

Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
February 6, 2013

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

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 meeting at 7:08 pm.

Approve Agenda: The committee voted to approve the February 6th, 2013 agenda with two edits: Removal of Item 5a (Celebration for Education report); and Item 8 (Health & Wellness Report)

Citizen Speak: Tom Piatt came with "Milton for Peace," to talk about budget issues.

Approval of Minutes: The chairman entertained a motion to approve two sets of minutes.

January 9, 2013 (Attachment) Vote

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Mr. Walker

Vote: 5-0-0

January 22, 2013 (Finance Subcommittee/School Committee Meeting)

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Vote: 3-0-2 (Ms. Sheridan and Ms. Bagley Jones abstained)

Superintendents Report

Topic One: Milton Foundation for Education came to talk about Wireless Infrastructure. Don Greene, MFE Board member, and Margaret Eberhardt, MFE President spoke to the School Committee. Ms. Eberhardt talked about how they had developed a 'wish list' with the administration. One of the items was wireless infrastructure. They reached out to other institutions who had already installed wireless, including Milton Academy, Curry College, Milton Hospital, etc. They developed a plan and will have all six schools with wireless capability by September. With the help of Bob Pattison, the infrastructure is being put in place. It will be fully funded through a partnership with the Copeland Foundation. No taxpayer money was involved.

Topic Two: Cunningham Site Council Presentation (Attachment) Principal Jonathan Redden, teacher representatives Roberta Williams, Janis Gordon, Bernadette Moonan; and parent representatives Jeanne Connelly and Stephanie O'Keefe were in attendance. Mr. Redden began by presenting a PowerPoint, which showed teachers in action, parent involvement, technology in use, development of 21st century skills, etc. The use of iPads in the LEAP and STEP classrooms; as well as Kindles, and other technologies, was discussed by Ms. Moonan.

** Mr. Walker left the meeting at this point *** (approximately 7:50)

Mr. Redden discussed how Cunningham uses technology for showcasing student work.

** note: Ms. Kelly arrived at this time (approximately 7:55 pm) ***

Mr. Redden continued to talk about student engagement and student achievement. Ms. Moonan called the literacy libraries "a teacher's dream come true." The site council also talked about enrichment opportunities and Reader's Workshops. Ms. Sheridan congratulated Mr. Redden and the site council on the presentation. Other school committee members commended the work of the council. Ms. Kelly asked if the online plan-books are only for Cunningham staff. Mr. Redden said yes, but that other schools have expressed interest and he will assist in set-up. Ms. Moonan answered questions about "Donor's Choose" -- a grant-based website where donors can give money to fund a variety of projects. Many MPS teachers have received money through this program. To view the entire presentation, visit:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/Feb6CunninghamSitecouncilPDF.pdf>

Happenings: Ms. Gormley noted that tomorrow night is Program of Studies night. Saturday is the Walkathon, weather permitting. The Tri-M induction ceremony will be held on the 14th and Travis Roy will come to Milton at the end of February.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Pavlicek noted that the Chair of the warrant committee said they're worried about the weather and Saturday may have to be cancelled. Also, he took a moment to thank Matt Gillis, who was attending his last School Committee meeting. The chairman also talked about what effects "sequestration" at the federal level could have on the budget.

Topic One: The chairman said the Contract Negotiations Team needs to be formed. It requires three or fewer members. Mr. Pavlicek and Mr. Walker are both willing to serve.

Topic Two: Town Finance Meeting Update: On January 28th, there was a town-wide finance group's quarterly meeting on the financial state of the town. The chairman said the main topic was revenue projections for the state.

Topic Three: Mr. Pavlicek attended the Suburban Coalition Meeting recently in Newton. Analyzed the budget, where the House might come out of it. They discussed the idea of increasing the income tax and decreasing the sales tax as proposed by the Governor.

Topic Four: Master Plan Committee Meeting Update: About 100 people came out to this recent meeting in Milton. Citizens worked on maps of town, compiled wish lists, etc.

Because Mr. Walker had not returned, Ms. Kelly asked if the Finance Subcommittee report could be moved to after the Policy Subcommittee report. This was agreed to.

Policy Subcommittee Report

Topic One: Policy JFAA, Residency Policy, First Reading (Attachment) (Vote) Ms. Sheridan noted that this is first reading. Ms. Kelly asked for clarification on whether it is the school's job or the parent's job to provide complete school records. Mr. Phelan explained that, while schools help, it is ultimately the parent's responsibility. Ms. Kelly asked if this is replacing the old policy and Mr. Phelan said it was. Ms. Kelly recommended the committee rescind the old policy.

Topic Two: Policy JGA, Grade One Assignment, Re-approval (Attachment) (Vote) This policy was adopted on January 9th meeting, but two very slight changes have been made. The chairman entertained a motion to re-approve the policy.

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Discussion: Ms. Kelly to add the word "be" in bullet 2 on page 2 so that it reads "would voluntarily be leaving their home school." She also asked to add a period at the end each of the four bullet points under "Lottery Order". She also asked for a clarification of Point 4 on Page 1, and asked for an example. Mr. Phelan gave one, but Ms. Kelly did not think the policy was clear. Mr. Gillis suggested the wording: "continue to prioritize school assignment for siblings in a particular school building, however siblings would not have priority for a program." Ms. Padera asked for clarification on provisional seats, and Mr. Phelan explained that everyone is assigned to a seat in their home school, which is why the school-based lottery is important. In addition, Ms. Kelly wanted to know when the lottery needs to be held. She referred to item #3 on the second page. She asked if we need a second round of cut-offs? Mr. Phelan explained how the current K as of March 1 is the first round of lottery. At the end of June, folks will move in from March 2 until the end of the year. These students will now be in a second lottery if it's needed. There could be a third phase which could be held at some point before the 10th day of school. Ms. Kelly suggested inserting "the initial lottery," into the language under "Lottery Detail", so that it reads "The initial lottery will..." With those accepted as friendly amendments, the chairman called for a vote.

Vote: 5-0-0 (Mr. Walker absent)

** note: Mr. Walker returned to the meeting (approximately 8:40 pm)

Finance Subcommittee Report:

Topic One: FY14 Cut/Reduction List (Attachment) (Vote) Ms. Kelly introduced the reductions list. Ms. Bagley Jones noted that at the most recent finance subcommittee meeting, it was decided that the committee did not have enough information before the Saturday meeting to vote. Ms. Gormley noted that some School Committee members also agreed to wait for a final vote, pending the warrant committee recommendations. Ms. Bagley Jones talked about reductions on Page 7. She requested that if the committee voted to reduce or reinstate, it was equally divided between music and visual arts. Ms. Kelly expressed concern about not having a quorum at the warrant committee meeting, since taking a vote may be required. Mr. Pavlicek noted that there may be enough members for a quorum.

No vote taken.

Topic Two: FY14 Fee Schedule (Attachment) (Vote). Mr. Gillis explained the fee schedule. Of the \$200,000, about 70% would be in new revenue. He explained why some fees are higher. They are considering reducing the Summer Enrichment program to 4 days, with parental support. Regarding the athletic fee, Ms. Gormley noted that an increase would “close the gap” in the athletic budget, but not entirely fund the program. Fundraising would still be necessary. Ms. Bagley Jones objected to raising the athletic fee and worried that student/athletes would be “out-priced,” from sports and clubs. She also objected to eliminating the Child Study program. Mr. Walker said all the School Committee members are “agonizing” over the cuts and asked for other suggestions on where to cut the budget. He then moved to approve the Fee Schedule as proposed.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Kelly

Discussion: Ms. Kelly worried about using revolving funds to offset the budget. Ms. Kelly then asked to separate the athletic fee increase from the rest of the fee schedule. Mr. Walker did not accept as a friendly amendment, so Ms. Kelly then made a motion to divide it. There was then further discussion about athletic fees. Ms. Padera said she would like to see what other districts charge for sports/activities.

Move to Divide the Fee Schedule: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Bagley Jones

Vote: 5-1 (Mr. Walker against)

The chairman then called for a vote on the Fee Schedule without the Athletic Fee component.

Vote: 6-0-0

The chairman then called for a vote on the Athletic Fee Schedule

Discussion: Ms. Gormley noted that the last time the School Committee raised fees was 2010. Also, even if the fees are raised, it does not solve the budget shortfall.

Vote: 4-2 (Ms. Kelly and Ms. Bagley Jones against)

Old Business Citizen Speak Topic Response: none

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Effects of sequestration, Health & Wellness report.

Citizen Speak: none

The chairman moved to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss Negotiation Strategy for Non Union Personnel/Administrative Contracts; and to discuss negotiation strategy for collective bargaining, not to return to Open Session, but to adjourn directly from Executive Session.

Move: Walker

Second: Sheridan

Roll Call Vote: Unanimous.