

**LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING  
Tuesday, November 24, 2009**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Conference Room A  
L-S Regional High School**

**Present:** Radha Gargeya, Chair, Mark Collins, Vice Chair, Nancy Marshall, Patty Mostue, Jack Ryan and Berne Webb

**Also present:** Scott Carpenter, Superintendent/Principal, Judy Belliveau, Director of Finance & Operations, Rami Alwan, Teachers' Association President, David Sackstein, Student Representative, and Mary Whittemore, School Committee Secretary. Nancy Errico, L-S Technology Coordinator, was present as were the visitors listed on the sign-in sheets attached to the approved minutes of this meeting.

**Agenda Enclosures/Handouts**

- Unapproved Minutes of November 10<sup>th</sup> and November 18<sup>th</sup> meetings
- White House Pre-School Budget Sheet with estimated costs of renovations
- PowerPoint slide presentation on "Educational Technology – 2000 and Beyond"
- FY'11 Preliminary Budget Priorities dated 11/24/09
- Capital Plan Summary with detailed plans on Equipment and Vehicles all dated 11/23/09
- Draft Policy on Sex Offender Registry Information dated 11/6/09
- Undated memo from members of the L-S Teachers Association re a "Request to the Town Crier to Enforce Their Acceptable Use Policy". Seven copies with original signatures are attached to the original approved copy of these minutes.

**I. Call to Order:** Radha Gargeya, Chair, called the public meeting to order at 7:35 p.m. The Chair confirmed that this is a regular Committee meeting following the Special Meeting held on November 18<sup>th</sup>. He requested that public comments regarding White House Pre-School be held until that topic appears on the agenda.

**II. Public Comment**

Robert Stein, member of the Sudbury Finance Committee and Liaison from that Committee to the L-S School Committee, read a statement expressing his dissatisfaction with the Committee's performance especially as it relates to the handling of the White House Pre-School issues. Specifically, he was dissatisfied with five areas:

1) the Chair's decision to limit public comment at its meeting of November 18<sup>th</sup> to parents of White House Pre-School students, thereby, in Mr. Stein's opinion, infringing upon the Committee's own Meeting Procedures;

2) the Committee's short-comings on fiscal transparency by not having brought to the attention of the public, either at past Town Meetings or budget hearings, the Pre-School's deteriorating financial history;

3) the Committee's lack of effective budgeting in recent years by having cut L-S staff and programs and raising fees while at the same time subsidizing the Pre-School which includes children from out of the District and benefits less than two dozen L-S students;

4) the Committee's failure over the years to prioritize systematically the key objectives of LSRHS and to balance those objectives with a thoughtful allocation of taxpayer funding, and

5) the Committee's tendency to micro-manage the Superintendent/Principal, as evidenced by spending the better part of three meetings on the White House Pre-School, instead of focusing on Mr. Stein's recommended priorities of class size, classroom funding, cuts to programs and sports as well as how L-S should prepare students to compete in the global economy.

Scott Carpenter responded by saying that the School Committee needed to provide due process to the parents of White House students as well as to study fully the implications of the pre-school's financial and physical condition thereby providing for an informed, reasoned and unrushed decision.

Radha Gargeya then read the following statement:

"First, let me address the topic of public debate at School Committee meetings. You will observe, given time, spirited and robust discussion amongst School Committee members on a given topic. I, or any member of the School Committee, could be challenged or one's opinion contested by anyone else on the School Committee. It is normal and to be expected. Good ideas emerge out of this crucible of public debate.

"This holds true for public comment as well. Usually, public comment is taken under advisement. But on those occasions – when a comment is explained or a context provided, or when an opinion is contested – it is done so within the parameters of the topic at hand; it can be spirited and robust and yet always collegial.

"This is what we expect of ourselves and this is what we would like to see in the room as well.

"Second, with regards to last week's meeting, I read out the procedures at the outset of the specially convened meeting. I did not want to reverse the stated procedures at the end of the meeting. I am a stickler for procedures. I think that consistent and transparent application of procedures is essential for a free society to govern itself."

### **III. White House Pre-School**

The Chair thanked Scott Carpenter and Judy Belliveau for their work on this topic. He also thanked the White House parents for their interest, their comments at Committee meetings as well as their willingness to help the school achieve a successful second semester. He established the procedures for the remaining discussion to be limited to a review by Scott Carpenter, comments by two White House parents and comments by two non-White House parents.

Scott Carpenter reiterated the following points:

- He knew that White House Pre-School was hurting financially and that the school would sustain a loss in FY10.
- He cares about the long range viability of Child Development, with a lab component at the pre-school, as an elective for L-S students.
- The facility is in imminent need of renovation and it can be done most economically in the winter. Delaying renovation until the spring or summer will cost significantly more money.
- A room that meets the DOE space requirements is available at the high school for White House students for second semester. It is near the front door and near the nurse's station.
- We still need to spend time determining what to plan for FY11.

Ann Peterson, White House parent, urged the Committee to continue the White House program for second semester with the existing teachers. She stated that regulations require that there be two teachers on site and in her opinion, there is no need for a director. She questioned adding the expense of a new director when the existing teachers need to be paid by virtue of their contracts. She also assumes that there should be a record of a satisfactory lead paint test on file somewhere. Later in the discussion she noted that her calculations suggest that the pre-school would make money in the second semester if there is no director. She also advised that the Committee factor in the potential financial loss because White House still needs to pay the teachers and there may be loss of tuition income due to parents who leave the school. Scott noted that if there is to be a pre-school next year, there still needs to be a director to get an expanded program off the ground. If there is no pre-school next year, then there is no need to hire a new director.

Tom Hall, White House parent, identified himself as a general contractor. Having visited the site recently, he claimed that the renovations will cost significantly more than \$60,000 if they include the second floor, thus adding to the burden to the taxpayers. He later stated his opinion that renovations would take longer than two months. He also wondered who was involved in selecting the last director.

Scott Carpenter responded that White House parents had been invited to participate in the interview process but none responded. As a substitute, interviews with the final candidates for director included some L-S teachers who have pre-school age children. In some cases finalists were observed interacting with those children.

Rick Johnson, a non- White House parent, asked how many building and grounds crew would work on the renovation and what work at the high school would be postponed or overlooked because of this diversion. Scott responded that it would take two men and that the rest of the B&G staff would fill in any gaps. He also made an inquiry about the revolving fund to which Jack Ryan responded that the remaining funds can only be used in FY10 or beyond for the Pre-School.

Robert Stein, a non-White House parent, raised the concern of how damaging it would be to the pre-school children to move to a strange facility in mid-year citing how disconcerting it has been to his own children who moved into large, newly renovated bedrooms in his own home.

Judy Belliveau reported that it is the Department of Education that regulates pre-schools. The EEC only licenses private day care facilities. She has learned that the Building Inspector is the

final authority on the physical plant and that we need 35 square feet per child. Kevin Rossley has met with both Sudbury's architect and electrical inspector, as well as the building inspector. It is also Kevin's understanding that a lead paint test had been done in the past, but he recommends retesting for it now.

Nancy Marshall made a motion that the Lincoln-Sudbury School Committee authorize the Administration to proceed with renovations to the White House Pre-School to satisfy codes and regulations necessary to provide services in the space to pre-school age children and potentially younger children, with the goal of running a financially viable program. The renovations are to be accomplished with resources available to minimize the cost to the District, said renovations to be funded from, and not exceed, the available balance in the White House revolving account. Seconded by Patty Mostue. Following a brief discussion by Committee members, the vote was taken and the motion carried unanimously.

#### **IV. Technology Presentation**

Nancy Errico narrated a PowerPoint presentation that highlighted L-S's history with computers, and the staff to service them, especially since the new school was built in 2004. She reminded the Committee that technology today goes beyond just computers. She also gave examples of how different departments are using technology. Nancy also identified the challenges and obstacles that the Technology Department faces, such as aging equipment, limited time and resources for not only integrating new technologies, such as interactive white boards, but also for training teachers how to use them.

During the discussion that followed, Tammy Wilson, Co-Chair of LSPO, mentioned that LSPO has potential volunteers who are willing to help in the computer lab or write grants for new equipment.

#### **V. Approval of Minutes**

Mark Collins moved that the minutes of November 10, 2009 be approved, including modifications submitted by Nancy Marshall. Seconded by Nancy Marshall. The motion carried unanimously.

Patty Mostue moved that the minutes of November 18, 2009 be approved, including modifications submitted by Nancy Marshall. Seconded by Mark Collins. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **VI. Recognitions**

Scott Carpenter highlighted the following people for their good work on behalf of L-S:

- The on-stage and back-stage students who made "Alice in Wonderland" a fun theatrical production. Special kudos go to John Germanotta, Director, and Choral Director Jamie Kirsch for his musical direction and accompaniment as well as to Seniors Ariana Gunderson for her stage direction and Jaqueline Laviolette for her starring role as Alice. Scott noted that he had received an e-mail from the owner of Lavender restaurant complementing L-S students for their demeanor at their post-production party there.
- Eighteen L-S students were selected for the Senior District Festival sponsored by the Mass. Music Educators Association (MMEA).

#### **VII. Student Report**

David Sackstein noted that there were choral students also chosen by the MMEA for a music festival. An update on L-S sports included the news that the Girls Cross Country team won the State competition. Tryouts for most winter sports will be held next week. There will be a traditional bonfire on Wednesday night preceding the Thanksgiving Day football game.

The news from Student Senate is that two new Freshmen have joined the group and some new upperclass members will join next week. There continues to be potential interest on the part of a couple of METCO students. The Senate will soon be administering its survey on issues such as stress and earning a varsity letter for club participation. A forum concerning L-S culture is also in the works. The annual luncheon for senior citizens will also occur on Wednesday, November 25th.

### **VIII. Teachers' Association Report**

Rami Alwan reported that 35 parents attended a meeting of SADD on November 12<sup>th</sup> organized by Wellness teacher Sarah Greeley and Guidance Counselor Susan Praetz. Two similar sessions are planned for February and the Spring.

The Faculty Advisory Committee has organized a program for teachers on cyber-bullying scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup>. There is a growing problem of anonymous and unblocked bullying via text messaging. House Masters are spending more time monitoring and policing bullying. The Middlesex District Attorney's office will send a representative to speak to the group.

Rami read the memo sent in advance to the LSRHS School Committee requesting that the Committee engage in a discussion with the editorial staff of the *Sudbury Town Crier* to seek their enforcement of their "acceptable use policy". The policy was established by GateHouse Media, owner of the *Town Crier*, and is designed to prevent abusive personal remarks in its newspapers and on their websites. Ninety-four teachers had signed the memo which laments that staff and students have been maligned in uncensored blogs on the newspaper's web site. Radha reported that Jack Ryan, Scott Carpenter and he had met with Jeff Adair, news editor for the *Town Crier*. He stated that he needs to be notified of an alleged infringement and it will be deleted. He does not have the staff capability of editing blogs before they are posted.

### **IX. Superintendent's Report**

Scott reported that he attended a daylong event hosted by the Northeast Homeland Security Regional Advisory Committee last week. It brought together representatives of police, fire and the DPW from six towns as well as other representatives from state and local government agencies. The purpose was to highlight inter-town and inter-agency cooperation that must occur in the time of an unexpected crisis. The role-playing situation presented was a major snow storm that paralyzed transportation, stranded students, downed power lines, and created vehicle accidents. Entities that normally do not work together were forced to do so during this exercise.

The Instruction and Learning subcommittee of the School Council met this week. They will ultimately make recommendations on how the continuing increase in class size might be mitigated. They are all researching effective support services for students who struggle academically.

Cooperation among the G-4 superintendents has already paid off. Thirty administrators from all four towns had a training session facilitated by a lawyer on how to handle issues involving staff with disabilities. This type of coordinated professional development activity is very cost effective and efficient for the districts.

Lastly, Scott offered his public thanks to his wife for her tolerance and his assistant, Toni Benhaim, for her organizational skills as he has taken on the new job of Superintendent/Principal. He also thanked Nancy Errico for her leadership in supporting the technological component of L-S teaching and learning.

**X. Information and Discussion**

- Discussion of FY'11 Budget Priorities

Judy Belliveau reviewed briefly her handout, FY'11 Preliminary Budget Priorities dated 11/24/09. This is a very preliminary report on potential staffing requests. The Committee should expect to see modifications as the budget process moves along.

- Discussion of Capital Plan

In view of the time, the Chair agreed to defer discussion of this topic until another meeting.

**XI. Action Items**

Nancy Marshall moved that the Committee adopt the "Policy on Sex Offender Registry Information" dated 11/6/09 as it was presented with the handouts for this meeting. Seconded by Patty Mostue. The motion carried unanimously.

Jack Ryan moved to appoint Judy Belliveau, Director of Finance & Operations, as the District Liaison to the State Ethics Commission. Seconded by Berne Webb. The motion carried unanimously.

**XII. Other Business**

Nancy Marshall reported on her attendance at the three-day meeting of the Mass. Association of School Committees last week. Keynote speakers were Paul Reveille, Mass. Secretary of Education, and Mitchell Chester, Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Nancy also reviewed the topics covered in the workshops that she chose to attend: Chapter 70, the Impact of Special Education on Education Reform, Effective School Committees, School Committee/Superintendent Relationships, Superintendent Evaluation, Disruptive Innovation, and Virtual High School. There was some discussion among Committee members concerning Virtual High School, the on-line classroom in which member schools can participate.

Radha Gargeya reported that he had attended an open house session concerning Special Education on November 14, 2009 at Sudbury Shaw's Supermarket with Sudbury's US Representative, Niki Tsongas. Title I funding and the stimulus ARRA fund were the topic of discussion. Ms. Tsongas agreed to look into the topic of grant opportunities.

**XIII. Executive Session, if needed – None**

**XIV. Bill Schedules - Executed as needed**

**XV. Calendar of School Events**

December 2, 2009	7:00 PM	Lincoln Cost Centers, including L-S
December 3, 2009	7:30 AM	Joint FinCom Liaison Meeting at L-S
December 8, 2009	7:30 PM	L-S School Committee/Presentation of Budget
January 12, 2010	7:30 PM	L-S Presents Budget to Lincoln FinCom

**XVI. Adjourn**

Jack Ryan moved that the meeting be adjourned at 10:30. Seconded by Patty Mostue. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Whittemore  
Secretary