

Milton School Committee Minutes
Milton High School
Milton Access TV Studio
February 6, 2019
7pm

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

Staff Present: Mary Gormley, Superintendent of Schools; Janet Sheehan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Dr. Donahue requested a moment of silence for retired school teacher Judith MacCurtain who recently passed away. Mrs. MacCurtain joined the Milton Public School System in 1970 and had a remarkable career at the Collicot Elementary School. She was a dedicated and respected teacher. Through the years, Mrs. MacCurtain influenced the lives of many children and their families. She was a mentor to her peers. She was a gifted educator.

Approval of February 6, 2019 Agenda

Dr. Donahue is adding an additional item to the Chair's Report. An additional public forum will take place on Wednesday, February 13 at 7:30 p.m. at Cunningham Hall. Under Executive Session he is removing Approval of Minutes. The agenda for this meeting was approved with these additions and deletions.

Citizen Speak

None

Superintendent's Report

Topic One: Final Field Trip Approval, Music Department Trip to Toronto, April 5-7, 2019 (Attachment) (Vote).

Superintendent Gormley introduced Ms. Dawn Sykes from Milton High School to present final field trip proposal for approval. Ms. Sykes explained that the visit is a cultural experience for the students and she believes it will accomplish many objectives. By attending high quality performances and touring world renowned performance venues the trip will cultivate interest and engagement in the performing arts. The trip will provide students with a clearer perspective about their own practice in the performing arts, and impart greater appreciation and understanding for differing viewpoints that can be demonstrated in the performing arts.

She explained that there have been previous trips to NYC, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia and she hopes to provide the students with a new location. A travel agent they have worked with in the past suggested Toronto.

An unprecedented 135 students are interested in attending this year. In comparison, 80 students traveled to Philadelphia last year. The year prior to that approximately 100 traveled to New York City.

Ms. Sykes then reviewed the specific itinerary, safety considerations, budgetary details, and other preparations, including permission slips and travel documents. There will be a parent meeting one week prior to the departure date to collect birth certificates for students 14 to 16 years of age, and passports for students over the age of 17. The travel documents will remain in a safe at the school until day of trip.

Ms. Varela asked if sufficient time was given to students and their families to prepare for this trip and secure documentation for international travel.

Ms. Sykes indicated that the students and their parents were notified of the trip in the fall, giving them ample time to prepare. Unfortunately, if a student doesn't have the proper documentation they will not be able to go on the trip.

Dr. Donahue made a motion to approve the Music Department trip to Toronto, to take place April 5-7 2019.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 5-0

Topic Two: Happenings

Superintendent Gormley explained there is an email blast being sent to advertise The Mixed Blessings Cabaret and all of the happenings will be included in that.

Chair's Report

Topic One: Update on Public Forums. The dates for the next public forums are Monday, February 11, 2019 at 1:30 pm, Fuller Village; Monday February 11, 2019 at 7:00 p.m. at Charles C. Winchester Auditorium, Milton High School; Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at 7:30 at Cunningham Hall. They will be held in conjunction with East Milton Neighborhood Association.

Additional meetings need to be scheduled. These include at least two meetings with the Board of Selectmen and meeting with some of the other neighborhood groups.

Dr. Donahue asked if any School Committee members were interested in spearheading the efforts to schedule these meetings. The information presented in the public forums and meetings will be identical to the information presented at the Collicot/Cunningham forum a few weeks ago.

Ms. Varela is unclear regarding the purpose of these other meetings. If the creation of the School Building Committee is approved, would the work done thus far simply be handed over to

the new committee? What is the difference between the Facility Advisory Committee continuing their work on space issues versus a School Building Committee?

Dr. Donahue explained the job of the School Building Committee, once in place, is to work towards completing a facility design project of that the town approves of. What this specifically entails will likely be the topic of many more conversations that will probably take place beyond February. There are many items to review and approve, and many meetings with the Board of Selectman and other groups. Dr. Donahue anticipates that this will not be addressed fully until the Annual Town Meeting in May.

Ms. Varela asked for clarification of the roles of the School Committee, Facility Advisory Committee and School Building Committee.

Dr. Donahue explained all short-term decisions, which will affect the next three to five years, and the responsibility of the School Committee. The Facility Advisory Committee's role is to evaluate current facilities, evaluate capital spent, and capital needed. Essentially, their role is to collect information pertinent to renovations of all facilities. The School Building Committee would be tasked with presenting architectural plans, plans for contractors and other items of this sort directly to Town Meeting. All committees and the Board of Selectmen are theoretically to work together to make the process as efficient as possible. The School Building Committee will include 2 members of the School Committee.

Ms. Rosmarin added presentations regarding both short-term and long-term options will be shared amongst the committee members. People felt unsure about the short-term options.

Ms. Varela believes we should be able to make the parents feel secure in what the future will hold.

Ms. Eberhardt asked who is leading the other forums. If the purpose is purely informational, what is the expectation for her to attend?

Dr. Donahue explained the purpose of the additional public forums is to engage the community. He does understand that members may have different time constraints.

Ms. Varela asked Dr. Donahue when he envisions the conversation with the Selectmen to be. Dr. Donahue thinks it will be after the special town meeting. They are a major stakeholder in this process. We haven't had a board-to-board meeting to review the data and the feedback from the community. One meeting would be information, and one would be a more final meeting and explain various options of timelines, budget, decision-making process, which options we are supporting as a town etc.

Ms. Rosmarin pointed out that they didn't present our Facilities Committee presentation on the space issue to the Warrant Committee. She asked if she should be sending this along.

Dr. Donahue said that he has sent that information through the appropriate channels. We will be able to make a brief presentation. We are following an aggressive timeline due to the nature of this issue because there is not much time left for decision making.

Superintendent Gormley spoke regarding feedback from parents that were present at the Collicot/Cunningham forum, stating we should arrange the forum to maximize the time of the audience. Dr. Donahue agrees.

Potential solutions include differentiating the start time of the forum from the start of the School Site Council, with specific agenda including the times and expectations of meeting. This information could be relayed to parents via email blast and can also be posted on the MPS website.

Finance Subcommittee Report

Topic One: FY20 Fees – Increase in Substitute Rate of Pay (Attachment) (Vote)

Dr. Craghead was not present so Ms. Eberhardt presented the Finance Subcommittee Report. She explained that the town is having a difficult time securing substitute teachers because surrounding communities offer a higher rate of pay. She added that there has not been an increase in the substitute teacher rate of pay since 2004.

Ms. Eberhardt made a motion to increase the substitute rate from \$80 to \$90/day, effective the first pay period in February. Dr. Pavlicek confirmed that the current budget can accommodate this for right now.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 5-0-0

Topic Two: Approval of Vendor Warrants (Attachment) (Vote)

Ms. Eberhardt made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant number 30 dated January 31, 2019, in the amount of \$510, 238.34.

Second: Ms. Varela

Abstain: Ms. White

Vote: 4-0-1

Ms. Eberhardt made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant number 31 dated February 7, 2019 in the amount of \$200,182.32.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 5-0-0

Transportation and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Report

Ms. White presented this report. On January 28, 2019, the group met and “Safe Routes to School” presented arrival and dismissal data and made recommendations to address the congestion at Glover Elementary. Principal McDavitt participated in the discussion.

The PTO is looking at whether they can elicit parent volunteers who can walk children to the school to ease traffic and this will be presented at next meeting.

The signs on Oak St placed by DPW that say do not enter are working well. Some neighbors had concerns about the hours of the restrictions. In response the hours of the traffic restriction may change and be reduced in the future.

The crossing guard issue at Cunningham has been addressed by Mark Alba from the Milton Police Department, who says that three new crossing guards have been hired for the site. They hope to hire more crossing guards but are having a difficult time based on the hours of the job and rate of pay offered.

The next meeting will include discussion regarding the Route 138 study. This will be reported to the School Committee at the next meeting.

Ms. Varela still feels strongly that we need more crossing guards. A Cunningham representative did mention that there remains a huge need for more crossing guards in the afternoon. She notes that the greatest concern is times of lunch, recess, pick up and drop off.

Ms. White said she has noticed it is “all hands on deck” in the afternoon. Even staff and faculty are volunteering to help. There is not an afternoon crossing guard because there is no funding for one. As we have all said previously we are essentially operating the population of five schools in four buildings. We continue to make strides towards making the school as safe as can be at these times of high traffic on campus.

Health and Wellness Advisory Committee Report

Ms. Varela presented the Health and Wellness Advisory Committee Report. There was no meeting in the month of December. The last meeting occurred at the end of January. Director of Health Education, Noel Vigue, gave a presentation on how the district will expand the Growth and Development curriculum in fourth grade, which is sooner than ever before, because puberty is starting earlier. There will be additions to the Health Education curriculum. This will include a Life Skills Course that will be presented to fifth graders and will address social and emotional issues. It will also include new topics such as vaping.

Laurie Stillman gave updates on the health surveys that will be administered throughout the year.

We also recently hosted performances by Drug Story Theater. The performances are held by students who are in recovery from addiction. Ms. Varela expressed that the production was incredibly powerful and thinks it will be effective with our students.

The town continues efforts to prevent and deter underage drinking. Milton Police Chief John King is spearheading this effort. Additional cameras are being added to wooded areas around the Cunningham Park. Warning letters will be mailed to parents as children are caught drinking

in this area. A second offense would get students banned from the park and any activities associated with the park (use of the pool, participation in sports).

Occurrences of drinking have decreased in the park compared to previous years, but our student representatives comment this is because more students are hosting parties at their homes with parents sometimes present.

The next meeting will be the Friday before Friday February vacation week. At that meeting the Substance Abuse Coalition will provide updates.

Policy Subcommittee Report

Topic One: First Reading, Policy ILD, Student submission to Educational Surveys and Research (Attachment)

Ms. Eberhardt reviewed the attachment that was released by MASC in February 2018. It is regarding the rights for parents and guardians to be aware of the studies that their children are participating in. In the policy, parents must be notified if any of the eight questions included in the policy are being asked of students. Additionally, if a third party administers a survey to students parents can request to view the survey. This policy is being presented as a first reading therefore Ms. Eberhardt encourages School Committee members to respond in coming weeks with any feedback.

Dr. Donahue wondered how early the policy requires parents be informed of the surveys, and this might be something to include in the policy. Superintendent Gormley feels two weeks is appropriate. Members were asked to look it over and present thoughts at next meeting.

Topic Two: First Reading, Policy IHBG, Home Schooling (Attachment).

Ms. Eberhardt explained that the high school guidance department, Karen Cahill, asked for this policy to be reviewed and updated. The Policy subcommittee is suggesting the sections regarding partial school day participation be removed. They are also suggesting the portion regarding high school diploma be removed. Lastly, the policy will include the application for home instruction.

Superintendent Gormley will bring copies of the potential edits to the next meeting.

Dr. Donahue notes they only have a few home-schoolers in the town.

Ms. Eberhart asked that all edits, questions, and concerns be brought and discussed at the next School Committee meeting.

Topic Three: Re-Approval of Policy JIBB, Student Representative and Student Safety Advisory Committee to the School Committee (Attachment).

This policy is regarding the ability for students to participate in Student Government. The policy allows student to also work with the School Committee. Ms. Varela has agreed to be a liaison to this student committee.

Ms. Eberhardt made a motion to approve Policy JIBB, Student Representative and Student Safety Advisory Committee to the School Committee.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 5-0-0

Old Business - none

Next Meeting Agenda Items

The next meeting will occur on Wednesday, February 27, 2019. The agenda will include the Tucker School site visit, continued discussion regarding space related issues, and preparation for the upcoming Town Meeting.

Citizen Speak

None

Meeting Adjourned

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

Second: Ms. Eberhardt

Vote: 5-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.