

Millbury School Committee Minutes

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MILLBURY, MASS

DATE: March 25, 2009

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

TIME: 7:00 pm

Location: Millbury High School Media Center

Ms. Brady-Pojani began the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Approval of Regular Minutes

Mrs. Vigneau asked that the word state be changed to stated (page 4 under Old Business).

Ms. Brady-Pojani asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 11, 2009 meeting. Mr. Corey made a motion and Mr. Clawson seconded the motion. All approved. (5-0)

Ms. Brady-Pojani asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the March 2, 2009 meeting. Mr. Clawson made a motion and Mr. Corey seconded the motion. All approved (5-0).

Student Advisory Council Report

A report will be presented at the next meeting.

Windle Field discussion with the Lions club and Pop Warner Football

Mrs. Hitchcock began the discussion by stating that during the last few weeks she had learned a great deal from many interested parties regarding Windle Field and that the Lion's Club has a remarkable reputation. Mr. Marlborough explained the significance that the Lion's Club has had on the Millbury Public Schools and the sizeable amount of money that has been donated. Mr. Bill Kane handed out and discussed a listing of the Lion's Club donations. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that there are two issues regarding Windle Field. The first issue is the removal and replacement of the pole at Windle Field. Due to budget restraints the school department could not fund the removal and replacement of the pole and that this would become a safety issue. Therefore, she recommended to the School Committee to close Windle Field. She explained that \$141,000 of warrant articles (\$10,000 of which is for the Windle Field pole) had to be removed from the 2010 budget. Her options were to eliminate staff or remove the warrant article for the pole. Mrs.

Hitchcock stated that the salary remaining from the 2009 budget for the retired grounds keeper at Windle Field for 6,500 along with a \$1,000 from the Windle Field Revolving Account will be used to remove and replace the pole. She also stated that she spoke to Mr. Spain today and that he has agreed to fund 2,500 towards the replacement of the pole. He also stated that if he receives money from the Shovel Ready Stimulus Package he will use those funds to pay for this project. She stated that at this time there was no need for donations. Mr. Borowski asked if the funds being used to fund this project would have a negative affect on the students. He stated that he would rather see Windle Field close than to take supplies, books, or anything away from the students. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that it would not directly impact the students. Mr. Marlborough from the Lion's Club stated that an anonymous donation of \$2,500 has been made towards the funding of this project. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the second issue is a long-term problem. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that other light poles will need replacing in the future. She stated that she hoped everyone understood the entire problem. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that the school department will not be in the position after this year to fund this project. Ms. Brady-Pojani also thanked the Lion's club for all they have done for the Millbury Public Schools and for the \$2,500 donation towards replacing the pole which the School Committee accepted. A discussion took place regarding the Windle Field Committee and how to enlist volunteers to serve on this committee to form a plan for the future. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the School Department would continue to support the management of the field and the scheduling of events. However, Mr. Spain indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department may be willing to take over the daily operations.

Report of the Administration

Shaw principal search committee has been formed the chairperson of the School Committee will serve on the committee. The committee will be chaired by Dr. Reese. The leadership team chose seven names out of eighteen applicants to interview.

Mrs. Hitchcock reported that at the meeting held on March 16th with Mr. Spain, Town Manager and the union stewards, Mr. Lyon, Mr. Prunier and Mrs. Dunn that it was clear that Mr. Spain had already broached the topic with his personnel to see what they might be willing to agree to i.e. either a wage freeze, furlough, or a benefit package decrease. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that if she misunderstood the direction from the School Committee she apologized. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that all the unions agreed to take the vote on the same day and that the freeze was for one year only and if we are in the same situation next year with the budget we will have to look elsewhere. She also stated that the Town employees had received their wage increased in descending order with their largest increase in the first year whereas the School Department employees received their increases in ascending order with their largest increase in the third year. She also stated that until she knew the exact deficit from the School Committee she could not tell the School Department employees how many furlough days may be necessary. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that they will meet again on Friday, March 27th. Mr. Turbit and Mr. Spain are looking into additional money from health insurance packages. If co-pays are increased minimally it may bring a substantial amount of savings. Mrs. Hitchcock asked if the School Committee has any other suggestions but first she would like to know how

much the School Committee is going to absorb of the deficit. She also stated that the School Department is prepared to cut into Tier 5. She stated that she and Mr. Spain are willing to put anything on the table. Mr. Clawson stated that he is looking for dollar amount from an administration wage freeze or employee not represented by a union. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that \$34,800 would be saved with an administration wage freeze and that Instructional Assistant positions should not be included. Mr. Clawson stated that the administration should take the lead and agree to the wage freeze and to present that to the union employees before asking them to vote for the wage freeze.

Mr. Clawson made a motion to cut \$650,000 from the 2010 school budget. Mr. Borowski seconded the motion for discussion. Mr. Borowski is concerned that \$650,000 is not enough. He stated that he didn't see how the Town Manager would be able to cut 1,000,000 from his budget. A discussion took place regarding this year and next year's deficits and would it make more sense to cut more this year and maybe a little less next year. It was also stated that to present a \$650,000 cut to the unions may make them think that the wage freeze is not necessary. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she wanted to be as transparent as possible to the staff and to tell them exactly how many lay-offs there will be and depending upon what option is voted for how many positions will be saved. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that under no circumstances could the number of lay-offs be predicted. A discussion took place regarding rescheduling the town meeting. Mr. O'Connor asked for clarification that the \$153,000 that was cut from the budget will be funded with the Special Education Stimulus package.

A vote was taken to approve the \$650,000.00 cut from the 2010 School Department budget. Approved (3-2) Ms. Brady-Pojani, Chairperson, Mr. Thomas Clawson, Vice Chairperson, and Mr. Corey in favor of motion. Mr. Borowski and Mrs. Vigneau opposed.

The Elmwood Street School 3rd grade chorus will be singing the National Anthem at the Worcester Sharks game on March 27, 2009. The students are receiving a tremendous discount on tickets.

Status of Internal Doors at the Shaw Elementary School

Mrs. Hitchcock reported that Chief Belsito was looking into the removal of the interior doors at Shaw. According to the Fire Marshall the doors cannot be removed. Mr. Bedard is reviewing the project with prospective vendors.

Budget

The Athletic Budget is down \$9,040 to level funded. Mr. Clawson question the fee paid to Auburn per student. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the fee had been revised due to less students playing hockey. Mr. Bedard stated the fee is not an athletic user fee but rather a fee charged by Auburn to Millbury.

It was decided to table the Foundation vs. Required Net Schools Spending Analysis until the next meeting so that the School Committee could review the information.

Mr. Borowski asked for clarification regarding the process of balancing the budget. Mr. Clawson stated that after the unions vote the School Committee should meet with the selectman. The School Committee has agreed to cut \$650,000 with the very real possibility of it going higher. The School Committee directed Mrs. Hitchcock to prepare to cut \$800,000 from the budget. This represents the voted \$650,000 plus an additional \$150,000. It was then stated that the School Committee would review each line item of the budget and decide where the deductions should be. Mrs. Hitchcock stated to the School Committee with the utmost respect that it is the responsibility of the administration to make the required deductions according to Ed Reform. Mr. Clawson stated that although that was true it is the School Committee that must vote on the recommended reductions.

Mr. O'Connor, from the Finance, Committee stated that next Monday, March 30th and Monday, April 6th they will finish their work on the budget. In the next two weeks they will develop recommendations to balance the budget. Due to the fact that the Town Manager, Selectman and the School Department could not agree to what percent they should each cut from their budget the Finance Committee will determine the split. Mr. O'Connor stated that this is a first for Millbury; however the Finance Committee will cut 1.6 million from the budget. He also stated that the line item will have the adjustment made to the total allocation line and not the individual line items.

Old Business

Nothing to report

New Business

The April School Committee Meetings will be on April 8th and April 15th.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that the high school play was great and would Mrs. Hitchcock send a letter to the Drama Club from the School Committee.

Adjourned 9:01

Respectfully submitted

Donna Lane

Approved:






