

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
January 12, 2010**

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

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent, John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel, Matthew Gillis, School Business Administrator

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

Prior to proceeding with the agenda, Mrs. Sheridan asked that a moment of silence be given in memory of Dr. Owen Kiernan, former Superintendent of the Milton Public Schools.

2. **Approval of January 12, 2010 Agenda**

Mrs. Sheridan suggested having the Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee report follow the Tucker Site Council presentation. Ms. Kelly stated that she would like to have some discussion regarding recent issues impacting the Milton School Committee and the Milton Public Schools. This discussion will be held under the New Business section of the agenda.

Motion was made to approve the January 12, 2010 agenda with these revisions.

Move: M. Kelly

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 4-0-2 (B. Lovely, C. Huban)

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

Catherine Reddington, Andy Strang and Sarah Mills, representatives of Sustainable Milton, attended tonight's meeting to present members of the School Committee and the Administration with new stainless steel, recyclable water bottles being sold by Sustainable Milton. Ms. Reddington explained the benefits of using these water bottles and discussed the environmental and financial benefits of drinking tap water. These water bottles are currently being sold for \$13 for members of Sustainable Milton and \$15 for non-members.

4. **Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the November 17, 2009 School Committee meeting were approved.

Move: G. Pavlicek

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

The minutes of the December 8, 2009 School Committee meeting were approved.

Move: G. Pavlicek

Second: B. Lovely

Vote: 6-0-0

5. Superintendent's Report

Tucker Site Council - Principal Marcia Uretsky and Jenny Yoon, Teacher Representative

Ms. Uretsky reported that the Tucker Improvement Plan is based upon current assessment data and was presented to Tucker faculty, Site Council and PTO for their input. The plan reflects two areas of focus: (1) Student Achievement and (2) School/Parent/Community involvement and communication. Details of the Tucker School Improvement Plan can be found on the website, <http://www.miltonps.org> under the Tucker Elementary School Edline page. With regard to student achievement, Ms. Uretsky highlighted the goals for improving student achievement in ELA. Some of these goals include a vertical alignment of the curriculum between grade levels; implementing Reader's Workshop across all grade levels; putting a Data Team in place to implement a school-wide assessment system and data analysis to monitor student progress; and providing differentiated instruction. Ms. Yoon highlighted the goals for improving student achievement in math. Some of these goals include identifying Math Power Standards in the Every Day Math Curriculum and providing additional instructional time to master concepts. Math instruction will be increased 15 minutes/day and nightly homework and basic skill practices will be assigned to determine that students have mastered what was done in class. The Morning Math Masters for grades 3-5 (funded through Title 1 funds) is another way additional instruction will be provided. In addition, students in grades 4 and 5 who are in the Needs Improvement and Warning categories are being taken out of FLES instruction in order to receive more math. Ms. Yoon pointed out that it is optional for parents to have their child taken out of FLES for additional math and/or ELA instruction. The Saturday Math program, Math is a Slam Dunk, is also available through a donation from Steve Shapiro and the Pinnacle Learning Center. For this program high school students come in to help 4th and 5th grade students who may want further enrichment in math or to help students who are struggling. Ms. Yoon further explained that Tucker provides differentiated instruction in math to meet the needs of all students and is moving towards a workshop model for teaching math.

Ms. Uretsky reviewed the School/Parent/Community Involvement goal within the Improvement Plan and highlighted the many ways that Tucker reaches out to both teachers, parents, and the community in an effort to increase communication and engagement. Some comments and/or questions from the School Committee included:

- Is information obtained through assessments communicated to parents? Ms. Yoon replied that information is shared with parents through parent/teacher conferences. Parents are informed of the results of assessments and what is being done to help their child at school. Suggestions may also be made as to how parents can help at home.
- What had to be cut in order to provide 15 additional minutes of math instruction? Ms. Uretsky replied that nothing specific was cut. Small bits of time were taken from various places and revisions were made as to how time was used (i.e. students receive a practice activity right when they come in to class).
- Does class size impact the ability to provide differentiated instruction? Ms. Yoon replied that teachers may have to be more creative in the ways students are divided. Ms. Uretsky added that since Tucker is a Title 1 school it has benefited from two literacy specialists this year and has benefited from the School Committee's support with respect to class size aides. This year Ms. Uretsky stated that she asked all K-2 teachers schedule ELA in the morning and math in the afternoon and that the schedule flip for grades 3-5 to allow the extra support from Resource Room teachers to be available throughout the day.

The Committee and the Administration thanked Ms. Uretsky and Ms. Yoon for this presentation.

*Ms. Gormley will continue with the Superintendent's Report following the report from the Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee.

6. Consolidated Facilities Exploratory Committee Report – Anthony Cichello, Chair

Mr. Cichello reviewed the history of this committee which had been appointed by the Board of Selectmen to look at the possible consolidation of management of school and town buildings into one Consolidated Facilities Department. Mr. Cichello stated that many towns have moved toward such a model and the committee looked at what has been done in other cities/towns and will continue to look at models that would be effective for Milton. The model being considered is having one Facilities Department with the head of that department reporting to both the Town Administrator and the Superintendent. Mr. Cichello explained that under Massachusetts State Law statute, the management of school buildings is invested in the School Department and the School Committee and is separate from the management of town buildings. In order to change this, the statute has to be accepted and a vote is needed from Annual Town Meeting and the School Committee (Mr. Cichello noted that either one can withdraw later if they feel this is not working). At last year's Annual Town Meeting, the town accepted the statute and the next step would be to receive approval for this consolidation at this year's Annual Town Meeting. The committee hopes to have a memorandum of agreement signed by both the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee by the time of Annual Town Meeting. Per Mrs. Sheridan's request, Mr. Cichello briefly discussed the work done by Joe Piantedosi, a consultant who was recently hired through funds received from both the Board of Selectmen and the School Department to look at Milton's buildings and make recommendations. Mr. Piantedosi is the Public Facilities Manager in the Town of Andover and has a great deal of expertise in this area. Mr. Piantedosi has submitted a report and copies were provided to School Committee members. Some questions and/or comments from the School Committee included:

- To what extent are other departments/elected boards that do not fall under the School Department or the Board of Selectmen giving their input to this plan (Cemetery Trustees, Parks Department, and Library Trustees)? Mr. Cichello stated that the committee can get this input as they move into the first phase of this project. For the moment, the primary focus is on the buildings in town.
- What impact will this have from a budgetary viewpoint? Mr. Cichello stated that he anticipates the Facilities Department having its own budget with some resources coming from the School Department and from other town department budgets. The committee will be reviewing what is allocated by each department to such items as cleaning, maintenance, etc.
- Will we have a plan that is sufficiently vetted with all departments by Annual Town Meeting in May? Some departments may not be in favor of a consolidation and there are labor issues to consider. Also, if we are asking Town Meeting members to vote on this consolidation, they should have ample time to review the details. Mr. Cichello replied that there is a great deal of work to do before May. If the committee is not able to keep to the schedule and the vote is not received, this project will not go forward and will have to wait another year since the vote must be made at an annual Town Meeting.
- School Committee members and Mr. Cichello discussed the wording of the article and the motion for the warrant. They also discussed the wording of the Massachusetts statute (Chapter 71, Section 37M).
- What other cities/towns are involved in this type of consolidated Facilities Department? Mr. Cichello named many cities/towns and stated that this information can be found in the committee's original report which is on the website, www.townofmilton.org. Ms. Gormley stated that she will email School Committee members a copy of that report.

Mrs. Sheridan suggested that School Committee members email either she or Mr. Huban if they have any other questions. The School Committee and members of the Administration thanked Mr. Cichello for his dedication to this project.

***Superintendent's Report (continued)**

In response to a question asked at the last School Committee meeting regarding the number of students who have been excluded from the Milton Public Schools during this the school year, Ms. Gormley reported that 31 students have been excluded. Ms. Gormley reported that Mike Goodless has been appointed to the residency position within the Milton Public Schools. Denise Kelly, Registrar, will move her office from the Milton High School main office to another office within the building.

Ms. Gormley also reported that she, Mr. Huban, Mr. Phelan, Mr. Gillis and Margaret Gibbons recently attended a conference regarding the Race to the Top grant. School districts from across the state attended this conference to learn about the Federal government's \$4.35 billion Education Reform program under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Under the leadership of the Insurance Commissioner, Ms. Gormley stated that Massachusetts is interested in applying for \$250 million. Ms. Gormley explained that the issues surrounding this grant include merit pay and the plan to tie teacher evaluations to student performance/MCAS results. Although this matter was thoroughly investigated and discussed with the teachers' union and the Milton Educators' Association, Ms. Gormley reported that Milton was unsuccessful at signing the memorandum of understanding. Mr. Huban explained that in order to submit the grant proposal for the Town of Milton, it would require the signature of the teachers' union, the School Committee and the Superintendent; Milton only had two of the necessary signatures. Mr. Pavlicek added that only one or two unions in the state have signed on for this grant. Ms. Kelly feels it is unfortunate that Milton will not be part of application process representing Massachusetts.

Ms. Gormley reminded School Committee members and the public of the following upcoming events:

- The Wellness Subcommittee is sponsoring an Internet Safety Night for parents on January 13, 2010 at Milton High School Auditorium.
- Pierce Players will be performing Annie, Jr. on the evenings of January 21st and 22nd and at a Saturday matinee on January 23rd
- Temple Shalom will be holding a Martin Luther King, Jr. event at 5:00 p.m. Monday, January 18, 2010 and many Milton students have submitted artwork and writings for this event.

In addition, Ms. Gormley reported that the work of the World Language Committee continues and a report will be given to the School Committee in February, 2010. Ms. Gormley also announced that Dr. Dore Korschun, Jeff Rubin, and Paul Ajemian plan to retire from the Milton Public Schools in June, 2010. Ms. Gormley publicly expressed her gratitude to these individuals for the contributions they have made to the Milton Public Schools. These positions have been posted and will be advertised and Ms. Gormley will send information regarding these positions and screening committees to all School Committee members. Ms. Gormley also announced that Holly Concannon has been appointed to the position of Elementary Math/Technology Director for grades K-8. Ms. Concannon, a Milton resident, will begin next week and has been spent the last several days orientating herself with the Milton Public Schools.

7. Chairman's Report

Mrs. Sheridan began her report by presenting to the School Committee and the public the video that was shown at the Celebration for Education event held in November, 2009. This video was created by Milton High School parent Tom Fahey as a way to thank the parents and many members of the Milton community who have contributed to the Milton Foundation for Education. Mrs. Sheridan stated that School Committee members have received copies of the draft report to the Annual Report for Town Meeting and also the Annual Report Letter. When asked if there were any further edits, Ms. Kelly

stated she would like to have a brief explanation of the Pre-school program included in this report. Ms. Gormley stated that she will add this to the report.

Motion was made to approve the Annual Report letter and the Annual Report with the suggested revision of a brief explanation of the Pre-School program being added.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

Mrs. Sheridan also stated that minor edits were made to the School Committee calendar as discussed at the last School Committee meeting.

Motion was made to approve Draft #6 of the School Committee Calendar.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: C. Huban

Vote: 6-0-0

8. Finance Subcommittee Report

Full Day Kindergarten Tuition

Ms. Kelly stated that a memorandum outlining the expenses of the Full Day Kindergarten program was included in the School Committee packets. Ms. Kelly thanked Mr. Gillis for the level of detail he provided in this document. Mr. Gillis recommended to the Finance Subcommittee that the tuition for the Full Day Kindergarten program be increased by \$200. This increase is necessary since operating costs are going up and the threshold for the sliding scale has increased. The Finance Subcommittee voted to recommend this \$200 increase in tuition to the full School Committee.

Motion was made that the School Committee approve a \$200 increase in tuition for the Full Day Kindergarten program resulting in tuition of \$3,300 for the 2010-2011 school year.

Before voting the Committee discussed the Kindergarten grants and the tuition charged for full day Kindergarten in surrounding cities/towns (public and private schools). Mr. Gillis stated that a 10% reduction in the state's full day Kindergarten grants is anticipated and that was reflected in the numbers shown in his memorandum. When asked for the Superintendent's recommendation, Ms. Gormley stated that she recommends this increase.

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Gormley informed the public that the Kindergarten Information night will be held at 7:00 p.m. on January 28, 2010 at Milton High School Auditorium. This information is available on the website.

FY10 Status

Mr. Gillis reported that as of the end of the 2nd quarter of the fiscal year we are in good shape and the budget is going as planned in the general fund, revolving funds and grants. Mr. Gillis stated that he can produce a monthly summary report detailing this information if the Committee would like. Committee members agreed that receiving this monthly update would be beneficial. With regard to the upcoming Special Town Meeting, Mr. Pavlicek stated that it is his understanding that the warrant will still include a \$700,000 reduction in budgets in anticipation of further 9C cuts.

FY11 Level Funded Budget

Ms. Kelly reported that the Administration is working very hard to find ways to gain efficiencies within the system and to identify positions that would need to be cut if no additional funding sources can be

identified. There is no definitive list as of yet; however, Ms. Kelly asked that School Committee members email the Finance Subcommittee if they have any items they would like to be considered for this list. Additionally, Ms. Kelly reported that the Finance Subcommittee is in the process of gathering budget back-up documentation to send to the Warrant Committee. Mr. Pavlicek reiterated what had been previously been stated at a recent School Committee meeting. If we get \$0 for next year, the situation will be gruesome.

9. Policy Subcommittee Report

Field Trip Policy (IJOA) – Second Reading

At the last School Committee meeting it was suggested that the first meeting in October be inserted in the Field Trip Policy Addendum (IJOA-2) as the timeframe for the Superintendent to provide the School Committee with the list of Annual Field Trips. The sentence will read: “The Superintendent will provide the School Committee with the list of Annual Field Trips by the first meeting in October each year and will note if any Annual Field Trips should be added or removed from that list.” Ms. Kelly stated that she would like the list to include the cost of the trip, days missed from school, and fundraising opportunities. Mr. Lovely suggested amending the sentence to read: “The Superintendent will provide the School Committee with a proposed list of Annual Field Trips by the first meeting in October. This list will contain such information that the Committee may reasonably request with respect to costs, dates, and other material information.”

Motion was made to approve the Field Trip Policy Addendum (IJOA-2) as amended.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 6-0-0

Class Size Policy IIB – Second Reading

Mr. Huban stated that at the last School Committee meeting it was suggested to change the wording of the first sentence to read: “The School Committee strongly believes that class size is important for effective teaching.” Upon further review of this policy, Ms. Kelly also suggested striking the last sentence of this policy and re-wording the second sentence to read: “The School Committee understands that achieving the goal of low class size is dependent upon the financial ability of the Milton Public Schools.”

Motion was made to approve the Class Size Policy (IIB) as amended.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: M. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

10. New Business

Ms. Kelly stated that although she understands that the recent incident involving Mr. Huban is a personal issue, she feels it is her obligation as a School Committee member to address it since it does have an impact on the School Committee and the Milton Public Schools. Ms. Kelly referred to a policy regarding staff conduct and believes this is an important policy to uphold. From a legal perspective, she realizes the School Committee does not have the authority to tell another member that he or she can no longer serve on the School Committee; however, she feels the Committee can make a statement regarding this matter. Ms. Bagley-Jones stated that this is a painful topic to discuss, but it does have public ramifications for the School Committee. The dangers of drinking and driving are frequently discussed among families and with students. Ms. Bagley-Jones feels this is a tough issue to address with

teenagers if we don't hold the line. Mr. Lovely agreed that the policy referred to by Ms. Kelly is an important one; however, he feels the School Committee should view this as a very serious teaching moment and hope that this never happens again to Mr. Huban or any other person sitting on such a committee. Although he understands the importance of what happened and the significant impact it can have on the community, Mr. Lovely stated that he would not support a motion of personal censure or any such proposal. Mr. Pavlicek concurred with Mr. Lovely that this is a teachable moment. He stated that we are all human and will make mistakes. It is important, however, to acknowledge those mistakes and accept the consequences. Mr. Pavlicek feels Mr. Huban has done this; therefore, he would not support a motion regarding this matter. Mrs. Sheridan agreed with Mr. Pavlicek and Mr. Lovely. She stated that the School Committee's only authority is the hiring and firing of the Superintendent and setting policies for the Milton Public Schools. Before closing, Ms. Kelly stated that she feels the teachable moment here is the taking of responsibility since members of the School Committee do act as policy setters and leaders. Ms. Kelly personally feels it would be in the best interest of the Milton Public Schools and the Milton School Committee if Mr. Huban were to take it upon himself to step down.

Motion was made to adjourn.

Move: C. Huban

Second: B. Lovely

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:50 p.m.