

Monday, October 23, 2002 – Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

October 23, 2002

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dennis M. Sullivan called a Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting of the School Committee to order in the Auditorium at the East Somerville Community School, at 7:05 p.m., to discuss future space issues and future budget issues.

II. ROLL CALL

Present were Ms. Murray, Ms. Harris, Ms. Rossetti, Mayor Gay, Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Cardoso, Ms. Bauer, Ms. Taylor and Alderman White.

No one was absent.

Also present were Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Albert F. Argenziano, Ms. Marie B. Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Mr. Anthony C. Caliri, Human Resources Manager and 75 members of the audience.

III. FUTURE SPACE ISSUES/FUTURE BUDGET ISSUES

Chairman Sullivan opened the meeting, welcomed the audience, and introduced school committee members. Mr. Sullivan informed everyone that at the October 7, 2002 regular school committee meeting there was a motion made to table discussion of a comprehensive study of the Somerville school system. In order for discussion to begin for this evening's meeting, the following motion was made.

MOTION: Mayor Gay made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to remove discussion of the comprehensive assessment study of our school buildings from the table and the motion was approved by voice vote.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano, began by introducing himself to the audience. He informed them, that as Superintendent of Schools, he will not be making any recommendations this evening. He explained we are facing an extremely difficult budget year and with that in mind what he would like to do is put some ideas and thoughts on the table this evening to allow the school committee to consider them over the next thirty days, obtain input from their constituents and then regroup in approximately a month in order to make some decisions before the December 2002 break. Because some of our decisions will have an impact upon families, Dr. Argenziano would like to give them the opportunity during the months of January through June to make any changes and transitions they feel necessary. Dr. Argenziano provided the school committee members and members of the audience with a folder of information regarding the long range planning process for FY04, the budget forecast for FY04, a layout of what our Somerville Public Schools and program locations would look like for the school year 2003 – 2004, and school closing/relocation projections. He then proceeded to give a detailed overview of this material as follows:

III. FUTURE SPACE ISSUES/FUTURE BUDGET ISSUES (cont.)

LONG RANGE PLANNING PROCESS FOR FY04

- STEP I** Level Funded Budget \$50,500,000.
- (Sp. Ed. Costs) Medicaid Reimbursement \$ 1,500,000.

- STEP II** Collapse Rental Property By Housing Programs In Existing Sites

- STEP III** Downsizing Regular Education And TBE Staff To Reflect Enrollment Loss And Still Maintain A Positive Class Size

- STEP IV** No Recommendation To Close Schools At This Time – Not Productive Or Cost Effective

BUDGET FORECAST FY04

FY03

\$41,390,050.	Salaries
\$10,609,050.	Operations

FY04

\$ 3% Negotiated Agreements

\$42,631,751.	Salaries
\$ 500,000.	Implementation of Steps
\$10,927,321.	Operations

TOTAL:	\$54,059,072.
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<u>Difference:</u>	\$54,059,072.
	\$52,000,000.
	-\$ 2,059,072.

III. FUTURE SPACE ISSUES/FUTURE BUDGET ISSUES (cont.)

Somerville public schools at a glance 2003-2004

<u>WSNS</u> K— 8 325 Students	<u>PHCS</u> K— 8 Regular Education Special Education Two-Way Program 400 Students	<u>Brown School</u> K— 6 Regular Education 225 Students *	<u>WHCS</u> Regular Education TBE Students from PHCS 570 Students	<u>Healey</u> Regular Education Special Education TBE Students TBE Students from LPCS 525 Students
<u>Kennedy School</u> Regular Education Special Education 500 Students	<u>Cummings School</u> Regular Education 175 Students *	<u>LPCS</u> Regular Education Choice Program 470 Students	<u>New Edgerly School</u> PK, K, 1 250 Students	<u>Old Edgerly School</u> Special Education Offices Next Wave Full Circle Scale Program
<u>ESCS</u> Regular Education Special Education TBE Students from LPCS 600 Students				

N.B.
Two-Way Program at PHCS (Savings of Principals Salary & Core Facilities)
Scale Program—Saves Rental Costs
Collapse St. Polycarps—Saves Rental Costs

* Depends on needs of City of Somerville in this upcoming fiscal cycle

When Dr. Argenziano completed presenting his proposals and planning process for the future of our schools buildings, program locations, and budget reductions, questions and answers took place among School Committee members and Dr. Argenziano addressed any concerns they had.

The next topic discussed was the survey of the Somerville Public School buildings. Mr. Sullivan reported that at the last meeting there was a motion made to have an outside firm come in to do a comprehensive study of the Somerville School system and report back to us with that data. Mr. Sullivan stated there's nothing more important than a child's education and he knows the public feels there is a lot of uncertainty at this point in time. School Committee members recognize that people want to know where their child is going to attend school next year, and where the programs are going to be located. He explained this is the reason for the study; the data is necessary in order to make these important decisions. Lengthy discussion followed.

MOTION: Mr. Sullivan made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris, for the school committee to approve a Request for Proposal for a comprehensive assessment for the Somerville School system and the motion was approved by voice vote.

FRIENDLY AMENDMENT: Ms. Harris suggested a friendly amendment to the above motion to do the comprehensive study of all the city schools, excluding the Lincoln Park Community School (construction of the building) and the amended motion was approved by voice vote.

III. FUTURE SPACE ISSUES/FUTURE BUDGET ISSUES (cont.)

Chairman Sullivan asked members of the audience, after hearing all that was discussed this evening, if they would like to offer any ideas and/or input. Eleven people from the audience, who were staff members or parents of our students, addressed both Dr. Argenziano, and school committee members.

In closing, Dr. Argenziano wanted the public to understand that we will be doing a Needs Assessment of our facilities, programs and future enrollment projections. However, he did not want anyone to lose sight of the only reason we are doing this is, we need to find two to three million dollars, and 80% of his budget is staffing. He expressed that, from a Superintendent's standpoint, he does not want to move anyone. When the study is complete and we receive all the documentation we will then be able to make the necessary decisions.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 p.m. by voice vote.

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary