

Minutes of the School Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Milton High Library  
November 7, 2012

**Committee Present:** Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Vice Chair; Mary Kelly, Leroy Walker, Becky Padera,

**Not Present:** Kristan Bagley Jones, Student Rep Acacia 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 November 7th meeting of the School Committee to order at 7:07 pm

The chairman asked for a moment of silence for Claire White, wife of Bill White and Jackie Morgan, also Francis Sorgi and Alice Walsh, mother of Brian Walsh.

### **Approve Agenda:**

Add Margaret Gibbons to Item 5a; add item C (Middle School Sports) and Item D (Math & Science) to the agenda; also add item 6E (MASC) to Chairman's Report; remove item 8; remove item 10H. With that, he declared the agenda approved.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to approve the minutes of the Milton School Committee of September 19th.

**Move:** Sheridan

**Second:** Kelly

**Vote:** 5-0-0

### **Citizens Speak**

There were no speakers.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Topic One: NEASC Presentation (Attachment). Principal James Jette & Margaret Gibbons came to speak on the response to the NEASC report as pertains to the deadline of February 1st, 2013. Mr. Jette asked every department to prioritize the list. In addition, NEASC outline a 1 year, 2 year and 3-5 year sequence of recommendations. The collaborative time recommendation is already underway, after a vote of the SC. In addition, he said the high school faculty is "on our way" with at least 10 of the other recommendations. He suggested we develop a proposal to start publicizing early

release days, beginning on January 9th. He went through each of the recommendations and updated the committee on what is being done to achieve the goal.

Ms. Kelly noticed that there are seven items on the list and asked if those were arrived at by the Milton High faculty, are they done by every school in the nation and Mr. Jette replied in the affirmative. She also wanted to know if this is the document that will give the big picture, and he said yes.

Ms. Gibbons noted that all the teachers are on board with all of these initiatives. She described it as a business plan. It is being reviewed; they've polled the market (student) and they are prepared to tweak it. The teachers appreciate that you're supportive. They realize that this is important.

Mr. Walker said he liked the characterization of this as a business plan. He complimented Mr. Jette by saying this is, by far, the most clearly articulated presentation on where we're going, timeline, and what we expect. There was further discussion about the presentation and Ms. Gormley pointed out that Mr. Jette has taken a seminar on NEASC procedures. Ms. Kelly asked the administration if we can bring this the 21st Century learning expectations to school committee for approval, as a matter of process? She asked how is this fitting together? From the school committee perspective, how is this being coordinated? Mr. Phelan said he curriculum coordinators came to be sure that things are articulated from grade to grade.

Topic Two: Pierce Middle School Sports. Dr. Karen Spaulding, Pierce Middle School principal, talked about how the Pierce has always tried to engage students after school. Chess club, drama, school newspaper, etc. Mr. Phelan noted that we have intermittently provided some sports to try to compete with other schools. He described a recent effort, with support from Mr. Walker, Steve Shapiro of Pinnacle Learning, Steve Traister, along with funding from the MFE. They have tried to formalize interscholastic sports at PMS at no cost to the district. This is a self-funded proposal, with a nominal user fee. Would like to provide, in this school year, boys and girls basketball; spring track team for boys and girls and next year, cross-country in the fall. Ms. Sheridan asked, we do rent out the middle school gym, and if so, would this interfere with the basketball program? Ms. Gormley asked Dr. Spaulding to talk about feedback from parents, which she described as “overwhelmingly positive.”

Ms. Kelly said this is an exciting idea. But, she said she has been looking at #s and she's having trouble understand them. She asked questions about the costs, fees, and the number of students, what league, etc. She described a “club gap,” and expressed concern that we haven't bridged that gap yet.

Mr. Walker also said he is excited about this proposal. We have been talking about this for quite a while now, and this is a perfect example of how a good idea can come to fruition. Dr. Spaulding said that for the first season, basketball will just be 8th grade sport. Track, however, will be for all grades. Ms. Kelly said we have to be creative or we have to be cautious when it comes to introducing new programs.

Topic Three: Pierce Middle School Math & Science enrichment. Dr. Spaulding described how there are enrichment programs for art (ACE), music (honors chorus) and now, athletics. She then described a new math/science enrichment program called ISTEM (Investigations in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) which would be

targeted to students with an aptitude for these subjects. The class would be offered to students who placed in the Advanced category on the most recent math MCAS, and these students would be asked to give up one of their exploratory subjects to take this class. There was discussion about how to assess the success of this course; and whether it should be offered to all students. Mr. Phelan said that, since the course is an elective, and it is in its pilot year, it would be best to offer to a selected group first. This program would also be offered at no cost to the public. Members congratulated Dr. Spaulding on this initiative.

Topic Four: MCAS Presentation (Attachment). Assistant Superintendent John Phelan talked about the new accountability data being used by the state to measure MCAS results. The AYP designation is being replaced with a new value called PPI, which stands for Progress & Performance Index. Based on the Spring 2012 MCAS, the Milton Public Schools have attained Level One status, which is a significant achievement. The goal now is to reduce proficiency gaps by half by 2017. This is the charge for each district, each school, each student and each subgroup. There was discussion about the new system, including how extra credit works. He previewed a chart which showed how Milton compares to other Bay State League towns, and other comparable districts. Ms. Kelly noted that the new PPI system is more reflective of student growth.

Mr. Walker said he's feeling a sense of urgency about the African American subgroup, the gap between African American/Black and white subgroups in Science, and the Tucker school's gap in proficiency in both Math and ELA, compared to the other three schools. He asked to hear a strategy for dealing with the achievement gap from the administration. Ms. Gormley pointed out that it not a Tucker-specific issue and said she will bring the plan to an upcoming meeting and that it will be a child-by-child approach and include benchmarks every month.

Topic Five: Happenings. Ms. Gormley reminded everyone about the upcoming conferences, the "Milton Reads" event and the 350th Anniversary Gala.

## **Chairman's Report**

Topic One: Superintendent's Evaluation: School Committee members took turns giving their evaluations of the superintendent. Ms. Padera went first, and noted the strong results in the AP program, as well as the district's Level 1 status. She commended the superintendent on setting strong goals, providing organizational stability to French Immersion; introducing STEM and working to introduce more extracurricular activities.

Ms. Sheridan praised the superintendent for building strong relationships, continuing to increase student achievement; her work on the NEASC accreditation; her leadership on building and advocating for the MPS budget; and strengthening the image of the Milton Public Schools.

Ms. Kelly called Ms. Gormley "the CEO of Milton Public Schools" and applauded her work ethic. She specifically praised her visibility at town events; her constant communication; and her ability to recognize and praise achievement in others. She also recognized Ms. Gormley's leadership abilities and noted that the community and the students reap the benefits of her leadership.

Mr. Walker said he agreed with the other speakers and commented on Ms. Gormley's energy. He said there is much to be proud of on the goal of increasing student achievement, but noted that he would like to see improvement on two issues: the lack of a clearly articulated strategy on NEASC response and also a strategy for dealing with the achievement gap. Regarding the goal of strengthening the image of MPS, he noted that a better job could have been done on the discussion of the First Grade Enrollment Plan. He thought it should have gone a little faster and been more transparent. He also would like to see more education in the area of drug and alcohol abuse prevention.

Mr. Pavlicek noted that in other town departments, the respect for Ms. Gormley as the leader of the school system is "incredible: and described her leadership of the Milton Public Schools as something she "was born to do." He said he would incorporate the School Committee members' comments, along with a written evaluation submitted by Ms. Bagley Jones, into a document to circulate to committee members.

Topic Two: Request for Qualifications: The committee put out an RFQ for legal services last month and the chairman said they feel it's a good idea to do this periodically. He would like to assemble a screening committee to go through the responses and come back with recommendations and asked for 3 or fewer members to serve. Mr. Walker and Ms. Kelly expressed interest. Ms. Gormley asked to be on the subcommittee and Ms. Sheridan said she might also be interested.

Topic Three: Town Request for Municipal Audit per Town Government Study (Attachment) (Vote) The Board of Selectmen voted to request this for the town and there is a 7-8 month wait. The selectmen asked if Mr. Pavlicek would co-sign a letter of request on behalf of the schools. Mr. Walker moved to authorize the chair to sign the letter for a financial management review.

**Move:** Mr. Walker

**Second:** Ms. Sheridan

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Topic Four: 350th Anniversary Update: Ms. Sheridan noted that this might be her final update from this committee. She described the final Gala Event on Nov. 17th, with appetizers, pasta, music and dancing.

Topic Five: MASC resolution. During the last meeting, there was on resolution that was not voted on because it was left out of the booklet. This resolution, proposed by MASC board of directors, asked that all members of governing boards be elected representatives of member school communities. There was some discussion about the merits of this recommendation. Mary Kelly moved to authorize the School Committee's representative to vote against this measure.

**Move:** Ms. Kelly

**Second:** Mr. Walker

**Vote:** 2-3-0

\*The motion did not carry, so Mr. Pavlicek recommended that Ms. Padera use her best judgement to vote as she sees fit.

### **Finance Subcommittee:**

Topic One: FY12 EOY Report. Ms. Kelly made a motion to recommend the full committee approve the submission of end of year to DESE.

**Move:** Ms. Kelly

**Second:** Mr. Walker

Discussion: The chair clarified the motion to read: move to authorize chair to sign the EOY report on behalf of the school committee.

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Topic Two: Capital Committee/Technology Proposal (Attachment) Mr. Walker moved to approve the technology capital request and submit the revised memo to the capital planning committee.

**Move:** Mr. Walker

**Second:** Ms. Sheridan

Ms. Kelly asked if this document could be posted on the website. Also, Mr. Walker asked to post the facilities spreadsheet.

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Topic Three: FY13 Proposed Transfers/FY13 Budget (Attachment) (Vote) Ms. Kelly asked Mr. Gillis to talk about the "big bucket" transfers. Mr. Gillis provided more detail, for example, budgeting for the strategic plan. Ms. Kelly suggested taking the budget transfers on the final page of this document and apply it. She then moved to apply the budget transfers listed on the FY request summary to the current year's budget.

**Move:** Ms. Kelly

**Second:** Ms. Sheridan

Discussion:

Ms. Kelly said she would like to "vote the buckets." Mr. Walker said they voted a bottom-line only. He suggested they take the chair's motion to approve the transfers.

Ms. Kelly said normally, when the SC votes budget, they usually vote categories. While a bottom line has been budgeted, she does not have the summary buckets. The chairman clarified that he thinks Ms. Kelly would like to vote the seven bottom lines.

Mr. Gillis said that he believes Ms. Kelly is asking for a style point, to provide what's normally called the "cover sheet," with seven categories. He agreed to provide the cover sheet for the next meeting. Mr. Walker noted that the committee voted a bottom line and they had some idea about how those categories were funded. Ms. Kelly thought perhaps the discussion should be tabled. Mr. Walker asked to vote the transfers and Ms. Kelly agreed. The chair reminded the committee that there was a motion on the floor to vote the transfers contained on the final page of the document.

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Topic Four: Negotiations with Power Company/Solar Panels (Attachment) (Vote) The chair noted there has been an impasse in negotiations with the current off-site solar company and he recommends the committee move to the second-highest bidder. He entertained a motion to terminate negotiations with Borrego Solar for the offsite solar project due to impasse over terms in the contract and to move to enter into negotiations with the next-ranked proposer, Sage Stone, LLC.

**Move:** Ms. Sheridan

**Second:** Ms. Kelly

**Vote:** 5-0-0

**Facilities Subcommittee Report:** Mr. Gillis reported how the schools have made use of a Green Communities grant to make many energy-saving improvements. This should save the MPS between 2 - 3% on energy consumption, and will save on heat, as well. Also, many of the light fixtures have been changed out to use more efficient light bulbs, which were free as part of the grant.

**Policy Subcommittee Report:** Ms. Sheridan made a motion to postpone this report, and to vote on the entire set of policies below at the next meeting.

**Move:** Ms. Sheridan

**Second:** Mr. Walker

**Vote:** 5-0-0

Topic One: Policy BAA, Evaluation of School Committee Operational Procedures- Propose to eliminate

Topic Two: Policy BB, School Committee Legal Status and Authority, Re-approval

Topic Three: Policy BBB, School Committee Membership and Term Office, Re-approval

Topic Four: Policy BBBC/BBBE, School Committee Member Resignation, Vacancies, Extended Absences and Unexpired Term Fulfillment, Re-approval

Topic Five: Policy BCA, School Committee Member Ethics, Re-approval

Topic Six: Policy BDA, School Committee Organizational Meeting, Re-approval

Topic Seven: Policy CBI, Superintendent's Evaluation, 1st Reading

Topic Eight: Policy JGA, Grade One Assignment Policy, 1st Reading

## **Old Business**

Citizen Speak Topic Response : none

## **Next Meeting Agenda Items:**

The Next School Committee meeting is scheduled for November 28th. Members asked to add a Policy Subcommittee report and Superintendent goals. Also, the RFQ will be coming up soon, as will budget.

**Citizens Speak (Round 2)** no speakers

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Negotiation Strategy for Non-Union Personnel/Administrative Contracts and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not return to Open Session.

**Move:** Mr. Walker

**Second:** Ms. Sheridan

**Role Call Vote:** unanimous

The meeting adjourned at 10:36 pm.

MD