

Milton School Committee Meeting Agenda
Milton Council on Aging Classroom
10 Walnut Street
March 13, 2019
7pm

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; 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 7:00 p.m.

Approve March 13, 2019 Agenda

Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH – 15 minutes)

Deb Lynch, Rachel Pozzar, Eileen Rogers came to share information about a project they are working on. The “Cunningham & Collicot Greenspace Project” is an initiative to create more space for recess and play. They have generated support from both schools. They have a defined project scope, which is to “create a cleared field behind the schools to be used by both schools”. This will include clearing the land, leveling the land, and providing a safe play surface for students. They plan to work on a funding action plan and prepare grant proposals as they further define the project and what it will include.

Ms. Varela thanked the parents for their initiative and explained that they will put this item on the agenda at an upcoming School Committee meeting for discussion.

Superintendent’s Report

Topic One: Final Field Trip Approval Request, Friends of Milton Crew, May 4, 2019-May 5, 2019 (Vote)

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Friends of the Milton Crew Field Trip to Connecticut scheduled for May 4-5, 2019.

Second: Ms. Eberhardt

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Two: Final Field Trip Approval Request, Milton High School Model UN (Vote)

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Milton High School Model UN Field Trip to Boston scheduled for March 22-24, 2019.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 6-0-0

Topic Three: Final Field Trip Approval Request, Pierce Middle School 8th Grade Trip to Washington DC, April 4-6, 2019

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Pierce Middle School Field Trip to Washington DC scheduled for April 4-6, 2019.

Second: Ms. Eberhardt

Vote: 6-0-0

Finance Subcommittee Report

Dr. Craghead presented the Finance Subcommittee Report. She indicated the subcommittee has met twice since the last School Committee meeting. They voted on a \$975,000 reduction in the amount requested for inclusion in the FY20 budget and they are having a larger discussion about that tonight with Board of Selectmen. The Warrant Committee has asked for an impact statement for those reductions, which Dr. Pavlicek created.

Topic One: Approval of Vendor Warrants (Vote).

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #32 dated 2/14/19 in the amount of \$340,449.65.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #34 dated 2/28/19 in the amount of \$588,536.90.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #35 dated 3/7/19 in the amount of \$451,457.55.

Second: Ms. Varela

Vote: 6-0-0

Made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #36 dated 3/14/19 in the amount of \$253,427.97.

Second: Ms. Varela

Abstain: Ms. White

Vote: 5-0-1

Facilities Advisory Committee Report

Ms. Rosmarin presented the Facilities Advisory Committee Report. The committee met with the abutters from the high school for a final forum. The discussion was interesting and challenging as expected. They generated a list of concerns people have about a building being constructed on the site. The abutters were assured that the committee has not made a decision yet. She sees it as a good first step.

The School Building Committee is in the process of being formed and Ms. Rosmarin hasn't heard back about the specifics of how the committee members will be chosen. If any one has suggestions for people in the construction or design industry, please encourage them to contact us. She explained they have two more meetings between now and Town election. The time could be best used to conclude our work in this regard prior to passing it on the School Building Committee.

Ms. Varela commented we should have a formal discussion of exactly what the School Building Committee will be charged with, what next steps should be, and to clarify what information is expected to be passed on to the members of the School Building Committee.

Ms. White asked whether the moderator communicates with the committee as it is formed. Gormley commented that she thinks he should communicate with Dr. Donahue.

Ms. Eberhardt asked if the School Committee is expected to direct School Building Committee to act in a certain way. She asked what would happen if the committee disagrees with the recommendations of the School Committee.

Dr. Pavlcek commented that the School Committee and School Building Committee would decide together.

Ms. Rosmarin commented that these are all things we will have to discuss. We can suggest a list of requirements that we want School Building Committee to consider, such as class size.

Dr. Craghead said there was a thread on Milton neighbors recently that bothered her. A citizen commented that they heard that art and music were being cancelled. Art and music were not being cancelled, but art and music classrooms were being repurposed.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Milton School Committee Minutes of January 2, 2019, and the Milton School Committee Minutes of January 16, 2019.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 6-0-0

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Finance Subcommittee w/Full School Committee Minutes of February 12, 2019.

Second: Ms. White

Abstain: Ms. Rosmarin

Vote: 6-0-0

Chair's Report

Topic One: Discussion with Select Board regarding FY20 Budget and Space/Enrollment Issues

As part of our process for going thru this we wanted to talk to the Select Board in open session and get feedback of process and product and offer opportunity for back and forth dialogue on the subject. They are familiar with the plans.

Ms. Rosmarin explained we have 4 more meeting before the town election and we are hoping to come up with recs that they will pass to School Building Committee

Mr. Zullas asked if there is a consensus yet.

Dr. Donahue replied there has not been a consensus reached yet; the potential options of an early education center or a fifth elementary school appeal but we have not yet finalized the decision on what we will recommend.

Ms. Rosmarin commented that the School Committee members all agree that we need 26 classrooms total and these options both include that.

Ms. Varela added that after discussion with parents – we all agree that we need 26 classrooms, but we still need to solidify which project we will task the School Building Committee with.

Dr. Donahue explained that an ideal option is one that functionally decompresses current elementary school site. The current enrollment surge is reaching a tipping point in a lot of areas. Not only cafeteria, space, but also parking, pick up, and drop off. An ideal solution would help mitigate a lot of those issues.

Ms. Varela added we are running five elementary schools in four buildings.

Ms. White added that school aged parents challenged us on the projections. They asked is we are planning ahead for continued population growth.

Ms. Rosmarin explained that this is based on current and historical enrollment and projections ten years ahead; but we will double check those projections by hiring another group for a second opinion.

Mr. Farrington asked where you think most urgent the most urgent need is.

Dr. Donahue replied the Cunningham/Collicot building houses 1300 students.

Ms. Varela added that the Glover School is a close second.

Ms. Varela commented that the School Committee understands the concerns regarding the Town operating budget.

Ms. Eberhardt commented that the early childhood center would be less of an interruption because you don't have to build a new site.

Mr. Zullas brought up the 4-4-4 model. He asked if the School Committee has considered this plan.

Dr. Donahue replied that while this is an interesting thought, it is not one the School Committee has addressed. To accomplish this we would have to refurbish the labs, undergo core construction to accommodate larger tables in lunchroom for larger children.

Mr. Zullas asked the School Building Committee to consider the 5-8 model.

Ms. Varela commented that even though we have the space at the high school, class sizes are large. Average class sizes for Honors and AP classes are between 28 to 31 students. We need more teachers. Moving high school children back to pierce, in her view, will have same issues with class size and space.

Mr. Zullas asked if there a way to repurpose the space.

Dr. Donahue replied this is a critical question and something to consider in the building. design. We have seen trends go up and down. It is important to make the space flexible.

Mr. Zullas asked if the it the School Committee's intention to delegate the decision on what the best way to go is or to make the decision and charge the School Building Committee with Implementation.

Dr. Donahue replied the answer to both is probably yes. This is a difficult process to work through because there are many stakeholders and we need flexibility. The School Committee will share their priorities and preferences, but the School Building Committee will also evaluate the options as well.

Ms. Varela clarified that we haven't had a formal School Committee meeting since we got the permission to form the School Building Committee. We need to talk about that before Town Meeting in May.

Mr. Zullas commented the Warrant Committee may want us to weigh in on using free cash for budget; we should have discussion to get a sense of your thoughts.

Ms. Conlon stated the \$2.8 million deficit in budget is now down to \$600,000 based upon cuts. We have \$400,000 potentially. Free cash is one time money and it would mean you have to replace it the next year.

Mr. Zullas commented that using free cash not a good habit to get into, but does think certain scenarios warrant the use. At a time when we are facing layoffs the use of free cash may be considered in his view. There are occasions where gaps must be filled to keep critical employees or services and use for this purpose is justified.

This concluded the School Committee discussion with the Select Board.

Topic Two: Town Meeting article for School Building Committee funding

Ms. Varela made a motion to approve the Town Meeting Article for discussion at May Town Meeting.

Second: Craghead

Vote: 6-0-0

Old Business

None

Citizen Speak Topic Response

None

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Per usual schedule.

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

Second: Ms. Varela

Roll call Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:56pm