

Minutes of the Milton School Committee
Retreat Meeting
Superintendent's Office, Milton High School
July 13, 2011

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

Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:11 P.M.

Approve Agenda

The committee approved the July 13, 2011 agenda after adding an additional item: a review of issues raised at the recent meeting with the Parks & Recreation Department.

Review of Parks & Recreation Department Request

As reported by Mr. Pavlicek, School Committee members and Parks & Recreation Department officials met prior to the School Committee meeting. The focus of the joint meeting was the fee schedule charged to Parks & Recreation by the School Department for use of the field house, gyms, and other school facilities. The fees are collected by the schools and placed in a revolving account to offset the costs of wear and tear in the new buildings. The Parks Department is seeking an agreement with the schools to have all rental fees waived going forward. In FY11, the schools charged the Parks Department roughly \$28K in rental fees and custodial overtime. Mr. Pavlicek stated that the school system has a tiered rental fee schedule and has charged the Parks Department the lowest rate for use of school facilities. The Parks Department officials are willing to continue to pay custodial overtime, but do not want to incur rental fees any longer. Per Mr. Pavlicek, the Superintendent would like to offer the Parks Department free use of school facilities during the week and charge rental fees only for weekend use.

In subsequent School Committee discussion, members reviewed the history of the Parks Department's relationship with the schools and requested further details about the Parks Department budget and revolving fund. There is concern that the Parks Department, which has responsibility for the care and upkeep of the playing fields, is reluctant to increase its own fee schedule, and is consequently running its operations with an unsustainable budget. The Parks Department has stressed that it will charge rental fees to the schools for use of its fields if the issue isn't resolved to its satisfaction. Currently the Parks Department is planning to upgrade the Pierce field for roughly \$60K, covering all costs except for those incurred for irrigation. In exchange, they are requesting a waiver of school facility rental fees into perpetuity. Mr. Pavlicek cautioned that any agreement with the Parks Department would have to be time limited so as not to tie the hands of future school committees.

The committee agreed to wait until they have received details about the Parks & Recreation budget from Dave Perdios to formulate a response. Mr. Walker also agreed to

provide the Parks Department budget and revolving fund information from the Warrant Committee.

The committee then briefly discussed the installation of outside security cameras at Glover and other schools. Per Mr. Pavlicek, other town and community organizations are interested in partnering with the school system to purchase security cameras.

Review School Committee 2011/2012 Calendar

School Committee discussion in response to suggestions from Ms. Sheridan included:

- Formally including the MFE on the agenda in conjunction with the Fall and Spring grant awards in addition to the fundraising events.
- Academic reviews to be added to the schedule pending administration input.
- New teacher evaluation plans as mandated by the state and common core standards to be included, pending input from the superintendent; the state guidelines have not yet been implemented, and changes in teacher evaluations may require impact bargaining.
- Formal recognition of retirees by the School Committee at a School Committee meeting in May, rather than hosting a School Committee reception.
- Continuing the volunteer reception; Ms. Bagley-Jones offered to take a leadership role in helping to organize the event this year to take some of the burden off of the administration.
- The Facilities Report will remain on the agenda for March 2012 to give Mr. Ritchie time to fully assess the situation in his new position.

Ms. Kelly recommended that there be an added meeting before the start of school in late August. The committee members suggested the date of August 29th.

School Committee Goals

Ms. Kelly handed out the policy related to School Committee goals and suggested that the committee think about setting performance standards and expectations for the system outside of federal and state mandates. The committee members agreed that there should be further collaboration with the Superintendent, since her annual goals should extend from their overarching expectations of the system, and must ultimately be adopted by them. The committee also agreed that goal-setting discussions should be held in public, retreat-like sessions prior to the vote. Mr. Walker stressed that the five core values of the school system should be the underpinning of the Superintendent's goals. Ms. Kelly agreed and stated that the core values should be reflected all the way down to the policy level and that the values, goals, and policies should all be interconnected. Mr. Walker recommended that the first step in the process should be a discussion of ideas and concepts from which measurable objectives could be developed. Ms. Bagley-Jones emphasized the need to establish discrete, measurable objectives by which to evaluate the system. Ms. Kelly suggested that the goals be a multi-year plan for the system—building from a question raised by Mr. Pavlicek about where the committee expects to see the system in three–four years.

In further discussion about goal setting for FY12, committee members suggested other topics for consideration:

- Setting/refining performance standards for teachers
- Further refining expectations for students in AP classes—an MPS goal and not a government-mandated standard. (Mr. Pavlicek reported that the passing rate for AP students had gone from 46% last year to 54% this year.)
- Improving customer service for parents and students
- Introducing new ideas for graduation requirements, for example, a course in personal finance in the Program of Studies
- Including goals related to technology in enhancing curriculum, education methods, and student outcomes

The committee also discussed possible ways to streamline the process for signing the weekly warrant—making the warrant schedule concurrent with school committee meetings and making the back-up information available in a timely manner before each meeting.

The committee agreed to meet again, with the Superintendent in attendance, to draft initial ideas for goals. The meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, July 27th.

Mr. Pavlicek entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with Mr. Bill Ritchie for the Director of Coordinated Facilities position and with Ms. Mary Gormley, Superintendent, and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

By a roll call voice vote, the School Committee voted unanimously to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

Move: Keohane

Second: Bagley-Jones

Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 P.M.