

**Milton School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Milton High School Library  
March 3, 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 3, 2009 Agenda**

Mr. Lovely deferred the approval of School Committee minutes until after the presentation of the Future Problem Solvers Program. With the Committee's consent, Mr. Lovely approved the agenda of March 3, 2009 with this change.

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

No one came forward.

**4. Superintendent's Report**

**Future Problem Solvers Program – Terry Deutsch, Collicot/Cunningham Librarian and Lori Henry, Tucker/Glover Librarian**

Ms. Deutsch and Ms. Henry were accompanied by several students from Collicot, Cunningham, and Glover elementary schools who participate in the Future Problem Solvers Program. The students included Tyler Volpe-Knock, Mary Corcoran, Sadie Marcus, Joshua Kery, Mick O'Hanlon, Emily Dsida, Simon Eder, Cole O'Flaherty, Carleen Mullally, Michael Rozewski and Michaela Olson. Ms. Deutsch explained that this is an international program which teaches creative and critical thinking. In 4<sup>th</sup> grade students begin learning the six-step problem solving process, and in 5<sup>th</sup> grade they continue on with the process. This year students were presented with two practice topics, "The Olympic Games" and "Cyber Conflict". Students research these topics and practice going through the six step problem solving process which includes: (1) identify challenges; (2) select an underlying problem; (3) produce solution ideas; (4) generate and select criteria (to evaluation solution ideas); (5) apply criteria; and (6) develop an action plan. In January, these students participated in the Qualifying Problem Bowl held at Marlborough High School, and the topic was "Space Junk". After researching and analyzing this topic prior to the Bowl, student teams were presented with the following futuristic scenario: "*Since the early days of space flight, a wide variety of discarded materials have been left floating in multiple orbits around the earth. Will this space junk pose a peril for future flights? When the discards fall to earth as meteorites, what damage might occur on Earth? Who should be responsible for the management on Earth?*" At the Bowl students are given a two hour time limit to come up with problems and solutions, analyze the problems, and come up with a final solution. State evaluators then critique the students' written work. Three Milton teams did extremely well and have been invited to the State Bowl at MIT where the topic will be "Counterfeit Economy". Students Mick O'Hanlon, Emily Dsida, Michaela Olson, and Cole O'Flaherty explained the six step process used for the Qualifying Bowl and described how they brainstormed their ideas to come up with a final solution and an action plan. The School Committee and the Administration commended the students and their coaches, Ms. Deutsch and Ms. Henry, for their remarkable work. Awards were presented to the students by Ms. Gormley and Mr. Lovely.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of February 11, 2009 were approved.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 6-0-0

The minutes of February 23, 2009 were approved.

Move: K. Bagley-Jones

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 4-0-2 (B. Lovely, G. Pavlicek)

Motion was made to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to return from Executive Session to Open Session to complete the agenda items and to adjourn directly from Open Session.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: M. Kelly

By a roll call voice vote, the Committee unanimously voted to enter Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to return to Open Session following Executive Session and to adjourn directly from Open Session.

The regular School Committee meeting temporarily adjourned at 7:15 p.m. and returned to Open Session at 7:55 p.m. and continued on in the agenda with the remainder of the Superintendent's Report.

**Continued from above**

**4. Superintendent's Report - Assistant Superintendent for Business Position**

Ms. Gormley stated that she has looked at this position per the request of the School Committee and has listened to the concerns of the community. The Superintendent's office compiled data from communities within Milton's Comparable Towns Study, Bay State League communities, and other abutting communities with regard to similar positions within their communities. Job descriptions and salary ranges were included in the information sent to School Committee members. Ms. Gormley stated that after reviewing this information, she is prepared to ask that the Committee change the position of Assistant Superintendent of Business Affairs to School Business Administrator. Mr. Lovely explained that this position will not have to be appointed or approved by the School Committee; however, the creation of a new position and the title for a new position does have to be approved. Ms. Kelly added that the Finance Subcommittee has discussed this position but has not gone into the details of a job description. Once completed, a job description will be forwarded to the School Committee; however, the Finance Subcommittee recommends that the request of the Superintendent be approved. When asked if the deferral of a job description would delay the posting of this position, Ms. Gormley replied that it would not.

Motion was made to approve the posting of the position of School Business Administrator for the Milton Public Schools for the next fiscal year.

Move: K. Bagley-Jones

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

**Residency**

Mr. Phelan provided the Committee with information regarding the number of cases investigated and/or under investigation; the number of open cases; the number of open cases with significant concern; the number of cases resolved; and the number of students excluded or who have since moved out of Milton;

and the number of students reinstated. It is Mr. Phelan's opinion that the School Department should continue providing stipends for the two Residency Officers for the remainder of this school year. Since this is a public document, Mr. Phelan read that there are 121 families that the School Department has investigated or are under investigation (investigations are initiated by anonymous calls, undeliverable mail, etc.); 81 of those cases remain open; 38 cases have been resolved; 24 students have been excluded or have moved from the district; there are 42 cases with significant concern that remain open; and 2 students have been reinstated. Questions and/or comments from School Committee members and members of the Administration included:

- Mr. Huban asked if any tuition money had been recouped as a result of the 38 cases resolved. He mentioned that within the Residency packet a document is signed stating that parents/guardians may be liable for tuition if they are found to be in violation of the Residency requirements. Mr. Phelan replied that they have not collected any money for this year nor have they collected money in these situations in past years. Mr. Phelan has checked with legal counsel to see how other communities deal with this type of tuition reimbursement and has been told that no other city or town has approached this yet. Ms. Gormley added that she has asked legal counsel to continue researching this matter. Mr. Lovely stated that in these cases you also must consider the cost of recovery.
- Ms. Gormley informed the Committee that there will be a motion to increase the Attendance Officers due to the increase in the number of cases being handled.
- Ms. Bagley Jones stated that the number of 24 students excluded could increase since there are 42 cases remaining open that have significant concern. She feels it would be beneficial to see what it would cost to recoup tuition. If the policy is not enforced, Ms. Bagley-Jones suggested removing that document from the Residency packet.

Ms. Kelly stated that as part of the budget cuts for this fiscal year, the Attendance Officer allocation was cut in half. Due to the increased volume in cases being investigated and the increased focus being given to residency issues, the Finance Subcommittee recommends the following motion:

Motion was that the Milton School Committee submits a request for a Reserve Fund Transfer to the Milton Warrant Committee in the amount of \$13,068 to fund the stipended positions of Attendance Officers for the remainder of FY2009.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: K. Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

Mr. Huban stated that under Chapter 70 laws, every School Committee has to appoint attendance officers. Ms. Gormley informed the Committee that Mr. Phelan has agreed to take on this responsibility.

Motion was made to appoint John Phelan as Attendance Officer.

Move: C. Huban

Second: K. Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

### **School Calendar Draft – 1<sup>st</sup> reading**

It was decided to present the School Calendar at the next meeting. Ms. Kelly requested that Ms. Gormley update the public on when school will end. Ms. Gormley replied that the date is currently June 18, 2009. Mr. Lovely suggested posting this date on the website and updating it in the event of any additional snow days.

**Field Trip – 1<sup>st</sup> reading, 8th Grade Washington D.C. Trip, May 23-May 25, 2009**

Ms. Kelly recused herself from this vote since she has a child attending this field trip. Mr. Phelan explained that this is an annual trip coordinated by Brian Borde. The trip is held over Memorial Day weekend; no school days are missed; the cost is \$928 and scholarships and reduced payments are offered to qualifying families. This trip is adequately chaperoned, and there are 59 students currently scheduled for this trip.

Motion was made to approve the first reading of Pierce Middle School's 8<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to Washington D.C., May 23-May 25, 2009.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 5-0-1 (M. Kelly)

**6. Finance Subcommittee**

Due to mid-year cuts and cuts to the Circuit Breaker, Ms. Kelly stated that the Finance Subcommittee recommends the following motion:

Motion was made that the Milton School Committee submits a request for a Reserve Fund Transfer to the Milton Warrant Committee in the amount of \$22,869 for the Special Education Out-of-District Tuitions to address the loss of state Circuit Breaker Reimbursement due to January, 2009 state budget reductions.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote 6-0-0

Ms. Kelly reported that an update on the FY09 YTD budget will be given at the next School Committee meeting. She also reported that the Subcommittee discussed, and unanimously recommends, having MASBO (Mass Assoc. of School Business Officials) come in to review the operations of the business office and make recommendations. When asked by Ms. Kelly what the funding sources could be for this, Ms. Gormley replied that there is \$4,850 within professional development that could be used for this.

Motion was made to have Mass Assoc. of School Business Officials come to perform a study of our business office operations.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 6-0-0

Mr. Lovely requested that the Superintendent convey in writing to the Warrant Committee the Reserve Fund Transfers voted tonight so they can be reviewed prior to the all day Saturday meeting of the Warrant Committee. The Saturday Warrant Committee meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be televised.

**7. Old/New Business**

Mr. Lovely took a moment to report that he had approached the President of the Mass Educators Association, Margaret Gibbons, both orally and in writing, to see if its Executive Committee would consider having the teachers come back to the table to discuss contract negotiations. Mr. Lovely reported that he was disappointed that he had received notification from the Union declining this invitation. Mr. Lovely stated that, hopefully, the Executive Committee will reconsider this as time goes on and we know more about the stimulus package. No further comments will be made by the School Committee regarding this matter.

Ms. Gormley updated the School Committee on the recent success of our sports teams and extended congratulations to all student athletes.

- For basketball, Milton High School plays Franklin High School tomorrow night in the South Sectional Semi-Finals for the state. Last Friday night Milton beat Dorchester and tonight Catholic Memorial is playing against Walpole High School. The winner of that game will play (hopefully Milton) Saturday at UMass Boston.
- Congratulations were extended to both the boys and girls hockey teams for their great season.
- Some tournament winners from the track team may attend the next School Committee meeting.

In closing, Mr. Lovely stated that the School Committee and the Administration continue to struggle with the budget. He encouraged all residents to become familiar with the budget process by visiting the School website, [miltonps.org](http://miltonps.org), in addition to the Town's website, [townofmilton.org](http://townofmilton.org). He also urged residents to participate in the Planning Board Questionnaire which can be found on the Town's website.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Sheridan

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.