

Mr. Twomey moved to approve six additional team leaders for a total of 11 team leaders. Ms. Cavicchi seconded the motion. The vote was 4-0 Ms. Cavicchi, Mr. Dahl, Mr. Keigley and Mr. Twomey.

Chinese Cultural Center

Chair Dahl advised that the Committee would hear comments first from the administration, then School Committee members, then the representative from the Chinese Cultural Center and then the public would be given an opportunity to give input.

Dr. Harutunian advised that Mr. Orlando was unable to attend this evening's meeting because of a prior commitment. Associate Superintendent Richards read to the Committee a memorandum from Mr. Orlando regarding the Chinese Cultural Center.

Dr. Harutunian asked that the School Committee support the administration's recommendation that the Chinese Cultural Center move out of the space no later than October 31, 1999. He also stated that if the Chinese Cultural Center is unable to find space then accessible storage at RMHS would be made available to them until December 31, 1999.

Mr. Keigley asked if any rent would be charged during that time.

Dr. Harutunian advised that he discussed the issue with Town Counsel and Town Counsel advised against charging rent as it could be viewed as entering into a lease and Town Meeting had made recommendations regarding procedures for entering into leases.

Ms. Cavicchi asked what type of service the Chinese Cultural Center has provided.

Dr. Harutunian advised that he had met with the principals and the principals can't recall any programs over the last few years. Mr. Richards stated that he was concerned that the administration may be overlooking some programs that the CCC may have run and he asked the CCC for documentation on any programs. He has not received any documentation.

Dr. Harutunian stated that the most important fact regarding this issue is that the space is needed at the high school.

Mr. Twomey stated that what prompted this is the need for space at RMHS and the objection of the CCC is that they believe they were not given sufficient notice that they would have to move. He stated that the administration has moved the date from August to October 31, 1999 and if CCC is unable to find new space by October 31st accessible storage will be provided for them at RMHS until December 31, 1999.

Mr. Dahl asked Dr. Harutunian to describe the space occupied by the CCC.

Dr. Harutunian advised that the space is in the front of the high school on the far right side. The area is approximately 625 square feet and provided excellent access for students with disabilities.

Executive Director of the CCC, Mei Hung, stated that she received notice from Mr. Orlando on July 21, 1999 that the CCC would have to move by August 23rd. She stated that she did not provide the documentation Mr. Richards asked for because she recently took over as Executive Director and felt that the CCC was going to be forced to move and did not want to spend time going through the boxes of the former Executive Director looking for documentation. She also stated that she believed that the CCC has provided the programs necessary and noted that a \$6,000 grant had to be returned because no teacher wanted to be involved in the program. She stated that it does not appear that Reading values diversity.

Ms. Kendra Cooper stated that she objected to Mr. Orlando's statement in his memorandum that she and Mei Hung were late to the meeting Mr. Richards. She stated that the Chinese Cultural Connection board member was late because he was coming from Boston. She also stated that Mei Hung received numerous messages on the CCC answering machine from Mr. Orlando and because she is out at workshops during the day often does not check the machine until the evening.

Mr. Richards stated that he asked at the meeting with the CCC the best way to contact Mei Hung and was told to leave a message on the machine at the CCC office.

Mr. Brown stated that if space is needed at the high school all tenants should be evicted.

Mr. Dahl stated that Town Meeting requires that all space be used wisely, negotiated by value and market rates be looked at during negotiations. He stated that the Reading School Committee does value what the CCC brings to Reading however that value must be balanced with the curriculum which is dictated by the state.

Mr. Twomey stated that it seems that the administration is trying to reach a compromise with the CCC by extending the move date to October 31, 1999 and offering accessible storage until December 31, 1999.

Mr. Twomey moved to support the administration's recommendation to extend the duration of the Chinese Cultural Center's use of the space at RMHS until October 31, 1999 and if they are not relocated by October 31st then the administration will offer accessible storage space to the Chinese Cultural Center until December 31, 1999.