

*voted & app'd
A 5/30/08
Ellen*

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
April 1, 2008**

The regular School Committee meeting was called to order at 9:15 p.m. following the Open Public Budget Hearing

Committee Present: Beirne Lovely, Chair, Lynda Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair, Chris Huban, Mary Kelly, Laurie Stillman and Glenn Pavlicek

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

1. **Citizen Speak** – no one came forward

2. **Approval of Minutes**

Minutes of the 3/4/08 School Committee meeting were approved.

Move: C. Huban
Second: G. Pavlicek
Vote: 6-0-0

3. **Science Presentation** – moved to future date

4. **Nepotism Policy** – As discussed at the last meeting, there is a Nepotism Policy which states no School Committee member can have a family member work for the school system. Mr. Lovely apologized again for not being aware of this policy when his daughter worked in the school system. Although no one intentionally violated this policy, there is one existing violation since Mr. Huban's spouse works for the High School office. Mr. Huban recused himself from this discussion and Mr. Lovely asked the Committee for any suggestions on how to deal with the current violation. Ms. Kelly feels this policy is appropriate since it clearly creates a line that should not be crossed. She hopes the Committee agrees to stay with this policy as written. Mr. Pavlicek had also been in violation of this policy since his son previously worked in the summer program. He feels the extent of this policy should be made clear. Ms. Stillman also inadvertently violated this policy when her child worked in the summer program. As a member of the Policy Subcommittee with Mr. Huban, Ms. Stillman explained that a consulting firm had been hired when this policy was put together. The Policy Subcommittee had been comfortable with the policy around ethics; however, there was a second policy regarding ethics which they were unaware of. This second policy was put in another section of the Policy Manual by the consulting firm. Committee members referred to the first policy and even called the State Ethics Commission when their family members were going to be working in the system. They thought it was fine according to the policy; however, the other section was missed. Ms. Stillman believes the Nepotism Policy is right but would like to make a motion that Mr. Huban be exempt to this policy in this particular case. Ms. Stillman believes the policy states if a person is brought on to the School Committee when their relative is already hired, that is OK. Since Mr. Huban will presumably be elected to the School

Committee in the future election, the same rationale could apply. From here on Ms. Stillman believes the School Committee should commit to this policy as written.

Motion was made to waive the violation with respect to Mr. Huban. Mr. Huban will recuse himself from any decisions regarding any salary increases, benefits or promotions.

Move: L. Stillman
Second: G. Pavlicek

Ms. Sheridan asked if the first policy seems appropriate, is the question whether or not to change or eliminate the second policy. Ms. Kelly also asked which policy the Committee would be exempting Mr. Huban from. Was it GBEA? If there are two policies, what is the other policy? Dr. Giffune explained Massachusetts is the only state in the Union where the School Board only appoints one position. The intent of the policy was for School Boards in states where they hire personnel, which is not the case here. For states where the School Board hires personnel the intent is that a School Board member not be party to hiring someone in the household whose income contributes to the household. Although Dr. Giffune agreed that one policy is being violated, she stated everyone who had any relative work for the schools filed the appropriate ethics papers. Mr. Lovely feels going forward the standard should be strict and we should continue to adhere to this policy. The Committee will look at the policies in question and clear up any confusion. Ms. Kelly read from the existing Policy GBEA and is very conflicted on this motion since the Committee was aware of this policy issue before nomination papers would have been submitted for this election cycle. A vote was taken on the above motion.

Vote: 4-1-0 (M. Kelly)

A motion was made to refer the existing policies to the Policy Subcommittee to see if they should be refined and/or combined. Mr. Lovely, Ms. Kelly and Ms. Sheridan will serve as the new Policy Subcommittee for this purpose.

Move: B. Lovely
Second: L. Stillman
Vote: 5-0-0

Mr. Huban returned and thanked the Committee for this exemption and apologized for not being aware of the violation to this policy. He added that the School Committee does not set salaries for the area his wife works so that should not be a problem.

5. **FY09 Budget** – The Facilities Subcommittee will report at the next meeting. Mr. Lovely stated the Committee has received many good suggestions by community members tonight and also via email. If anyone would like to make a suggestion, they can contact the School Committee at schoolcommittee@miltonps.org. On the website every School Committee member has an individual email address along with phone numbers where they can be reached.

The Finance Subcommittee has been meeting regularly and had asked Dr. Giffune to look at a school consolidation proposal to determine if it would work, what the benefits would be, and to see if this could be done while maintaining Kindergarten rooms for Kindergarten use. Dr. Giffune provided the Committee with a slide presentation showing these results. She provided a chart for every grade in

elementary for both English and French Immersion showing current enrollment, the number of sessions in each program and the average class size. She then showed what the revised numbers would be if we were to reduce each grade by one class (keeping in mind that 5 teachers are expected to be eliminated at the elementary level). In summary, these charts showed that while we can reduce elementary teachers by 5 and maintain reasonable class size, it cannot be done without moving students (potentially 100 students would have to move). Dr. Giffune reviewed the assumptions of a school consolidation plan and stated that from the assumptions two options will be presented. The assumptions are that PreK would be located at Collicot/Cunningham; Kindergarten can be accommodated at all sites, or only at Glover and Tucker; co-taught classes would be located at the age appropriate schools; and substantially separate programs would be maintained at age appropriate schools. She then went through slides showing the capacity at each school. Capacity figures include the number of full size classrooms, the number of rooms designed to accommodate PreK or K, and the number of modified spaces available at each school (modified spaces are small instructional spaces, many of which can house about 16 students). After questions from Ms. Stillman and Ms. Sheridan regarding modified spaces, Dr. Giffune stated there are enough full size classrooms to accommodate the two options. The modified spaces will be used for substantially separate classrooms since that class size is significantly lower.

Option 1 has K at Collicot/Cunningham, Glover and Tucker, PreK at Collicot/Cunningham, Grades 1 and 2 at Glover and Tucker, and Grades 3-5 at Collicot/Cunningham. Option 1 maintains the rooms that were constructed for PreK and K will be used by PreK and K with the exception of 2 classes at Collicot/Cunningham; maintains separate art, music and computer rooms at Collicot/Cunningham; and restores art and music rooms to both Glover and Tucker. This option does, however, require an additional transition for Kindergarten students at Collicot/Cunningham when entering Grade 1 at either Glover or Tucker. In response to Mr. Lovely's question regarding what would happen if we were able to add back the 5 elementary teacher positions, Dr. Giffune responded that there would be space available under this option if those positions back were added back.

Option 2 has Grades K-2 at Glover and Tucker and PreK and Grades 3-5 at Collicot/Cunningham. This option maintains Kindergarten at only Glover and Tucker; maintains separate art, music, and computer rooms at Collicot/Cunningham; maintains current art/music programming at Collicot/Cunningham; maintains current school hours; and has all PreK classes assigned to PreK classrooms. At Tucker and Glover Option 2 restores art and music rooms; however, there may be 8 Kindergarten classes assigned to regular classrooms. According to Dr. Giffune's presentation, a consolidated school plan would maintain advantageous class sizes; maintain current elementary programming in art, music, etc.; address disparity in class sizes between programs; maintain current school hours; allow for mixing students at an early age; efficiently deploy resources; stabilize assignment of incoming students; and allow maximum matching of learning styles to teaching styles. After the presentation, the following questions were raised:

- Mr. Lovely asked if any thought been given to the transportation/relocation costs? Mr. Hilton replied the estimate is \$600-\$800 for the average class move. The move would be done in conjunction with the summer cleaning when all furniture is being moved anyway. Dr. Giffune feels it is wise to use our own employees for this purpose and suggested looking at the cut list to retain a custodian. With regard to transportation, Mr. Hilton does not believe there would be a significant increase in cost with these options.

- Mr. Huban asked if we would find any savings in professional development or planning time since grade level teachers would be together. Dr. Giffune replied savings may be found in K-2 for literacy since those consultants will only have to go to two buildings.
- Mr. Huban asked if teachers would subscribe to this type of model and how the necessary cuts may impact morale. Dr. Giffune responded that last year elementary staff was surveyed and approximately 70% preferred a consolidated model. As far as morale, Dr. Giffune explained one reduction will be a retirement; the others may be 3 or 4 reassignments to a different level (as long as certificates are in order). Taking into consideration the need for Kindergarten teachers and the flexibility of the staff, Dr. Giffune believes morale will be OK.
- Ms. Sheridan voiced concerns over the amount of transitions for students and with the math and reading specialist positions. It is her understanding that currently there is a 1.0 Assistant Principal/Coach position at both Tucker and Glover and a full time Math Coach shared for Collicot/Cunningham. Since these are three positions that are not providing direct service to children, could they be cut next year? Dr. Giffune replied that the coordination has already been lost in elementary mathematics and teachers need support. When looking at the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education's protocols for schools in corrective action and restructuring, they demand that you have literacy and math coaches. Ms. Sheridan stated that while these positions are beneficial, many school systems across the state are cutting coaches.
- Ms. Kelly would like to more detail as to how we could absorb again the \$164,000 cut from the busing budget last year. She feels either of these plans is equally disruptive. Dr. Giffune replied going to a consolidated plan would not be as disruptive as reconfiguring randomly which students have to move.

Mr. Lovely thanked Dr. Giffune for this presentation. He suggested the Committee reflect on the presentation, analyze it and think of what comes next. Ms. Stillman suggested meeting with the Warrant Committee to get all the bullet points together to make sure everything going to press is accurate (Warrant goes to press Friday). Mr. Lovely stated there is not enough time to post for a School Committee meeting before the Warrant Committee meeting. Committee members voiced their concern with a contingent budget and feel they must discuss with the Warrant Committee what dollar amount is in the contingent budget and what that budget would include. Mr. Pavlicek believes what will be in Table 10 of the Warrant is the voted budget plus a certain percent for collective bargaining. The recommendation for a contingent budget is the request reduced by the new non-special education positions (3 restorations at the High School) plus an adjustment for collective bargaining.

Motion was made to go past 11:00 p.m.

Move: C. Huban
 Second: B. Lovely
 Vote: 6-0-0

After further discussion regarding a contingent budget, Mr. Lovely stated he would contact Katie Conlon to find out what her thinking is on this issue.

Motion was made to authorize the Chairman to raise our appropriation request in Table 10 so that we would reasonably be able to discuss what the override amount should be for next year.

*A friendly amendment was made that Mr. Pavlicek also be authorized to be part of these inquiries.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote 6-0-0

Ms. Stillman had some items she would like to add to the Budget Impact Statement. She will forward these to the Committee.

Motion was made to temporarily adjourn the regular School Committee meeting to move into Executive Session and to re-adjourn the regular School Committee meeting Wednesday, April 2nd at 7:30 p.m. at the Warrant Committee Meeting which will be held at the Council on Aging.

Move: G. Pavlicek

Second: C. Huban

By a roll call vote the Committee voted to temporarily adjourn to enter Executive Session.

The regular School Committee meeting temporarily adjourned at 11:15 p.m.