

**Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
June 16, 2009**

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

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent

1. Meeting called to order at 7:40 p.m.
2. **Approval of June 16, 2009 Agenda**
Ms. Kelly suggested that a summer meeting schedule be discussed either tonight or at the School Committee retreat. With the Committee's consent, Ms. Sheridan approved the agenda of June 16, 2009.
3. **Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-Residents may speak for up to 3 minutes)**
No one came forward to speak.
4. **Approval of Minutes**
The minutes of the April 30, 2009 School Committee meeting (Open Public Budget Hearing) were approved.
Move: M. Kelly
Second: B. Lovely
Vote: 5-0-0

The minutes of the May 19, 2009 School Committee meeting were approved.
Move: B. Lovely
Second: K. Bagley-Jones
Vote: 5-0-0
5. **Superintendent's Report**
Superintendent Gormley explained that every year in communities across the state the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents recognizes the individual who is at the top of his or her class by presenting them with a Certificate of Academic Excellence. As Superintendent of the Milton Public Schools, Ms. Gormley proudly presented this Certificate of Academic Excellence to Milton High School senior Kassi Stein. Ms. Stein was the first in her class of 250 students and will be attending Northeastern University in the fall to study Bio/Medical engineering. The School Committee expressed its pride in Ms. Stein's accomplishments and wished her well in her college career. Ms. Stein was also accepted to Wellesley College, Columbia University, Brown University and Harvard University.

Speech Requirement

During a discussion at the last School Committee meeting regarding the speech requirement for graduation, the School Committee asked whether the speech requirement should be waived annually or if it should be eliminated as a graduation requirement. Ms. Kelly had expressed her concern at that meeting that she felt it was important for students to be exposed to public speaking (doing presentations, participating in debates, etc.). As a result of this concern, Dr. Drott was asked to follow up on this

matter to insure that public speaking was part of a student's regular curriculum. Dr. Drottar reported that he spoke with department heads and they agreed that public speaking is interwoven into the regular classroom curriculum.

A motion was made to eliminate speech as a graduation requirement at Milton High School.

Move: G. Pavlicek

Second: B. Lovely

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Gormley reported that grade 1-5 classroom assignments will be listed on report cards. Next week every Kindergarten parent will receive a letter with their child's school assignment and classroom assignment. Mr. Phelan is completing phone calls to families and the student assignment plan is being used to equalize class size. When asked how many children are being asked to move out of their home district, Ms. Gormley replied that between 15 and 20 students will be moving. The first group of children asked to move would be those who are new to the Milton Public Schools; the next would be current Kindergarten students who do not have siblings in the building. With regard to Kindergarten class size, Ms. Gormley reported that the Administration is firming up Kindergarten registrations packets and trying to decide if another Kindergarten classroom will be necessary. The goal for Kindergarten classrooms is not to go over 22 students. Ms. Gormley stated that she will continue to work on this with the Finance Subcommittee and will bring a proposal to the full School Committee before any decision is made.

Ms. Gormley also reported that class size for French Immersion 1st grade will be between 26-28 students; however, these class sizes typically only decrease through natural attrition (students moving out of Milton, etc.). Class size in English 1st grade will be between 18 and 21 students. The goal in the English program is to start smaller so new students entering the Milton Public Schools can be added to these classrooms. Ms. Bagley-Jones inquired about providing an aide in French Immersion 1st grade classes. Ms. Gormley replied that once they have firm numbers for 1st grade, the Administration will discuss the class size policy with the Finance Subcommittee and will come to the School Committee with a proposal. Ms. Kelly pointed out that the class size policy is dependent upon funding and the expectation is that next year's budget will be equally as difficult as this year's budget has been. Ms. Gormley replied that the Administration has not made any commitment to parents regarding classroom aides. Parents have been told this matter is under discussion. Ms. Bagley-Jones suggested that letters also be sent out to incoming grade 9 students informing them of when High School orientation will be held. Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Gormley agreed that the website and an Email Blast could be used to communicate that information. Since classroom assignments are still in fluctuation, Mr. Lovely suggested adding a disclaimer to the website stating that due to budgetary constraints there may be changes made to class assignments due to class size considerations and that parents will be informed as soon as possible of any change.

Other updates from Ms. Gormley included:

- The Administration is negotiating with a candidate for the School Business Administrator position and will have details regarding this position in the near future.
- The screening committee for the Tucker principal position reviewed 50 applications; interviewed 10 candidates and have three finalists. Ms. Gormley and Mr. Phelan interviewed

the three finalists and reference checks will be done this week. Ms. Gormley will keep the School Committee informed before any appointment is made.

- Over 500 students are enrolled in summer programs. Summer Enrichment will be held at Milton High School and the special education summer program will be held at Collicot/Cunningham.
- Last year 304 students enrolled in full-day Kindergarten and 13 students enrolled in the half-day program. For the upcoming school year 340 students have enrolled in full-day Kindergarten and 14 students have enrolled in the half-day program.
- A meeting was held with the custodians to discuss the concept of “team cleaning” for the school buildings.

6. Chairman’s Report

Ms. Sheridan stated that the Volunteer Recognition held prior to this meeting was a great way to end the school year. On behalf of the School Committee, Ms. Sheridan thanked Kristan Bagley-Jones, Bev Quinn, and the Milton High School String Quartet for helping to make this event so successful.

7. Finance Subcommittee Report

Staff Reductions

Per Ms. Kelly’s request, Ms. Gormley reviewed the budget history and stated that it was clearly articulated through the budget process that some staff reductions would have to be made even in the event of a successful override. Ms. Gormley included a sheet detailing the reductions in the School Committee packets for this evening’s meeting. The Committee discussed the reductions and the impact they will have on the Milton Public Schools. The reductions include:

Milton High School

- .5 Librarian (reduction from 1.0 to .5)
- 1.0 Guidance Secretary (elimination of 1.0 of 2.0 secretaries)
- 1.0 Classroom teacher (.2 Wood and Auto, .2 Family and Consumer Studies, .4 PE, .2 TBA (to be announced one the master schedule has been run)

Pierce Middle School

- .5 Librarian (reduction from 1.0 to .5)
- .5 Physical Education Teacher (elimination of .5 position)
- .5 Art Teacher (ACE remains) (reduction from a 1.0 position (retirement) to a .5 position)

Elementary Schools and System-wide

- 4.0 Instructional Aides (elimination of positions)
- 1.0 Facilities Coordinator (elimination of position/duties to existing personnel)
- 1.0 Inclusion Specialist (elimination of position)
- 3.0 Special Education Teachers (elimination of positions). This includes 1.0 Speech (based on IEPs); 1.0 Language-Based Teacher (consolidation of programs based on the number of students); and 1.0 position to be announced.

Ms. Kelly suggested posting these reductions on the website along with an explanation of the impact they will have on the Milton Public Schools.

Athletic Budget

Ms. Kelly stated that the Finance Subcommittee has been working with the Administration on the athletic budget and the recommended increased fee proposal in order to insure that we don't have the same situation we had this year with the amount of fundraising necessary. The total athletic spending plan for FY10 is projected to be \$601,618 and of that \$201,069 comes from the appropriation. There was an increase to the appropriation after the override, and the Administration is recommending that some of that (\$25,000) be put towards the athletic budget. For FY10, it is anticipated that \$234,250 will be collected in user fees; \$39,000 in gate receipts; and due to the fundraising efforts of this year a balance of \$37,000 will be available from the athletic revolving account. Ms. Kelly noted that the fee for athletics will be raised from \$200 to \$250 and the fee for hockey was raised to \$500. It is projected that fundraising events will raise \$15,000 at a fall Walkathon (September 2009); \$4,000 at a fall Talent Show; \$30,000 in outside banner sales; and \$25,000 in a golf tournament fundraiser. Ms. Gormley commented that having to fundraise approximately \$75,000 is much more reasonable than this year's amount of approximately \$140,000. Ms. Gormley also reported that there will be a fundraising meeting on Tuesday, June 23, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. at Milton High School for anyone interested in being involved in next year's events. The Committee thanked the Finance Subcommittee, the Administration, and the Athletic Director for preparing this information regarding the athletic budget. It was requested that the documents regarding athletics be posted on the website.

Clubs and Activities

Ms. Kelly reviewed the FY10 proposed fee schedule and read it aloud for those watching. The fee schedule will be as follows:

- Full Day Kindergarten \$3,100
- Integrated Pre-School \$1,000/\$2,000/\$2,500 (depending on the number of days attended)
- Milton High School Pre-School program \$900
- Milton High School Athletics \$250 per sport; \$500 for hockey
- Milton High School clubs and activities: \$50 per club with a cap of \$150 per student
- Pierce Middle School clubs and activities will be a one-time fee of \$75 (students can join as many clubs as they wish); the PASS program will be \$100; and to join both PASS and other clubs the fee would be \$150
- Transportation \$210 for shuttle/\$350 for all other
- Alternative Evening Program \$500
- Applied Music Program \$50 Registration per session/\$10.50-\$20.00 per lesson

Ms. Gormley encouraged any student unable to pay these fees to speak with a teacher, guidance counselor, athletic director, coach, etc. Ms. Sheridan requested that the family cap for athletic fees be added to the schedule. The family cap for athletics is \$1,200 and \$1,400 for those playing hockey. After this edit is made, the Committee requested that the FY10 Proposed Fees be posted on the website.

Motion was made to approve the FY10 Proposed Fee Schedule as presented.

Move: B. Lovely

Second: G. Pavlicek

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Kelly added that the Finance Subcommittee will also review rental fees and make a recommendation to the full School Committee. Ms. Sheridan stated that the Facilities Subcommittee had worked on rental fees last year and would be happy to do that again.

8. Health and Safety Subcommittee Report

Ms. Bagley-Jones provided the Committee with minutes from the Health and Safety Subcommittee's May 7, 2009 meeting. She stated that the updated Wellness Policy will be given to the Policy Subcommittee for review. The Health and Safety Subcommittee is continuing its discussion regarding the cuts made to the health education program and Ms. Bagley-Jones suggested the possibility of seeking grants in this area. Ms. Bagley-Jones thanked everyone involved in the Health and Safety Subcommittee for their hard work and voiced her appreciation to the new partnerships that have been formed. Ms. Gormley stated that four parent forums will be scheduled for next year due to the positive response from parents this year. She agreed with Ms. Bagley-Jones that the new partnerships formed as a result of this subcommittee have been a valuable asset for the Milton Public Schools.

9. Communications Subcommittee Report

Ms. Sheridan stated that the majority of the goals of this committee have been accomplished. The Communications Subcommittee, therefore, will cease to exist and the improvements made will be maintained throughout the school system. Ms. Bagley-Jones stated that the initial goal of this committee had been to assess and suggest ways that both the School Committee and the School Department could improve their written, verbal, and technological communication to and with the general public. These goals have been accomplished through better use of technology; the development of a district-wide calendar and E-Newsletter, the new and improved Milton Public Schools website, and by improving communication with the media. Communication between Central Office and residents (phone calls returned promptly) has improved as has the communication between the School Committee and residents. Also, the School Committee and the Administration clearly communicated budget information to residents and to other town departments. Some areas of concern that people would still like addressed include the French Immersion/English issue and the reductions to art, music, and health education. Ms. Gormley thanked Ms. Bagley-Jones for her dedication to improving communication. Ms. Gormley added that in September a subcommittee will be formed to look at the issues regarding the French Immersion and English programs and many parents have already volunteered to participate. The School Committee also extended its sincere appreciation to Ms. Bagley-Jones for her commitment to the Communications Subcommittee.

10. School Building Committee

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the last few items of work are being addressed on the various projects. At Collicot/Cunningham a guard rail on the roof needs to be installed, a ramp in the basement needs to be re-engineered, and the solar panels will be the last item to be done. At Pierce there are still some landscaping issues to be completed and at the High School there is some duct work on the roof that needs to be insulated and water-proofed. The work on the historical photos of the old High School and Middle School buildings and the narratives by John Cronin are in progress for the new High School and Middle School auditoriums. Mr. Pavlicek stated the School Building Committee will continue to meet once a month possibly to the end of this year. Ms. Gormley mentioned that the work on the solar panels at the High School started today and should be complete within 2-3 weeks. The School Committee and the Administration extended special thanks to Laurie MacIntosh and Sustainable Milton for their work with this effort. When asked how much money was currently in the insurance fund, Mr. Pavlicek replied that there is approximately \$1,000,000 in that fund (a self-insurance fund) and it may be one more year that the money has to sit in anticipation of any claims.

11. Old/New Business

In response to Ms. Kelly's suggestion that the Committee discuss a summer meeting schedule, Ms. Sheridan asked that Committee members review their schedules and this can be discussed at the School Committee retreat. Ms. Sheridan stated that the retreat will give the School Committee the opportunity to review the last year and to set goals for the coming year. She asked that School Committee members email her if they have any items they would like discussed at the retreat.

12. Next Meeting Agenda Items

Mr. Lovely mentioned that the Weight Room at the old High School had been named in memory of Skip Lapworth. Although the Weight Room at the new High School is named after Coach John Reardon, some people would like to insure that Skip Lapworth's memory is continued in some way at the new High School. Mr. Lovely asked that Ms. Gormley speak with the Athletic Director and coaches to see how this could be done. Mr. Lovely would like to discuss this matter at the next School Committee meeting.

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

Move: B. Lovely

Second: G. Pavlicek

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.