

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

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

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 August 30, 2011 meeting of the School Committee at 7:08 P.M.

Mr. Pavlicek then requested that the attendees observe a moment of silence in honor of Emily Ayre, a Pierce Middle School Guidance Counselor, who recently passed away.

Approve Agenda

The committee members approved the August 30, 2011 meeting agenda after 1) deferring approval of the July 29, 2011 minutes to a subsequent meeting, 2) deferring discussion of the School Committee FY12 goals to subsequent meetings, and 3) clarifying that the School Committee had previously voted to approve the contracts for bargaining units C and D, and the chair would therefore report the results of the negotiations to the community later in the meeting—no vote would be required.

Superintendent's Report

Back to School

Ms. Gormley invited Mr. Gillis and Mr. Phelan to report on the myriad of preparations over the summer to ensure a positive start for the school year.

Building Preparations

Mr. Gillis reported that all the buildings had been thoroughly cleaned, and the roof and ductwork repairs were proceeding as scheduled. At Glover School, 99% of the roof has been repaired, and 50% of the external ductwork has been completed. He reported that 50% of the Tucker roof work was finished, and the ductwork was underway. Significantly, the schools had no leaks during hurricane Irene.

Mr. Gillis anticipated that the rooftop solar panel project would begin soon, and the Tucker, Pierce, and MHS projects should be completed by the end of October. Due to a reduction in the size of available rooftop space at Pierce, after an analysis by structural engineers, the projected kWh of electricity production from the project was reduced from 740 kWh to 700-720 kWh. Mr. Gillis thought that the 20 kWh loss would be made up by the planned offsite project, which is somewhat behind schedule. Mr. Gillis stated that the solar panel project would result in an overall 63% savings in electricity costs for the schools, and he emphasized that this was a \$3 million capital project with zero cost to the town. The rooftop solar panels should be fully operational at the year-end, while the

offsite project is still 14-16 months out. The projected FY12 savings are roughly \$90K from the rooftop and \$60K from the offsite projects. Due to the delay in the offsite project, Ms. Gormley recommended, in response to a concern raised by Ms. Kelly, that the Finance Subcommittee come up with a contingency for a potential reduction in FY12 savings. Mr. Gillis stated he hoped to negotiate for a \$60K up-front cash payment from the offsite developers to cover the potential shortfall.

Ms. Gormley reported that the entire staff appreciated the efforts to be green and reminded the community of the savings in non-personnel expenses because of these initiatives. She stated that the companies involved in the solar project were reputable, and Mr. Gillis reassured the committee members that the solar panels were designed to withstand hurricane-force winds. He also reminded the committee that the developers have a financial incentive to keep the panels intact and working.

In response to a question from Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Gillis also reported on the progress of changing out the current light bulbs to LED bulbs, which have a life of 50K hours as opposed to 3K hours. Ms. Kelly praised the extraordinary effort to achieve energy savings, which she hoped would be documented for the community.

Ms. Gormley remarked that the subcommittee process set up by the School Committee worked well—establishing initiatives, setting goals, and coming up with solutions

Staff Orientation

Mr. Phelan shared slides from the staff orientation to introduce and integrate new personnel. His presentation began with the recognition of the work of this year's retirees and a special thanks to the administrative and maintenance personnel for their hard work over the summer months. He also thanked the staff involved in the success of the MPS summer programs, which serviced an unprecedented number of students this year.

As reported by Mr. Phelan, there are 28 new teachers. The majority are replacements for retired and terminated employees and were hired before the end of school—one of the positive results of having the budget process completed early. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Kelly, Mr. Phelan reported the additional 5th grade teaching position to alleviate class size was in place at Collicot. Of the new teaching staff, 20 of 29 have Masters degrees, six have previously worked in the system, and four are MHS grads. He went on to state that the new administrators had been working all summer to get up to speed, as had the new teachers, who had been participating in professional development. The new staff members were introduced to the district, and all teachers received common core training and preliminary information on MCAS performance. Karen Clasby, the new Director of Pupil Personnel Services, spoke to the group about inclusion and learning needs, and a Boston University education professional worked with the group on student engagement.

Mr. Phelan stated he was finalizing enrollments—an exacting process, requiring a number of fully completed documents and a thorough residency review. Some families

who had moved and not notified the administration were required to reenroll their students. Ms. Gormley thanked families for their patience with the process.

Ms. Gormley informed the committee that AYP information would be available in mid-September and that the preliminary results were encouraging. SAT and AP results are pending.

Ms. Gormley spoke about the successful MPS teacher mentoring program, developed under Mr. Phelan's leadership, which she felt was a key to attracting and retaining good teachers. The program empowers teachers to take mentoring roles as a first step in the leadership track. Mr. Phelan stated that the mentors, who are coached by the leadership team and meet once a quarter with him, are passionate about their roles. The leadership team has developed a new teacher handbook, which is helpful and widely regarded.

Ms. Sheridan thanked the administration for the huge amount of work to get the school year off to the right start and said that she had received positive feedback from the community. Ms. Gormley thanked Mr. Gillis and Mr. Phelan for all their detailed planning to ensure a successful school year, which involves, among a multitude of details, collecting bus fees and athletic fees, and a lengthy due diligence to establish residency in Milton. She stated the school administrators were still working around the clock to make sure all students could start on the first day of school. She again thanked the community for being patient.

Ms. Gormley updated the committee on the unfortunate Glover playground fire over the summer. There is an ongoing active police investigation. Glover community members are planning to hold a fundraiser to cover the \$5K deductible cost for restoring the damaged playground.

Ms. Gormley went on to report that enrollment in full-day kindergarten was a success due to informed and involved parents. New kindergartners have appointments to meet with their teachers this week.

Leadership Retreat

The Superintendent summarized the work of the Administrative Retreat held recently at Curry College. During the retreat, the team members reviewed their achievements and discussed what they wanted to focus on in developing district-wide goals—based on the five core values of the MPS—to lay the groundwork for a three-year plan as requested by the School Committee. The team came up with some broad, strategic district goals, which will become the foundation for individual school improvement plans. Ms. Gormley distributed a draft of the broad objectives to committee members and requested that they give their feedback and proposed revisions in the next two weeks.

The Superintendent will then present the finalized goals to the principles and school site councils to add relevant detail after review of the most recent MCAS data needed for planning. Mr. Walker stated that the goals were a good framework and a good start to the

process. Ms. Kelly noted that site council elections should be held soon given the tight deadline for the goal-setting agenda.

Revised 2011-2012 School Calendar

Ms. Gormley presented to the committee a revised school calendar, which includes January 2, 2012 as a holiday as required by the state, pushing the last day of school back to June 15, 2012. The Chair entertained a motion to approve the 2011-2012 School Calendar as revised.

Move: Walker

Second: Sheridan

Vote 6-0-0

Per Ms. Gormley, the new calendar will be distributed this week, and the changes will be noted on the MPS the Web site.

Chairman's Report

Units C/D Contract Update

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the contracts for units C and D had been approved and voted by the committee. The contract is consistent with the teachers' contract, which had been reopened to negotiate a smaller wage increase. The contract for units C and D is a two-year agreement with a 2% wage increase in the first year and a 2.25% increase in the second. The contract now is now in line with the teachers' and synchronizes the negotiation schedules for everyone.

Legal Representation for Cable TV Studio Construction

Per Mr. Pavlicek, counsel representing Blue Hills Regional High School—the MPEG contractor selected for construction of a recording studio in the high school—is the same firm that represents MPS in certain cases from time to time. Mr. Walker and Mr. Keohane both expressed concern about creating the appearance of, or potential for, conflict of interest and recommended that the committee vote to instruct Blue Hills Regional to seek another law firm for representation in this matter. Ms. Sheridan moved to request that Blue Hills Regional seek separate counsel for representation in the contract with Milton.

Move: Sheridan

Second: Walker

Vote: 6-0-0

Consolidated Facilities Report

Mr. Pavlicek reported that the Warrant Committee had met to discuss an article for the Special Town Meeting in November related to the salary line for the newly created Consolidated Facilities Department. He sought School Committee input for the Warrant Committee recommendation. Committee discussion focused on the need for more staffing in the department to ensure that school building needs can be addressed adequately given Mr. Ritchie's increased responsibilities.

Other Business

Mr. Pavlicek also noted that the School Committee should review its policies related to social media due to the rapid changes in that area. He requested that the Policy Subcommittee make sure the MPS policies related to social media are current and meet legal standards.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Mr. Pavlicek reviewed the issues to be covered in the Special Town Meeting, reiterating that the Consolidated Facilities budget would be the most relevant for the schools. Other pending articles are related to Civil Service and authority for revolving funds.

School Building Committee Report

As stated by Mr. Pavlicek, the School Building Committee is winding down, having met with the town's bond counsel, town counsel, and the Town Administrator. The committee is hoping to close out its account of roughly \$70K, which can be used for the school building ductwork replacement project. The Massachusetts Technology Collaborative rebate of roughly \$400K and the remaining monies in the owner's workers' compensation insurance policy of roughly \$615K must be, per DOR rulings in similar situations, returned to the town to pay down interest on maturing debt. In response to a question from Ms. Kelly, Mr. Pavlicek stated that there were two large claims and several smaller ones that reduced the projected amount in the workers' compensation account. Overall, for a project of the magnitude of the school building overhaul, the claims were reasonable.

Ms. Gormley commended the Milton Community for the school building project. In spite of the enormity of the project, school was never closed, which is a testament to parent involvement and resilience of the community. She thanked the Copeland Family Foundation for their significant contribution to the project. Signage and commemorative plaques honoring the important players in the project have been placed in the school buildings.

Mr. Walker thanked Ms. Gormley for her contribution in making Milton the second best place to live in the U.S., referring to a recent ranking in *Money Magazine*.

New Business

Ms. Sheridan explained to the audience that the committee had intended the meeting to be televised live. However, hurricane damage had interfered with the live transmission.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for September 14th.

The Chair entertained a motion to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the custodial bargaining unit and to adjourn directly from Executive Session and not to return to Open Session.

Move: Bagley-Jones

Second: Walker

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.

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.