

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Milton Access TV Studio
January 16, 2019
Time: 7 pm

Committee Present: Dr. Kevin Donahue, Chair; Sheila Varela, Vice Chair; Margaret Eberhardt, Dr. Elaine Craghead, Betty White, Ada Rosmarin.

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm.

Approve January 16, 2019 Agenda

Dr. Donahue requested Guests of the Superintendent item 4a: Pierce Players – High School Musical Jr., be moved ahead of Citizens Speak. He also requested to add an item 6d: Reauthorization of the Milton High School Student Activities Fund be added to the Finance Subcommittee Report

Dr. Donahue moved to approve the January 16, 2019 agenda with Guests of the Superintendent (item 4a) moved ahead of Citizen Speak and with the addition of (item 6d) to the Finance Subcommittee Report.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent's Report, Topic One: Pierce Players – High School Musical Jr. The Pierce Player students introduced themselves and gave summaries of the characters they play in the musical. The performances are completely sold out.

Citizen's Speak – none

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: Draft School Year Calendar for 2019-2020. Superintendent Gormley asked the School Committee to review a draft of the School Year calendar 2019-2020 and provide suggestions and comments between now and the next meeting. The calendar will be voted on at the next meeting.

Chair's Report

Topic One: DRA Presentation (Attachment)

Carl Franceschi presented a review of the slides after feedback and suggestions were incorporated.

Elementary School Enrollments were reviewed. There are 107.5 class rooms in the district now. In the next three years the projections are that a total of 127 will be needed. The ten year projection indicates we will need a total of 133 classrooms.

Pierce Middle and Milton High School enrollment at this time allows for class enrollment that is acceptable, but class sizes may increase slightly in the next 10 yrs.

Short term options were discussed previously but include the following:

1. Do nothing – allow class size to increase
2. Convert remaining art, music, and computer rooms. A wall could be placed in the library to create classroom space. Carve out space in the library and build a wall to create a classroom. Total 3 classroom gained
3. Create Classrooms within the Library/Media centers
4. Utilize existing underutilized spaces in the High School, Middle School, and Cunningham Upper floor. At Glover Elementary the teacher's room can be shifted and 1 classroom can be created. At Collicot there is a music room that can be converted to one classroom, and the possibility to carve one classroom out of the library space. This would add two more classrooms to the school. At Tucker, the art room on the first floor could be converted into a classroom, and the computer room could be expanded to the size of a full classroom.
5. Rent modular classrooms. Up to three modular classrooms can be added to the school on the back side of the gym. The Cunningham/Collicot site has room for four. The Tucker school has room for one modular classroom to be placed at the end of the gym. All the options will decrease play spaces on the school campuses, but will add a total of 8 classes.
6. Rent and renovate space, if possible.
7. Combining two or more strategies above

Long term options include the following:

1. Do nothing.
2. Convert remaining art, music rooms, and libraries. At Glover there is possibility to gain two classrooms by constructing a wall.
3. Construction of new space.
Glover Elementary - There is potential to build an 11 classroom addition towards the rear of the Glover school. This is a low cost option, but this site is already short on space and this would greatly affect the traffic flow and parking availability. Another option for this space is to build an entire second story. This would create up to 18 new classrooms, which would be a huge win for the district, but adds significant traffic to a small site.
Early Education Center – A school could be built to house both Pre-K and K; this would add 26 classrooms. The Town would need to find a site for this project to be constructed. It would provide a district-wide solution with the number of classrooms added. A potential location would be behind the Cunningham/Collicot building but wetlands may be limiting.
5th Grade wing at Pierce Middle School - There is a possibility to construct a new three story addition to the back of the existing school.
Milton High School – By changing the configuration of the road around the school, a building zone can be created on the back side of the Field House that could house the early education center. There would be a separate entrance for the early education program and a separate outdoor play area as well. 26 classrooms could be gained long term.
New free standing elementary school – This school would be approximately 77,000 sq. feet and would include 26 classrooms, four sections per grade, a library, media center, art, music, gym, and cafeteria. Additional items would need consideration, such as space for parking, pick up and drop off, and space for playing fields. Lastly, a site for this project would need to be determined.

Costs for Short Term Solutions. The cost associated with each short term solution ranges anywhere from \$20,000 to \$2.4 million.

Costs for Long Term Solutions. The cost associated with each long term solution ranges anywhere from \$7.5 million to over \$50 million.

Evaluation of Short Term Solutions.

- Converting art, music and computer rooms into classrooms is a low cost option to reduce class sizes. This can be easily utilized as a temporary solution, but will decrease the full potential of art, music and computer programs in the schools.
- Construction of classrooms within the current library spaces is a low cost option but reduces the library space, indirect conflict with goals to expand library use.
- Constructing 3 new classrooms within the upper floor of Cunningham Elementary does reduce class size and maximizes the use of that space, however as previously discussed there are safety concerns. This option carries a higher cost for a gain of only 3 classrooms.
- Renting a total of 8 modular classrooms does reduce class sizes without displacing current educational space, but this is the most expensive short term option. Other cons are the reduction of playground space, and the fact that the modular units are often far removed from the school.

Evaluation of Long Term Solutions.

- Construction of a one story addition at Glover Elementary is the lowest cost long term option but not a complete solution.
- Adding a two story addition at Glover Elementary will provide a partial solution with significant stress on an already very tight site.
- Construction of a free standing early Education Center, at Milton High School will provide a district wide solution with the completion of one project, but the potential conflict with the high school population needs to be considered.
- Construction of a free standing early Education Center, at a site other than Milton High School will provide a district wide solution with the completion of one project, but there are likely additional considerations.
- 5th Grade Addition to the Middle School will provide a partial solution but relocating the 5th graders may not be desirable from an educational standpoint and the logistics are disruptive.
- Construction of a New Elementary School is the most flexible long term solution. It maintains the current grade configuration and will provide a district wide solution with the completion of one project. This is the most costly of all the projects, however, and it is not certain that the town has space for such a project.

Dr. Donahue invited the School Committee to engage in discussion of pros and cons of these options. He also commented that these solutions will require review and discussion with all stakeholders, but the School Committee should start to come to some decisions to move this process forward. Long term solutions will require much discussion with the town, but he thinks the short term solutions can be more internal.

Ms. Rosmarin reviewed a previous analysis of long and short term options that was drafted based on discussions held by the Facilities Advisory Committee and the Leadership Team. In terms of short term solutions, the plan to do nothing was not favorable. Conversion of art, music, and computer rooms was

appreciated as a low cost option but still affects those music programs for years to come and the group is concerned about this. Decreasing library space also presents concerns regarding educational programming. The group felt that renovating the Cunningham upper floor did not yield enough classrooms to be worth the cost and labor involved in converting this space. Renting modular classrooms is an expensive option. One suggestion from many members of the group was that art and music classrooms could be placed in the portable classrooms so children would not spend an entire day in a portable classroom. Lastly, the Facilities Advisory Committee is continuing to explore whether there are spaces in town that can be used as a site for new construction.

Discussion regarding short term options.

Dr. Craghead asked how the estimate for classroom gain in the Cunningham upper floor conversion changed from a gain of five classrooms to only three classrooms.

Mr. Franceschi responded that upon further review of actual usable square footage the number of classrooms was decreased to three.

Ms. Varela commented that a more inexpensive short term solution is favorable because we should focus on long term goals.

Ms. White favors temporarily using the library to add classrooms. She would prefer the focus should be for classrooms to be maximized, and sacrificing the size of the library temporarily to do so is appropriate.

Dr. Craghead is concerned this will be a permanent solution.

Ms. Rosmarin reminded everyone that the younger grades have libraries in the classroom.

Ms. Eberhardt commented that it will be costly to rent modular classrooms, so she does not find that to be an ideal solution. In addition, she commented that the library center is more of a community center, in the sense that there are other uses for the space (after school programs for example).

Ms. Rosmarin asked how the libraries are currently utilized. Superintendent Gormley answered by explaining that before and after school programs, Future Problem Solving, and the English language learners are some of the programs that rely on library space. In addition, there are many providers that do not have office space and because of this use the library for this purpose.

Dr. Donahue added that the lower cost options are attractive. He would rather use money towards interventions that provide long term solutions. Dr. Donahue commented that the choices at this point are to continue to convert classrooms, limited construction (inside the libraries, Cunningham upper floor), and/or finding rental space, class size growth.

Superintendent Gormley commented that special education programs will not expand if there is no room to expand these programs.

Moving on to long term options:

Dr. Donahue reminded that this will have to be a community decision and we will need to get input from stakeholders in the community. This is a first pass at it.

Ms. Rosmarin gave a review of the long term options. The plan to do nothing did not receive positive reviews. Conversion of remaining rooms for long term use was also not favorable across all committees. Glover school additions (options to the front and the back of the school) was not favorably viewed, particularly by the leadership team who had multiple concerns (site overcrowding, parking, traffic and safety concerns, proximity to the brook). The addition of fifth graders to Pierce was thought to keep school transitions the same and saves on administrative space, but there were concerns about overcrowding at this site and whether this would be educationally desirable. The early childhood center behind Cunningham/Collect there was concerns for traffic and overcrowding at the site.

Dr. Craghead commented that she is in favor of the early education center at the high school. It does provide a 26 classroom building just as the K-5 school would but at a decreased cost. She thinks the middle school addition is too much pressure on an already tight space.

Ms. Varela commented that the early education center at Cunningham/Collicot would not be an option at this site. Because there is no site to build a new elementary school, this should not be considered heavily at this time.

Dr. Pavlicek commented that opening a fifth elementary school would mean that the entire school population would shift.

Ms. Rosmarin wondered about the fire station building plan. They are presenting at Town Meeting and requesting construction drawings to be done. Would we be asking for these drawings at the Town Meeting and can we really get this for \$60,000?

Finance Subcommittee Report

Dr. Craghead presented the Finance Subcommittee Report.

Topic One: Wage Adjustment For Minimum Wage Workers (Attachment) (Vote).

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve the increase in pay rate of all employees being paid at the rate of \$11 and hour to \$12 per hour, retroactive to January 1, 2019.

Second: S. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Two: Preschool Tuition Increase (Attachment) (Vote).

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve the increase in tuition for our preschool programs for the 2019-2020 school year. The Edge Hill and Blue Hills Campuses' tuition will increase from \$3350 to \$3450. The Gile Road 3 Full Day Program will increase from \$4000 to \$4100. The Blue Hills Full Day Program will increase from \$8000 to \$8200.

Second: M. Eberhardt

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Three: Reauthorization of the Milton High School Student Activities Fund (Attachment) (Vote).

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve the annual reauthorization to fund the Milton High School Student Activities Fund checking account to the maximum of \$40,000.

Second: M. Eberhardt

Vote: 6-0-0

Approval of Vendor Warrants (Attachment) (Vote).

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve three vendor warrants. Vendor Warrant #24 dated December 20, 2018, in the amount of \$482,516.15. Vendor Warrant #26 dated January 31, 2019, in the amount of \$355,328.45. Vendor Warrant #27 dated January 10, 2019 in the amount of \$209,986.98.

Second: K. Donahue

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Varela asked for an update on FY20 budget proposal. Dr. Craghead replied the Finance Subcommittee has already turned their proposal in to the Warrant Committee and they are awaiting a response. Dr. Donahue commented that the Warrant Committee is busy preparing for the upcoming Town Meeting.

Ms. Varela also asked whether the current capital requests will affect the School Committee proposal submitted for FY20. Dr. Donahue replied that most of the facilities related capital request are moving forward. The roofing project for Glover Elementary School will be deferred. He is unsure of the outcome of the previous request regarding Chromebooks in the middle school.

Approval of Minutes (Attachment) (Vote).

Dr. Donahue made a motion to approve the School Committee minutes of November 7, 2018.

Second: S. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Old Business

None

Citizen Speak Topic Response

None

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The next meeting will be held at Cunningham Elementary School in the library on January 23, 2019. There will be a tour of the school at 6 p.m. for all that are interested. The Cunningham Elementary School Site Council will present at this meeting, and there will be a public forum as well.

Citizen Speak

None

Superintendent Gormley announced that the Milton Interfaith Clergy Association's annual event in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King will take place at Concord Baptist Church from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Milton Public School students will have their original art and compositions showcased at this event. Monday there are two service projects that residents can participate in.

Meeting Adjourned

Dr. Donahue put forth a motion that the meeting be adjourned to the Executive Session, not to return to the open session, for the purpose of review of minutes, as well as for discussion of negotiation strategy for union and nonunion personnel.

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.