

Minutes of the Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Library
June 8, 2011

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Denis Keohane, Vice Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Mary Kelly, Leroy Walker

Not Present: Kristan Bagley-Jones

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

Call to Order

Mr. Pavlicek called to order the June 8, 2011 meeting of the School Committee at 7:02 P.M.

Approve Agenda

The June 8, 2011 meeting agenda was approved after the following changes:

- 1) addition of the approval of the minutes of the May 18, 2011 meeting,
- 2) addition of an update on the plans for Milton's 350th anniversary celebration, and
- 3) clarification that the acceptance of grants in the Finance Subcommittee report will be action items requiring a School Committee vote.

Citizen Speak

No one came forward to speak to the committee.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the April 27, 2011 minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Walker

Second: Keohane

Vote: 5-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the April 27, 2011 minutes of the Reorganization Meeting of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Walker

Second: Keohane

Vote: 5-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the April 27, 2011 minutes of the School Choice Open Hearing

Move: Walker

Second: Keohane

Vote: 5-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the May 18, 2011 minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Keohane

Second: Walker

Vote: 5-0

Superintendent's Report

Appointments

Ms. Gormley introduced Dr. Joseph Arangio, who will serve as Principal of Milton High School for a one-year interim until a long-term hire is made. Ms. Gormley explained that the principal search was held late in the spring, and the screening committee was unable to identify a strong candidate for the position. As stated by the Superintendent, Dr. Arangio, a former MHS principal, has high standards for teachers and students and will be a great addition to leadership team. While serving as principal at MHS, Dr. Arangio participated in the design of the new high school building. He has a wealth of experience, which includes leading successful, high-performing high schools, participating in NEASC, and working in the principals' program at the Harvard School of Education. Ms. Gormley anticipates a seamless transition and is confident MHS will be well prepared for the NEASC visit in October. Dr. Arangio, who received a warm welcome from committee members, said that he was delighted to be back. He stated that Milton and MHS were special to him and expressed his appreciation for the community's support for the new buildings, which gave teachers a huge morale boost.

Title I Coordinated Program Review

The Superintendent introduced Martha Sherman, Coordinator of English/Language Arts Grades K-5 and Title I Director, who reviewed for the committee the Title I portion of the state's Coordinated Program Review results. Title I is a federal program which designates funds to school systems based on the state census. Ms. Sherman explained that per the Title I regulations, Tucker has been designated a "targeted assistance school" based on the socioeconomic makeup of the students. 26% of Tucker students receive reduced fee or free lunch, the highest percentage of all the Milton schools. Systems are required to rank order their schools by the highest need and dedicate Title I funds to that school. The threshold for 'schoolwide' as opposed to 'targeted' assistance is 40% of students identified as needing assistance. Title I funds provide academic support (e.g., tutoring and extended day programs) in reading and math. Milton receives roughly \$60K in Title I funds, which are currently spent on 1.5 designated Title I teachers, who must give a full accounting of their time used to provide Title I services.

Ms. Sherman reported that the Title I review—which included 30 criteria used by the DESE to evaluate the compliance of the district in meeting state requirements—was generally positive. Of the 30 items, Milton has been asked to provide revisions to four, two of which are related to policy language, and two of which require better documentation of teacher time and effort spent in providing Title I services for payment of stipends from Title I funds. Ms. Sherman stated that although the deadline for the submission of corrective actions to the state is mid-October, she plans to complete the process by the end of the summer.

Ms. Kelly recommended that there be online information about the Title I program and services. And Ms. Sheridan reiterated that the free and reduced lunch application form is available on the MPS Web site home page. In response to a question from Mr. Keohane, Ms. Sherman stated that, in her experience, Milton has always qualified for some Title I funds. Ms. Kelly noted that other comparable communities seem to receive larger grants.

Ms. Gormley thanked Ms. Sherman for her work and attention to detail, which resulted in an excellent report card for Milton's Title I program.

Yearly Fundraising Update

The Superintendent invited Steve Traister, Athletic Director, and Matt Gillis, School Business Administrator, to the table to report on the results of this year's fundraising activities for athletics and clubs. Prior to the report, Mr. Traister updated the committee on the successes of the MHS teams this spring.

Fundraising is a significant piece of the overall athletic budget. As stated by Ms. Gormley, the MPS has consolidated a myriad of small fundraising initiatives into three main annual events and counts on these events to fill the gap in what the general fund and user fees can provide and the remaining needs of the programs. As stated by Mr. Gillis, the Athletic Department revenues come from three main sources: a revolving fund (users fees, donations, gate receipts), a student fund (team fundraising), and the general fund. He reviewed the FY11 actual revenue and expenditure line items, reporting that they had come very close to budget this year. He projected that the athletic program could sustain itself this coming fiscal year with the current level of fundraising, most likely without touching the beginning balance of the revolving fund of roughly \$70K.

The Superintendent recognized the support of the Boosters in the maintaining the athletic program. She also sent out appeal for a parent volunteer to chair the successful banner sponsorship program, one of the significant fundraising efforts.

School Happenings

Technology Plan

The Superintendent reported that the DESE had approved the technology plan for FY12 submitted by Mr. Pattison, the MPS Information Technology Director.

Enrollment Update

Mr. Phelan reported that the final amount of the state grant for full day kindergarten has not yet been determined. According to Ada Rosmarin of the Milton Early Childhood Alliance, both the Governor and House of Representatives support level funding the grant. The Senate, however, seeks to cut \$2 million from the program, which would translate to a cut of roughly \$15K for MPS.

Mr. Phelan then presented current enrollment figures for kindergarten and first grade. Ms. Gormley recognized the hard work of both Sean Walsh and John Phelan during the process of registering and placing the students. April 29th was the deadline for submitting

the registration materials for kindergarten. As it stands now, there will be a total of 14 kindergarten classes with 21-22 students per class next year. Only four-five families opted for half-day kindergarten, and those students will attend their district schools, leaving midway through the day. The administration plans to have aides in every kindergarten class for 80% of the school day. The fee for full day kindergarten for FY12 will be \$3,300.

For first grade there are a few small English classes of 13-14 students at Glover and Cunningham. The administration anticipates that these numbers will move up over time, with attrition from the French program and new students enrolling in the district who will be placed in these small classes. The administration is also currently reviewing the impact on class size of the plan to cut a grade 5 teacher at Collicot/Cunningham. Ms. Gormley will present a proposal to address this concern at the next Finance Subcommittee meeting. She hopes to have a final plan for a School Committee vote at the next scheduled meeting prior to the beginning of the new fiscal year. The additional grade 5 teacher would provide flexibility for a shared class where students from French, English, and inclusion programs could be grouped together for certain subjects. Mr. Phelan stated that the administration was projecting class sizes to be in the 27-28 range without the added teacher. As stated by Ms. Gormley, this is a priority issue. Ms. Gormley also emphasized, in response to a question from Ms. Kelly, that the administration is in continuous communication with parents about class sizes.

Ms. Kelly noted that the school budget is evolving, and that potential net gains from retirements, for example, might provide some cost savings. She stated that the budget process is an ongoing evaluation of needs, and the administration is always looking for opportunities to fund more positions. Ms. Gormley stated that as soon as the enrollment numbers are firm, the information would be posted on the MPS Web site.

Other Events

- Ms. Gormley expressed her thanks to John Savino and Michelle Nabi, this year's student representatives to the School Committee.
- She went on to report that graduation week had been a huge success, and the graduation ceremony was phenomenal and powerful; Ms. Sheridan thanked the parent volunteers who organized and chaperoned the all-night party.
- The Milton PAC is hosting a reception in the Collicot/Cunningham library to welcome Karen Clasby, the new Administrator of Pupil Personnel, and to thank Dr. DelVal for her service last year.
- The Fuller Village "Salute to the Arts" event raised \$5K, which will be divided between the art and music programs at all levels.
- The reception for volunteers was held June 7th; guests included partners from Fuller Village and the Forbes Museum.

- The MPS summer enrichment program has enrolled over 500 students in regular programs, 200 students in sped programs, and 60 students in the Title I program—roughly 900 total students will be participating this summer.
- Mr. Keohane gave an update on the CREW program. There are currently 16 students who have signed up. The group anticipates having 32 crew participants by the fall, based on student interest. A number of activities have been planned to build the team, including events at Townsend’s Restaurant in Hyde Park and a cookout at Milton Landing.
- FAVA advocates for art in the school are renting the East Milton Library for student and adult art classes this summer. They are hosting a fundraising event at First Parish for the art classes; the group has aggressive plans to enrich Milton community with art activities.
- *South Shore Living* magazine has highlighted the Milton Public School’s Food Service.
- The MHS PTSFO is hosting an informal reception for Dr. Drott on June 14th in the front entrance of school.
- Milton Hospital has made a grant to the MPS.
- The Milton Players performance of the *Wizard of Oz* was a great success.
- Unity Day for was held June 7th for fifth graders to begin the transition to Pierce Middle School next year.

Elementary Specialists Schedule

Ms. Gormley reported on the tentative scheduling of specialists for next year’s elementary students. She will have the elementary principals discuss the plans in further detail at a later meeting. The plan includes:

- one 30-minute period of PE each week
- one 30-minute period of music each week
- library period every other week, in order to exchange a librarian for an art teacher

The administration is working on a proposal for K-3 students to receive art instruction for 30 minutes per week; art for grades 4-5 would increase to 45 minutes per week.

Band and strings will be held during recess period, which is not ideal. Ms. Kelly would like to brainstorm about pros and cons of other options for bands and strings, for example, holding sessions in before- and after-school periods. There is concern children will drop out of these programs.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported on the reception held in honor of this year's retirees from the MPS and recognized their contributions. This year's retirees are: Joanne Bonner, Hugh Bonner, Gracie Burke, Denise Doyle, Dr. John Drottar, Phil Genatossio, Patricia McDonald, Gerard Schultz, Christine Shaw, Rebecca Warner, and Dr. Susan Whalen.

School Committee Subcommittees

Mr. Pavlicek presented the list of School Committee subcommittees and membership composition based on member input. In subsequent discussion, the School Committee requested changes in some of the subcommittee titles to better reflect the purpose of and type of representation necessary for each subcommittee. Ms. Sheridan removed her name from the Policy Subcommittee, which was oversubscribed and represented a quorum of the membership. Mr. Pavlicek still needs a committee member, who is available during business hours, who can be authorized to sign-off on payroll.

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to approve the proposed list of School Committee subcommittees and memberships.

Move: Walker (pending changes requested by the committee)

Second: Sheridan

Vote: 5-0

School Building Committee

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to spend the roughly \$75K remaining in the account of the School Building Committee for capital improvements, i.e., the ductwork and roof work which may exceed the recent town appropriation. As stated by Mr. Pavlicek, the Finance Subcommittee has deemed this to be a reasonable use of the funds.

Move: Walker

Second: Sheridan

Vote: 5-0

The committee briefly discussed the status of the funds placed by the Building Committee in escrow in an owner-controlled insurance policy. The amount of the fund is substantial, and the committee has yet to receive information on the balance, as well as advice about how such monies can be spent. A representative from the insurance company has been contacted. Mr. Pavlicek stated he would invite Mr. Cichello to a subsequent meeting to give further details about this issue.

Ms. Sheridan updated the committee on the plans for the celebration of Milton's 350th anniversary. There are a number of subcommittees working on this year-long event, culminating in a celebration June 9-11, 2012. Ms. Sheridan is seeking volunteers from the community to participate in the planning and hopes to involve everyone. A link to the 350th committee can be found on the Town of Milton Web site:

http://www.townofmilton.org/Public_Documents/MiltonMA_BComm/350th/350thevents

Ms. Sheridan requested that the MPS post the link on its Web site as well. As part of the fundraising effort, the Forbes House will be hosting a tea once a month for \$15 per person, a portion of which will go to the celebration activities.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Ms. Kelly moved to approve the May 2011 Expenditure Report.

Move: Kelly

Second: Walker

Vote: 5-0

Ms. Kelly moved to approve the list of MFE funded individual teacher grants totaling \$14,960. Per Ms. Kelly, the MFE grants fund variety of interests and schools. She thanked the MFE for the tireless fundraising and the hard work involved in reviewing teacher applications.

Move: Kelly

Second: Sheridan

Vote: 5-0

Ms. Kelly moved to approve a grant of \$2K from FAVA to be used toward the purchase of smart boards in the art classrooms. She thanked FAVA for the grant.

Move: Kelly

Second: Walker

Vote: 5-0

Facilities Subcommittee

Ms. Sheridan updated the committee on the system-wide effort to increase efficiencies in lighting and energy use. According to Mr. Gillis the MPS has realized almost \$1 million in savings from this initiative.

Mr. Gillis reported that the contract negotiations were moving forward for the solar panel projects.

Next Meeting Agenda

Mr. Pavlicek reminded the committee about the retreat scheduled for next week. The date of the next School Committee meeting is to be determined.

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion 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: ?

Second: Kelly

By a roll call voice vote, the School 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.