

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
August 7, 2007**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

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

Before the meeting began Mr. Lovely took a moment to recognize the men and women from Milton serving in the Armed Forces and asked that we all keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

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

Laura Conway discussed the nursing staff at Cunningham/Collicot. She stated that in addition to the K-5 students, the Integrated Pre-School Program, KEDS and a developmentally delayed special education class will be coming into the Cunningham/Collicot building. If at all possible, Ms. Conway feels having that many students warrants an increase in the nursing staff above the 1.4 recommendation. She stated this is not a budget issue but a liability concern the schools must address. She also asked why there were not Vice Principal positions at all the elementary schools. *Mr. Lovely noted that both of these issues were being addressed tonight.

Catherine Reddington seconded Ms. Conway's concern regarding the nursing staff. Ms. Reddington brought up the recent article on Milton being one of the best places to live and stated that some information regarding property taxes was incorrect. She also felt the recent raises given to clerical staff were higher than those given in the business world or private sector. If the positions were reclassified, she would like to have seen them reclassified in an appropriate way. Ms. Reddington stated that job descriptions for Principals, Vice Principals and other staff should be looked at if there is a question as to why they are not in all schools.

- 2. Construction-** Charlie Winchester of the School Building Committee addressed issues relating to the Cunningham/Collicot project, the demolition process for the 1909 wing, and steps being taken to assure the safety of Pierce Middle School students. With regard to the Cunningham/Collicot project, Mr. Winchester reported that the Building Commissioner issued a conditional certificate of occupancy to allow Administrative personnel and custodians on site effective 8/6/07. Hopefully, there will be a full or amended certificate the week of 8/20/07. Completed items include classrooms, the fire and sprinkler alarms, the security system, the paging and telephone systems, HVAC, plumbing, and heat. Mr. Winchester mentioned that the site lighting out front is being paid for by the contractor not the town. Although the cafeteria is not complete, the kitchen part of it is. The painting of the lunch room ceiling is underway, the vinyl floor needs to be put down and cafeteria furniture needs to be set up. The gym is nearly done. Electricians were there today to finish the lights, the sound system is in, the ceiling will be painted within the next week or so and then the synthetic gym floor can be poured. The front entrance

of Cunningham needs to be completed; the basic concrete structure for the stairs is poured but the steps need to put in. The ramp needs to be built, but that will not impede the opening of school. Final paving will be done next week and grass will be planted in September. When asked about lightening protection for the building, Mr. Winchester replied he will inquire about that and get back to the Committee. Ms. Kelly asked about the width of the pick up/drop off area. Mr. Winchester replied it is designed for the width of two cars but only for discharge of passengers on the right side.

There are two contracts for the 1909 wing; one for demolition and one for site work. The same contractor is being used for both. The stairs and most of the asphalt have been removed and there is a sub-contractor for asbestos removal. The contractor thought he would have access to part of the building late last week or early this week, but abatement work is going later than expected. The contractor hopes to start demolition by Friday or next Monday. A drain line has been installed on the back side of the new school adjacent to the soccer field. The work of filling in that trench and restoring an irrigation line that was disrupted is just about done. They are working on the side of building adjacent to Central Ave. to create an incline that can be negotiated by trucks servicing the cafeteria. In terms of access and safety, the back side of the school is unaffected. New curbing has been installed along the Brook Road side of the building at the driveway going in and they expect to have the sidewalk done and the entry to the auditorium ready for use within the next week or so. Alternate arrangements will be made for the main entry depending on where they are with the demolition. The front door is a required egress point so there will be covered walkways if needed. Mr. Lovely stated there has been some discussion about dust being a potential problem at Pierce during the demolition process. Mr. Winchester replied that fire hoses can be used to keep the dust down. In terms of the HVAC system, the current filters can adequately handle this although they may need more frequent changing during this process. Although the initial thought had been to cover the intakes with some type of dust mask, it has been decided that more frequent changing of filters will be the best solution. Mr. Hilton confirmed that there have been numerous conversations regarding this matter and everyone is aware of the need to change the filters frequently. An inquiry was made as to whether the neighbors have been advised of the demolition. Mr. Winchester replied that there was a letter that was to be sent to the neighbors, but it has not gone out yet. Ms. Kelly requested that letter be posted on the School website for residents to reference. Ms. Stillman asked if there would be one period of time during demolition when there would be more dust and noise. Mr. Winchester replied the equipment used now takes down one piece of the building at a time. At that time a fire hose can be used for the dust. Ms. Kelly asked if any precaution regarding air quality should be posted for those attending the Welcome to Pierce Camp the week of 8/20/07. Mr. Lovely replied someone will check with Mr. Phelan regarding that matter.

3. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of 4/26/06 were approved.

Move: C. Huban

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 5-0-1

Minutes of 5/11/06 were approved.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 4-0-2

Minutes of 6/5/07 were approved.

Move: L. Stillman
Second: L. Sheridan
Vote: 6-0-0

Minutes of 6/19/07 were approved.

Move: C. Huban
Second: G. Pavlicek
Vote: 5-0-1

4. Chairman's Report

Finance Subcommittee –The Finance Subcommittee meeting had also been posted as a School Committee meeting so other members could attend. Subject matters of that meeting included wrapping up the year end and commencing the budget earlier this year; early submission of the year end report to the Dept. of Education and other financial related issues.

Mr. Lovely commented on the recent report in Money Magazine naming Milton as the 7th best place to live. He had been disappointed to see the front page of the Milton Times being about the recent raises. Mr. Lovely explained the nature of these raises was due to an increase/reallocation of responsibilities due to budget cuts. It was more of a reclassification of positions; these raises were not an award to these individuals for doing their jobs. Mr. Lovely had asked Nate Leskovic of the Milton Times why the Editorial Board felt it necessary to disclose the names of the five individuals. Although the Editorial Board had felt it was important to disclose the names, Mr. Lovely personally felt this was unnecessary and potentially embarrassing for those mentioned. He feels there is a negative twist in so many articles in the Milton Times relating to the schools and said this was particularly evident in the article relating to Milton being named the 7th best place. No where in the Times article were the schools mentioned even though the criteria listed in the Money Magazine article shows the schools receiving an A and safety receiving an A+. The Times failed to mention that the schools were ranked within the top 20. Mr. Lovely stated that Milton has made the commitment to build all new schools and has made several wonderful accomplishments that should receive positive support from the press.

Due to the shortfall in athletic fundraising the Boosters and others have stepped up to help raise some funds. Wollaston Golf Club has donated the golf course and all associated costs for a Golf & Tennis Tournament to be held the morning of September 10, 2007. Mr. Ken Quigley, President of Curry College, will provide a luncheon and event as they have done in the past immediately following the Golf & Tennis Tournament. On behalf of the Committee, Mr. Lovely expressed his thanks to Mr. Quigley for his support of the Milton Public Schools. Ms. Sheridan reported that new team captains have also been brainstorming on ideas to raise money. They have designed tee shirts and car magnets (\$20 for both items together) which can be purchased from Barbara Perry, Lynn Harnish-O'Sullivan and any of the team captains.

Dr. Giffune provided the Committee with a schedule for upcoming School Committee meetings including topics that are required to be discussed. Mr. Lovely suggested that Committee members review this list, prioritize items and submit any additions/deletions to the Superintendent's office. Ms.

Stillman voiced her concern over when budget discussions begin and feels we need a more accelerated process.

5. **Staffing** – Dr. Giffune introduced Christine Gerber, the newly appointed Principal at Cunningham. Dr. Giffune went on to explain how the elementary support staff has been redistributed. In order to support elementary instruction and elementary literacy in both reading and math last year there were 14.15 positions; this coming year we will have 4 positions. In order to staff the schools appropriately with these limited resources, the part time Assistant Principals have been left at Tucker and Glover. At Tucker that .5 Assistant Principal is coupled with an instructional coach the other .5 time who is an expert in early literacy; at Glover it is a similar arrangement and that .5 coach is also a math expert. Martha Sherman, Elementary English/Language Arts Coordinator, will be housed at Cunningham/Collicot. The Elementary Math Coordinator position has been eliminated and Maryellen McDermott will now be a Curriculum Lead Teacher. This position will also be housed at the Cunningham/Collicot building. Therefore, there are 4 people full time at the Cunningham/Collicot to devote to the improvement of instruction. Ms. McDermott will receive a stipend to coordinate and articulate the curriculum throughout the four elementary schools. While this is not ideal, Dr. Giffune feels that moving these positions and housing them both at Cunningham/Collicot was the best way to utilize the resources we have. Ms. Kelly asked what the Assistant Principal's job description entails at Tucker and Glover and who is taking on that role at Cunningham/Collicot. Dr. Giffune explained that the Assistant Principal's job is to assist with the supervision of staff. Ms. Sherman is a member of Unit B, which is an Administrative unit. She is more than capable in assisting with the supervision of staff. Ms. Kelly asked for an explanation of the Curriculum Lead Teacher. Dr. Giffune replied this is a teacher who could have teaching responsibility (Unit A) and there is a stipend accompanies it. When the Math Coordinator position was not filled in Unit B, we put in a math coach (a Unit A position) and attached a stipend for a curriculum leader.

Nursing – Margaret Gibbons, Head Nurse, came to address the nursing situation at Cunningham/Collicott. While realizing that the 1.4 nursing staff (1 full time and 1 .4 person) may not be ideal, Ms. Gibbons asked that this matter be given a 4-5 week trial. She has pledged her support and realizes additional nursing help will be needed in the first few weeks to help get the new building set up. After the 4-5 week trial, Ms. Gibbons will report back to the Committee. Mr. Lovely asked for a ball park figure of the student population at each school and the available nursing staff. Ms. Gormley replied that Cunningham/Collicot will have approximately 930 students (including Pre-School) with 1.4 nurse (1.0 full time and the .4 is a two day full time nurse); Glover has 525 with 1.0 nurse (two .5 positions); Tucker has 315 with 1.0 nurse. Since the KEDS program will now be housed at Cunningham/Collicot, Ms. Kelly asked if we could use that as a funding source to fill the .6 gap. Mr. Lovely asked what the level of generated fees for Community Schools was and if there is generally a surplus at the end of year. Mr. Hilton replied that Community Schools has had an offset of \$25,000 per year for the last few years and an increase of \$25,000 this year. The increase of \$25,000 this year was generally going to utilities. Although they will continue to look at this possibility, Community Schools does not usually have much surplus year to year. Ms. Kelly also asked if it would be possible to use a substitute position to fully staff Cunningham/Collicot (with 2.0 nurses) as opposed to waiting for a 5 week trial. Mr. Lovely replied that would be a good idea, but asked where money could be found to do so. Ms. Stillman inquired about lunch time coverage for nurses and if other staff members are trained on how to use Epi-pens, etc in the event of an emergency. Ms. Gibbons replied that other staff members are trained in these procedures. Going back to Ms. Kelly's suggestion of having a substitute position to fully staff

Cunningham/Collicot with 2 nurses, Ms. Gibbons stated she would rather see an increase in the hours of the .4 person.

Motion was made to increase the nursing staff at the Cunningham/Collicot complex to two full time nurses.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: L. Sheridan

Ms. Sheridan seconded this motion for the purpose of discussion. To increase the nursing staff to two full time nurses, it would require an additional \$32,000-\$45,000 depending on experience. Ms. Sheridan also asked where that money could come from. Ms. Kelly mentioned an instructional supplies line slated for \$310,000 which is an increase over last year's spending of \$170,000. Until we identify another source, Ms. Kelly asked if that could be the source of additional funding. Mr. Pavlicek replied that he would be reluctant to move positions around unless someone says it is definitely needed. Ms. Gibbons added that to change staffing now would require re-posting and conducting interviews again. There would not be time to complete this before the opening of school. A vote was taken then on the above motion.

Vote: 1-5-0 (B. Lovely, L. Sheridan, L. Stillman, C. Huban and G. Pavlicek)

Teaching Assignments – Classroom assignments will go out in the mail on August 13th for grades 1-5. If this information is not received by Thursday or Friday, Principals should be contacted. Parents have been informed of any program that has moved.

Pierce Middle School – Dr. Giffune reported that the Middle School lost 6 positions. Dr. Giffune worked with Mr. Phelan trying to fill the math position but there was not a large candidate pool. Together they came up with an alternative. Mr. Phelan had reduced his math coach by .4 and he further reduced that to a curriculum teacher and put that person to do Investigations. Instead of a hiring a math teacher a Social Studies teacher will be hired for 7th & 8th grade. This will restore some of the team structure in grades 7 and 8.

Milton High School – The High School has lost 3.6 positions (1.0 Math, .6 Science, 1.0 Humanities/Drama, and 1.0 in Wood/Auto. There was one late resignation; they are looking to fill one Chemistry position which they are close to doing and they have hired Special Education staff. The High School Resource officer will also be in place.

To recap the cuts at the elementary level, Ms. Gormley stated French reading support is gone at the elementary; we lost 1 art position; we eliminated 1.6 in Music; 2 classes have been eliminated (3rd & 4th grade); FLES has been eliminated in grade 1 and reduced in half at grades 2-5. All support staff has been eliminated. Ms. Gormley went over the number of reductions made in each unit. Ms. Sheridan asked what the difference was between Unit C & D. Ms. Gormley replied that Unit C represents lunch and recess aides; Unit D is special education aides. No IEP's will be affected by the elimination of these positions. When asked what positions were cut at Pierce, Ms. Gormley replied that Pierce has lost one Math Coach; one Science teacher (grade 7 & 8); one World Culture teacher; one Physical Education teacher; one Math Investigations teacher and 1 Special Education teacher.

Before continuing with the agenda Mr. Lovely took a moment to extend the School Committee's condolences and that of the Milton Public School system to Mary Cobb, a previous School Committee member, on the recent loss of her daughter.

Ms. Gormley reported that the Athletic Director position was posted as Athletic Director/Wellness Director. Applications were reviewed by Dr. Drottar, Dr. Giffune, Ms. Gormley and a review committee. They were looking for a candidate who had been both a Varsity coach and an outstanding teacher. It was a collective decision to place Steve Traister as the Interim Athletic Director. Mr. Traister has worked at Milton High School for three years and previous to that had been in the Mansfield Public Schools where he was a Varsity Basketball Coach.

With regard to the recent raises, Dr. Giffune explained that two of these individuals went from being 10 month employees to 12 month employees. Four of the five individuals had their responsibilities greatly increased. For example, one individual went from managing student information systems to now being responsible for tracking all receipts we take in by students. Another individual is responsible for tracking all out of district special education placements which is around \$3,000,000 and calculating the circuit breaker for us; another individual is responsible for tracking all timelines and procedures for over 600 IEP's. We have another individual who was hired as general clerical help and now that person tracks all deposits and receipts we get in (from athletics, transportation, tuitions, food service, etc.). Ms. Kelly pointed out that the reason why this was such a story is that it is came at the same time we are cutting teachers. She also stated the School Committee had not been part of this discussion. Ms. Kelly referred to Policies GDA, Support Staff Positions and GDB, Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans and suggested some verbiage be added to these policies so in the future any changes in job descriptions/pay increases are brought to the Committee for discussion. Mr. Lovely suggested Ms. Kelly adds this to her list of topics for discussion she submits to the Superintendent's office.

6. **Financial Matters – FY07 Year End** - Mr. Hilton reported the FY07 year ended at 0. There is a little left in the revolving accounts and we anticipate having the Medicaid reimbursement money in the fall.

Financial Reporting Software Implementation - Mr. Hilton reported that the schools continue to provide any support necessary for the software implementation (for Payroll). Changes in software and service providers necessitated the purchase of new software licensing which was not complete until July. It is expected that the town side will be complete within the next few weeks and implementation for the schools will hopefully be January 1st. The Accounts Payable software is working well.

FY08 Budget Status – Ms. Kelly had been looking for information to back up FY08 personnel numbers. Mr. Hilton is working on that and will submit the information to the Finance Subcommittee within the next few weeks.

Grant Funding and Circuit Breaker for FY08 – The circuit breaker is down about \$70,000. Some of the other grants are down between \$3,000-\$4,000 and \$30,000 for the coming year. The decrease in the circuit breaker is due to the fact that we have less out of district placements.

With regard to the year end report, Ms. Stillman stated this is often the political document cited in terms of how we spend our money. The reason why our administrative line appears higher than other school districts may be how we categorize our staff. Ms. Stillman urged Mr. Hilton and Administration to be cognizant of the public relations ramifications behind how things are categorized in the year end report. Mr. Hilton replied that as they went through the close out process this year, funds were moved as they were spent to the right categories.

FY09 Budget Process – It is the Committee’s intention to jump start the budget process this year. Dr. Giffune stated the first payroll must go through to know the staff rollover amount. This can be done simultaneously with setting priorities and parameters for the budget. Mr. Pavlicek is looking into the budget presentation and potential presentations the Warrant Committee may be requesting. New financial policies voted by the Selectmen request the town to look at budgeting two years in advance. Therefore, we may not only be asked to put together a proposal for FY09 but also an estimate for FY10. The budget is on the Finance Subcommittee’s agenda as well as the School Committee’s agenda for their first meeting. Ms. Stillman feels we must be realistic when talking about budget parameters. We have always talked of what we would like in the best of circumstances; however, we now may be faced with discussing what it is we consider to be level service. Dr. Giffune replied she is not unrealistic when preparing the budget. Her job is to tell the School Committee what the students need; it is the School Committee’s responsibility to say what needs to be protected. Ms. Kelly added that the big picture issues such as were presented by the Long Range Planning Committee need to be discussed by the Committee. What can we afford to provide and support on a continuous basis? Issues such as the French Immersion program need to be discussed.

7. **Transportation** – Mr. Hilton reported that they are 7/8’s of the way complete with regard to transportation. Drop off /pick up is unchanged at Tucker, Glover and Pierce. Ms Gerber sent a memo to Dr. Giffune outlining the pick up/drop off for Cunningham. Ms. Stillman suggested using Alert Now to remind parents that the website is a useful way to obtain all information regarding the schools. When asked how we are communicating that there still may be open spots on some buses, Mr. Hilton replied this will be advertised as soon as they see where the capacity exists.
8. **Policy Subcommittee Report** – Mr. Huban reported that in an effort to help raise money for the Athletic Department, the Boosters have committed to \$50,000. They have also offered their help in closing the \$65,000-\$70,000 gap. One proposed idea the Boosters had was selling advertising Sponsorship Banners to be placed around the interior fence at Brooks Field. After further discussion it was deemed necessary for the School Committee to give its approval for the sale of these banners. The Policy Subcommittee met with Dr. Drottar and Lynn Harnish-O’Sullivan and it was the general sense that this would be a workable fundraising idea. Although there are some reservations, the Policy Subcommittee came up with a set of proposed rules and regulations with regard to selling these banners. Mr. Huban read these to the Committee. Ms. O’Sullivan already has people interested in purchasing these banners. If approved, she will review the rules and regulations with them. Mr. Huban noted that during the meeting Ms. Stillman informed them that there is a bill in Legislature to ban advertising in public schools. This bill has not been passed yet and will not impact this during the trial period.

Motion was made to accept the proposed Rules and Regulations for Sponsorship Banners.

Move: L. Sheridan

Second: C. Huban

Further discussion followed regarding these banners. Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. O'Sullivan received approval from the Copeland Foundation. Dr. Giffune reported they did not see written approval in the report. Mr. Lovely believes it had been verbal approval from one Copeland Foundation member and will double check on that. Mr. Hilton has put out several calls to businesses and other school districts regarding this matter. He suggested that the Committee may want to reconsider one of the proposed rules referring to the prohibition of national chains or corporations with over three stores from advertising since this may be too exclusionary. He asked that the Committee give Administration the capacity to waive that rule once they hear back as to how other school districts handle this. Mr. Hilton also believes the School Committee may need to receive the funds from this. Mr. Lovely suggested a friendly amendment be added to the proposal stating that to the extent the funds have to go to the schools directly, the School Committee would undertake to assure that they be applied exclusively to the athletic budget. Ms. Stillman voiced her concern with the promotion of fast food and is uneasy having the schools used as a ground to promote the commercialization of children. She suggested that the Wellness Committee meet again and that this be watched carefully. Mr. Pavlicek is also concerned with the same rule regarding selling banners to national chains or corporations. Mr. Lovely made a friendly amendment to delete that proposed rule and to add wording stating that the Committee will have discretion with respect to any other matters they believe are inconsistent with other School Committee policies. When asked for her recommendation regarding this policy, Dr. Giffune said she does not support this. Ms. Kelly recused herself from discussion and voting on this matter due to a family business conflict. A vote was taken to approve the Rules and Regulations for Sponsorship Banners with the friendly amendments suggested.

Vote: 5-0-0

The Rules and Regulations for Sponsorship Banners will read:

- 1) Size of Sponsorship Banners must be uniform.
- 2) Sponsorship Banners must make a statement saluting a team or generic Wildcats.
- 3) Sponsorship Banners are only allowed inside Brooks Field.
- 4) Sponsorship banners will be allowed from September 1, 2007 until November 22, 2007 at which time the Policy Subcommittee will review results and make recommendations to the Full Committee whether this program should continue. In no way does the Committee's agreement to this program constitute acceptance in the future.
- 5) No Sponsorship Banners will be hung until paid in full.
- 6) Sponsorship Banners will not be allowed to promote anything prohibited by the Milton Public Schools (i.e. Alcohol, Tobacco, etc.). The Committee may not allow other promotional slogans inconsistent with its stated policies.
- 7) Wording on Sponsorship Banners will be subject to the review of the Policy Subcommittee and the Superintendent or her designee and will restrict any wording that is profane or deemed inflammatory in any way.
- 8) Any monies collected by the Milton School Committee or its agents under this program will be used exclusively for the athletic budget.

The Policy Subcommittee also discussed the Alert Now system and its uses. They feel this is an Administrative policy and not a School Committee policy. Mr. Huban is waiting for a recommended policy from Administration and will report back to the School Committee. Since she had been unable to attend the last meeting when the street assignments for the student assignment policy were voted, Ms. Kelly asked when the additional information regarding how we assign students will be presented. Mr. Lovely replied they are waiting for a draft from Administration and then the policy will be updated. Ms. Stillman mentioned that someone had suggested extending the offer to buy sponsorship banners to families who may want to show their support. She suggested that a letter go out to parents inviting them to sponsor a banner.

9. **Legislative Subcommittee** – Ms. Kelly submitted a proposal she had drafted regarding a Home Rule petition for Milton. This petition would allow the School Department to receive their share of the Medicaid reimbursement money directly rather than having to have it appropriated at a special Town Meeting in the fall.

Motion was made to send this proposal to Town Counsel for approval.

Move: C. Huban

Second: M. Kelly

Mr. Lovely suggested a friendly amendment be made for the schools to seek 100% of these funds rather than the 50% mentioned in the draft. Mr. Pavlicek suggested we may want to leave the 50/50 language in and then cut the deal with the Board of Selectmen or Town Meeting (we should specify which one). He also suggested it would be a good idea to get input from the four representatives we have in Milton regarding this matter. If we had to stipulate Town Meeting or Board of Selectmen, Ms. Stillman prefers Town Meeting. She made a friendly amendment to stipulate that in the draft. With the friendly amendments made, a vote was taken on the above motion.

Vote: 6-0-0

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban

Second: L. Stillman

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.