A regular meeting of the Quincy School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 12, 2008 at the City Council Chambers, City Hall. Present were Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Mr. Kevin Mulvey, Mr. Nick Puleo, Mayor Tom Koch Mrs. Jo-Ann Bragg, and Mr. Dave McCarthy, Vice Chairman. This meeting began at 6:30 p.m.

The Superintendent called the roll and Mrs. Dwyer was absent. Also present were: Dr. Richard DeCristofaro, Secretary, Mrs. Tefta Burrelli, Clerk. Messrs. O’Brien, Walsh, Mullaney, Keith Segella, Dr. Pattavina, Ms. Powell, Todd, Hughes, and Roberts. Ms. Tracey Christello represented Citywide, and Mr. Paul Phillips, QEA President, was present. The Committee observed a moment of silence for Paul Grady, a long time coach, who recently passed away.

On a motion by Mr. Mulvey, seconded by Mr. Puleo, the Committee approved the Regular Session minutes for February 27, 2008. On a roll call vote, the motion passed 5-0. Mrs. Bragg ABSTAINED and Mrs. Dwyer was absent.

Basketball Coaches Kevin O’Connell and Mike Jorgenson were present to introduce Douglas Scott, Boys’ Quincy High Basketball, and Rebecca Goreham, North Quincy High Girls’ Basketball Team. Both athletes have scored over 1,000 points. The Committee presented them with certificates for their outstanding diligence, teamwork, and determination in the pursuit of academic and athletic excellence. The Committee also recognized their parents and grandparents who were in the audience.

After a short recess, the Committee went on with the business at hand. Mrs. Dwyer arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Ms. Janet Powell and Keith Segella introduced representatives of the Big Brother, Big Sister Organization. This is a school based mentoring program at Montclair and Lincoln Hancock. Volunteers visit the schools each week.
They talk, play games, etc. with students to help them gain self confidence. At Atlantic Middle School, they provide critical support. Volunteers come from State St., Aviva, ENC, City St., Quincy College, and City Bank. Representatives Meg McPhearson and Brian Head were present. The volunteers are very happy with the way the staff have welcomed them into the schools. They received plaques from the School Committee in appreciation for all their work with students.

The Robotics team left this morning for Orlando Florida. Thirty-four teams participating. Mrs. Mahoney said there is a live feed which we can post on our website. When the students arrived, there was a competition for T-shirts, and Quincy received first place and got the T-shirt award. On March 28 they will attend the Boston Region at BU.

Both high schools held their Science Fairs and about 400 students participated. Last week, students, staff and guests participated in Read Across America. The Superintendent thanked everyone who read to the students. He also thanked the teachers for their planning.

Members received the Spring Sports scheduled from Mr. Rendell.

Thanks went to the Kiwanis for the Junior Hero recognition awards held last Saturday.

As no one wished to be heard at the Open Forum, the Committee went on with the business at hand.

Mr. Mike Ryan reported that Maintenance is working on the PA systems at Atherton Hough, Montclair, Lincoln Hancock and North Quincy High School. The PA system at North was installed by Signet and we are waiting for a representative of Signet to come and determine what’s wrong with it. Ceiling work at the Broad Meadows lobby was removed to install piping by an outside contractor. The ceiling openings were patched and the floor area was being washed and auto scrubbed. The question was asked if there was any asbestos in the ceiling. Honeywell’s subcontractor notified the Department of Environmental Protection. Tests were done and the results came back well below the clearance guidelines. The City of Quincy Dept. of Health was notified of the test results. All the testing came back within safe guidelines. Once Mr. Ryan receives the lab report he will forward it to Dr. DeCristofaro. Principal Tagliere sent notices home to parents informing them. Mrs. Mahoney asked if we do a comprehensive study in all our schools of the PA systems. Last year three systems were upgraded. Mr. Ryan gets notices from Mr. McPhee or the principal if they are not working. Most of
the PA equipment in the schools is outdated.

Mrs. Mahoney inquired about Honeywell. She feels we seem to be disconnected. What has been done and what hasn’t. She asked for a report the Committee used to get.

Mr. Puleo inquired about the North Quincy gym. Mr. Ryan is meeting with Mr. Rendle regarding this.

Mrs. Bragg inquired about a Critical Needs Report done a few years ago. This report included the PA systems. She asked Mr. Ryan to come back with a report telling the Committee where the greatest maintenance needs were. He will check in on that. A subcommittee meeting will be called to answer these questions.

Mr. McCarthy asked what Gary Cunninff’s role is regarding Honeywell. Mayor Koch will have a full report from Garry for the next meeting.

Mrs. Dwyer reported that the Quincy High School Building Committee had two meetings. The QHS Building Committee will meet the last Friday of every month. They went over colors, around the tops of the building. Letters went out to the community. We have received no complaints to date. It will take six months to clean up the soil from the oil leak.

At that last meeting, the Superintendent stressed that communications is very important. He would like to see communications improved. He would like to see the minutes of those meetings done quickly so that they can be shared with everyone. There will be a “Topping Out” ceremony on March 18th. beginning at 9:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. when they raise the beam. The Mayor will speak, the City Council will be there also. Students, QHS staff members, Mr. Santoro will be present.

Mayor Koch said that a letter did go out to the neighbors indicating that the council confirmed what was in the letter. It described the work was done. It indicated we wouldn’t used heavy equipment and not use lights that are too offensive. Yesterday we learned that a savings of $150,000 was realized in the plumbing area we can shave out of that bid. He has asked Jay Duca and Tom Purpura to take a look at the plans before we sign the contract to make sure it is truly needed.

Mrs. Bragg asked where we stood trying to get in touch with Lincoln Properties about the oil that had migrated under the parking lot. Mrs. Dwyer thought it was in the City Solicitor’s office. Mrs. Bragg asked the Superintendent to check into it.
Mrs. Mahoney wants to know if we are cutting anything out, is the building still considered a green building? The Mayor assured her it was.

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The Superintendent and Chris Walker met today with the MSBA. They met with directors of capital planning and construction management and our field coordinator, Chris White, who will get to know us. We will talk with him as much as we can. They reviewed Central’s Needs Survey information and discussed the Statement of Interest Form. Prior to beginning our feasibility study, a series of forms will be needed. The MSBA wants to know where the enrollment is, the last thing is to detail the composition of our building committee. The Superintendent will talk with the Mayor about who he wants on it. The Superintendent will meet with the Mayor to talk about the composition of a building committee for Central.

This meeting was based upon the MSBA sharing the task and timelines that we will be engaging in with them, ensuring there is authorization from the School Committee and City Council with regards to the feasibility study, talking about reimbursements, the way the architect will be chosen. The actually feasibility study will consist on focusing on alternatives -- no build, build, and renovating. These are things the building committee will discuss. A site search if you are going to build on a different location and then the approval process. They want to make sure we bring them information and they work with us to discern whether it will be built. There is a lot more collaborating.

Mrs. Bragg asked choosing the architect is different then in the past. Does the Mayor choose the architect? The Superintendent said we will work with a design team made up with people whomever we choose. The architects are rated. The MSBA strongly suggests that we choose the #1 candidate that that team comes up with. The final decision rests with the Design Team. It’s different from before. The process for choosing the Project Manager hasn’t changed. The whole process from planning to beginning construction will be between 12 and 14 months.

Mayor Koch said he will move quickly to put the building committee together. He is looking at a new building, new site, and looking at some private sites.

Mrs. Dwyer thought when they talk about build, no build, or renovation, no build means if we have an empty building and you decided to move that school into an existing empty building.
Mr. Rich O’Brien, Janet Powell, Judith Todd and Keith Segalla will begin meetings next week on the CPR by the Department of Education. They will be here from March 18 to March 28. They will be investigating, special ed. the McKinny-Vento Act, Drug Free Schools, ELL, Budget Review. All documentation has been submitted to them on all these projects. They will visit 13 schools and interview over 250 staff members. It is a huge undertaking. They will be housed at Point Webster, Room 28.

Mr. Puleo asked if teachers will be taken out of their rooms. Mr. O’Brien answered that principals have been working on coverage for those teachers.

Regarding the Safe and Drug Free Schools, Mrs. Mahoney asked if the parents will need to sign permission slips?

The School Calendar was tabled by Mrs. Bragg.

The School Committee calendar was also tabled. Mrs. Dwyer asked that the June 3 meeting be moved to June 10 so as to allow the members to attend graduation.

Also, Mrs. Bragg said she could not attend the April 15 meeting and to schedule it from April 1 or April 8. Mr. McCarthy said he will get in contact with the Superintendent and go over the calendar with him.

On a motion by Mr. Koch, seconded by Mr. Mulvey, the Committee accepted a gift of a 1995 Isuzu Rodeo LS Sport Utility 4D from Mr. John Graham. The vehicle will be used as a teaching tool for students in the Auto Mechanics/Auto Body Shops. The auto is valued at $1,400. The ayes have it.

At this time, Mr. Phillips asked to be heard as he was not present during Open Forum. He said there are issues in the schools as some do not have appropriate intercoms between the office and the classrooms. This is part of the QEA contract. He knows that efforts are being made. He suggested a complete survey of every building, every room, everywhere.
Mrs. Bragg reminded everyone about the new law for Mass Health. Mrs. Bragg reported that during her campaign, she learned about the need for more teacher resources. With assistance from Superintendent DeCristofaro, Director of Curriculum, Colleen Roberts, the Teacher Mentor Planning Team, the Professional Development Team, Principals, and teachers, the following resolve submitted this evening brings us one step closer to fulfilling that need by establishing Teacher Resources Libraries in every Quincy Public School building. Included with the resolve is a list of suggested books, periodicals, and a budget to begin the project. This is an important first step to support new teachers and all teachers. Once they are established, teachers can be creative and share best practices and build on each others strengths.”

Mrs. Bragg submitted the following resolve to the Budget and Finance Subcommittee for School Committee’s consideration with the hopes that Teacher Resource Libraries will be incorporated in next year’s school budget.

“Whereas Quincy has hired 300 new teachers in the past three years, has a growing Special Education and English Limited Learners population and has an established teacher mentor program;

Whereas, the National education Association has reported more then two million new teachers will be needed in the next decade due to school enrollment increasing and veteran teachers retiring;

In an effort to assist new teachers and all teachers succeed, we the Quincy School Committee need to provide our teachers with additional support, the educational tools, classroom management techniques and the resources to be effective in their jobs;

We, the Quincy School Committee establish Teacher Resource Libraries within each Quincy Public School building that is comprised of computer supplies, books, periodicals, MA curriculum Frameworks for each content area, Quincy Public School’s Design for Learning standards and benchmarks, suggested websites for teacher resources, hands on activities, Student Support Service materials, extra teacher additions of textbooks, best practices ideas and methods that can be utilized by teachers to assist them in helping their students reach their full potential.

Teacher Resource Libraries will be updated at a minimum of once a year. Teachers are encouraged to expand the resources available and build on each other’s strengths.

Mrs. Bragg made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mulvey to put the resolve into the Budget Subcommittee to evaluate the actual needs and compare the need for this with the available funding. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Mr. Puleo congratulated the Quincy High School drama students who put on a successful production of The Boy Friend last weekend.
The Superintendent thanked the Mayor for reading to elementary students this past week.

Mr. McCarthy put into the Policy Subcommittee “movies in schools.” He would like to make sure the movies line up with the curriculum and the subject being taught.

Also, he put into the Policy Subcommittee “teacher evaluations.” He is asking for a review of the process on how we evaluate our teachers.

Mrs. Mahoney has asked that the state delegates be invited to the Committee meeting on April 9 to give us an update on a budget review. There are a lot of changes in the state level. We received here tobacco grants.

Mrs. Bragg recognized the Graduate Follow-Up Study, Class of 2006. That class had the highest percentage of graduates, 83%, continue their education.

Mr. Thomas Walsh, Director of Personnel, will retire at the end of this year. He will be missed by everyone.

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The Committee noted the following retirements:

Judith Hickey  Ruth Lutts
Mark McGuiness  Robert Shaheen

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On a motion by Mrs. Dwyer, seconded by Mrs. Mahoney, the Committee voted to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. There was no executive session. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously 7-0.