

Milton School Committee Minutes  
Milton High School  
Milton Access TV Studio  
April 24, 2019  
7 pm

**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; Dr. Glenn Pavlicek, Assistant Superintendent for Business.

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

**Approve April 24, 2019 Agenda**

The agenda was approved with the addition of Item 13b: Consideration of the Purchase, Exchange, or Leasing of property, to the Executive Session. This was added to the Executive Session because discussion in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiation position of the School Committee.

**Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH – 15 minutes)**

None

**Superintendent's Report-** this was deferred and will be presented after the Facilities Advisory Committee Report.

**Facilities Advisory Committee Report (School Building Committee) (Vote)**

Ms. Rosmarin presented the Facilities Advisory Committee Report. She introduced the members of the Facilities Advisory Committee who were present. She reminded the audience that their presentation is regarding the potential long term options for space in the district only, because short term options will remain under the auspices of the Milton School Committee.

Ms. Rosmarin reminded the audience that the town moderator is in charge of selecting the candidates who will serve on the Milton School Building Committee. She explained that the Facilities Advisory Committee will present recommendations tonight as to how to best meet the challenges of increasing enrollment in the district. The School Committee will then determine by vote which of these recommendations they support as a solution. This option will then be passed on to the School Building Committee.

In brief summary: Our work began in October 2018 when we signed the agreement with DRA to do the Space Needs Study. This began after years of rapidly increasing enrollment. The Committee has been meeting every 3 weeks to try to keep moving this project forward since that time. In November we received our annual report from NESDEC, and we drafted a Town Meeting Article that went into the February 2019 Town Meeting. Also during this time, DRA was hired and began work in October 2018; they presented their preliminary report in December 2018; and their final report in January 2019. In February during Town Meeting the formation of a School Building Committee was approved. A number of public forums were then held in the community so that Committee members could educate and hear opinions from town citizens. In March 2019 we met with the Select Board. Finally, two weeks ago the Facilities Advisory Committee reviewed all the information compiled and drafted their recommendation. Ms. Rosmarin explained that tonight the School Committee will hopefully come to an agreement about a long term option for spaces need that can be presented to the School Building Committee.

Enrollment history slide – Ms. Rosmarin indicated in the ten years since completion of the previous school building project there has been an increase in 438 students. Projections for the next ten years are for an additional enrollment increase of another 200 students. This estimated was deemed conservative because at this time the kindergarten birth rate is a known variable.

Ten years from now 25 additional classrooms will be needed in the district, and this is based upon conservative enrollment growth estimates. Additionally, when co-taught classes are included in these estimates the averages appear lower and don't reflect true needs.

The Facilities Advisory Committee developed a list of important elements to consider:

- Be educationally sound
- Decompress existing overcrowded site
- Provide 26 additional classrooms
- Minimize grade level transitions
- Ensure traffic management
- Be cost effective
- Promote walkability
- Identify available sites
- Build space that is flexible to meet changing enrollment needs
- Be sustainable and energy efficient

The Long Term Options that have been discussed and considered by the Facilities Advisory Committee include the following:

- An addition either in the front or the rear of Glover
- Having Early Childhood Education Center behind the Cunningham/Collicot building
- A 5<sup>th</sup> grade additional to pierce
- The addition of an Early Childhood Center behind Milton High School

- New free standing K-5 school at new site
- An Early Childhood Center developed at an alternate site.

Ms. Rosmarin presented the pros and cons of each item as drafted by the Facilities Advisory Committee:

1. Do nothing – doing nothing allows class size to increase, is not educationally sound, and will continue to put strain on overloaded facilities. These problems will increase as enrollment continues to rise. This was eliminated as a viable option.
2. Convert art, music rooms, computer rooms, and libraries- Many of these classrooms have already been converted, this is not educationally sound, and was deemed to have a negative impact on essential curriculum and student experience.
3. Construction of additional space on Glover or Cunningham/Collicot campuses- the Facilities Advisory Committee felt that neither school was built to support the additional students being served. Making any additions will cut into existing playgrounds and parking lots; therefore access, traffic, and parking will become increasingly difficult. Lastly, by conservative estimates Glover would increase to a population of over 1000 or Cunningham/Collicot would house over 1700 students and the committee felt this would not satisfy criteria they drafted as their goals.
4. Addition to house fifth graders to the Pierce Middle School. This would increase the school population to over to 1400 students. The cafeteria and gym are inadequate to handle this many students. They were concerned about isolating the fifth graders from their other elementary grades. Parents expressed concern regarding contact with older middle school children. There would also be challenges with pick up and drop off along a state highway which is concerning, and an addition would reduce or eliminate the playing field behind the school.
5. Construction of an Early Education Center to serve Pre-K and K. Pros include the fact that this would provide a district wide solution with one construction project, and this would be less expensive to build and operate. However, this add an additional transition for children, would cause logistical issues for families with multiple children (an additional drop off for children too young to walk to school), and most students would attend for only one year. The cost for the project is as follows:
  - a. Free standing = \$34.1 M-37.6 M
  - b. MHS site = \$28.6-31.6M
6. Construction of a new K-5 school. The Facilities Advisory Committee finds this option the most flexible to meet the needs of increasing enrollment. This option maintains current grade configuration in the neighborhood schools and also minimizes transitions. The challenges of this option are that all elementary school would need to be reassigned/redistricted and the costs to build and operate a new school are high.
  - a. Cost \$45.6-50.3 M

Ms. Rosmarin stated that recommendations of the Facilities Advisory Committee in order of preference are as follows:

1. Construction of a new K-5 school
2. Construction of an Early Education Center to serve Pre-K and K

Ms. Rosmarin opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Cichello expressed where we are now is a product of the great success of the previous building project.

Ms. Varela asked for clarification as to the vote that will take place.

Ms. Rosmarin replied that the School Building Committee has the charge to guide the construction of the solution we choose. The School Committee must vote and decide what the final recommendation is for the project.

Dr. Donahue added that the School Committee makes a recommendation to the School Building Committee. He believes we should give only one recommendation. There is potential for reimbursement. In the application process one question asked is whether the School Committee supports the construction plan. He explained that we will set ourselves up for greater success if we are clear with the Milton Building Committee.

Ms. White said she did not start off thinking we needed a new building, but as she learned more she came to believe this new school gives us more options for the future.

Ms. Eberhardt asked how we will pay for this and reminded the group that two years after the override we still are unable to meet the needs of the town currently. The town is cutting jobs. Is the town willing and able to meet the demands this new construction will entail? She expressed her greatest concern is how we can afford any of these options.

Ms. Varela expressed if we could find another space for a free standing Early Education Center, it's cheaper to build and maintain. If we can't get any of our previous requests for staff funded, she questioned how we will afford the staffing of an entire building.

Dr. Craghead expressed same sentiments. A free standing school is more expensive to operate and more expensive to build. She reminded everyone that we have a fiscal responsibility to make a wise decision.

Ms. White asked for comment on how the school budget has grown along with the enrollment.

Dr. Pavlicek stated that it has gone up 50% over time. A lot of the costs are related to maintenance. The town has shown a commitment to maintenance. He thinks construction and operational costs will be a burden to the town. Despite this, Dr. Pavlicek explained that we should present the most educationally sound option without regard to cost.

Ms. Eberhardt asked for details about potential reimbursement for a newly constructed school. How much would we get and how is this determined.

Ms. Gormley explained that our enrollment issue may cause us to get looked at favorably.

Ms. Varela said she is afraid that if the School Committee doesn't make a fiscally sound choice voters may reject the presented plan.

Mr. Cichello urged the School Committee members not to be afraid to be bold. This is an enormous challenge.

Dr. Donahue expressed that in terms of operating budget he shares his colleagues' concerns. He said he feels indebted to the previous School Building Committee. They went to the town and had several options that did not pass. If those had passed, we might be in a different situation now. The lesson to be learned is that to fix a problem you shouldn't do the minimum required to fix it. I feel strongly that a K-5 school, while the most, expensive, it solves the problem that we have. I worry that an early education center is educationally suboptimal.

Ms. Varela asked Ms. Gormley and Ms. Sheehan to talk about implications of building an early education center.

Ms. Sheehan remarked that towns smaller than Milton have had success. In a district this size she is not sure you can compare the experience of families in a smaller town. Initially Ms. Sheehan liked this idea and the economics but as we have gone through this process, her thinking has evolved.

Ms. Gormley commented that she has been an advocate of the least number of transitions. She understands the concerns regarding funding. The potential for reimbursement is pivotal but this seems uncertain. It seems like we have a lot of information to gather.

Dr. Pavlicek replied that if we were to construct the early education center there will likely be some reimbursement on the Kindergarten, but none on the Pre-K.

Ms. Gormley reiterated that she wants a long term solution that meets our needs, no matter what that is.

Dr. Craghead agreed that we need a solution with the right figures. The reimbursement possibilities are vague and therefore we do not have enough information to make a decision. If there is reimbursement her vote will change.

Dr. Donahue stated that we need another elementary school and we need to advocate for that. The conversation should be the educational needs of the students.

Ms. Varela asked how long before we would know about state reimbursement for new construction?

**Dr. Donahue made a motion that the School Committee recommend to the School Building Committee that the construction of a free standing K-5 elementary school is the preferred educational objective of the Milton School Committee.**

**Second: E. White**

**Vote: 4-2 (Ms. Varela, Dr. Craghead)**

### **Superintendent's Report**

Topic One: Update on Screening Process for Assistant Supt. of Curriculum & Human Resources

Ms. Gormley has provided updates on this process in her weekly email blast. The committee members were chosen and there is a group of potential successors going through the interview process.

Topic Two: Happenings. These will be covered in the email blast sent out tomorrow.

### **Chair's Report**

Topic One: Superintendent's Evaluation. Dr. Donahue forwarded this to the School Committee members yesterday.

**Dr. Donahue made a motion to accept the results of the Superintendent's Evaluation.**

**Second: S. Varela**

**Vote: 6-0-0**

Topic Two: Revised School Committee Calendar

Dr. Donahue made the following change: The School Committee reorganization will not take place on 5/1/19 and will be followed by a regular School Committee Meeting.

### **Finance Subcommittee Report**

Topic One: FY20 Budget (Attachment) (Vote)

**Dr. Craghead made a motion to accept the Finance Subcommittee Recommendations in order of priority to restore a 0.2 FTE (music) teacher at Pierce Middle School; restore half of the school clubs at the high school that were previously cut (total cost \$32, 500); restore 0.5 FTE the elementary level technology teacher. This is a total of approximately \$78,000.**

**Second: K. Donahue**

**Vote: 6-0-0**

Topic Two: Third Quarter Report (Attachment) (Vote)

**Dr. Craghead made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Finance Subcommittee to approve second the Third Quarter Report.**

**Second: M. Eberhardt**

**Vote: 6-0-0**

Topic Three: Approval of Vendor Warrants (Vote)

**Dr. Craghead moved to approve Vendor Warrant number 42, dated April 25, 2019, in the amount of \$428,218.01.**

**Second: S. Varela**

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Approval of Minutes (Vote)**

**Dr. Donahue moved to approve the minutes of January 23, 2019.**

**Second: S. Varela**

**Vote: 6-0-0**

**Dr. Donahue moved to approve the minutes of March 6, 2019.**

**Second: A. Rosmarin**

**Abstain: E. Craghead**

**Vote: 5-0-1**

**Dr. Donahue moved to approve the minutes of March 16, 2019.**

**Second: S. Varela**

**Abstain: A. Rosmarin, E. Craghead**

**Vote: 4-0-2**

**Old Business**

None

**Citizen Speak Topic Response**

Dr. Donahue asked Ms. Rosmarin to thank the group that participated.

**Next Meeting Agenda Items**

Previously discussed above.

**Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH – 15 minutes)**

None

**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 discussion of negotiation strategy for union and nonunion personnel.**

**Second: S. Varela**

**Roll Call Vote: 5-0-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 9:02 pm.