

Milton School Committee Meeting

Milton High School Library

25 Gile Road

Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Chairperson Pavlicek called the meeting of the Milton School Committee to order at 7:00 p.m. in the library at Milton High School.

Present: Chairperson Glenn Pavlicek, Vice-Chairperson Christopher Huban, Paul Hogan, Mary Kelly, Laurie Stillman, Superintendent Dr. Magdalene Giffune, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Personnel Mary Gormley and Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs Gary Osmond.

I. Citizens Speak

Kristen Jones, a fifth grade Collicot parent, spoke of her concern of having one principal for both the Collicot and Cunningham Schools. She stated that she was concerned with the large number of students and that she wanted to maintain two separate schools. She felt that this created a situation where Collicot and Cunningham would not be equitable and safe in comparison with the Glover and Tucker Schools. She stated that the research she has done shows that large schools don't help with morale and that smaller schools have more flexibility and are more welcoming.

II. Administrative Report

Associate Professor Dr. Robert Chen – U. Mass Boston – National Science Foundation Program

Dr. Chen was on hand to discuss the National Science Foundation Program that will now be entering into its third year. This program called the WISP Program (Watershed Integrated Sciences Partnership), existed for the purpose of sensitizing the students to the environment surrounding the area of their schools. The program consists of graduate students from the University of Massachusetts working ten hours per week matched with a teacher in a classroom to establish activities and connections for their students relating to the environment surrounding their schools. The program works within the existing curriculum frameworks along with the resources of the community and opens up opportunities for middle school students to do things that they ordinarily would not be able to do until high school. All funding for this program is from the National Science Foundation.

Milton Public Schools Music and Drama Club

Noreen Diamond Burdett, Director of Music, along with Ms. Judith Campbell, Drama Teacher at Milton High School, newly elected Drama Club Officers Shannon Browne and Charlie Burke, reviewed changes in the Milton High School Drama Program and noted the increased participation. They discussed the fact that this program attracts all different types of students. They reviewed such areas as fundraising, the structure of the program, the involvement of some of the students in set building, and the integration of drama and music within the program.

Annual Operating Plan Sub-Committee Reports

Standard Based Instruction – Milton High School Principal John Drottar, along with Co-Chairperson Teacher Kathleen Spinks, reviewed the research and process that this group has been working on over the past year. They noted that they spent the year systematically looking for gaps in the curriculum, and reviewing journals, frameworks, textbooks and all materials used in the classrooms. Although substantial progress has been made to make sure the standards match our curriculum to the state standards, it was pointed out that this is a slow and ongoing process. The aligning of the curriculum to the changes made to the advanced placement level is always being updated. Accordingly, the necessity of this committee was stressed. The process was reviewed and it was noted that one of the important objectives was the need for day-to-day objectives and a variety of techniques available so that all students will be reached. The ultimate goal is to teach each student how to be a good problem solver and to have a clear delineation of what each student needs to know at each level.

Math Instructional Review – Pierce Middle School Principal John Phelan, accompanied by Maryellen McDermott, Anne Murphy, Stephanie Nephew and Math Department Head Paul Ajemian, were on hand representing the Math Review Team. This team is working on a project involving data collection with respect to mathematics for kindergarten through high school and then making recommendations based upon such data. They were broken down into sub groups using assessment tools and resources needed to address various math skills. One of their goals is to find the gaps that students have in their math abilities and to assist those students who have not performed well on the MCAS tests in mathematics. They have made solid recommendations and are always looking for constant improvement.

FLES Instructional Review – Cunningham Principal Dore Korschun and World Language Department Head Gracie Burke, accompanied by teachers Cori Smith and Maryellen Burke, took a critical look at the FLES program in our school system. They took surveys at all levels and ended up detailing improvements and enhancements that they would like to see made to the current program. They built their knowledge from the elementary level to the middle school level through the high school level and felt that the entire school system should have a common goal with a clear vision statement. It was noted that any recommendations reflecting budget increases be incorporated into the next budget process as early on as possible.

Dr. Giffune reviewed a meeting that was held at the 1909 Wing with parents from Collicot and Cunningham Schools regarding the organizational structure. It was noted that the English and Social Studies Department Head position would be incorporated into one Humanities position with the savings from that being put into the 1909 Wing staffing. She noted that the concern at the 1909 Wing will be on maximized learning for all students. She felt that the school could be organized into small learning communities despite the number of students. A motion was made for the Finance Sub-Committee to look at any possible revenues to bridge any of the gaps at the 1909 Wing. The motion was duly seconded and unanimously approved.

II. School Committee Report

Reserve Fund Transfer

The School System will be receiving \$345,000 from the Circuit Breaker Account and a recommendation was made for the \$78,000 we received from the Reserve Fund for the cost of two additional buses be reimbursed to the Town next week. A motion was made and duly seconded with discussion ensuing. A vote was taken and the motion was passed with four members voting yes and Christopher Huban voting no.

School Building Committee Report

Meetings have been held with various groups to discuss value engineering proposals at the Collicot/Cunningham Schools. It was noted that if the Collicot gym were taken out of the proposal, there would occur an approximate savings in project cost of \$1 million and alterations to the library and moving it to the fourth floor of Cunningham could save an additional \$250,000. This idea was discussed and then rejected. Bids are scheduled to hopefully go out in September and the Facilities Sub-Committee is currently working on merging together all punch list items for the entire School Building Project. Member Stillman discussed the Green School Grant and suggested that the energy savings could offset costs. We are awaiting Town Counsel's recommendations on this issue. Discussions relating to the changes in the Administrative space for the Collicot and Cunningham Schools resulted in a concern with the balance of the two schools. Questions were raised regarding contingencies for this process.

Policy Sub-Committee Report

Mr. Huban noted that current edits to draft policy proposals are due next Tuesday and these will be presented to the School Committee for adoption at the June 21st meeting. There will be a first reading in July of the final four sections with completion expected by September. A request has been made that FY06 Field Trips that occur out of the country be controlled by a much stricter policy than the one that currently exists.

Chapter 70 Hearings Report

Ms. Stillman reported that last Thursday the Fair Funding Group presented testimony at the Chapter 70 Hearings held at the Statehouse. Walter Timilty testified and our message was presented. It has not yet been determined whether Chapter 70 will be revisited by the legislature this year. The most significant issues currently being debated are adequacy of educational funding and equity for like communities. It was noted that the funding must be available if the formula were to be changed, with this money having to be set aside by the Senate Ways and Means Committee. A motion was made for the School Committee to write a letter urging the legislature to revisit Chapter 70 this year. It was also recommended that we charge the Legislative Committee with the task of contacting similar communities to ours to join together with us in this effort. The motion was duly seconded and the motion for the School Committee to write a letter to the legislature was unanimously approved.

A motion was then made and duly seconded for the regular portion of the School Committee to adjourn to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Contract Negotiations. A unanimous roll call vote was taken and the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m. to return to regular session for the purpose of adjournment only.

