

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
June 9, 2009**

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

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent; John Phelan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Personnel

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Approval of June 9, 2009 Agenda**
Ms. Sheridan stated that an introduction of the retirees honored this evening will be added to the agenda. With the Committee's consent, Ms. Sheridan approved the June 9, 2009 agenda with this addition.
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)**
No one came forward to speak.

Ms. Sheridan stated that the School Committee had the opportunity to honor retirees this evening at a reception held prior to the School Committee meeting. The retirees from the Milton Public Schools who were present for this reception included Anne Murphy, Terry Deutsch, Karen Slodden, Paula Donohue, and Carol Cove. The School Committee publicly thanked these individuals and all the other retirees who were unable to attend tonight's reception for their contributions to the Milton Public Schools and wished them happiness in their retirement. Ms. Gormley personally thanked the retirees for their years of dedication to the students of the Milton Public Schools. Ms. Sheridan expressed her gratitude to Bev Quinn for making this reception special and to the Milton High School String Quartet for their performance at this reception.

Before moving to the Superintendent's Report, Ms. Sheridan invited Mr. Jeffery Cruikshank and Ms. Mary Ann Rull, two of the three co-chairs of the Invest in Milton group to the table. Mr. Julio Varela, also a co-chair of Invest in Milton was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Ms. Sheridan stated that the work done by Invest in Milton and its group of volunteers was evident with the successful override vote yesterday. The School Committee thanked the Invest in Milton committee for going above and beyond for the students of Milton and for the residents of the town. Ms. Gormley added her personal thanks to Mr. Cruikshank, Ms. Rull, and Mr. Varela on behalf of the Milton Public Schools.

4. **Superintendent's Report**
Documentary on Elementary Band, Dr. Noreen Diamond Burdett
Dr. Burdett explained that she first came up with the idea of filming a documentary of the band after attending a symposium on music education advocacy. She worked with her son Joshua, a film major and graduate of Syracuse University, to prepare the documentary presented tonight entitled "Elementary Band". The documentary focuses on a group of elementary students participating in a band lesson taught by Mr. Gary Goode. Students within the classroom each spoke as to why they chose their particular instrument and why they enjoy playing in the band. The School Committee thanked Dr. Burdett and Joshua for preparing this documentary and for sharing it this evening.

Speech Requirement

Ms. Gormley explained that over the last few years 1.5 English teachers were eliminated from Milton High School and the School Committee has waived the speech requirement for graduation. Per the request of Ms. Kelly, the Administration researched other communities that do not have a speech requirement and spoke to Stephanie Nephew about the possibility of having a speech elective. Ms. Kelly feels it is important for students to be exposed to doing public presentations as part of their education. Dr. Drottter explained that students give many presentations within their classes as part of their daily work. Mr. Huban agreed that students are exposed to doing presentations, participating in debates, etc. within their classes. He feels it would be acceptable to waive the speech requirement for graduation. Ms. Gormley added that this can be further discussed with department heads.

A motion was made to waive the speech requirement for the graduating class of 2010.

Move: C. Huban

Second: G. Pavlicek

Before voting, Ms. Kelly asked if the speech requirement should be eliminated all together since this is the third or fourth year that the School Committee has voted to waive it as a graduation requirement. Dr. Drottter recommended that speech be waived for one year. In the mean time, Ms. Gormley can meet with the leadership team and department heads to discuss how the skills of public speaking are integrated into the curriculum and make a recommendation next year as to whether or not speech should be eliminated as a graduation requirement.

Vote: 4-0-1 (B. Lovely)

Grant Writer, Christopher Masalsky

Mr. Masalsky briefly updated the Committee on his work over the past six months. He explained that there are three different ways to approach grants. Some initiatives are staff driven; some are situational initiatives; and some are strategic initiatives. Mr. Masalsky explained some initiatives in each category and stated that both public and private funding sources are being explored.

Staff Driven Initiatives include:

- More technology in the classroom (i.e. Smart Boards)
- Extended Learning Time (ELT) – identified a pilot model at Tucker Elementary
- Glover Musical Theater (materials, equipment)
- Energy efficiency and environmental issues
- Pierce Health Education
- Sustainable Milton (student driven initiatives on sustainability)

Situational Initiatives

- Crisis response – Mr. Masalsky wrote a grant to a program with the federal government which awarded \$43,000 to help provide services to the community after the events which occurred in March, 2009
- ARRA stimulus funds

Strategic Initiatives

- Grants to help with athletic funding
- Ways to support and expand the programs offered by the Milton Outdoor Classroom

Ms. Gormley explained that Mr. Masalsky works with the Administration, teachers, and parents. Many people have contacted him with suggestions and he has become part of the Milton Public School system. Mr. Masalsky can be reached at cmasalsky@miltonps.org. Questions and/or comments from the School Committee included:

- When do we hear back regarding these grants? Mr. Masalsky replied that we should hear back on some grants within 3-6 weeks; however, there has been a slow down on both public and private funding.
- Did we receive the \$43,000 for crisis response funding? Mr. Masalsky replied that an award letter was received. Since this is one of the first federal grants to be received, we are working to determine if this goes to a town account or directly to the school account. Ms. Gormley thanked Ms. Bagley-Jones for making Mr. Masalsky aware of this funding opportunity.

Kindergarten Assignments

Ms. Gormley thanked Assistant Superintendent Phelan and Sean Walsh for their work with Kindergarten assignments. Ms. Gormley reported that there are 354 students registered for Kindergarten next year; there are 304 in the current year. All residency packets will be secured before making Kindergarten classroom assignments. Next week assignments will be made for 1st grade French Immersion and English students and Ms. Gormley will be meeting with 1st grade parents to go over the range of options. Questions and/or comments from the School Committee included:

- For incoming Kindergarten students, do you reaffirm that they are still in Milton? Mr. Phelan replied that he, Sean Walsh, and the elementary staff reexamined all folders and sent letters to every family with a checklist of what was missing from their packet. Every folder has been reviewed for updated information and accuracy.
- Can we assume that there will be no changes made to the French Immersion program for next year? Ms. Gormley replied that there will be no change. The French Immersion and English programs will run at every elementary school.
- If one elementary school is over-subscribed, is it a lottery as to which students are asked to move? Ms. Gormley replied that the procedure for moving students is clearly stated within the student assignment plan which can be found on the website. The first students to move are those who are new to the Milton Public Schools. The next students to move would be those students who may be in the Milton Public Schools but do not have siblings.
- The disparity between French Immersion and English class size is an issue that was brought up at the last meeting. Ms. Gormley replied that she is working on a proposal that can be addressed at the Finance Subcommittee meeting on Thursday and presented to the full School Committee at a future meeting.

5. Chairman's Report

Ms. Sheridan stated that representatives from the School Committee attended many senior events within the last week (High School Awards Night, Honors Night, Boosters Dinner and Graduation). The screening committee for the Tucker Principal has presented three finalists to the Administrative team. Ms. Sheridan thanked Bev Quinn for her help in this process. With regard to the Facilities

Subcommittee, Ms. Sheridan reported that the solar panels should go up at Milton High School this week.

6. Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly reported that the Finance Subcommittee met last Tuesday and discussed fees. They will bring their final recommendation to the full School Committee at the next meeting. The Finance Subcommittee also discussed the end of the year process and Ms. Kelly stated that Paul Hilton is coming back to assist with this. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday morning.

7. Health and Safety Subcommittee Report

Ms. Sheridan stated that Ms. Bagley-Jones is not present to report on the Health and Safety Subcommittee.

8. Old Business

There was no old business to discuss.

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items

- Fees
- Student Assignment
- Speech requirement update
- School Choice – Ms. Gormley stated that Ms. Sheridan and Mr. Huban agreed to table this discussion until September.

A motion was made to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and litigation and not to return to Open Session and to adjourn directly from Executive Session.

Move: C. Huban

Second: B. Lovely

By a roll call voice vote the Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and litigation and not to return to Open Session and to adjourn directly from Executive Session.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.