

**School Committee Special Meeting
Joint Meeting with the Selectboard**

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MILLBURY, MASS

DATE: April 6, 2009

PRESENT: Ms. Brady-Pojani, Chairperson, Mr. Thomas Clawson, Vice Chairperson,
Mr. Corey, Mr. Borowski, Mrs. Vigneau, and Mrs. Hitchcock

TIME: 5:15 pm

LOCATION: Town Hall – Selectman’s Meeting Room

2010 Budget Discussion

Mrs. Hitchcock summarized the list of reductions. A discussion took place regarding the position the School Committee and Mrs. Hitchcock would take during the meeting with Mr. Spain, Town Manager and the Board of Selectman. It was decided that Mrs. Hitchcock would present information regarding what a cut of over one million dollars will look like.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that other towns were negotiating with their school departments. The Town of Auburn voted to change their health benefit package and to a .5 year wage freeze. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the MTA wanted a one year roll over at 2.5%. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that if the deficit reaches \$800,000.00 then she would put Student Activity fees at Shaw and the Jr. /Sr. High School back on the table.

After the discussion it was decided that the School Committee and Mrs. Hitchcock would ask the Board of Selectman to consider a 58-42 split. It was also decided to ask about the Medicaid funds over the \$90,000.00 and to decide how any additional funds given to the town will be split.

Old Business

Nothing to Report

New Business

Nothing to Report

Special Meeting with the Board of Selectman (6:00PM)

Chairman of the Selectman Mr. Plante began the meeting by stating that the School Committee had requested this special meeting to discuss the budget.

Mrs. Hitchcock thanked the selectman for agreeing to meet this evening. Mrs. Hitchcock began by stating that if the School Committee accepts the recommendation of the Finance Committee the school department will be forced to eliminate eight teachers. Three teachers from Elmwood Street School, three teachers from the Shaw Elementary School and two teachers from the Jr./Sr. High School. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the ten administrators in the district have agreed to a wage freeze regardless of the union vote. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that class sizes would grow at the Elmwood Street School significantly higher from 19 or 20 students to 26 students per class. A part time secretary, a full time custodian, a .5 unfilled custodial position and the volunteer coordinator will be eliminated. She also stated that there is a full time teacher retiring that has not been included in the budget cuts. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that a charge for Student Activities should be charged at the Jr./Sr. High School and the Shaw Elementary School. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that the Athletic Budget and that the budget for supplies and instructional materials has been cut. After school busing will be cut and this is a significant loss due to the fact that the Shaw Elementary School is in corrective action. It will also affect high school students who need additional tutoring to help them pass the MCAS so that they may graduate. This action is a tremendous loss to the students of Millbury.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the School Department has been looking into cutting costs in every direction. The cafeteria will begin contributing to utilities costs. The software that was being considered for transportation mapping has been cut at a savings of \$10,000.00. The School Committee has removed their three warrant articles, which total \$141,000. The warrant articles include the Shaw Elementary School ADA improvements including the removal of the interior doors that are very heavy for students in wheelchairs, the Drainage Project at the high school, and the replacement pole at Windle Field. The Windle Field pole is being funded out of this year's budget.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that at the Shaw Elementary School a Classroom Imagine teacher and a nurse must be added. She also stated that an additional preschool teacher and aide must be added to the Elmwood Street School staff due to the class sizes being over capacity. These positions have been removed from the budget and will be funded by the Special Education stimulus package.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that this is a tremendous amount of money to cut from the School Department's budget. She asked the Board of Selectman and the town manager to consider working with the School Committee regarding the Finance Committee recommendation of a 65-35 split. She asked the Board of Selectman to consider a 58-42% split. She also stated that they split any additional funds and that Medicare reflect a higher number this year. However, Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that obviously the split is the

most important issue to be considered. Mr. Spain stated that they cannot change the Medicare numbers the funds must be directly appropriated. He also stated that it is illegal and this issue was explained last year. Mr. Spain stated as far as the 58-42% split at the very beginning, back in February he believed that a 60-40% split was fair. He also stated that the Town was not willing to go lower than that. He also stated that any if any additional funds come in they could have a special meeting to determine the split. Mr. Plante stated that the Board of Selectman had looked at everything and there is no other place they can cut. Mr. Spain stated that in the matter of fiscal 09 and the \$214,000 total town shortfall that the School Department has not come up with the \$50,000 that they were suppose to. Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that in an article in the Chronicle Mr. Spain had stated that he had it covered and there was no mention of the School Committee's donation. Mr. Spain stated that he could not speak for the School Committee in the article. It was also stated that the School Committee was curious why the meals and rooms tax was not included in the Town Manager's budget or was it included. Mr. Spain replied that the meals and room tax was not included. Mr. Borowski stated that the impact of losing eight teachers will in effect cost a lot more in the future to fix the problems. He asked the Board of Selectman to reconsider the 58-42%. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she had gone to all schools to discuss the significance of a benefits package change, a wage freeze and furlough days could have on the School Department's budget. She also stated that three furlough days could save three positions. It was stated that the vote regarding the benefits package is becoming more complicated and that there may be an issue with the MTA. There have been many calls from retirees concerned about the benefits package change. An insurance advisor for the town met with employees last Thursday to basically talk about the potential savings the town would incur if they carried one health provider and if they changed co-pay options.

Mr. Spain stated that he has cut 4 positions from the town hall and hours have been cut in every department. This will hurt service to the townspeople. He also stated that the reason he did not cut department heads was because each department will operate with less people and the department heads can work more than 40 hours without overtime and a department head can do the job of a head clerk, however, a head clerk cannot do the job of a department head. Mr. Spain stated that the key thing is that additional revenues will be looked at individually and that he and Mrs. Hitchcock will recommend where the funds should be used. Mrs. Vigneau stated that if we get money for Special Education it should go to the School Department. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she herself lived in a small community and that they were having difficulty staffing their Highway Department due to budget restraints. However, this is an adult inconvenience and it was far more important to have students well educated. They are our future. They are forward thinkers. The high school does an amazing job engaging students to learn the skills necessary to receive their diplomas. Putting money into education is a far better way than putting money into services so that adults are not inconvenienced. Some high school students may not graduate. The marginally increase of \$30,000 to the School Department is far more important. Mr. Tom Fox, a resident of the Town of Millbury urged both the School Committee and the Board of Selectman to reach an agreement before the town meeting. He stated that it would be very difficult to have people in the

hall trying to make sense of what you can't make sense of. Mr. Plante stated that they would do all that they could to reach an agreement with the School Committee.

Respectfully submitted
Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:








