

**CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

January 12, 2004 REGULAR MEETING

January 12, 2004

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Administrators absent were Dr. Argenziano, Ms. Ferrari, Mr. Snow and Dr. Jenkins. Mr. Anthony C. Caliri, Human Resources Manager, represented the school administration during this evening's meeting.

III. AWARDS AND CITATIONS

School Committee Vice Chair, Ms. Harris, presented Citations to Winter Hill Community School students Sarah Merisier, Grade 4 and Hugh Merisier, Grade 3 for their courage, bravery and corrective actions that took place on November 17, 2003 in providing their mother with proper medical assistance. These two students have exemplified Somerville's profile in courage.

School Committee Vice Chair, Ms. Harris, also presented a Citation to Mr. Bruce Campbell for his outstanding work as a Community Police Officer in Ward IV. His work with young people on a daily basis is recognized, commended and the Somerville School family expressed their gratitude to Mr. Campbell.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were approved as follows by voice vote:

December 4, 2003:

- Rules Management Committee of the Whole Meeting

December 15, 2003:

- Regular Meeting

Ms. Bauer amended the minutes of the December 15, 2003 Regular Meeting (p. 293, under Item B, Field Trips, last paragraph, as follows:

Per Ms. Bauer's request, the Superintendent will send a memorandum to all Principals notifying them of the new policy on overnight school sponsored students trips approved by the Somerville School Committee, informing the Principals of the information listed in items #3B1 (Transportation) and #3A2 *that school committee approval precede beginning fundraising activities or other trip preparations.*

The amended motion was approved by voice vote.

V. STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL

Student representative Maya Nitzberg reported on the following items this evening:

- The musical production of Cabaret is moving rapidly through rehearsals, construction, and workshops. The team is working very nicely together and look forward to the production, which will be held in March. The students along with help from Parents are welcoming donations. They will be printing an ad book, if interested in purchasing space to publicize your business please contact Mr. Romanoff at the high school. The team is also looking for wood, old furniture and dresses from the 1930's/1940's.
- Over the next few weeks the high school student council along with the council's faculty advisor, Mr. Oteri, will be discussing the issues of nutrition – multiple ways of selecting certain foods and discarding others, and the option of the high school receiving a water bubbler machine as well as a vending machine containing such foods as granola bars and yogurt.
- On Thursday, January 15th, the senior class will be having a fundraiser at Pizzeria Uno's in Porter Square. There will be 50/50 raffles and coupons that can be purchased outside the door that evening.
- Tonight, January 12th, Financial Aid night was held at the high school. Helpful information was provided to parents and students.
- Mid-term exams begin next week, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Second semester will be starting Monday, January 26th.

VI. REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT

There were no items reported by Dr. Argenziano this evening, as he was called away on a family emergency.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES

- A. ***Ed. Programs and Instruction Committee of the Whole:*** Ms. Bauer (Jan. 7)

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Report of Guidance Services, presented by Mr. Charles O'Donnell, Consultant

Mr. Charles O'Donnell, along with the assistance of Dr. Joseph Mahoney, has spent the past two and a half months evaluating guidance services in the Somerville Public Schools. Together, they conducted both group and individual interviews of students, teachers, guidance counselors and administrations. Ms. Bauer gave a summary of the evaluation and review of the Somerville Public Schools Guidance Department, submitted by Mr. O'Donnell. Included in the report were recommendations for improvement in four areas: Leadership, Procedures, Community Outreach, and Resources. Most of the recommendations are non-budgetary, but the report also strongly recommends that the system reinstate the director of guidance position to provide leadership, coordinate all services and provide consistent direction.

VII. REPORT OF SUBCOMMITTEES (cont.)

Ms. Bauer informed the public the next Educational Programs and Instruction subcommittee will meet again on Wednesday, January 21 at 7:00 pm. to discuss and plan specific changes to guidance services.

- ✓ Approval of In-Service Courses

Approved motion by Committee of the Whole:

- To approve the Instructional Technology Professional Development Offerings for Teachers and staff, as submitted. Eleven (11) courses total (on file in the Superintendent's office).

B. *Finance and Facilities Subcommittee:* Ms. Harris (Jan. 12)

Subjects discussed:

- ✓ Conwell School Update

Ms. Harris informed the public Mayor Curtatone notified members that on Thursday, January 15, at 7:00 p.m. there is a neighborhood meeting at the West Somerville Neighborhood School, open to the public. The discussion will be on the Conwell School project, and the sale of the building, a very integral part of the finance and budgeting done by the city side last year.

- ✓ Somerville Public Schools Web Page

Ms. Harris gave a report on the presentation of the Somerville Public Schools Website given to the committee by Mr. Joseph Mastrocola, Coordinator of Instructional Technology and Ms. Anne-Marie Fiore, Instructional Technology Facilitator. Ms. Harris urged the community to log on to the website directory to view the different links and information provided for the public's knowledge. The address of the Somerville Public School website is www.somerville.k12.ma.us.

- ✓ TAB Building Generator

Ms. Harris reported there will be a future Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting with people from Tufts University, the Electrical Company, and the neighborhood community in order to discuss the external generator at the Tufts Administration Building.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Durrel School

MOTION: Ms. Bauer made a motion, seconded by Ms. Harris to remove business of the Durrel School from the table. The motion was approved by voice vote.

Ms. Bauer then referred this item to a future Finance and Facilities Subcommittee meeting for continued discussion.

Mayor Curtatone briefly informed the committee that the Durrel School is one of the assets the Board of Aldermen will be analyzing as they conduct their asset management study. There has been a municipal real estate advisory board formed by the previous administration. Mayor Curtatone will be announcing the reformation of that board with a different composition and this matter will be put on the fast track. A thorough analysis of all the space needs of city services and potential long time uses of all the municipal real estate owned by the city of Somerville will be conducted and upon completion, a report will be forwarded to the school committee and board of aldermen in order for the school committee to take appropriate action at that point.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

A. SHS Summer School Graduate

Mr. Thomas F. Galligani, SHS Headmaster, recommended that the following student, who has successfully completed summer school and has earned the required credits, be granted a SHS diploma. Approved by voice vote.

Paulo Sampaio

B. Regular Meeting of the Somerville School Committee: Scheduling Change

MOTION: Ms. Harris made a motion, seconded by Ms. Cardoso, to not have Finance and Facilities meetings before the Regular School Committee meetings. Discussion followed.

FRIENDLY

AMENDMENT: Ms. Foster made a friendly amendment to the above motion to have the time of the Regular School Committee changed to 7:00 p.m., effective immediately.

The friendly amendment was approved by a roll call vote of: Yes—7—Curtatone, Provost, Cardoso, Foster, Bastardi, Harris, and Rossetti; No—1—Taylor; Present—1—Bauer.

The motion, to no longer have Finance and Facilities meetings held before regularly scheduled school committee meetings, was approved by a roll call vote of: Yes—9—Curtatone, Bauer, Provost, Cardoso, Taylor, Foster, Bastardi, Harris, and Rossetti.

C. Outside Grounds - East Somerville Community School

Ms. Bastardi reported she has been receiving phone calls regarding the poor condition of the outside of the East Somerville Community School, including the parking lot and Tot Lot area. She asked for clarification as to who is responsible for the different areas and requested that communication be sent to Mr. Ciampi, asking him to direct the people who are responsible to take care of this matter. Mr. Caliri responded he would have communication sent, as requested.

D. Article: Gone with the Windfall

Ms. Rossetti referred to the article, *Gone with the Windfall*, received in this week's school committee packet and briefly discussed the \$20 billion fiscal relief fund mentioned.

IX. NEW BUSINESS (cont.)

MOTION: Ms. Rossetti made a motion, seconded by Ms. Bastardi, to have Superintendent Argenziano send communication to our State Legislators, requesting how Massachusetts had expended the fiscal relief fund. The motion was approved by voice vote.

E. Reforming Chapter 70 Education Reform Funding

Ms. Rossetti referred to and briefly discussed communication received from Senator Jarrett Barrios, regarding a preliminary study on reforming Chapter 70 education reform funding for cities and town in the Commonwealth. In his letter, Senator Barrios has asked that comments be submitted to the legislative working group by January 15, 2004. Ms. Rossetti requested members to contact Dr. Argenziano, Ms. Ferrari, or Ms. Rossetti, tomorrow, January 13th, with their comments concerning this matter, as Ms. Rossetti will be requesting that the Superintendent does respond to Senator Barrios.

Mayor Curtatone informed the committee members he will be meeting with Senator Barrios on Wednesday and is willing to communicate the concerns, of not only the school committee but also administration, from a finance standpoint on this issue. After that meeting takes place, Mayor Curtatone will report the information to the school committee.

X. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Rossetti

1. The school committee will be hosting their first Community Forum this Wednesday, January 14th at 6:30 p.m. at the East Somerville Community School auditorium. The agenda is open to the public for comments, concerns and/or questions to be discussed with the school committee.
2. The first Public Hearing concerning the Conwell School will be this Thursday, January 15th at 7:00 p.m. at the West Somerville Neighborhood School cafeteria.
3. The West Somerville Neighborhood School PTA will be having their Family Night Talent Show on Friday, January 23rd.
4. West Somerville Neighborhood School Council Meeting will be meeting on Tuesday, January 20th at 6:00 p.m.
5. The Powder House Community School Council Meeting will be meeting on Wednesday, January 21st at 6:00 p.m.
6. Ms. Rossetti asked members to bring their responses, to the different items that were included in this week's packet, to the Community Forum meeting on Wednesday evening.

Ms. Bastardi

1. Thanked her fellow school committee members, Dr. Argenziano, and the team at Central Administration, along with Mayor Curtatone, for welcoming her so warmly to the School Committee and for their offers of guidance, if needed.

XI. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Ms. Foster

1. Thanked everyone for the warm welcome and stated she is very excited to be part of the school committee.

Ms. Taylor

1. The School Fair is Saturday, January 24th, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the high school. Every elementary school will have a display. Principals, teachers and parents will be there to talk about the program at each school. Kindergarten registration process will take place and registration will be ongoing. Schools are open during the week, Tuesday through Friday for open house and Ms. Taylor encouraged parents to visit the schools.

Ms. Cardoso

1. Welcomed Mayor Curtatone, Ms. Bastardi, and Ms. Foster.
2. Monday, January 19th is Martin Luther King Day. Celebration will be at the East Somerville Community School auditorium, sponsored by the Somerville Human Rights Commission, at 10:00 a.m. Refreshments will be served. Interpreters in Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Spanish will be present.
3. The Title I PAC will be holding their monthly meeting next Tuesday, January 20th at 7:00 at the Winter Hill Community School. This is their annual meeting with the school committee.

Ms. Provost

1. Thanked Ms. Cardoso and members for their welcome.
2. Referred to the Somerville Public Schools January 2004 Events Calendar and the School Committee Meeting schedule list and asked if they could be combined. It was explained that the Calendar of Events is distributed to committee members monthly so they are aware of the different activities taking place in each school and the School Committee Meeting schedule list is posted on both the city website and the school website to inform the public of the upcoming meetings.
3. Referred to a letter from the former DPW Commissioner regarding the Kennedy and Healey Schools notifying the Superintendent these schools can now be formally accepted by the City of Somerville. Ms. Provost asked if the acceptance of those buildings has taken place. Brief discussion followed, Ms. Provost will bring this up when the Dr. Argenziano is present to answer her questions.

Ms. Bauer

1. The Winter Hill Community School Council Meeting is Tuesday, January 13th.
2. The Cummings School Council Meeting is Monday, January 26th.
3. The Cummings School PTA will be held on Thursday, January 29th. The school Science Fair exhibits will be on display this day and also on Friday, January 30th.

XII. ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS (cont.)

Mayor Curtatone

1. Thanked everyone for the nice welcome he received this evening.
2. Mentioned to members the very difficult task ahead of us this coming year, it is a fiscal challenge and we have to be clear eyed and hard headed about the financial hurdles we need to overcome. Mayor Curtatone stated he looks forward to working side by side with the school committee and the school department administration. He also commended members of the School Committee, present and prior, for setting up the community forums.

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

In Dr. Argenziano's absence, Mr. Caliri reported with regret the recent deaths of the following people. A moment of silence was observed and a letter of sympathy will be sent to their families.

1. Gertrude O. Kohler, retired teacher, Hodgkins School and the Powder House Community School.
2. Patricia Escott, retired teacher, Cummings School.
3. Helen Merry, former teacher, Somerville Public Schools.
4. Shawn J. Manning, nephew of Mrs. Marie Ferrari, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration.
5. David A. Snow, brother of Mr. Robert A. Snow, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.
6. Alice M. Jenkins, mother of Dr. Steven F. Jenkins, District Administrator for Student Services.

Ms. Cardoso also reported with regret the recent death of Mr. Mario Carreiro.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

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

Dr. Albert F. Argenziano
Secretary