

January 27, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mary Jo Rossetti called a Regular Meeting of the School Committee to order in the aldermanic chambers at 8:00 p.m., with a moment of silence and a salute to the flag of the United States of America.

II. ROLL CALL

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

No one was absent.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

There were no presentations made this evening.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following minutes were approved for printing by voice vote:

December 9, 2003:

- Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

January 6, 2003:

- Annual Organization of the School Committee Meeting

January 9, 2003:

- Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole Meeting

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Kim Carvalho reported on the following items this evening:

A new quarter begins at Somerville High School and students now start their second semester. Ms. Carvalho reported the seniors are all relieved the first half of the year is complete but sadness comes with that, as they will soon be leaving the building many have learned to call home for four years.

The students are still focused on college applications and scholarship awards and at the same time, preparations begin for Proms, Class Day and Graduation Day.

Ms. Carvalho mentioned this past weekend was the All City School Fair. She and Class President, Melinda Barbosa, were student representatives for Somerville High School. This event was a great opportunity for parents to inquire about the different schools in the city to help them make a decision on which school to choose for their children.

Lastly, Ms. Carvalho reported the Senior Class Pajama Jam will be held on Friday, February 28, 2003 in the Somerville High School Atrium. This will be a good time for all!

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Argenziano reported on the following items:

1. The Superintendent thanked Mr. Charlie Aliano and his staff, Honeywell, Mr. Robert Ciampi and the custodians, for maintaining the heat in our buildings. Last week was an extremely difficult week because of the frigid conditions and he expressed his appreciation for their efforts in keeping the buildings as warm as possible.
2. Reported to the committee that because of the extremely cold weather, he put into effect for three weeks, a bus scheduled to pick up high school students. Any high school student who misses the regular transportation, will be able to take advantage of this bus running from the following schools in the morning and a return trip in the afternoon: Powder House Community School, Healey School, East Somerville Community School, Lincoln Park Community School, Somerville High School. This is a first come first served basis. Dr. Argenziano informed members this came about at the suggestion of a parent.
3. Reported to members that the Department of Public Works notified us there is a purchasing freeze on for repairs that need to be done. If there are supplies in-house, the necessary repairs will be made. If the department has to purchase something, they will not be able to put the order in. Emergencies will be taken care of.
4. Provided members with a copy of the Somerville High School daily bulletin and referred to the item *Groundhog Job Shadow Day*. Dr. Argenziano publicly commended Ms. Juana Gayle-Flores, Career Counselor, for starting ground hog shadow day and for her fine work in allowing our students to shadow professional people in our community.
5. Enclosed in this week's packet is a request for a field trip to Paris, France. There will be another request coming – a field trip to Spain. Dr. Argenziano explained the students have already paid the total cost of this trip which is scheduled for April 18 – 26, 2003. As Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Argenziano advised that he is not going to recommend approval, especially with pending troop movement and the escalation of anti war sentiment throughout the world. If the high school students want to go on their vacation, it will be the responsibility of the students and parents, and as the Superintendent stated to members, he could not recommend this in good faith and then have the committee vote on it.
6. A flyer was enclosed for members announcing The Brian Higgins Trivia Night, which is being held in memory of Brian. The date of the fundraiser is March 6, 2003 – 6:30 p.m. at Good Times Emporium. Proceeds will benefit the Brian Higgins Foundation helping families with children with special needs and also for a scholarship to go to a Somerville High School student studying special education. Donations are \$25.00 per person.
7. Enclosed are the West Somerville Neighborhood School Newsletters for December and January.
8. Provided for members was a booklet *No Child Left Behind – Homework Tips for Parents* in English and Spanish. Copies will be sent home to our Parents.
9. Provided for members is a folder with information for the Rules Management Subcommittee Meeting of the Whole which is scheduled for Thursday, January 30, 2003 at 7:00 p.m.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT (cont.)

10. In relation to Implementation of Question 2, Dr. Argenziano provided a final copy of the Urban Superintendent of Schools letter to be sent to Lt. Governor Healey. He informed members that within two week the Superintendents are going to try to solidify their plans. According to Commissioner Driscoll, cities, towns and school departments were asked to wait a little longer because a new item has been added to the certification. If a bilingual teacher is certified in regular education - that is not enough, the teacher will need to pass an examination in English competency before they will be allowed to teach in English. The State Department of Education will be putting together new guidelines, which will be received in thirty days.
11. Dr. Argenziano expressed his thanks to Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services, the Parent Information Staff and all the schools for their work in having everything ready for the All City School Fair that was held this past Saturday, January 25th.
12. Informed the public that the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) final report was received on Friday afternoon at 3:30 p.m. There will be school committee discussion at the Finance and Facilities of the Whole Meeting on February 3, 2003 and a Long Range Planning Committee Meeting on February 5th, at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium.
13. Dr. Argenziano informed members and the public that the department has gone ahead with a severance plan. A meeting was held last week where over fifty teachers attended to gather information. The deadline to apply for the severance plan is January 29, 2003. Dr. Argenziano suggested that the school committee adopt and approve the severance plan, whether it is done at this time or later in the meeting under new business.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. ***Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee of the Whole:*** Ms. Bauer (Jan. 15)

Subject discussed:

- ✓ Unidos/Bilingual PAC

Ms. Bauer reported that there were over three hundred people in attendance at the Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee meeting at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium. This meeting included people from the Bilingual Education community, the Unidos Program and the PAC Coordinators. The main purpose was to discuss the future of bilingual education including the Unidos Program in the Somerville Schools. Translators were available in four languages: Punjabi, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Spanish. Over thirty parents, teachers, and students, both graduates of the bilingual education program and current students addressed the school committee regarding how successful our bilingual education programs have been and the fear they are now having about losing those programs.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee of the Whole: Ms. Bauer (Jan. 15)

Motions from Committee of the Whole:

- that the school committee writes a letter to the state house in support of the Larkin bill and to include with the letter a list of those attending the January 15, 2003 Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee of the Whole meeting.
- that the committee writes a letter to Representative Larkin asking for changes in the Unz Law, to remove the provision for suing teachers, to omit the thirty day trial period before requesting a waiver and to eliminate the age requirement for the waiver.

Friendly Amendment: Ms. Taylor made a friendly amendment to the above motion to also send a copy of the letter to our own State Representatives and Senators. Ms. Bauer accepted the friendly amendment.

- to be proactive in notifying parents and teachers of the waiver rights concerning the new Bilingual Law.

Ms. Murray made a request to table the above motion until clarification was received of the law, i.e., who is responsible in terms of the waiver information – the local school department or the State Department of Education. Dr. Argenziano clarified for Ms. Murray, which department has jurisdiction over the waivers. He referred to Section 5 of Question 2 *English Language Education in Public Schools* handout, provided to school committee members. He read from the parental waiver section as follows: *any such decision to issue such an individual waiver is to be made subject to the examination and approval of the local school superintendent, under guidelines established by and subject to the review of the local school committee and ultimately the state board of education. The existence of such special individual needs shall not compel issuance of a waiver, and the parents shall be fully informed of their right to refuse to agree to a waiver.*

Ms. Murray understood and accepted the clarification made by Dr. Argenziano and stated she would support the above motion.

MOTION: Ms. Cardoso, made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris, to remove this item from the table. The motion was approved by voice vote.

MOTION: Ms. Bauer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso to be proactive in notifying parents and teachers of the waiver rights concerning the new Bilingual Law. The motion was approved by voice vote.

B. *Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole:* Ms. Rossetti (Jan. 21 and Jan. 23)

Subject discussed:

- ✓ School Improvement Plans

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole: Ms. Rossetti (Jan. 21 and Jan. 23)

Ms. Rossetti reported that school improvement plans were presented to school committee members by all school Principals on two evenings, January 21 and January 23, 2003.

Motion from Committee of the Whole:

- to accept all school improvement plans as presented, pending funding.

The next Long Range Planning Committee of the Whole will be held on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. in the East Somerville Community School Auditorium to discuss the final report, *Pre-K-8 Long Range School Facilities Planning*, received from New England School Development Council.

C. *Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:* Ms. Murray (Jan. 27)

Subject discussed:

- ✓ Varsity Cheerleading Proposal

Ms. Murray reported that a presentation was made to the school committee by three parents from the Somerville High School Cheerleading Team Parents Association. They made a very strong plea to the committee for any kind of contribution they could make either as a committee or as individuals to help send the Somerville High School cheerleaders to a competition in Tampa Florida. The Team has qualified to compete at the national level in Tampa, Florida from March 21 to March 25, 2003. Only thirteen teams in the entire state were invited to attend the national competition and Ms. Murray expressed her congratulations to the team. She also encouraged her colleagues and the public to please help out with a donation, in any amount. You may send your contribution to Somerville High School Activity Account, 81 Highland Avenue, Somerville 02143, to the attention of Ed Sweet. There will be a fundraiser on Sunday, February 2, 2003 from 2:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Somerville High School gymnasium. The Varsity Cheerleading Team will be hosting other teams and Ms. Murray mentioned this will be a very nice event for all to attend.

- ✓ Billrolls

Motion(s) from Committee of the Whole:

- To accept and the FY2002 Billrolls, as submitted.
- To accept and the FY2003 Billrolls, as submitted.

- ✓ FY03 Budget Reductions

Discussion took place regarding the FY03 budget reductions. Ms. Murray stated nothing definite has been decided, as things are still changing on a daily basis. At this point it is not known the ultimate cuts the schools or the city will have to take. Additional updates

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

Finance and Facilities Subcommittee: Ms. Murray (Jan. 27)

will be given to the community as proposals are discussed. Ms. Murray informed the community the Pre-K – 8 Long Range School Facilities Planning final report was received from New England School Development Council and the Finance and Facilities Committee of the Whole will meet on Monday, February 3rd at 6:30 p.m. to discuss this report. Copies will be distributed to the Library, the schools, the Mayor's office, and the report will also be available on the city website. There is a Long Range Planning Committee Meeting on Wednesday, February 5, 2003 at 6:30 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School Auditorium, also, to discuss the report with the community.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Urban Superintendents' Network Memorandum

Ms. Bauer reintroduced to school committee members the subject of the committee's support of the Urban Superintendents letter addressed to Lt. Governor Healey that was discussed at the January 15, 2003 Ed. Programs and Instruction Meeting of the Whole.

MOTION: Ms. Bauer made a motion, seconded by Mayor Gay to have the committee write to both the Governor and Lt. Governor supporting the Urban Superintendents' Network memorandum and to also extend to both of them an invitation to visit some of our bilingual education classrooms. The motion was approved by voice vote.

B. Clarification

Board of Alderman President, Mr. Sean O'Donovan brought up the topic of his name being used at the last regular school committee meeting of January 13, 2003. He was not available to attend but did view the videotaping of this meeting. Board of Alderman, Vice President Denise Provost did attend the meeting and relayed information to Ward III School Committee member, Ms. Roberta Bauer, stating it was on behalf of Alderman O'Donovan. Mr. O'Donovan understands that Chairman Rossetti did not allow conversation to take place in his absence and he wanted to express to the viewers and the people at tonight's meeting that there was no prepared statement or any information given to Ms. Provost to pass along to Ms. Bauer to be reported out at the January 13th meeting. Alderman O'Donovan did not ask anyone to speak on his behalf and he stated that the comments made were untimely, using his own name when he wasn't available, and were unintentional misrepresentation.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. FY2002 SCALE/ADP Graduates

Ms. Susan L. Barnard, SCALE Supervisor, recommended that the following students, who have successfully completed the requirements for graduation from SCALE, be granted their diplomas. Approved by voice vote.

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IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

A. FY2002 SCALE/ADP Graduates

Michael John Curtis	8 Cedar Avenue	Somerville	02143
Lisa Duggan	33 Gilman Street	Somerville	02145
Owen John Paul Kearns	285 Medford Street	Somerville	02143
Indira Lia Leite	15 Jackson Road	Somerville	02145
Joseph Stephen Mazzeo	63 Evergreen Avenue	Somerville	02145
Michael George Angelo	75 Malden Street	Malden	02148
Zackeriah Thomas Bouthiller	7 Woodland Street	Southbridge	01550
Michael G. Callahan	142 Russell Street	Everett	02149
Rachael Louise Clark	169 Crescent Avenue	Revere	02151
Angelo Joseph Ferraro	66 Geneva Street	Revere	02151
Lisa Michelle Fronduto	63A Floyd Street	Everett	02149
Jimmy Tri Le	124R Gledhill Avenue	Everett	02149
Jamahl Lewis	12C Scott Circle Hanscom Air Force Base	Bedford	01731
Annette Elizabeth Moscone	145 Winthrop Parkway	Revere	02151
Kirk Bartlett Wetherbee, Jr.	6 Tenney Road	Rowley	01969

B. Severance Plan

The Superintendent of Schools recommended endorsement of the severance plan that will go into effect during the budget reduction process.

MOTION: Ms. Taylor made a motion, seconded by Mayor Gay to adopt and endorse the severance plan for the Somerville Public Schools staff. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Ms. Cardoso requested to be on record as voting *present* for the above stated motion.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Murray

1. The Somerville Cares About Prevention forum met last week. Ms. Murray reported it was a great turnout and some topics discussed were preliminary curriculum at the high school and data from the youth risk behavior survey that was presented to the committee in the fall. There is a Somerville Cares About Prevention planning meeting next week and follow-up steps to the last meeting will be discussed.
2. The Brown School is having its Tropical Family Dance from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on Friday evening, January 31, 2003.
3. The Winter Hill Community School Annual Multicultural Fair is on Friday, January 31st. The Fair is ongoing throughout the day and Ms. Murray encouraged all to attend.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

4. The annual Community Resources Breakfast with the business partners will be held on Wednesday, January 29th at 8:30 a.m. at the Ray Izzo Highlander Café at Somerville High School. Ms. Murray extended an invitation to the community to attend the breakfast.
5. Thanked everyone for the work they did at the School Fair that was held on Saturday, January 25, 2003. Ms. Murray reported so many people enjoyed the day and it was a fabulous event. She also informed the public that the Kindergarten registration is not just a one day registration, it is an ongoing process that will continue through May.

Ms. Taylor

1. Briefly talked about the Martin Luther King Day speech that was held at the East Somerville Community School. One of the highlights was having Somerville High School student body president Melinda Barbosa, who was one of the speakers at this event. Ms. Taylor mentioned she is very proud of all of our students and was also happy to see such a wide range of Somerville citizens present.
2. A further celebration of the Martin Luther King Day will be held at the Elizabeth Peabody House on February 4, 2003. Guest speaker will be Dr. Mammie A. Parker.
3. Two events coming up on February 4th are 1) a night to hear input from Ward 6 residents, also open to the public. This will be held at the College Avenue Congregational Church at 7:00 p.m. and 2) Ms. Rossetti and Ms. Taylor will be meeting with the Powder House Community School community on February 12th at 7:00 p.m. in the school's cafetorium to share thoughts and discuss suggested long range planning.
4. Ms. Taylor informed the community she is selling raffle tickets to benefit the SCALE Scholarship Fund. Anyone interested in purchasing a ticket, please let her know.
5. Reminded school committee members the Duhamel Committee has changed its name to the Duhamel Education Initiative. The breakfast, which is an annual event, will be held on February 8, 2003.

Ms. Bauer

1. After listening to Dr. Argenziano's report on SCALE graduates, Ms. Bauer wanted to mention the many number of students who come from all over to attend SCALE. This is an incredible program that we have and it deserves everyone's support.
2. The Cummings School will be having their Parent Teacher Conferences this Thursday, January 30th from 2:45 - 4:45 p.m. At the same time, the students' science fair projects will be on display.

Alderman O'Donovan

1. Acknowledged the city workers. He expressed his thanks to them and also to the crossing guards who have been out working in the cold weather these past few weeks.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

2. Mentioned he is hoping to hear of Dr. Argenziano's acceptance to the extension of his contract as the Superintendent of Schools. Alderman O'Donovan congratulated Dr. Argenziano and stated he wished he were at the last meeting, as the vote to extend the Superintendent's contract would have been 6-3.

Mayor Gay

1. Reported that the Martin Luther King Day Breakfast held last week was a huge success. Mayor Gay thanked Ms. McWhinney, Director and Mr. Shenandoah Titus, Human Rights Commission Executive Director for helping out with this event. She also mentioned that Senator Barrios and Melinda Barbosa were keynote speakers. It was a very exciting day and Mayor Gay looks forward to next year's celebration.
2. Mayor Gay expressed her thanks to all of our Department of Public Works city workers, as well as a special thanks to our crossing guards, community police officers, fire fighters, and police officers, who are out in this extremely cold weather every day doing a great job for the citizens of Somerville.
3. Mayor Gay reported that on Friday, January 24th, she had the pleasure of going to the White House and listening to our President speak. He did mention the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and how important this was. There were over fifteen hundred Mayors from across the country in attendance at the Mayor's Conference and the same question was on everyone's mind. How much money was attached to this mandate? Needless to say, we should expect no money. Mayor Gay also mentioned it was a fun-learning experience being around the people in Washington for several days last week and there was a whole section for the Mayors as it relates to education. She was very proud to be among the other Massachusetts Mayors and stated that we have done our job here in Massachusetts, and added, no thanks to the federal government. Mayor Gay believes with all of us working together, we will see a brighter day.

Ms. Cardoso

1. Welcomed Sean O'Donovan, President of the Board of Aldermen, to be sitting in once again at the school committee meetings.
2. Reminded everyone that the Mayor is hosting a meeting at the Lincoln Park Community School, the Ward II community meeting, on January 28, 2003 at 7:00 p.m. The first topic of discussion is the Lincoln Park Community School reconstruction. Ms. Cardoso did apologize to those people who may have gone out this evening to the meeting, as there was an error on the flyers that were previously distributed, stating Monday as the day.
3. Special Education PAC Advisory Council Meeting will be held Tuesday, January 28th, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. @ the Healey School, 3rd floor Library. Subjects are on MCAS for students with disabilities and are presented by the Mass. Advisory Center.
4. Announced she is now the Chairperson of the Rules Subcommittee. There will be a meeting of the whole, this Thursday, January 30th, at 7:00 p.m. The agenda items are Guidelines For Use of School Buildings, GPA for Somerville High School, and Non-custodial Parent Regulations.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Rossetti

1. Reminded parents at the West Somerville Neighborhood School that this Wednesday morning, January 29th at 8:30 a.m. there will be a coffee hour and a Title I representative will be present at this meeting.
2. The Highlander Hockey Parents Association is hosting a fundraiser this Friday, January 31st at the Dante Club at 7:00 p.m. Ms. Rossetti invited all in the community to attend.
3. Reported the Finance and Facilities Subcommittee had discussion this evening relating to the potential sale of the Conwell School building which does sit in Ward VII. There may be a vote next Monday night at the Finance and Facilities meeting, which does not give Ms. Rossetti enough time to call a special meeting. She asked the viewers this evening and the Somerville Journal to please publicize the information of the possibility of a vote regarding the Conwell School, as the Mayor has asked us to seriously consider this, which then will allow the board of alderman to then cast their vote in order to put that building up for sale.

XI. COMMUNICATIONS

The Superintendent put at members' places this evening an email received from Adina Davidson and Joel Nitzberg, regarding MCAS data. Mr. Nitzberg was looking for additional information on the disk that the district receives from the State and Dr. Argenziano informed the committee he referred this item to Mr. O'Leary, who is given the disk when we receive it. The email is self-explanatory and is enclosed for members' information.

XII. PERSONNEL

There was no Personnel Report submitted for this evening's meeting.

XIII. MOMENT OF SILENCE

The superintendent reported with regret the deaths of the following persons. A moment of silence was observed and letters of sympathy will be sent to their families.

1. Mr. Ralph V. Willey, (January 20), father of Ralph "Buddy" Willey, Supervisor of Attendance and David Willey, Director of Full Circle High School/Next Wave Alternative Junior High School.
2. Mr. Espedito Liberace, (January 19), father of Beatrice Liberace, retired Kennedy School Teacher.
3. Ms. Eleanor Barrett, (January 19), retired Paraprofessional and mother of Ms. Carol Sweeney, Paraprofessional at the Kennedy School.
4. Mr. Thomas P. Hayes, (January 19), brother of Jack Hayes, School Messenger.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary