

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School Cable Access Studio
Date: January 18, 2017

Committee Present: Leroy Walker, Chair, Dr. Kevin Donahue, Vice Chair, Sheila Varela, Margaret Eberhardt, Dr. Elaine Craghead.

Not Present: Ms. Bagley Jones

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent of Schools; Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business, Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources

Call to Order

The Chair called the January 18th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:01pm

Mr. Walker introduced Dr. Karen Spaulding, who brought a few members of the Pierce Players cast. They will be performing "Aladdin," at the Pierce Middle School. After a brief performance, some members of the cast took questions from the School Committee.

Next, Coach Tom Shaw came with members of his team to talk about the recent Cross Country season. The team won the Divisional Championships, as well as States and All-States. He talked about the team motto "expect the unexpected," and praised the girls for supporting one another throughout the season.

Approve Agenda

The committee approved the agenda after moving Item 5a up to before the Superintendent's report.

Chair's Report (one item moved up)

Topic One: NESDEC Enrollment Projections (Attachment). Donald G. Kennedy, the Director of Planning with NESDEC came to give enrollment projections. Dr. Kennedy talked about enrollment from 2006 to 2026. Enrollment has been relatively flat from 2006 to 2015. He says a "sea change" is coming. The presentation can be viewed by visiting this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/NESDEC.pdf> Dr. Kennedy said there is a pattern beginning in 2011, showing a steady increase. 80% of growth is K-5. 186 students in the last 5 years in K-5. Dr. Kennedy said he cannot think of another district in New England that has such a robust number of new Kindergarten students, with the possible exception of Lexington. He noted that fewer elementary aged children are going to private/parochial schools. Dr. Kennedy also talked about Milton home sales. Even the other communities with strong school growth haven't seen the median home prices soaring. People want to be here and it is likely because of the schools.

Dr. Craghead asked about the rapid rise in home sales. Where is the tipping point? Won't it become cost-prohibitive to enough people so that the numbers then go down? Dr. Kennedy said it is hard to predict where the tipping point is.

Dr. Donahue asked about how reliable the data may be and was told it is plus or minus 1%. Dr. Donahue noted, as we become increasingly competitive with the private schools, we'll have to keep an eye on the numbers. Ms. Gormley noted that the chart shows when the numbers of students went down during the school building project. We knew that would happen. We know when two local private schools opened a 6th and 7th grade program, the numbers would drop.

Michael Sullivan (student rep) asked about the median sales prices and wondered if the figures took into account inflation? Dr. Kennedy said that no, they don't take into account inflation. To get a true historical analysis, you want to adjust for inflation.

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: Web Based Communication and Educational Technology Strategy Update (Attachment) Ms. Janet Sheehan reported that 100% of all teachers are now using web-based communication. Teachers are exceeding expectations and are using a variety of tools. Ms. Sheehan said the new teacher contract removes the language of "Edline" and noted that 100% of teachers are posting homework. Mr. Walker said this is a much better picture. Ms. Craghead said she's concerned about the disparity of 20% at Glover and 80% at the Tucker.

Dr. Burke came on to give a presentation. Digital literacy plan. To view the presentation, click here: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/DigitalLearningUpdate.pdf>

At the conclusion of the presentation, Dr. Craghead asked about the rollout. Dr. Burke said she would like to see the high school add the parent portal in Sept of 2017. Ms. Varela asked if Edline be around for two more years at the elementary schools? Ms. Burke said she can't change the platform without union approval. Ms. Sheehan said there has been language in the contract for a number of years for web-based communication. Any changes would have to be negotiated. Ms. Gormley said the pilot at the high school has been great. Mr. Walker said this is maybe too rosy a picture. Regarding the parent communication, we need to find a way to help parents help their kids. How can we support parents in that way? Mr. Walker said we have to go back to the point that each of the School Committee member made. "How do we communicate with parents electronically, now?" The question that the School Committee would like answered is how do we get to 100% electronic communication with parents now. No more presentations, no more handouts. He would like this answered by Feb 15th. He also asked if the Standard Based report card allows for electronic sending? Dr. Burke said that we print and hand out, but there is the capacity to email them out. Mr. Walker asked why do you have to run another pilot at Pierce? Dr. Burke said we are prepared in August, to let it be the "go." Mr. Walker asked Ms. Gormley to keep the School Committee informed about whether or not Pierce will hold a pilot.

Topic Three: 2017-18 School Year Calendar. Ms. Gormley said she speaks with Interfaith Clergy about the religious holiday and this was mutually agreed upon. Dr. Donahue moved acceptance of the 2017-18 school year calendar.

Move: Dr. Donahue

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 4-0-0 (Mr. Walker left the room)

Topic Three: Curriculum and Parent Engagement Strategies for Addressing Prejudice and Insensitivity. Ms. Sheehan spoke (handout) about what the schools are doing in the areas of Cultural Competency Ms. Craghead said that we need to make sure the parents can see what's going on. Ms. Gormley said she'd put the parent engagement information in the Superintendent's Eblast, with a link for additional info.

Happenings: Ms. Gormley said Aladdin will be presented tomorrow night and Saturday afternoon. Also, the Wildcat Wellness Center Grand Opening is Tuesday, Jan 24th. Also, K Info Night is upcoming. Elementary Science Fairs are coming up. In the next few weeks, the School Committee will be presenting the FY 18 budget presentations at each of the schools.

Ms. Eberhardt noted that she and Ms. Varela attended the MLK presentation.

Finance Subcommittee:

Topic One: Dr. Craghead presented Vendor Warrant #28 dated Jan 12, 2017 for 419,036.19 and moved to approve.

Move: Dr. Craghead

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 4-0-0 (walker left room)

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The next meeting is with Warrant Committee and Board of Selectmen, which will deal with some of the issues being discussed by the finance subcommittee.

Chairman's Report (Items 5B AND 5C, continued)

(Mr. Walker returned to the meeting.)

Mr. Walker said he would like to commend Ms. Gormley regarding her goals. He asked her to look carefully at the work we had done and our goals, and to do her best to track with our goals. If you look at one she has provided, they match almost perfectly. He also noted that if you look at the breadth and scope of the challenges, she deserved all of our credit and more. Ms. Gormley is an extraordinary asset to this district and the town. To view this goals, visit this link:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/SuperintendentsGoals2016-2018.pdf>

Mr. Walker moved to approve these goals.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 5-0-0

Ms. Gormley then said she worked closely with School Committee on her goals. She thanked them for feedback.

Next Meeting Agenda Items (continued)

Ms. Varela urged the public to pay attention to announcements about budget presentations.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiation strategy for non union personnel and security adjourn directly from Executive Session and not return to Open Session.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Dr. Donahue

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:50pm.