

Minutes of the Milton School Committee
Regular Meeting
Milton High School
November 30, 2011

Committee Present: Glenn Pavlicek, Chair; Denis Keohane, Vice Chair; Lynda-Lee Sheridan, Mary Kelly, Kristan Bagley-Jones, Leroy Walker, and Steven Pierre, Student Representative

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

Call to Order:

The Chair called to order the November 30, 2011 meeting of the Milton School Committee at 7:04 P.M.

The Chair then requested a moment of silence for Kathleen Mullen, a long-time Milton Public School teacher who recently passed away.

Approve Agenda

Ms. Bagley-Jones requested deferring the Health and Wellness Subcommittee Report to a later meeting, after which the Agenda for November 30, 2011 was approved.

Citizen Speak

Ms. Karen Friedman-Hanna, Co-President of FAME, came before the committee to advocate for the Milton Public Schools' music program. She expressed concern about the impact of potential budget cuts to the music program and asked that the committee take music off the table as a source for budget cuts. She emphasized music's importance in education, describing music as a universal language that is inspirational for everyone.

Approval of Minutes

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the October 12, 2011 minutes of the Regular meeting of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Sheridan

Second: Walker

Vote: 5-0-1 (Bagley-Jones abstained)

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the October 26, 2011 minutes of the Regular meeting of the Milton School Committee.

Move: Sheridan

Second: Walker

Vote: 6-0-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the November 2, 2011 minutes of the Regular meeting of the Milton School Committee. Ms. Sheridan recommended an edit in the name of a health course offering called "The Great Body Shop."

Move: Sheridan

Second: Bagley-Jones
Vote: 6-0-0

The Chair entertained a motion to approve the November 21, 2011 minutes of the Finance Subcommittee where a quorum of School Committee was present. Ms. Kelly pointed out that the Finance Subcommittee format for minutes was different from that of the minutes of the School Committee's regular meetings.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

Vote: 4-0-2 (Pavlicek and Bagley-Jones abstained)

Superintendent's Report

School Happenings

The Superintendent announced the current and upcoming school and community events, including the:

- Cabaret Talent Show to be held on December 1st
- Pierce Shopping Night fundraiser, which is open to public
- Robotics Team competition to be held at North Quincy High School December 3rd
- Winter music concerts to be held during December at the middle and high schools
- Financial Aide Night at Milton High School on December 7th

The Superintendent encouraged the community to check the MPS Web site for numerous holiday fundraisers to support the schools. She also read a letter from the Milton Visual Arts Alliance announcing a holiday event to be held at the Milton Public Library where children would create cards to send to senior citizens. She added that there is a link to all MVAA activities on the MPS Web site.

Ms. Gormley reported that the Pierce and Tucker School Site Council reports would be presented at upcoming School Committee meetings.

Chairman's Report

Superintendent's Evaluation

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to approve the Superintendent's Evaluation as written by him in a letter dated November 2, 2011 and previously circulated among committee members for their input.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

A link to the Superintendent's Evaluation can be found on the Home Page of the MPS Web site in the School Committee Corner.

<http://www.miltonps.org/>

Town Government Study Committee

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the Board of Selectmen had moved to create a committee to study town government and had requested the appointment of a member of the School Committee or School Administration to participate. Committee members questioned whether the school appointee would be there to represent the School Committee or a personal point of view. Mr. Walker volunteered to participate with the understanding that he would represent the full body of the School Committee. Ms. Kelly recommended that the process of discussions in the study committee be reported back to the School Committee, and Ms. Bagley-Jones emphasized the need for input from the School Administration.

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to nominate Mr. Walker as the School Committee's representative to the Town Government Study Committee. Mr. Walker accepted the nomination.

Move: Bagley-Jones

Second: Keohane

Vote: 6-0-0

Report from the MASC Annual Meeting

Mr. Keohane reported on the results of the voting on five MASC resolutions discussed by the Milton School Committee at its previous meeting. All five resolutions were ultimately approved by the MASC. Mr. Keohane stated that the MASC had addressed Ms. Kelly's concern about Resolution 3 regarding charter school funding and amended the resolution prior to the vote. In response to a question from Mr. Walker, Mr. Pavlicek stated that the resolutions would become a part of the MASC's legislative agenda.

Mr. Keohane also participated in a breakout group addressing the issue of obesity in the schools.

Finance Subcommittee Report

FY13 Budget

Mr. Pavlicek prefaced the Finance Subcommittee's Report on the preliminary draft of the FY13 budget by stating that for several years the School Committee has been asked to provide information to the Warrant Committee outlining both level-dollar and level-service budgets. Mr. Pavlicek emphasized that the current revenue forecasts are more optimistic this year, making it less likely that extreme cuts will be necessary. He stated that the current level-dollar budget under review is a worst-case scenario.

Ms. Gormley also clarified that the budget exercise is part of a process, which the School Department takes seriously—the first stage in the Warrant Committee deliberations. The Warrant Committee has requested to see what the MPS would look like with the same number of dollars next year needed to run the schools this year. Per Ms. Gormley, the School Administration has recommended a budget of \$35.7 million to move the system forward in FY13 without adding new positions. A level-dollar budget would result in roughly \$1.7 million in cuts. To eliminate the \$1.7 million shortfall, the Administration found savings in non-salary expenses of roughly \$295K and \$1.4 million in reductions in personnel expenses. The cuts, as stated by Ms. Gormley, would affect all disciplines and

grades and were determined collaboratively by the leadership team in a system-wide analysis.

As reported by Mr. Phelan, cuts in the personnel line would result in the loss of 26.5 FTEs. Each FTE represents an average salary of approximately \$57K. The FY13 draft budget proposal outlines the impact of these cuts in the current school program offerings. The FY13 budget draft can be found on the MPS Web site:

<http://www.miltonps.org/documents/2013ReductionSummary11-30-11SCMeeting.pdf>

In the subsequent School Committee discussion, Ms. Kelly requested more detail on the effect of the cuts in elementary activities and sought clarification on what seemed to be minimal impact on the foreign language program at the elementary level. Ms. Sheridan requested a list of the specific elementary enrichment and remedial clubs and activities that would be eliminated.

Ms. Sheridan also expressed concern about the cut in a high school health teacher. Mr. Phelan responded that the high school would try teach health through the PE program but cautioned that the school system was getting closer to eliminating the health program altogether. In response to further school committee inquiries, Mr. Phelan stated that special education cuts may curtail continuing the language-based program to the middle school. Ms. Bagley-Jones expressed her concern about cuts in intervention and prevention initiatives, which will, over time, increase special education costs.

Ms. Sheridan requested further clarification on the impact of cuts on the high school business offerings and the caseloads of the guidance counselors. Ms. Bagley-Jones emphasized the need to publicize the efficiencies established in school operations over the last few years to save teaching positions.

The committee members recognized that the nine-week budget process had the potential to have a negative impact on the morale of the staff, and thanked the leadership team for taking time to go through the exercise. Members also stressed that they are invested in the success of the public schools and will advocate for full funding. In response to a question from Ms. Kelly about the distribution of teaching cuts among the schools, Ms. Gormley reiterated that the budget deliberations were a collaborative effort involving the Special Education Director, Principals, and Administration. She plans to meet with PTOs about the budget to begin to gather input from the public.

Mr. Walker stated that responsibility now shifts to committee members to advocate for the schools, stating that these aren't cuts we should make. He pointed out how close the schools have been to level funding and stated he hopes the committee members can be advocates for getting the necessary resources. Mr. Pavlicek stated that committee members and parents should press the legislature for increased state funding in January. Ms. Kelly emphasized the need to keep the community informed and maintain transparency throughout the budget process. Ms. Bagley-Jones hoped the message to the public would be carefully crafted to avoid the perception of scare tactics.

After the committee discussion, the Chair entertained a motion to recommend an initial request to the Warrant Committee of \$35,739,719 for a level-service FY13 budget for the schools, accompanied by back-up documentation to support the level-service budget after final clarification of the numbers in the Finance Subcommittee.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

Policy Subcommittee Report

Social Networking Policy

Ms. Sheridan requested committee feedback on the Policy Subcommittee's revisions to the current Social Networking Policy prior to the next meeting on December 14th. She also stated she would send out the current Internet Acceptable Use Policy as a reference.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Pierce and Tucker Site Council reports

Social Media Policy reading

Future topics: revisit goals for FY12

Preliminary meeting with the Warrant Committee December 7th

As there was no further business, the Chair entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Move: Walker

Second: Kelly

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting ended at 9:25 P.M.