

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
March 18, 2009**

Committee Present: Beirne Lovely, Chair, Lynda Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair, Chris Huban, Mary Kelly, Glenn Pavlicek and Kristan Bagley-Jones

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel; Paul Hilton, Assistant Superintendent for Business

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Approval of March 18, 2009 Agenda

Mr. Lovely deleted the Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee Report from the agenda. With the Committee's approval, Mr. Lovely approved the agenda for March 18, 2009 with this change.

3. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)

No one came forward.

4. Approval of Minutes

The minutes of February 24, 2009 were approved.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

The minutes of March 3, 2009 were approved.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

5. Superintendent's Report

Donation Acceptance

Ms. Leslie Cheverie attended tonight's School Committee meeting to present a donation in the amount of \$10,000 from the Mitchell A. Cheverie Trust. Ms. Cheverie, a Milton parent of two children with special needs, would like this donation put towards an Occupational/Physical Therapy room and the equipment necessary to help children. Ms. Cheverie informed the Committee that any remaining funds can be distributed by Mr. Rubin to other special needs programs within the Milton Public Schools. Jeff Rubin, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, voiced his gratitude to Ms. Cheverie and her family. Mr. Rubin stated that it is his hope to furnish the motor room at Collicot with the equipment needed to service the pre-school, Collicot, and Cunningham students. The School Committee and the Administration expressed their gratitude to Ms. Cheverie and her family for this fantastic gesture of goodwill.

Motion was made to gratefully accept the donation of \$10,000 being offered by Leslie Cheverie (the Mitchell A. Cheverie Trust) in honor of her son.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

Milton High Varsity Basketball Team – Coach Sean LoPresti and Assistant Coach William Donovan

Members of the basketball team who were present included Coleman Durgin, Cody Clark, Marshall Kennedy, Marcus McDermott, Tom Ranton, Gabe Blanchette, Tim Potts, Tom Carten, Joe Renehan, Owen Flanagan, DJ Santos, Ben St. Gerard, and Emanuel Hutcherson. Rene Castro and Nasara Hassan were unable to attend. Coach LoPresti stated that this was a great group of young men who have trusted and believed in each other. There was great team chemistry and great senior leadership. Coach Donovan agreed that the team has worked hard and has made the Milton community proud. Ms. Gormley stated that Coach LoPresti does not give himself enough credit. She reported that Coach LoPresti has been named the Boston Globe's Division 2 Coach of the Year and that Marcus McDermott has been named both the Boston Globe's and the Boston Herald's All-Scholastic. Channel 5 News will be highlighting the basketball team as part of the "High Five" on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at 6:00 p.m. The Administration and the School Committee thanked the students and coaches for their hard work and for making the Milton Public Schools and the entire Milton community so proud. Dr. John Drottar, Milton High School Principal, also thanked the community for its support and gave a special thanks to Superintendent Gormley for her dedication to these students.

Assistant Superintendent for Business Position

Ms. Gormley reported that at the last School Committee meeting the title for this position was changed to School Business Administrator. When posting for this position, Ms. Gormley plans to put out the largest net possible. Advertisement venues include the Boston Sunday Globe, Boston Globe Online, the MASBO website, the MASS jobsite, the MA DESE website, and the Milton Public School website. The timeline for this process is as follows:

- March 27, 2009 – Application deadline and Screening Committee finalized
- March 28-29, 2009 – Applications reviewed by Screening Committee
- March 30, 2009 – Screening Committee initial meeting, select questions/candidates
- April 2-3, 2009 – Semi-finalist interviews
- Week of April 6, 2009 – Finalist interviews with Superintendent and appointment
- July 1, 2009 – Potential start date for School Business Administrator

Ms. Gormley would like two School Committee members to participate in the Screening Committee. The Screening Committee will include Ms. Gormley, Mr. Phelan, one or two School Committee members, one Principal, one Unit B representative, Food Services Director, Jackie Morgan, one School Business Office representative, one or two PTO President representatives, one Town Hall representative, and one Warrant Committee representative (Leroy Walker). Mr. Lovely requested that Ms. Gormley also include one or two parents who may not be PTO members. Ms. Gormley will send an Email Blast out tomorrow explaining the screening process and requesting that any interested parent contact Bev Quinn in the Superintendent's office. Also, any School Committee member interested in participating in the Screening Committee should contact Bev Quinn.

French Immersion Classroom Aides

Ms. Gormley reported that the School Committee has a policy which states that if class size is over 26 students, a part-time instructional aide will be provided. Some 1st grade French Immersion classes have gone down to 24 and 25; therefore, the instructional aides have been removed. Ms. Gormley reported that she has heard from many parents regarding this matter; however, the Administration is following the class size policy and also taking into consideration the recent 9C cuts made by the state. Currently, there is one part-time aide for a 1st grade French Immersion classroom at Collicot and one part-time aide in a 1st grade French Immersion classroom at Glover; Cunningham and Tucker both have class sizes under 26. Mr. Huban pointed out that at a recent meeting the School Committee voted to suspend the class size policy and referred this policy to the Policy Subcommittee for review. Ms. Kelly added that budgetary constraints are a consideration and the class size policy does state that it is dependent upon

the financial ability of the schools. For the benefit of the public, Ms. Sheridan read that the class size policy states that: “The School Committee is aware that class size has bearing upon effective teaching. The School Committee understands that achieving this goal is dependent upon the financial ability of the Milton Public Schools.” Ms. Bagley-Jones stated that she has heard from parents who want to make sure these reductions are being made fairly and consistently between French Immersion and English classrooms.

Before moving on in the agenda, Mr. Lovely took a moment to recognize the student representatives: Ben Richman, Siobhan O’Grady, Ben McCarthy and Charlie Rosmarin.

School Calendar 2009-2010

Mr. Huban asked if it would be possible to add the professional day scheduled for March 19, 2010 to either the February or April school vacation weeks. Ms. Gormley replied that she will discuss this possibility with the leadership team. Siobhan O’Grady asked that the Administration keep in mind that March is a difficult month for students since there are no holidays. Mr. Huban also stated that he has received some questions as to why school is starting before Labor Day. Ms. Gormley replied that this is part of the contractual agreement with the teachers. Ms. Kelly inquired if the Administration had received any feedback with regard to providing one half-day off for parent/teacher conferences. Ms. Gormley replied that she will conduct a survey on that matter and report back to the Committee.

Motion was made to approve the 1st reading of the 2009-2010 School Calendar.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

Field Trip- Pierce Middle School Washington Trip

Ms. Kelly recused herself from this discussion since she has a child attending this trip. Mr. Phelan stated that this is the second reading for this field trip which is an annual trip coordinated by Brian Borde. The cost of the trip is \$928 and no school days are missed. Scholarships are available to students through WorldStrides, and Mr. Borde provides parents with this information in advance.

Motion was made to approve the second reading of the Pierce Middle School 8th Grade Washington D.C. trip, May 23-May 25, 2009.

Move: K. Bagley Jones

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 5-0-0

6. Health and Safety Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley Jones updated the School Committee on what is being discussed by the Health and Safety Subcommittee. Discussion topics include:

- Air quality
- Wellness Policy – add new areas of concern to the current policy which would include bullying, safe school climate, increased health education on human reproduction, changing families, and mental health needs of students
- Counseling services in the schools
- Offering stress reduction opportunities for all Milton Public School staff
- Holding community forums/parent workshops

Mr. Huban asked what the Subcommittee has been discussing with regard to increased health education on human reproduction. Ms. Bagley-Jones replied that health education has been significantly reduced in the Milton Public Schools and the Subcommittee feels there is a need to fill that gap. Mr. Phelan

added that staffing in physical education has decreased in recent years, and this has resulted in the reduction of health classes. Ms. Bagley-Jones clarified that the Subcommittee is not talking about changing the current curriculum on human reproduction; however, the current curriculum is not being taught due to lack of time and staffing. With regard to other topics such as bullying and a safe school climate, the Subcommittee feels these are important areas as well; however, it realizes that adding to the current curriculum is not realistic at this time. Mr. Pavlicek suggested that the Subcommittee check with a Town Hall representative when discussing stress reductions programs since there could be potential savings in insurance if certain programs were offered.

7. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the Finance Subcommittee has met with the representative from MASBO and discussed what will be covered in the review of our business office structure. The Finance Subcommittee has also been discussing full day Kindergarten. Per Mr. Hilton, the state is reviewing its capacity to support the full day Kindergarten grant. If the state decreases its support of the grant, Mr. Hilton reported that the School Department may have to reconsider the tuition fee schedule. The Finance Subcommittee has requested that the Administration look at the formula for full day Kindergarten tuition. Mr. Lovely feels it is important to let people know as soon as possible of any possible tuition increases. According to Ms. Kelly, the Finance Subcommittee has discussed a potential increase of \$100-\$150 for full day Kindergarten tuition if the state decreases its support of the grant. Currently, the full day Kindergarten tuition is \$3,000, and there is a sliding fee based on income guidelines from the state.

Warrant Signing Issues

Mr. Lovely reported that at a recent MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) training session attended by Kristan Bagley-Jones, there was some discussion involving the manner in which warrants are approved. There are certain Massachusetts General Laws requiring that a School Committee approve, by signature of a majority of its members, all bill schedules for purchases of goods and services. Mr. Lovely reported that the Milton School Committee has always met this requirement; however, the question has been raised if this also requires a vote by the School Committee. Mr. Lovely reported that Joe Emerson, legal counsel for the schools, does not believe it requires a vote by the School Committee. The MASC has a contrary opinion; therefore, Mr. Lovely referred this matter to the Policy Subcommittee for review. Ms. Kelly added that this topic came up in discussions with the MASBO representative. Ms. Kelly stated that the Finance Subcommittee will also review this process and come back to the full School Committee with its recommendation. Ms. Bagley-Jones added that Mike Gilbert, the field representative for the MASC, suggested that the School Committee should also be seeing this information by line item. After the Policy Subcommittee's review of this process, the full School Committee will discuss this further to determine if it is the Committee's consensus to change this policy.

Year to Date Budget

Mr. Hilton highlighted that areas of concern in the year-to-date budget include legal expenses, special education tuition, utilities, and special education transportation. These are areas that the Finance Subcommittee continues to watch closely.

Mr. Lovely asked that Mr. Pavlicek give a brief update on the work being done by the Warrant Committee. Mr. Pavlicek reported that the Warrant Committee is in the process of coming up with a contingent budget recommendation for the annual Town Meeting. The Warrant Committee is discussing an approximate \$3 million override, with the school portion being approximately \$1.2 million (these are preliminary numbers). Mr. Pavlicek suggested that the School Committee sit down and talk to the Warrant Committee. Ms. Kelly mentioned that the Warrant Committee's spreadsheet shows funds being put into the Stabilization Fund (\$50,000). She asked if the School Committee still wanted to pursue

using the Stabilization Fund to offset some of the cost of the override. As she understands it, most of the bonding has been done for the big projects the Town has undertaken. Ms. Kelly stated that she would be interested in seeing a cost analysis of the financial impact of a decrease in the Town's bond rating if we were to use the Stabilization Fund. Mr. Huban stated that he appreciates the work of the Warrant Committee; however, he feels the School Department was crystal clear in the need for \$1.3 million. Mr. Huban stated that he was surprised by the number set forth by the Warrant Committee and asked how the schools will get people to support an override if it still means a school will close. He suggested using the \$50,000 (being put in the Stabilization Fund) to help get back to \$1.3 million. Mr. Lovely suggested inviting the Warrant Committee to a meeting next Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. Ms. Sheridan asked if any reply had been received from the SBA (School Building Authority) with regard to the potential closing of an elementary school. Ms. Gormley stated she has not received a reply yet; however, she will contact SBA to find out the status of this request.

8. Old Business – None

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- School Choice
- Date for Open Budget Hearing – Ms. Kelly suggested waiting on this until we hear back from SBA

Motion was made to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and not to return to Open Session and to adjourn directly from Executive Session.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

By a roll call voice vote, the Committee unanimously voted to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and not to return to Open Session and to adjourn directly from Executive Session.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.