Chamber of Melrose City Hall with the following members present: Ms. Thorp, Ms. Thorp, Ms. Kourkouvelis, Mr. Constantine, Mr. Lehman, and Mayor Dolan

Also in attendance were Superintendent Joe Casey and Business Manager Greg Zammuto.

Ms. Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7pm. Ms. Driscoll noted that this meeting is being tape-recorded.

**Election of School Committee Chair and Vice-Chair for 2012**

Ms. Driscoll announced that the By-Laws of the Melrose School Committee, Section 3.2, indicate that the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected annually by the Committee members at the first meeting December. Mr. Casey presided over the election, and took nominations for 2012.

Mr. Constantine nominated Ms. Thorp for Committee Chair.

Ms. Kourkouvelis nominated herself for Committee Chair.

Ms. Kourkouvelis recited statement as follows: "I would like to nominate myself as Chair of the Melrose School Committee for the year 2012. In my view, the role of the Chair is to manage the organizational framework in a non-authoritarian manner that invites input from all parties at every step. I would increase the visibility of the process to my peers on the Committee as well as the public and would remain committed to ideals of inclusion, transparency, integrity and dedication to protecting and encouraging participation in all interested parties. In my opinion, the better the manager, the less things need to be managed. My goals would be to minimize my own involvement except as needed to ensure that all parties have a voice and the contributions of all members are given equal weight. In this way we can maximize efficiency and accountability to our constituents."

Ms. Thorp commented that Member votes and support are appreciated and she will work to move the Committee forward.

With six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Mayor Dolan and Ms. Driscoll), one (1) in the negative (Ms. Kourkouvelis voted for herself), and one (1) absent (Ms. Casatelli), Ms. Thorp was elected School Committee Chair for 2012.

Ms. Thorp nominated Mr. Constantine for Committee Vice-Chair.

With six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Kourkouvelis, Mayor Dolan and Ms. Driscoll), none (0) in the negative, and one (1) absent (Ms. Casatelli), Mr. Constantine was elected School Committee Vice-Chair for 2012.

*(Ms. Casatelli arrived at 7:10pm)*

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Lehman seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To open the Public Comment period

**Public Comment**

Mr. Ted Kenney of Main St. commented that a leadership change on the School Committee would be a positive step, questioned segments and ratings of the Committee Self-Evaluation, and supported additional public meetings for the Superintendent search. Mr. Gerry Mroz of Mt. Vernon St. commented on need for

and restructure of subcommittee meetings, more in-depth discussion of budget issues, and more professionalism for Site Council members.

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Lehman seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Comment period

### **Report of Student Representatives**

MHS Student Representatives Emily Conn and Jared Gardiner reported as follows: Congratulations to MHS History teacher Lisa Lord for being recognized by the Veterans of Foreign Wars as Teacher of the Year on the district level. We received positive feedback from our initial 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Open House. Toys for Tots are being collected in the Superintendent's Office, and military collection boxes for non-perishable items are located in Ms. Lord's room and the main office. MHS Drama Club put on a great production of The Odd Couple this weekend. Today there was a delayed opening to allow each department to work on curriculum documents, and eighth graders toured the High School and attended information sessions led by MHS students. A different format was established this year for Student Week and the Pep Rally which were a huge success. We expect the Aspen parent portal to be up and running this week.

### **Announcements – Superintendent of Schools**

*District Updates* - Mr. Casey reported that a donor has reached out to us to provide student ticket pricing of \$3 to the Stoneham Theater for various after-school and weekend presentations. The School Building Association has advised us that our submission for funding for Winthrop School improvements has been accepted and, in addition, we will be applying by January 30 for grant monies to update the science labs at the High School. We will also be publicizing our January and February Open House and Parent Information Nights, and will include information regarding our new K/Grade 1 registration policy on the notice. Information is also posted online.

### **Announcements - School Committee Chair**

*Superintendent's Search Update* -

*(Mayor Dolan left the meeting at 7:52pm)*

- *Recommendation by Documents Working Group* –Ms. Casatelli reported that we had a second meeting on November 17 to consider Superintendent Search documents, budget for advertising, procuring an online brochure or postcard and updating our website, and what to include in the information packets. Mr. Lehman followed up with MASC who will assist us in producing and printing a brochure or postcard (we would absorb actual printing cost) and mailing it to their mail list (we would pay for postage). MASC would also place our ad on their website and other relevant state and national sites, and mail our brochure or postcard to organizations which have shown an interest, in addition to providing an objective role for reviewing resumes. Mr. Lehman endorsed their offer. Members favored the postcard option. Also, the Education Week publication comes out again in January in print and online where we could place a 2-column ad. Mr. Lehman also presented his draft advertisement for consideration and feedback. Ms. Kourkoumelis questioned availability of funding to upgrade our website while we are driving candidates there, and that MASC mailing list may not cover a wide enough area for maximum exposure. Next steps are voting on this tonight, formal announcement on December 15, sending our ad to MASC, and final approval vote at our December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Constantine seconded and with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Driscoll, Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Casatelli, and Ms. Kourkoumelis), none (0) in the negative, and one (1) absent (Mayor Dolan), it was

VOTED: To approve budget not to exceed \$6,000 for Superintendent Search as outlined in the Documents Working Group meeting of November 17, 2011.

- *Discussion on 2<sup>nd</sup> Forum* – Members discussed waiting for Search Committee to be formed to allow them to decide what topics would be helpful vs. going forward with a second meeting beginning with a summation of our first forum.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Kourkoumelis seconded and with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkoumelis and Ms. Driscoll), none in the negative, and one (1) absent (Mayor Dolan), it was

VOTED: To recommend to the Search Committee that a second public forum be held in January

*Consent Agenda* – Consent Agenda items include November 2011 documents as follows: School Committee Minutes of November 15 (*Attachment #2 per agenda*) and November 17 (*Attachment #3 per agenda*), Cafeteria Report (*Attachment #4 per agenda*), Personnel Report (*Attachment #5 per agenda*), Monthly Budget Summary (*Attachment 6 per agenda*), Middle School Field Trip Request (*Attachment #7 per agenda*), and Approval of Warrants (*Attachment #8 per agenda*).

Ms. Kourkoumelis requested that Warrant #S12058 Services and Reimbursements, and Field Trip application be removed from the Consent Agenda.

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Lehman seconded and with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkoumelis and Ms. Driscoll), none in the negative, and one (1) absent (Mayor Dolan), it was

VOTED: To approve remaining Consent Agenda items

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Constantine seconded and with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkoumelis and Ms. Driscoll), none in the negative, and one (1) absent (Mayor Dolan), it was

VOTED: To bring forward the Textbook Inventory report

### **Subcommittees (Committee of the Whole)**

#### **Finance and Facilities – Christine Casatelli/Carrie Kourkoumelis (8:07pm)**

*Textbook Inventory* – Mr. Casey commented that this document (*Attachment #10 per agenda*) was a great effort and is a reference of what we are using in classrooms and what department chairs and principals are looking at for costs and possible changes. Curriculum Director Pat Muxie noted that this foundation work is complete and will be updated as necessary on an annual basis. Discussion included what books we do not have that we need, decision-making regarding obtaining printed books vs. online versions, what are best class materials and how can plan

(Mayor Dolan returned at 8:32pm)

to acquire them, need to prioritize wants and needs, address budget issues, do we need additional staff, and need to discuss with all stakeholders to make informed decisions on how to go forward.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Driscoll seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To change the order of the day to hear the Strategic Plan report

*Subcommittee meeting ended at 8:43pm.*

**Policy and Planning – Ms. Thorp (8:44pm)**

*Progress on Strategic Plan* – PPS Director Patti White-Lambright presented Plan updates and noted improvements in format and reporting to better gauge our progress (*Attachment #16 per agenda*).

Ms. Kourkouvelis moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To return to the order of the day

*Subcommittee meeting ended at 8:55pm*

*(Ms. Casatelli left the meeting at 8:55pm)*

**Educational Programs and Personnel – Donald Constantine/ Donald Lehman (8:56pm)**

*Race to the Top Update* – PPS Director Patti White-Lambright and Curriculum Director Pat Muxie reviewed the RTTT program intended to increase achievement for all students and accelerate improvements for those farthest behind. Grant total is \$112,000 distributed over a four-year period. (*Attachment #9 per agenda*).

*(Ms. Casatelli returned at 8:57pm)*

*Subcommittee meeting ended 9:14pm*

**Return to Finance and Facilities Subcommittee 9:15pm**

*Discussion of FY13 Fees* – Mr. Zammuto outlined fees (*Attachment #11 per agenda*) used to fund related expenses within the budget including Full-Day K, Athletics, Consumable (Foods Class), and Music, and it was suggested that we do not increase any fees for these programs for the 2012-2013 school year. Also reviewed were programs outside the budget including Summer School, Summer Enrichment, and Education Stations.

*School Revolving Accounts* – Mr. Zammuto presented summary of expenditures of individual schools for FY11. (*Attachment #12*)

*Vote on Funds Approved by Board of Aldermen* – Mr. Zammuto reviewed FY12 and FY13 funds in the amount of \$378,250 approved on November 28 by the Board of Aldermen to the School Department (*Attachment #13 per agenda*). Mr. Zammuto will revise reporting of individual line items for greater clarity.

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Constantine seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept \$378,250 as approved by the Melrose Board of Aldermen to be used as follows:  
In FY2012 use of \$35,000 for the Middle School Skills Plus Program and use of \$3,250 for the Lincoln Summer Learning Academy, and in FY2013 use of \$340,000 towards funding the FY13 School Department budget

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Kourkouvelis seconded to approve Warrant #S12058 Services and Reimbursements. With six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Driscoll, Ms. Thorp, Mr. Lehman, Mr. Constantine, Ms. Casatelli and Mayor Dolan), and one (1) in the negative (Ms. Kourkouvelis), it was

VOTED: To approve Warrant #S12058 Services and Reimbursements

*Subcommittee meeting ended 9:39pm*

**Policy and Planning – Kristin Thorp/ Mayor Rob Dolan 9:40pm**

*School Committee Goals for 2012-* Ms. Thorp presented possible goals for next year (*Attachment #14 per agenda*) for Member review based on Committee Self-Evaluation scores from our last meeting. Members suggested possible revisions which were discussed.

*Handbook Changes* – Ms. Thorp presented revision to the Student Search and Seizure Policy in the Student/Parent Handbook (*Attachment #15 per agenda*).

Ms. Driscoll moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept Handbook changes

*Concussion Policy* – Ms. Thorp presented draft policy (*Attachment #17 per agenda*) for Member review, and noted we are required by the State to have a policy in place by January 1.

Ms. Kourkoumelis moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept Concussion Policy

*Social Media Policy* – Ms. Thorp presented Social Media Policy (*Attachment #18 per agenda*) noting this is our first attempt at this policy which may be revised, and document has been reviewed by our Legal Counsel among others.

Ms. Casatelli moved, Mr. Lehman seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept Social Media Policy

Ms. Casatelli moved, Mr. Constantine seconded to approve Field Trip request of the MVMMS Ski Club (*Attachment #7 per agenda*).

Ms. Kourkoumelis commented that she is approving the request but would like to see more detail. With seven (7) votes in the affirmative, the Field Trip request passed.

*Subcommittee ended 9:53pm.*

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Lehman seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To open the Public Comment period

**Public Comment**

Mr. Gerry Mroz of Mt. Vernon St. noted the importance of revolving accounts and need for complete documentation, understanding of what functions the district doesn't provide and textbook inventory needs further review.

Ms. Thorp Ms. Casatelli moved, seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close the Public Comment period

Ms. Kourkoumelis moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:59pm.