

Minutes of the School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High Library
May 23, 2012

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Vice-Chair Lynda-Lee Sheridan (Ms. Kelly and Mr. Walker arrived later)

Not Present: Kristan Bagley-Jones

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

Because there was not a quorum, the school committee meeting was not called to order. However, the members who were present decided to allow two “recognitions” by the Superintendent. Pierce Principal James Jette introduced Emily Posse and Al Lenz. Emily, a seventh-grader at Pierce, placed sixth overall in the Regional Spelling Bee held at Lantana’s in Randolph. Al Lenz competed in the Regional Finals of the National Geographic Bee in Worcester recently, where he placed in the top 20 overall. Ms. Gormley presented each student with a plaque.

Call to Order

With the arrival of School Committee Member Mary Kelly, the Chair called the May 23rd meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:19 pm

Approve Agenda

The committee approved the agenda after removing Item 5c (the presentation from the bullying advisory committee). Also, Item 7a (third quarter financials) does not require a vote. However, Item 12a (contract negotiations) does require a vote. Ms. Sheridan asked to move Item 8 (the Facilities Subcommittee update) to be heard during the Superintendent’s Report.

Vote: 3-0

Citizens Speak

No one came forward for Citizens Speak

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to approve the following minutes of the Milton School Committee.

a. Minutes of April 25, 2012 Reorganization Meeting

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Ms. Kelly

Vote: 3-0

b. Minutes of April 25, 2012, Regular School Committee Meeting

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Vote: 3-0

c. Minutes of May 2, 2012, School Choice Public Hearing and Regular School Committee Meeting

Move: Ms. Sheridan

Second: Mr. Pavlicek

Vote: 2-0-1 (Ms. Kelly Abstain)

d. Minutes of May 7, 2012, School Committee at Finance Subcommittee Meeting

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Vote: 2-0-1 (Ms. Sheridan abstain)

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: William Ritchie, Consolidated Facilities Director

i. Robert Mayhew, Operations Manager for the Consolidated Facilities was introduced. Mr. Mayhew was appointed about a month ago. He has 25 years of experience in Operations and has previously worked with the Cardinal Cushing school. The Consolidated Facilities is a new department in town and is responsible for maintenance of 22 buildings and 900,000 square feet of space.

** Note: Mr. Walker joined the meeting at 7:26 pm. ***

Topic Two: Facilities Subcommittee Report:

Ms. Sheridan updated the committee on the energy savings which has been achieved through the efforts of Mr. Ritchie and Mr. Gillis. This year, there has been a significant decrease in electric consumption -- nearly 10%. The use of gas decreased 18-22% in consumption. This decrease is due to upgrades in lighting as well as conservation efforts of the staff. Ms. Sheridan announced that Milton High School will be receiving a 2012 EnergyStar rating, which recognizes significant efforts in energy conservation. Mary Kelly commended the conservation efforts and pointed out that the mild weather contributed to some of the savings. Mr. Gillis also spoke about the savings realized through the new solar panels. He reported that at Milton High, in April, we saved 58,000 kilowatt hours. Also, Glover has 600 panels, which are expected to generate 40% of the building's electricity. He estimated that eventually, 25% of our power will come from solar panels.

Topic Three: Bullying Prevention Advisory Committee -- deferred

Topic Four: NEASC Update

- i. Dr. Joseph Arangio, Milton High School Principal
- ii. Yolanda Beech, Milton High School Vice Principal

- iii. Alan Cron, Milton High School Vice Principal
- iv. Dr. Martine Fisher, World Language Director

This group came to update the committee about the work that has taken place since the NEASC process concluded. On May 16th, Dr. Arangio received a letter that NEASC board had voted to grant Milton High reaccreditation. The commission identified a list of "commended" items and also recommends some areas for improvement.

NEASC requested a Special Progress Report, due in February, 2013, providing detailed information on actions to address five areas of improvement. Another report, the Two-Year report, is due in October of 2013. There were 34 commendations in the report and five recommendations for areas to be addressed. Dr. Arangio put together a follow-up committee to deal with the recommendations and each member presented what has been done and what will continue to be done. To view Dr. Arangio's letter or to read the NEASC report, visit this site:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/NEASCUpdate6-4-12.pdf>

Mr. Walker congratulated the team on the accreditation. He asked Dr. Arangio if he agreed with the areas of recommendations made by NEASC. Dr. Arangio said we're not going to go through each to talk about whether we agree with them or not. For example, one area identified was differentiated instruction. He said that every school in America is striving towards differentiated instruction and Milton High has made great progress. The NEASC committee only listed four "deficiencies," and differentiated instruction was one. Mr. Walker asked if he agreed with the NEASC "deficiencies," and Dr. Arangio said some of them he did not agree with. He noted that we have four more years to implement some of these suggestions. Ms. Gormley said, with respect to the NEASC recommendations, "my analogy to parents is, 'how healthy can you be?' and our health is our curriculum. Mr. Walker pointed out that in the recommendation, NEASC recommended the use of data to drive instruction. Dr. Arangio said that in order to fully implement this recommendation, the work would probably have to be done by an outside consultant. This area is one of the few things we can't handle in-house. Mr. Walker said we should pursue this aspect. Ms. Sheridan said we should not leave the impression that data is not currently driving instruction. Dr. Arangio agreed, saying the report requested s "formal, organized" methods. He said Milton High currently uses data, such as MCAS, SAT, AP results, so the data is there. He said NEASC is pushing us to put a greater focus on teacher assessments. Ms. Kelly noted there were many references to "21st Century learning expectations." She suggested that the school committee needs to agree if that is the course we would like to take, regarding the academic expectations of Milton High. Mr. Walker talked about the schedule for assessment, setting goals, both for the superintendent and for the system as a whole and to have this process in place by September.

Ms. Gormley then publicly congratulated Mr. Cron on his appointment as Principal of Rockland High School. She also thanked Dr. Arangio for his year of service as Principal of Milton High School. She congratulated Steven Pierre, student representative to the School Committee, for his time on the school committee and wished him well at Duke University.

Topic Five:

a. Happenings. Mr. Phelan gave a presentation on elementary programs. To view this presentation, visit this website:

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

Mr. Phelan discussed the work of the World Language Committee, which released a report in the Spring of 2010. At that time, they created the “alternate assignment” plan, which designated a fixed number of classes per school in French and English, and the creation of an “auxiliary” class to accommodate program choice. However, because of current enrollment trends, the model is difficult to sustain. Enrollment in English for incoming first-graders has dropped from 56% in 2007-8 to 34% for the current incoming class. The result has been single strands of English classroom, which has several effects, including limiting flexibility in classroom assignment, fewer role model students for co-taught classrooms and high class size in French Immersion classrooms. Other issues include a limited pool of qualified French-speaking, elementary-certified teachers, organizational inconsistencies, etc.

Next, the prospect of Lottery/Capping of French Immersion was discussed. This was one of two viable options proposed by the World Language Committee. They concluded that capping the program would be necessary if enrollment trends continued. Results of Capping: Enrollment in the English program would increase. Single strands in the English program would be eliminated. Increased number of English classrooms optimizes the school's ability to heterogeneously assign students. Therefore, the recommendation of the Superintendent is to cap the French Immersion program enrollment in the 2013-14 school year. Ms Gormley said the next step is to communicate this to the incoming Kindergarten families, as well as other MPS families. Ms. Gormley reiterated that we value both programs and we are committed to both programs. This solution is designed to ensure the future of both programs.

Mr. Pavlicek asked about some details of the capping, such as: would it be done school by school? How would the lottery work?

Ms. Kelly noted that any future discussion regarding how we assign programs should be part of the agenda. She asked for a variety of data, such as: what are the percentages of IEPs and 504s in the English programs? What are the gender breakdowns? How have current third-graders in French been affected by larger class sizes? Where is the data on the co-taught models? She thinks the data will best inform the committee on how to change student assignment.

Ms. Sheridan asked questions about the timeline and Mr. Walker agreed that the committee needs to given reasonable advance notice. He noted that we are trying to solve a problem and by doing so, should not create 3 or 4 others. Ms. Kelly requested a class size report for all grade levels and noted that the School Committee needs to vote to approve or reject a cap. Mr. Walker asked for performance data on boys/girls in English as well as boys/girls in French, including MCAS data for all 12 years. Mr. Phelan pointed out that this data would need to be compiled by hand. Mr. Walker then asked for a “statistically significant representative sample.”

b. New Appointment.

Mr. Phelan announced that there has been an appointment made at the Middle School. He said there were 119 applicants for the position of Assistant Principal/Math Curriculum coordinator. A screening committee of faculty and staff chose Life LeGeros

for this position. Mr. LeGeros comes to us from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, where he oversees the mathematics targeted assistance team as the Director of Statewide Mathematics Initiatives.

Ms. Gormley announced that they have formed the Pierce Principal Screening Committee, which is underway. She then reminded any parents who have not yet registered for Kindergarten to do so.

She commended Pierce Middle School for a successful Career Day and announced that Pierce Players would be performing Pinocchio on May 31st at 7 pm. Other upcoming events include the Senior Awards Night, Boosters Banquet, Senior Prom and Graduation. Also, the next School Committee meeting will be held June 6th, preceded by a Retiree Reception from 6 to 7 pm. On June 13th, there will be a volunteer reception prior to the School Committee meeting. The last day of school will be on June 13th.

Chairman's Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) have announced the winners of this year's awards. Both of the Milton School Committee's nominees, Ada Rosmarin and the Copeland Family Foundation, were recipients of the 2012 awards.

Topic One: Interim School Committee Selection Process. The chairman said that anyone interested in the open School Committee seat should send a letter of interest by Friday, May 25th. So far, there are four candidates. School Committee members discussed the best way to interview and screen candidates. It was proposed that the School Committee schedule a meeting for June 13th at 7:30 pm to interview the candidates.

Move: Mr. Walker

Second: Ms. Sheridan

No vote necessary

Members also agreed to draft a packet for prospective School Committee members on what is involved in the appointment. Mr. Walker will draft questions for the interviews.

Topic Two: 350th Anniversary Committee Update. Ms. Sheridan announced that the "Big Event Weekend," is only two weeks away. She outlined the events of the weekend, including the fireworks, the all-MHS reunion and the parade. She also asked if School Committee members would like to March in the parade and they agreed they would.

Finance Subcommittee

Topic One: Third Quarter Financials. Mr. Gillis gave a brief overview as to the state of our finances through the third quarter. To view this presentation, please visit this website: <http://www.miltonps.org/documents/AprilExpReport.pdf> He explained that in the 3rd quarter, that the district has expended 66% of total funds. He said we are on target for the year. Ms. Kelly thanked Mr. Gillis for his work.

Citizen's Speak: none

Next Meeting Agenda Items:

Mr. Walker asked at a previous meeting to add a Drug & Alcohol Abuse Presentation to the next meeting. Also, Ms. Gormley asked to add another presentation with edits for First Grade Assignment. The Bullying presentation will be added in September.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with AFSCME Custodial Union and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not return to Open Session

Move: Ms. Kelly

Second: Ms. Sheridan

Roll Call Vote: 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:02 pm.