

Millbury School Committee Minutes

DATE: March 11, 2009

PRESENT: Ms. Brady-Pojani, Chairperson, Mr. Thomas Clawson, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Corey, Mr. Borowski, Mrs. Vigneau, Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator and the Finance Committee

TIME: 7:00 pm

LOCATION: Millbury High School Media Center

Approval of Regular Minutes

Ms. Brady-Pojani asked for a motion to approve the revised draft minutes of February 25, 2009 meeting. Mr. Clawson made a motion and Mr. Corey seconded the motion. All approved (5-0). (Ms. Brady-Pojani asked that the name Peter Boll change to Eric Boll.)

Report of the Student Advisory

AJ Blaisdell reported that a \$500.00 scholarship will be awarded to the winner of the Central Mass Hero Idol. Katie L'Esperance and Steven Elie are competing. AJ also stated that the winner would be chosen by the audience.

Presentation by State Senator Michael Moore on Local Aid

Mr. Moore stated that he has been speaking at meetings at various towns and districts. Mr. Moore stated that although the Governors budget is level funded this year, based on anticipated revenue fees to date, the best case scenario will be slightly lower than level funded. Mr. Moore stated that the revenue numbers keep changing drastically and he does not want to give wrong numbers. He also stated that the district should get the local revenue amounts sometime in April. Mr. Moore stated that he expected the legislature to pass the Stabilization Fund to rural districts. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the School Department was not invited by the Town to submit projects to the shovel ready Construction Stimulus Package. She also stated that other districts had invited their School Departments to submit projects. Mrs. Hitchcock asked if it was too late to submit projects to be considered. Mr. Moore stated that he would look into this matter. Mrs. Hitchcock presented to Senator Moore a construction stimulus request for Shaw's ADA compliance measures. Mr. Borowski asked that if Senator Moore's office was going to send any information to the Town Manager in the future could Mrs. Hitchcock be included.

Report of the Administration

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had agreed to serve on the Town Financial Management Task Force. She also stated that a representative from the School Committee was also needed to serve on the Town Financial Management Task Force. Ms. Brady-Pojani made a motion to approve Mr. Clawson as the representative to serve on the Committee. It was seconded by Mr. Borowski.

Mrs. Hitchcock discussed the agenda for the Professional Development Day on March 20 2009. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that most of the staff will be working to complete the standards for the curriculum and that twenty-five other staff members will be trained in ELL. This training is required by the Department of Education.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the last day of school (without any more snow days) will be June 24th. She stated that this day will most likely be a .5 day for students and a full day for teachers. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the five snow days used to date were incorporated into this year's calendar.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had met with both unions heads last week. She also stated that she met with the High School and Elmwood Street School staff today to make recommendations to consider the wage increase freeze for FY 2010. She also stated that the school department would not be obligated to vote on this action unless the unions for the town also agreed. Mrs. Hitchcock also clarified to the staff that the School Committee had not agreed upon the 60-40 deficit split proposed by the Town Manager. She also stated that some members of the staff had suggestions regarding the budget. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she will meet with the Shaw Elementary School staff on Thursday.

Budget

Mr. Corey stated that he heard in an unofficial capacity that the budget deficit had increased to 1.77 million today. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had not heard of the increase and Mr. O'Connor the Finance Committee stated that he had not heard of the increase. They both still had the deficit amount at \$1,619,650.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that the School Committee would like Mrs. Hitchcock to send a letter tomorrow to the Selectman asking for clarification regarding where these numbers are coming from. They would also like clarification regarding the \$649,000 expenditures that the Town Manager cut from his budget. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that she would like this letter sent as soon as possible and to sign it from the School Committee.

A discussion regarding the warrant articles took place. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she would rather cut the warrant articles from the budget rather than cut a teaching position. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that if they receive more money then the warrant articles should be included in the budget. She is concerned that if the School Committee removes the

warrant articles then the town manager might not feel it is necessary for him to remove his warrant articles. Mr. Borowski asked about consequences from the Department of Education if the interior doors are not in compliance at the Shaw Elementary School. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that a case could be made due to the budget restraints and that as long as the D.O. E. sees that a plan has been started to rectify the situation that should be enough. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that she is waiting for a response from Fire Chief Belsito, who is waiting for a response from the state fire marshall, regarding the removal of the interior doors. Ms. Brady-Pojani asked that Mrs. Hitchcock send a letter to the Lion's Club and PopWarner to inform them both that Windle Field will have to be closed next fiscal year.

Ms. Brady-Pojani asked if there was a concensus to remove the warrant articles from the budget. All approved (5-0).

Mr. Clawson stated that before the next meeting a vote should be taken to see if the raise freeze was a possibility. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she would set up a meeting with the Town Manager and all the union leaders as soon as possible. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she felt that ethically she would like to notify staff members being laid-off by mid April. She stated that she may use the old fashioned pink slips stating that your position may not be funded for the next school year. She also stated that other communities were dealing with the same issues and that some of the communities are on there second round of lay-offs.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had included in the packets a spreadsheet with information about surrounding towns regarding fees for sports, parking, or activities. She also stated that Mr. Matt Friedman is prepared to level fund the athletic budget. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that she would like this issue added to the agenda for the next meeting as the School Committee members would like to have time to study this information.

Mr. Mike O'Connor, from the Finance committee, stated that he cannot understand an increase to 1.77 million to the deficit. He also stated that free cash is not really free cash. He stated that it is put into tax revenue in order to establish a tax rate. He also stated that he is aware that the School Committee had not agreed to the 60-40 split proposed by the town manager during his budget presentation. Mr. O'Connor also stated that the Finance Committee must gather as much information regarding the school department's budget and the town manager's budget in order to submit a balanced budget. He stated that at this time the school department as been very forthcoming and he appreciates their efforts. Mr. O'Connor also stated that the final budget must be in town hall seven days before the town meeting. If the date for the town meeting is pushed later then the Finance Committee would support that decision.

Mr. Bedard reported on the Audit Report from Melanson and Heath. He stated the school's activity accounts were in the process of being corrected. The high school account had been corrected last year and Shaw and Elmwood Street Schools were in the process of being corrected. Each school's treasurer has been trained and the activity

account has a smaller balance. Another account has been set-up for each school through the town hall for larger deposits. Mr. Bedard stated that the other finding was the accounting for 3 employees sick and vacation time versus their collective bargaining contract. This issue has been corrected with the employees' agreement. The accounting will improve as it will be automated in the near future.

Old Business

Mrs. Hitchcock stated she will try to set up a meeting with the union leaders for the school department as well as the town hall regarding the wage freeze issue. She also stated that next year's school calendar be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

New Business

Mrs. Hitchcock will draft a letter to the Lion's Club and Pop Warner Football to inform them both that Windle Field will be closed.

Next meeting March 25, 2009

Meeting adjourned 8:25pm

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:





