

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
January 23rd, 2013

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair; Mary Kelly (arrived late), Kristan Bagley-Jones, Leroy Walker, Becky Padera.

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the January 23rd meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:06 pm

The chairman asked for a moment of silence for Joe McMann, a longtime youth basketball volunteer.

Approve Agenda: The agenda was approved after members agreed to add a vote on waiver of speech requirement under the Superintendent's Report. They also moved to move Items B and C under Finance Subcommittee to the next meeting. Finally, Mr. Walker requested a discussion of a card access system be added to the Executive Session, as well as a vote.

Citizens Speak: Andrea Synnott spoke about Grade One assignment. She requested that the deadline for the wait-list expiration be extended to the first week of school. She also asked that "provisional seats," be given to children who enter the French lottery for a spot in their home school. She also stressed that the lottery should be very transparent and accountable.

Superintendents Report:

Topic One: Annual Walkathon. Ms. Bagley Jones, Maureen Griffin, and Milton High students came to the meeting to generate interest in the annual Walkathon, being held on Saturday, February 9th. They thanked Mr. Jette and other individuals for helping to get this off the ground.

note: Ms. Kelly arrived at 7:35 pm.

Topic Two: Milton High School Program of Studies and Professional Development Day (Attachment) (Vote) Principal James Jette and Assistant Principal Michelle Kreuzer, along with Milton High School Business and Technology Department Head Courtney Walsh and Pierce's Math Curriculum Coordinator Life Legeros came to discuss Milton High School's program of studies. Mr. Jette started by thanking the school committee for the new collaborative time at Milton High, as part of professional development. The team then went through proposed changes to the program of studies. They stressed

there would be no impact on graduation requirements and no additional monies. The courses of macroeconomics and microeconomics have been merged into Introduction to Economics. There were several other course changes, AP Spanish Literature course will be deleted. One of the more significant changes regarded the math program. For incoming 9th graders, they will reduce math from 4 levels to 2 levels and are adhering to a new math sequence recommended by the state.

School committee members asked questions of the team about the program of studies especially the math changes. They asked if there were opportunities for students to “jump ahead,” and were told there were. Ms. Kelly noted that this new sequence is “raising the bar,” for all students. Ms. Bagley Jones was concerned that struggling students may not be interested in taking summer “bridge” courses to keep up with the course work. She also asked about class sizes.

Mr. Legeros said all Milton students will benefit from this new approach, and will be exposed to a higher level or rigor. He said this “ambitious” plan puts Milton on the cutting edge for math curriculum. Members praised the team for their work on the math presentation. The chairman entertained a motion to approve the program of studies.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Mr. Walker

Discussion: Ms. Kelly asked what the budgetary implications are and was told it was “budget-neutral.”

Vote: 6-0-0

Next, the chairman entertained a motion to waive Speech as a high school graduation requirement for 2013-14

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Discussion: Ms. Kelly would like to permanently remove Speech from the graduation requirements. Also, there was discussion about the “Technology Essentials” course. It was explained that this is a course for all incoming Freshmen to teach the basics of what they’ll need in high school regarding technology.

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Three: A Technology Plan was presented by Technology Director Bob Pattison and John Phelan. Mr. Pattison noted that he had looked into the computer loan proposal and found that most schools are in the same situation as Milton, in that computers are being used until they no longer function, so there are none available to “loan.” He then went on to discuss the Smartboard plan and outlined how many boards each school would need to be 100% equipped. Cunningham needs five; Collicot needs three and Pierce needs 22. He also explained how handheld tablets are kept secure. Regarding the technology plan, he made edits to pages 7 and 8 about benchmarks and percentages. Edits suggested by the school committee were incorporated into the

document. School committee members asked questions about the distribution of Smartboards, and Ms. Bagley Jones suggested that a Smartboard demonstration be scheduled for a future meeting. Members also suggested adding a timeline and prioritized lists. Mr. Walker requested a monthly report on Edline usage by each teacher. Mr. Phelan pointed out that, while Edline use is strongly encouraged, it is not a contractual requirement. Ms. Gormley said she would work with the leadership teams to make this a priority. The chairman then entertained a motion to approve the technology plan.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Kelly

Discussion: Ms. Padera asked that the phrase "Type AB Students" be changed to "Type AB computers."

Vote: 6-0-0

Happenings: Ms. Gormley noted that the upcoming E-Blast will list the Happenings.

** note: Because Chief Wells and Sgt. Richman were in attendance, the chair requested that the executive session portion of the meeting be moved up. He entertained a motion to change the order of the agenda to go into to Executive Session for the purpose of security discussions. * * *

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Mr. Walker

Vote: 6-0-0

Next the chair entertained a motion to go into executive session, to return to open session immediately thereafter.

Move: Mr. Kelly

Second: Mr. Walker

Roll Call Vote: unanimous

Open session adjourned at 9 pm, to be reconvened after executive session.

Open session resumed at 10:20 pm, and the chairman entertained a motion to support the allocation of a remaining School Building Committee funds to make security improvements to the schools; and to ask the School Building Committee to allocate funds for that purpose.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Discussion: Ms. Kelly asked how much the appropriation would be. The chairman informed her it would be \$65,000.

Vote: 6-0-0

Next, the chair entertained a motion to authorize the chairman and superintendent to enter into an agreement with the vendor, Technical Systems, to install a card access system in Milton Public School buildings.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Discussion: Ms. Kelly asked if the card access system would be for all schools. Mr. Walker explained that it would include 14 doors; four at MHS and PMS and two each at the elementary schools.

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Two: RFQ/ Legal Counsel Update: The chairman noted that there were three finalists, all of whom were interviewed last week, but no vote has been taken. Ms. Sheridan moved that the school committee enter into an agreement with Joseph Emerson to represent the Milton School Committee as legal counsel.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Discussion: Mr. Walker said that he planned to vote "no" because he wanted an opportunity to access a legal firm with a broader client base, more robust resources and more creative ideas about approaches with unions. Ms. Kelly said she agreed with Mr. Walker and believed it was time for a change. Both agreed that Mr. Emerson had served the district well.

Vote: 3-2-1 (Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Pavlicek and Ms. Padera in favor; Mr. Walker and Ms. Kelly opposed; Ms. Bagley Jones abstained.)

Finance Subcommittee Report

Topic One: FY14 Cut/Reduction List (Attachment) (Vote) The cut list was presented, noting that this year, the difference was that the School Committee prepared "advancement initiatives" as part of the budget. As usual, there are mandated costs. The budget request will be \$38,379,680. A level-dollar budget would mean a budget reduction of \$2.9 million. A level-dollar plus \$1.5 million would mean \$1.4 million in reductions. The chairman went over the list of cuts, which he said could "decimate the system." The report included Level One cuts and Level Two Cuts, resulting in a possible 20.8 FTE reductions. Ms. Gormley noted that a staff meeting was held, to apprise them of the potential cuts. There are also plans to increase fees for transportation, preschool, summer school, music lessons, athletic user fees, etc. There was discussion about the details of the Cut/Reduction List, with Mr. Walker saying he was troubled by the strategy to cut some of the supports required to meet the goals of the advancement budget. He plans to vote against the list. There was further discussion as to any potential changes that could be made to the cut list. Ms. Bagley Jones requested a prioritized list. It was agreed that some changes could be made after the next Warrant Committee meeting. The chairman suggested that the conversation regarding cuts and/or changes to the list will continue at the Saturday meeting and beyond.

Facilities Report

This was deferred to the next meeting.

Old Business -- Citizens Speak Topic response. Mr. Walker responded to Ms. Synnott, who spoke at the start of the meeting. He said she had some interesting points that should be considered as part of the Grade One Assignment Policy.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Budget items will be added.

Citizen Speak - Round Two.

Nobody spoke at this session.

The chairman deferred the other items from Executive Session to another meeting and moved to adjourn.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 pm.