

Milton School Committee Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Meeting at the Council on Aging
March 22, 2023

Committee Present: Chair Ada Rosmarin, Vice Chair Dr. Elizabeth Carroll, Dr. Celina Miranda, Anna Varghese, Betty White

1. **Call to order** - 7:00pm
2. **Approve March 22, 2023 Agenda**
Updated and approved
3. **Superintendent's Update**
 - a. [Presentation by Consolidated Facilities](#) - Director William Ritchie
 - Presentation link on the MPS website

Member White

- When I think of Consolidated Facilities, I think of Bill Ritchie
- Pleasure to work and collaborate with you over the years
- You easily transitioned from working for the school to working for the entire town
- You can solve and fix anything
- You can anticipate what is needed for the town
- During the pandemic your work and leadership was just beyond anything imaginable
- I wish you the best in your retirement

Dr. Carroll

- Your legacy is something we can build on
- It will be very difficult to find a replacement for you
- Thank you for sharing the overview tonight
- Didn't realize the extent of the Green Community work, very exciting

Dr. Miranda

- Fantastic overview of what has been accomplished
- You have established a legacy
- Thank you so much for your commitment and wish you all the best

Bill Ritchie

- Treated this job like my own company
- Care about the schools
- My heart was in the job for 23 years

Chair Rosarin

- You have been the go to guy for facilities for over 20 years for our town
- Always appreciated your willingness to pitch in on anything that came your way
- Always available with kindness, thoughtfulness and able to answer any questions
- Explored alternative options for school buildings

- Constructed multiple new classrooms where no classrooms were before
- Became an expert during Covid with ventilation and sanitizing
- Thank you and express our sincere gratitude

Guest Speaker - Tony Cichello

- Was the Chair and Vice of the School Building Committee and Chair of Consolidated Facility Committee
- Have known Bill for over 23 years and does nothing but impress me time after time
- Consider myself a friend of Bill's
- During the building project Bill Ritchie was invaluable
- Moving students, teachers, furniture, everything moving from place to place during the project
- Bill was always there taking care of the current schools and a huge assist on the schools getting built and rebuilt
- Started doing the Consolidated Facility Department people didn't think it was going to work
 - We were lucky to have town leaders to come together during the process - Mary Gormley, Kevin Mearn and some other folks coming together to make sure it worked
- It was a tough job - Working with the town and the schools
- Diligence, competency and the ability to get the job done
- Bill has been tremendous with doing a whole lot with very little
- Projects in house to save 40%
- Green School initiative benefits
- Left a great legacy
- It is a challenging position
- Many thanks to Bill and congratulations on your retirement

Bill Ritchie

- Thankful for all the volunteers over the years including School Committee, Tony Cichello, Sean O'Rourke and many others
- I don't like to say goodbye - I will always be around
- Great experience with Milton

Chair Rosmarin

- Presented a gift to Bill Ritchie

4. **School Building Committee Report**

- Sean O'Rourke - Update/Presentation link on the MPS website

Member White

- Site walks and different lands - asked Hans to talk about the conservation land during the walks
 - Putting all of these parcels together makes it more valuable
 - Could apply for grants, clean up some of the conservation land
- Asked Sean to speak more about the conservation land

Sean O'Rourke

- Conservation land budget is 2,500 per year
- Do not have a lot of money to work with so depends on the grant funding
- Unifying 23 acres of conservation land would be helpful for them as well

- 6 acres on Randolph Ave could be developed
- The ledge can be an expensive issue
 - Makes it very difficult
- Not building a school to make money like these 40b developers that can absorb the cost

Dr. Carroll

- Given many presentations over the years, each time I a very impressed
- Appreciate you helping us remember last year's option compared to this year's option
- So much has approved including the cost benefit to the time
- Thank you for sharing the visuals of the overcrowding in the schools
 - Important for others in town without children in the school understand what is going on
- Really counting on town meeting members being informed and parents of Milton students being engaged
- Grateful for you sticking with this process and appreciate your ongoing work

Sean O'Rourke

- Encourage everyone to review the video

Dr. Miranda

- Asked Sean to speak to what is at stake here?
- You have done wonderful and diligent work
- What are we looking at, what happens if we are not able to move forward?

[Sean O'Rourke](#)

- Looking at funding since 2019
- Hired architects
- Worked with neighbors
- If it doesn't pass - will have to hit the reset button
 - We have to hire new consultants
 - Look at the town land again
 - Took 4 years to get where we are now
 - 40b projects will happen
 - Students will be in trailers on school sites

Member Varghese

- Thank you for the presentation
- Appreciate very much what you have shared with us and the amount of work you have done
- All has been very informative
- What has your feedback been from talking to the Pine Tree neighborhood, Blue Hill Parkway Neighborhood and Canton Ave?
 - Has there been feedback about increase in traffic, etc?

[Sean O'Rourke](#)

- Would like to meet with Home Inc. once we have our conceptual drawings
 - Met with the over a year ago and they provided us a list of concerns and to make sure all of their concerns are addressed

- Working with Home Inc. for over two years, personally went up there with Chair Rosmarin and took a 3 hour Q&A and answered any questions they had
- Blue Hills Parkway Neighborhood
 - They were the ones who asked for 150 feet off of the parkway last year
 - Given them 300 Feet (doubled what they asked)
- Pine Tree Brook
 - We have a meeting with them tomorrow night to listen to their concerns
 - Pine Tree Brook had environment concerns mainly to do with storm water
- We need to work with more engineers
- By law we cannot make the land worse
- Final issues with traffic - went through references to leverage the consulting services looking at traffic studies but had to shift the funding
- At the presentation to Warrant Committee - traffic analysis was in the budget

Member Varghese

- Noticed the per pupil spending slide
- I didn't grow up with a lot of space in my home, parents did not stop parenting because we ran out of space
- Love everything you have shared but that one slide I do have a problem with - telling us we have to spend more to educate our kids
 - It's like saying you can't parent until you have a bedroom for each of my kids
- Saying we have to give all this money to give them great academics - it's hard to hear
- I hear from a lot of families, there is concern about layoffs
- Not sure it is a good statement
 - Is there a way for us to show rankings?
 - Show other towns that have invested money, what is the return on the investment?

Sean O'Rourke

- Using that slide as reference data
- The surrounding towns to us - Canton/Westwood as the ones that we know are performing academically higher
- Top Topic last year
- Educational Excellence is a stated goal

Dr. Carroll

- Appreciate what Member Varghese shared
- Valid concern and perceptive
- When we think about our return on our town investment - the data you are sharing which comes from the department of education shows that 75% of towns are spending more per student than we are
- We are achieving a high return on our investment considering we are not ranked at the top
- Given that, I think it is relevant information when we want to compare ourselves to other towns that spend more per student

- Appreciate all the feedback you hear and make your own calls
- It is important to have this conversation
- We do have high standard for our district

Member White

- It was nice to have Bill Ritchie and Tony Cichello here who were both involved in the last building project
- Remember the condition of our schools before we began
 - They were not in good shape
 - They were overcrowded
 - Psychologically had an affect on our faculty and students
 - Remember the feeling walking in the new spaces that lifted everyone up
 - Had school pride
- Now going back into the school buildings
 - Seeing the overcrowding - felt like the old days
 - Good for the town to build a new project
 - Alleviate the overcrowding
 - Good for the town to invest so everyone can benefit
- Encourage Sean to keep up the good work

Dr. Miranda

- What is at stake is the quality of education?
- The more we overcrowd our schools the more we have to think about our class sizes
- Run the risk of the students not being able to concentrate
- Kids sitting on floor - we can do better than that
- 3rd grader at Cunninham, favorite room is the Art Room
 - Need the creativity
 - Was concerned about losing the art room/space
- We need to act on something now
- We all care about being in fantastic town to live in

Sean O'Rourke

- Agree this project is an investment for the town
- If this project is delayed there will an issue
- The person who has been making sure the building are maintained is retiring
- This will be a heavy job for a new person to oversee the schools
- Spaces have been converted

- Trailers are our next options
 - Concerned about security with the trailers
 - See everyday on the news there are active shooters
 - How are we keeping our kids safe?

Chair Rosmarin

- Would like to show our support to the School Building Committee

Chair Rosmarin made a motion to support the School Building Committee approving the articles for the town land swap domain.

Second: Member White

Roll Call Vote: 4-1-1

Member Varghese abstained from the vote, and would like to review the documents.

Member Ross Deny was absent during the vote.

5. Policy Subcommittee Report - Dr. Carroll

- a. First Reading, Policy ID, Certified Therapy Animals
 - Reviewed and shared the policy with the community
 - New policy brought to School Committee by Director of Nursing Kim Coughlin
 - We bring back at our next School Committee meeting
- b. First Reading, Policy GBEA, Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest
 - Reviewed and shared the policy with the community
 - MASC has a model policy on this topic updated in 2022
 - Our policy was written/updated in 2019
 - Shared the Redline Copy

Dr. Miranda

- Asked about the immediate family definition of the GBEA Policy?

Dr. Carroll

- Immediate family
 - Spouse
 - Parent
 - Live in partner
 - Children
 - Siblings
 - Live in same household
- Can address within the policy
- Will bring back to Joseph Emerson

Chair Rosmarin

- What does constitute the relationship
- Does seem unclear
- Think the language is clear from Joe Emerson
- Should explore alternative language before the second reading

Dr. Miranda

- Agree would like to clarify

6. Finance Subcommittee Report - Member White

a. Approval of Vendor Warrants

Member White made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #34 in the amount of \$338,756.89 payable on March 9, 2023.

Member White made a motion to approve Vendor Warrant #36 in the amount of \$644,145.30 payable on March 23, 2023.

Second: Dr. Miranda

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Member Ross Denny was absent during the vote.

Member White

- Warrant Committee voted to support the Schools Budget
- Included additional positions
- Especially wanted to thank Dr. [Glenn Pavlicek](#) for all of his work over the past several weeks
- Also wanted to thank Amy Dexter for her work and availability

7. Citizen Speak (Policy BEDH-15 Minutes

None

8. Approval of Minutes - Chair Rosmarin

Chair Rosmarin made a motion to approve School Committee Minutes dated March 1, 2023.

Member Varghese

- One question asked after the presentation was not included in the minutes regarding disabilities
- How can we make/add the amendment to the minutes?

Chair Rosmarin

- The March 1, 2023 Minutes will be amended and approved at the next meeting
- Will add the amendment to the minutes

9. Next Meeting Agenda Items - Chair Rosmarin

Updated

Chair Rosmarin made a motion to adjourn from open session and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing strategy with respect to collective bargaining with Milton Educators Association – Units B and D and for the approval of minutes and not to return to open session and adjourn directly from executive session.

Second: Member White

Roll Call Vote: 5-0-1

Member Ross Denny was absent during the vote.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.