

STONEHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
STONEHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY  
JANUARY 7, 2010**

The regular meeting of the School Committee was held at 7:00 P.M. on Thursday, January 7, 2010 in the High School library with the following members present: J. Viselli, Chairman; S. MacNeill, Vice Chairman; M. Christie and D. Maurer and S. McCarthy. Also present was L. Olson, Superintendent of Schools and A. DiCologero, Administrator of School Finance.

Chairman J. Viselli called the open session of the School Committee to order at 7:00 P.M.

**I. Agenda**

**A. Action to Approve the Agenda**

**ACTION:** A motion was made by M. Christie and seconded by S. MacNeill to approve the agenda. The motion carried 5-0.

**B. Action to Approve the Minutes of:**

December 10, 2009 Regular Meeting

**ACTION:** A motion was made by M. Christie and seconded by S. MacNeill to approve the minutes of December 10, 2009. The motion was approved 4-0-1 with S. McCarthy abstaining.

December 10, 2009 Executive Session

**ACTION:** A motion was made by D. Maurer and seconded by S. MacNeill to approve the minutes of December 10, 2009 to remain confidential. The motion was approved 5-0

**C. Bill Schedule #8**

**ACTION:** A motion was made by S. MacNeill and seconded by M. Christie to approve Bill Schedule #8 in the amount of \$317,544.08. The motion was approved 5-0.

**D. Student Representatives to the School Committee**

Nicole Willard and Sucharita Mukherjee were present at the meeting and reported that mid-year exams begin in two weeks, seniors are busy with college applications and Carnival Ball auditions were held today.

**E. Review of Pending Legislation – Local Education Reform and Federal *Race to the Top* Grant**

Dr. Olson reviewed summaries of the legislation from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents that emphasized the topics of underperforming schools, underperforming districts, and charter schools. The house passed it's version of education reform last night. An amendment was added by Representative Lewis to re-examine the entire foundation budget. The house and senate now need to reconcile their budgets. The biggest issue that could impact Stoneham is charter school reimbursements. It does not appear that the lifting of the charter school caps should have a significant impact in our geographical area.

There has been a lot of controversy and confusion regarding the Race to the Top Grant. As a result, the state DESE has recently revised its application to indicate that the local superintendent, school committee chair and local teacher union president must all sign the grant application – with any resulting conflicts subject to subsequent negotiations. Most towns are waiting for guidance from the state MTA on whether or not to sign the applications. The deadline is January 13, 2010. There is a movement to get the state to rewrite the Memorandum of Understanding. Dr. Olson recommended not signing the memorandum at this time because of too many unanswered questions. The Committee agreed and took no action.

#### **F. Initial Review of FY11 Calendar**

Dr. Olson reviewed the school calendar for 2010-2011 that showed a before Labor Day start date of September 1, 2010. A brief discussion followed regarding the holiday vacation in December and the Committee agreed to keep the school open on December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **G. Middle School MSBA Grant – Enrollment Projections and Initial Compliance Certification**

Dr. Olson reviewed enrollment projections that were generated by the MSBA and projected a significant decline in enrollment numbers in future years due to declining birth rates and the lack of housing growth. The number of births has dropped from 260 in 2003 to an estimated 190 in 2012. The projections did not account for any development of the BRMC property.

Dr. Olson updated the Committee on the status of the MSBA Initial Compliance Certificate. We are still waiting for a response on the issue of the closure of the old Central School in 2001.

A brief discussion ensued regarding the decrease in birth numbers and the Committee requested Dr. Olson conduct a comparison survey with surrounding communities.

#### **H. FY11 Budget**

Dr. Olson presented the recommended Budget for FY11.

The current FY10 school operating budget is 34% of entire town budget this year, not including health insurance and bonds. The total budget presented for FY11 is \$22,999,837, an increase of 4.5% from this year – it is anticipated that the Town Administrator will recommend a level-funded budget. Not included in the FY11 budget is the following:

- Additional teachers for enrollment shifts – Robin Hood Grade 1 and Central School Grade 3
- No contingency for utility increases or new out of district special education placements.
- No new staff or expanded special education services for emotionally & behaviorally impaired children; will seek to modify programs based upon reassignment of current positions.

Additional concerns include:

- The average growth rate of 3.3% over the past seven years is not adequate to maintain programs
- Funding sources have not been consistent & predictable, allowing for prudent planning.

The annual change in available funds shows a significant drop in funds and grants over the past seven years.

Despite these issues, Dr. Olson reported the following significant accomplishments over the past few years:

- Reduction in Middle School Class Sizes
- Restoration of Middle School Health Curriculum
- New Elementary Math Curriculum
- New Elementary Early Literacy Initiative
- High School Math and English “CPI” Scores that are in the top 10% of all schools in the state
- Negotiations with unions resulting in \$1 million savings in town health insurance costs.

Dr. Olson reviewed the following 2010-2011 Budget Goals:

Elementary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Equitable distribution of Title I and reading services</li><li>▪ Resolve half-time kindergarten session schedule</li></ul>
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Add three Middle School teachers to allow for the restoration of Middle school teams</li><li>▪ Restore Middle School technology staffing</li><li>▪ Work with MSBA on feasibility study/capital planning process</li><li>▪ Prepare for new math curriculum in FY11 or FY12`</li></ul>
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Address time and learning requirements at the High School</li></ul>
District Wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Provide professional development support for the ELL program to bring it into compliance with state and federal regulations</li><li>▪ Maintain current programs and class size levels</li><li>▪ Hold tuitions and fees at their current levels</li><li>▪ Improve the focus on curriculum standards for special education students</li><li>▪ Support textbook replacement and technology plan</li><li>▪ Investigate conversion of oil to gas heating at High School, Middle School, old Central and East School</li><li>▪ Explore options to facilitate staff use of email, web postings and other communication tools</li><li>▪ Begin development of new Strategic Plan</li></ul>

Dr. Olson stressed the need to talk about revenue projection and necessary reductions. The committee requested an electronic copy of the budget in excel format.

A discussion followed regarding budget line items for curriculum guides, technology software, kindergarten enrollments, volume discounts for classroom supplies, the use of email communication with students and families, supplementing textbooks on line, safety issues with school facilities, Middle School team concept curriculum and copier lease costs.

The committee requested the Middle School principal and the Director of Technology and be present at the January 28<sup>th</sup> meeting for a focus discussion.

## II. Discussion/Correspondence/New Items

The next School Committee meeting will be Thursday, January 14 at the Stoneham Cable Studio.

D. Maurer disseminated copies of a “Thumbs Up for Healthy Food Choices” booklet that he felt was a great resource for nutrition guides and requested Dr. Olson check with elementary principals and health teachers to see if they would be interested in getting copies of the booklet.

### **III. Superintendent’s Report**

Dr. Olson asked the Committee to review the Annual Report for 08-09 for approval at the January 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **IV. Executive Session**

**ACTION:** A motion was made by S. MacNeill, seconded by M. Christie and voted unanimously by roll call at 8:44 PM to enter Executive Session under MGL Ch. 30A, § 11A ½ and not to return to open session. The meeting adjourned at 8:44 P.M.

**RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED**  
**LES E. OLSON, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**