

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Public Participation Via Remote Access
January 20, 2021

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

Staff Present: James Jette, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Karen Spaulding, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Human Resources; Amy Dexter, Assistant Superintendent for Business

(Conducted pursuant to the Executive Order dated March 12, 2020 suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, Gen. L. c. 30A §20 et seq. and 940 CMR 29.01 et seq.)

1. **Call to order:** 7:04pm
2. **Approve January 20, 2021 Agenda**
Updated and approved
3. **Superintendent's Report** - Superintendent Jette
 - a. **Milton High School Site Council Presentation** - Principal Ms. Cahill and Assistant Vice Principal Mr. Kelly
link: https://www.miltonps.org/application/files/5916/1254/8584/MHS_Site_Council_2020-2021.pdf

Ms. White

- Miss the High School, students are always pleasant and so welcoming
- Great to have the students vested in their education
- Strong high school and impressive

Ms. Eberhardt

- Impressive to hear the high school talk about the whole student
- Important to hear about the family engagement
- Provide voices and an inclusive environment

Dr. Craghead

- Encouraging to hear about the clubs, activities, arts and sports are still going
- Engagement keeps students involved and a sense of normalcy

Ms. Rosmarin

- Great to hear about everything going on at the High School
- Vision of the Graduate is pleasing to hear

- Involving students in their IEP meeting encouraging

Dr. Donahue

- Excellent presentation
- Pandemic goes on, we look at the things that keep us engaged, it is wonderful to hear about the High School activities
- All spaces should be utilized as much as possible and will continue to evolve

Chair Varela

- Impressive presentation
- Thanked Principal Cahill for stepping up and taking over being the Principal of the High School
- Assistant Principal Kelly great team and kept everything moving forward
- Doing a great job making High School Students feel valued and make them feel like they have a purpose
- Thanked the faculty and staff for their presentation

Superintendent Jette commented that Milton High School has a great Administration Team, impressive staff and faculty. Students make it all a success.

b. Milton High School Program of Studies - Principal Cahill

link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nczXBWTypee06z8OHg9P4Xkc2lLYUiz_TeRjMw2zUDjM/edit

Chair Varela made a motion to approve the Milton High School 2021-2022 Program of Studies.

Second: Ms. Rosmarin

Vote: 6-0-0

c. District Updates

- Presentation - Melissa Craven and Sara Whitten
 - PBIS Team - Social Emotional Learning
 - Collaborate together and share ideas

Superintendent Jette stated a letter was sent to the community.

- Discussed 3 potential plans in the presentation on December 2nd
- Reviewed all transactions with town officials
- Finances are available for more in person learning
- Listening session will be scheduled for next week
- MEA is meeting with faculty and staff at the elementary level
- Promising plan in place, scheduled for early February
- Thanked School Committee, Mike Dennehy and Finance Committee
- Thanked the Community for their support

4. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 Minutes)

Bonnie Bates - Pleasant Street

- Duxbury announced they are returning full return at the elementary level
- Chose an option to be best for kids
- Believe time is now to return in full
- Milton is putting a plan in place to return half days and other districts are full days
- Children of Milton have lost enough time
- We are behind on the deadline
- Other school districts are going to social distancing of 3 feet

Suzanne Bridges - 71 Center Lane

- Has been hopeful that changes will be in place to return to school but that has not been the case
- Moved back to Milton hoping that my children would receive the education that both she and her husband received growing up in Milton
- Current model is the base minimum that DESE has suggested
- Children are suffering
- Children need more time in school

Robb Kociol - 2 Standish Road

- Two student in the Milton Public Schools
- Children are suffering from social isolation
- Teachers are working 2-3 times harder this year
- We need a timeline to return to school full time
- Need to be the voice of the children

Chris Long - 91 Whitelawn Ave.

- We are being too conservative in returning to a full time model
- Kids have lost too much learning time
- Don't assume students can't adapt to pivoting
- Children are desperately looking for a routine
- Everyone is doing a great job, but we are not moving with enough urgency
- So many other communities are doing so much more

Maria Stoughter

- Nurse, emergency room
- Health Care workers went to work, need to have the teachers back to work
- All the work being done is appreciated but need to be back in school full time

- Not fair to the kids, need to make this work
- If teachers do not want to return, then they should no longer have the job
- Kids deserve an education with a professional not a parent with homeschooling

Paul Scapicchio - 85 Meredith Circle

- 3 children in the Milton Public Schools
- Move to Milton for the schools/new buildings
- Important as an elective official to listen to the community, parents are frustrated
- Getting kids back is important
- Don't ignore the parents

Chair Varela commented:

- Even with the 20% remote we have a population crisis especially at the elementary level, others schools/districts do not
- Everyone coming back 5 days a week all together is not safe and will not happen this school year. Milton cannot house that many children safely.
- Changes are being made to the hybrid model
- Reality is we are in a pandemic and we also have an enrollment crisis

5. Chair's Report - Chair Varela

a. Update on Superintendent Search Process

- Steps being taken
 - Director of MASC joined School Committee meeting to discuss the process
 - Guidance and support also with MASC
 - Reached out to the community with a survey to what the community is looking for in a Superintendent
 - over 900 participants in the survey
 - Two listening sessions for
 - staff and faculty
 - parents, students and community members
 - Other options:
 - could post to review applicants
 - put together a search committee
 - hire a consulting firm
 - or can make a recommendation to appoint Interim Superintendent Jette to the position

Chair Varela opened up the discussion to School Committee members to discuss the next steps.

Dr. Donahue

- Feel comfortable appointing Superintendent Jette tonight
- He has weathered the past few months with grace and skill

- Pleased with his performance
- Take the opportunity to talk to Superintendent Jette directly

Ms. White

- Years involvement in the town, known 6 Superintendents- it is a complex job
- Grateful Superintendent Jette took the position in August
- Pleased how hard he works and how responsive he has been
- Connected to the community and the students
- Superintendent Jette is popular with faculty and staff
- Staff are supportive of Superintendent Jette, which is rare
- Staff admire him at all levels in the schools
- Interacts well with the unions
- Superintendent Jette is the best at this time to lead the schools
- Willing to appoint Superintendent Jette as soon as possible

Dr. Craghead

- Agree with Dr. Donahue and Member White
- As School Committee
 - Put forward a budget
 - Set policy for the district
 - Hire and evaluate the Superintendent
- Decision is very important and we have heard from the community in the survey
- Clearly see what goes on behind the scenes
- Look at the Superintendent evaluation
 - Superintendent checks all the boxes
 - Racial issues, pandemic, space needs, has worked with grace, attempts to reach out all across Milton to parents, faculty and staff. Maintains lines of communications.
 - Aware of the finances, facilities, policies and every aspects of the schools
 - Energetic, wise and good humored
 - Would be willing to make the vote tonight

Ms. Rosmarin

- Superintendent Jette has had trial by fire
- Needed a leader in an emergency and Superintendent Jette has stepped up
- Continue to follow his lead to keep our students safe, bring in more learning time
- Strength in character to do what is best for students and staff
- Have seen Superintendent Jette grow in his roles over the year in the Milton Public Schools
- Nurtured him as a leader over the years
- Stepped into a difficult situation and has handled it with grace, sensitivity and warmth
- Has loyalty from staff

- Could do a national search but there is not guarantee we will find all the qualities that Superintendent Jette has
- Risk losing James Jette to another district
- New Superintendent leads the district but needs the people underneath to follow the lead
- Loyalty can take us far, community has so many strong, active, engaged people that have so much to offer to help our schools
- Mr. Jette also has her support to be the Superintendent

Ms. Eberhardt

- Thanked the parents that joined the information sessions
- James Jette is a mirror and has been model for others
- Do have questions for the district for the future
- Would like to have more conversations on how to make a better school

Chair Varela

- Takeaways
 - strong leadership
 - strong listening skills with staff, parents and students
 - understands the need for overall equity across the district
 - flexibility and empathy for faculty and staff
 - overall understands that the students in the district are the number one priority
 - understands the how on to make the district successful
 - maintains good working relationships with the town
 - hit the ground running with facilities and what is needed with our overpopulation crisis
- Feels that Mr. Jette is an amazing candidate, not going to get better
- Cannot please all the parents and guardians in all the choices we make
- Great respect for all colleagues
- 30 years of service on this School Committee
- Together we are ready and secure with decisions to be made
- Could make the motion tonight or on February 3rd

Ms. White

- Flexible for the opportunity to have a discussion with Mr. Jette

Dr. Craghead

- Respectful of colleagues if they want to have more of a discussion

Ms. Eberhardt

- Students are the center
- Know that Mr. Jette always put the students first

- Many of the parents engaging with School Committee have not been to the high school level yet to work with Mr. Jette
- Worry about that it is impossible to talk about the future, consumed with the present
- Mr. Jette knows there is so much work to do to get all back to school full time, that is the goal

Dr. Donahue

- What are the major obstacles
 - space needs
 - build school
 - equity and racial issues
 - maintain a complex high achieving schools
- There is no other candidate better than Mr. Jette, can see asking him any more questions that would change our minds
- Real tension and respect the process
- Mr. Jette is tremendously talented and qualified for the position

Ms. Eberhardt

- Agreed completely with Dr. Donahue
- Community continues to grow, we need to continue listening to the parents
- It is ultimately School Committee decision

Chair Varela

- Could make the motion to appoint tonight
- Later in February or March can have an informal session with Mr. Jette about long term goals during non-COVID

Ms. Rosmarin

- School Committee has a history with Mr. Jette
- School Committee has to make the decision
- Mr. Jette has made all the efforts even during the COVID times to get out to all the schools and to the community

Ms. White made a motion to appoint James Jette to be the Superintendent of Milton Public Schools.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0

Chair Varela invited Superintendent Jette to speak and to see if he accepts the position.

Superintendent Jette commented:

- Humbled and honored
- Milton Public Schools is a great school district

- Grateful to tall the students, faculty, staff and the parents
- Thanked School Committee for their comments
- Thanked the community, teachers and leaders for their support
- People take pride in our school
- Definitely accept the opportunity
- Not a day that has gone by that we have not thought about students returning to school, understand parents are concerned and the entire staff is committed to returning to school
- Still a lot of work to be done
- Thankful for all of the support

6. Facilities Advisory Committee Report - Dr. Donahue

- Productive last meeting
- Spoke great length about enrollment
- Will need additional classrooms
- Utilizing all of our classrooms
- Likely this fall having to convert spaces into classrooms (library) temporarily
- Current request is to have capital expenditures approved
- Remodel how many classrooms
- Look at kindergarten enrollment
- Lot of work to be done
- This is an ongoing issue until we have a new school built
- Will see the population growth
- Need a short term plan discussion
- Temporary classrooms will be expensive
- Maintaining current facilities
- Plan how to manage numbers
- Need to update strategic plan

7. Strategic Planning Advisory Committee Report - Ms. Rosmarin

- Reviewing the results the district assessment
- How to align the results found with the Strategic plan
- Going on the next steps
- Priorities objectives and goals

8. Finance Subcommittee Report - Dr. Craghead

- a. FY22 Budget
- b. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #28 payable January 14, 2021 in the amount of \$652,235.59.

Dr. Craghead made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #29 payable January 21, 2021 in the amount of \$145,712.92.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 6-0-0

9. Approval of Minutes

Chair Varela made a motion to approve School Committee minutes dated December 16, 2020.

Second: Dr. Craghead

Vote: 6-0-0

10. Next Meeting Agenda Items

Updated and approved

Chair Varela made a motion to adjourn the School Committee Meeting.

Second: Ms. White

Vote: 6-0-0

Meeting adjourned 10:05pm.