

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
January 17, 2006**

Minutes

Meeting called to order

	Present	Arrival/Departure
Committee Present:		
Glen Pavlicek	<u>X</u>	_____
Paul Hogan	<u>X</u>	_____
Chris Huban	<u>X</u>	_____
Beirne Lovely	_____	_____
Mary Kelly	<u>X</u>	_____
Laurie Stillman	<u>X</u>	_____

Staff Present: Dr. Magdalene Giffune, Superintendent; Mary Gormley, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Paul Hilton, Assistant Superintendent for Business

1. **Citizens Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes) – No one came forward**
2. **Administration Report**

Dr. Giffune stated David Colton is held up at another meeting. Mr. Colton will be presenting some information regarding the town's budget.

Yesterday's first annual breakfast for Martin Luther King Day was a success. Dr. Giffune and other members attended this breakfast and found it very interesting.

School Calendar - A first reading of next year's school calendar was given. Mr. Huban wanted to know if there were any problems having the teachers and students come back before Labor Day. Dr. Giffune replied as part of the new contract teachers can be brought back as early as August 28th or 29th and students may return August 30th or 31st. Kindergarten will be brought back the Tuesday after Labor Day. The December 22nd day off was a typographical error and will be removed. School will be held that day. Questions were raised about removing the November 10th holiday since Veteran's Day falls on a weekend. That would

bring the June release up a day. Ms. Stillman voiced some concern over child care since many summer programs don't start until early July.

Dr. Giffune hopes to have Kindergarten and First Grade registrations early to determine what programs may be needed. It is projected that Kindergarten enrollment will grow again next year so more teachers may be needed at that level. She also reported that the \$15,000 Kindergarten planning grant has been written and will be submitted tomorrow. If received, we would be in line to receive funds for one full-day Kindergarten pilot program at Tucker School.

Ms. Kelly inquired about a time and date for Pre-School registration. Dr. Giffune replied that individual appointments may be arranged. The number of typical students accepted in this program is dictated by the number of children on IEP's. Information regarding the number of students on IEP's is based on referrals from Early Intervention. There is then some type of lottery held, and time frame for that will be posted on the web and in the local papers.

2. **School Committee Report**

Mr. Pavlicek reported that several minutes of Executive Sessions have been released, some only partially due to content. The following minutes have been released: 9/9/03, 9/23/03, 10/8/03, 10/21/03, 11/4/03, 11/17/03, 12/16/03, 1/27/04, 2/3/04, 2/9/04, 2/10/04, 3/23/04, 4/26/04, 5/18/04, 6/22/04, 10/5/04, 11/16/04, 12/1/04, 12/6/04, 1/10/05, 2/15/05, 3/7/05, 3/23/05, 4/5/05, 4/8/05, 4/25/05, 4/26/05, 5/2/05, 5/3/05, 6/16/05, 8/2/05 and 9/6/05.

School Building Committee Report – Mr. Pavlicek reported that interior work at Cunningham continues. Digging will begin for the Collicot foundation later this week. Sewer lines are being dug from back to front and these lines need to be relocated to run between the two buildings. The School Building Committee is meeting tomorrow night for further updates.

Facilities Report – Mr. Hogan reported that the work list of remaining items on the school building project is going pretty well. Also the subject of energy used in the schools is being looked at and a consultant is being brought in to assist in this matter. Ms. Stillman inquired about having NStar and Keyspan provide free energy audits before a consultant is brought in. Mr. Hogan also reported that the security issues at the High School as mentioned at last week's meeting are also being addressed.

Health and Safety Committee – Ms. Stillman reported that wellness issues have been a primary focus of this committee. They have divided into four subcommittees and are hoping to present policies for the School Committee to adopt regarding wellness. Ms. Stillman expressed her thanks to Jackie Morgan for her help.

FY07 BUDGET

The Finance Subcommittee plans to meet the next two Mondays. Last week the School Committee had requested that the Finance Subcommittee discuss additional teachers at the High School and the amount of physical education provided at the Elementary level. This discussion will take place at the next Finance Subcommittee Meeting.

Dr. Giffune explained initial changes proposed from the 06/07 budget as outlined in documents distributed to Committee members. Members voiced their questions and suggestions regarding the budget, and Dr. Giffune stated that the bottom line has not changed. The request is for \$3.1 million.

Ms. Kelly asked for some clarification of the construction project work list. Mr. Hogan responded that there is a list of items that were either not done or not done satisfactorily. This list was primarily emanated by the School Department. Dr. Giffune sent a letter to the Building Committee and they have had several meetings regarding this issue to discuss what items belong to them. The architect, DRA, has walked through the schools with Bill Ritchie and they have come up with a list everyone agreed upon. However, when numbers were put to this list by the construction manager, it was determined that the amount previously allocated was insufficient. Some items have been brought to the attention of the School Building Committee and they agreed to add more money. We are now approximately \$20,000 short. The amount of \$25,000 is allocated in the budget.

Mr. Huban asked Dr. Giffune if the increase in Kindergarten enrollment was addressed in this budget. She replied that place holders have been included in this budget for that purpose.

Ms. Stillman emphasized that the Committee needs to understand where the system is with regard to class size. Mr. Phelan and Dr. Drottter have provided reports on their class numbers and there is particular concern at the High School level. Dr. Giffune said the addition of two teachers at the High School will alleviate some of this problem. The possibility of adding another team at Pierce was also mentioned as a way of reducing their class size. Ms. Stillman feels that class size is a big problem which needs to be addressed with the Warrant Committee. Dr. Giffune and Committee members discussed other ways to help class size. Some discussion was given to leveling and various grouping practices and how that could influence class size.

Mr. Pavlicek said they would come back to the budget since Mr. Colton has arrived to give his presentation.

Mr. David Colton, Town Administrator, was invited to come to this meeting to discuss the budget process from the town's point of view. He and the Selectmen put together an informal committee to develop some long range planning and forecasting (5 year horizon.) This committee consisted of Mr. Colton, the Superintendent of Schools, the Town Planner, and Directors of the Library and Cemetery. Mr. Colton showed how the town looks with respect to size, per capita income, unemployment rates, levels of education, and tax rates. The presentation as to how Milton looks as an organization shows crime over the past 20-25 years is steadily decreasing; MCAS scores when compared to about 20 of our peer group communities are in line for all grades on all subjects; the Fire Department showed a response time of under 6 minutes 100% of the time since 1999; and Milton was the 2nd best in the state for recycling. Some other comparisons showed our debt service as a percent of the operating budget is well below our peer group; we raise less revenue than the median of our peer communities; spend less money than the median of our peer communities; and the growth in revenue and expenditures is slower than the 20 peer communities. Mr. Colton said Milton does more with less and does it well.

When looking at the past 5 years (2001-2005) there has been a decline in reserve levels. Recession and less state aid have contributed to this decline. The estimated increase for 2006 is due to the expected appropriation to the Stabilization Fund from the landfill escrow. Without that we would see the fifth year of decline in reserve levels. Free cash has been at a high level for the past four years but it is still up and down. Mr. Colton stated the town needs to work on its practice of using free cash as a source of revenue.

Some areas of concern are lack of funding for a Capitol Improvement Program, increase in health care costs, the practice of using free cash as a source of revenue, and our heavy residential tax base with little prospect for commercial growth. The greatest concern is reserve levels. He stated that certain assumptions were also made which included the 4.6%/yr. tax levy growth (includes the allowed Proposition 2 ½ % and new growth); projected state aid to be 13.25% of revenue (presently 11.5%), and there will be modest increases in state aid over the next five years (Chapter 70 funding is a good portion of this aid); \$750,000/yr. is the plug number/educated guess for free cash. With regard to expenses, all department heads have been asked to project a level service budget for the next five years.

As far as future projections, revenue is projected to go from the current \$65-66 million to approximately \$80 million in 2011 (based on assumptions). Projections show a deficit (based on a level service budget) of \$3.5 million in 2007. This deficit will accumulate and result in cuts which will directly affect services if nothing is done. Mr. Colton explained cutting from the level service budget is one way to improve this deficit or we can agree on the level of service we want to provide and do an override for the full amount. This allows for a reverse in the

curve and slowly allows for some surplus. He went on to explain the objectives and goals for this program and answered all questions from Committee members. The Committee was very impressed by Mr. Colton's presentation and thanked him and everyone else involved in this project.

Mr. Pavlicek then asked if there were any further questions or concerns regarding the FY07 budget since the final number will be voted on at the next School Committee meeting. No questions were raised.

3. **New Business**

Ms. Kelly asked for an update on the 1909 building Investigative Committee. Dr. Giffune replied that two meetings are scheduled with an outside facilitator to discuss this matter.

Mr. Pavlicek then made the motion to adjourn this meeting and move to Executive Session not to return to Open Session.

Moved: P. Hogan

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting was adjourned.