

Town Meeting

4-9-15

TOWN MEETING

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Precursors

- Staff meeting: Frank said that there had been a stand-up staff meeting but that he would report on it during discussions.

Announcements - none

Consent Items - none

Motions

- Representatives of the class of 2017 made a motion to hold a middle school dance on Friday, April 24 with a portion of the profits to be donated to the Arlington Free Clinic.
 - o Catherine mentioned that a staff party had recently been planned for that night.
 - o Frank (who had been signed up to chaperone the dance), suggested that they work together to come up with a later date, so the **motion was tabled**.
- Frank then said he had another motion that he would bring up again after the discussion period.

Discussions

- Graham spoke about the Stratford building BLPC meeting which had been held in the library last night. About 40 people attended, including the building architects, neighborhood representatives, APS reps, as well as Graham, Carol, and parent Laura Saul Edwards from HB.
 - o The first important item was the confirmation that actual construction on this building will not begin until the summer of 2017. At that time the Stratford program will relocate to an as yet to be determined space. They will join us again when we move in September 2019.
 - o The architects do not currently expect to have to do extensive work on the parts of the building we use. Construction will be concentrated in the lower back parts of the building - adding on to and re-doing the parts Stratford currently uses.
 - o Bennett (12th) asked what would happen to programs like Stratford Friends when they move. Graham answered that it would depend on where the Stratford program ended up during those two years.
 - o Nancy asked if HB would be able to use the Stratford areas during the vacancy, and Graham said that was a possibility.
 - o Dave expressed concern that the construction would cut field space, and Graham said that this was one of the issues still being worked on.
 - o Graham reminded TM that anyone with specific ideas and or concerns about the construction should see him so that he can bring those concerns to the committee.
- Frank then spoke about the topics covered at yesterday's staff meeting: staff vacancies and greater than expected staff allocation numbers.
 - o HB will need to hire two special ed teachers: one vacancy is for Julie's job, but Frank said that the hope and expectation is that Julie will be able to apply for it and get it. The second is for a new position being created to replace two assistant positions. In addition, Santiago will not be returning next year, so there is a vacancy for a Spanish teacher. There will also be a pro forma vacancy for a .2 position, but Anne will be returning to full-time teaching and will therefore fill that spot.
 - o The Superintendent is expected to announce the selection to fill Frank's position on April 23.
 - o Frank announced that HB had received a revised staff allocation of 2.4 additional teachers - very welcome news. The bad news is that with allocations and arena scheduling coming soon, there is little time to decide how best to use these positions. Departments will meet next Wednesday and there will be two more Town Meetings before the allocations meeting on the 30th. The administrators have been discussing the issue and are hoping we can use the spaces to strengthen, rather than increase, our offerings. 18 additional new students will be joining us next September, and the 9th grade class will have 87 students. One idea is to lighten the

extraordinary load currently carried by 6th and 7th grade teachers who also have to prep for their TA blocks. Perhaps their teaching loads can be reduced to five classes plus TA, rather than six. We want to avoid the 7/7 model now being used at other schools where classrooms are used every block of the day so that teachers can continue to be available and accessible to students during their prep blocks.

- o Some discussion then followed concerning who would teach those single “extra” classes. Bennett asked if teachers might not be able to offer more independent studies, and Salome (11th) said she didn’t think that would be a good use of resources.

- o Dave asked if the allocation increase was a front-loaded one to cover our total student body increase, and if that increase might then later be taken away again if numbers went down or for other reasons. Frank conceded that this might happen, especially as the option for psychological transfers had been eliminated. This led to request for clarification, and Frank said that while the other comprehensive schools were still available for psych transfers, HB had been taken out of that loop.

- o Liz asked about and Frank confirmed that it would be possible to use at least one position for outside teachers. This was done frequently in the past but had stopped in recent years due to limited staffing numbers. Conceivably an outside, non-certified teacher could teach two semester long courses that would be of value to the student body, or he or she could be used to team teach with other teachers.

- o Liz then asked about the increased allocation being used to benefit the filled-to-capacity HILT program. Kris echoed Liz’s thoughts about the HILT program, saying that changes in regulations now required HILT math to be taught by a certified math teacher who often had difficulty communicating with the students. The students often arrive with very little or no math skills and have to be brought up to completing algebra in order to graduate. Tom added that having an additional teacher available to help with the HILT students might allow them to participate more easily in other courses as well.

- o Dave asked if an extra spot might be used to hire an additional special ed teacher who would be able to teach “regular” classes left over if the load were lightened for 6th and 7th grade teachers. Frank said that that would be difficult since the person would have to have multiple certifications.

- o The discussion concluded with the assurance that it would be continued by the individual departments and at next week’s Town Meeting .

- Frank then made a **motion** to establish three hiring committees: 2 special ed and one Spanish. **Motion passed** unanimously. Frank said he would post sign-up sheets near the Town Meeting announcements.

Chair: Lizzie Nelson

Co-Chair: Erin Lammie

Secretary: Margaret Gorman