

Millbury School Committee Minutes
Joint School Committee/Board of Selectman meeting Tuesday, April 20th, 2010

Date: April 20, 2010

Present: Ms. Brady-Pojani, Chairperson, Mr. Clawson, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Corey, Mr. Borowski, Board of Selectman Committee, Finance Committee, Mr. Spain, Town Manager, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator, and Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent

Absent: Mrs. Vigneau

Location: Millbury Town Hall

Time: 7:00 pm

Mr. Plante, Chairman of the Board of Selectman, began the meeting thanking Mrs. Hitchcock for calling to schedule the meeting. He stated that the Town and the School Department has always worked well together and that this is no different than any other year except financially its worse this year.

Mr. Michael O'Connor, Finance Committee, stated that the Finance Committee is responsible for submitting a balanced budget at the Town Meeting. He stated that the Finance Committee analyzes the budgets submitted by the School Committee and the Board of Selectman and they make recommendations to balance the budget. He stated that the budgets presented to the Finance Committee do not balance and that neither party requested an override. The Finance Committee recommends that the School Department cut 63.78% and the Town cut 32.22% of the budget. He stated that Mr. Spain, Town Manager, agreed to a 60-40% again this year. He also stated that the Finance Committee does not decide what cuts from the School Department budget are more important than the cuts from the Town.

Ms. Brady-Pojani stated that there never seems to be enough money. She stated that the School Committee shares the same concerns as the parents and that the School Committee does not agree with some of the tiers cuts made by Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent. The School Committee feels other things should be cut.

Mr. Clawson stated that the School Committee is looking to cut in other areas to hopefully save some positions. He stated that the School Committee will cut \$5,000 out of their budget which was used for dues and conferences for the members. He also stated that the School Committee wanted to see cuts to the supplies account and Principal's budget accounts.

Mr. Spain, Town Manager, stated that he would like to clear up some misinformation. He stated that the Superintendent indicated that the first correspondence with budget information she received was on March 8th. He stated that he had an email dated February 18, 2010 regarding the budget. He also stated that Mr. Beard had discussed the issue of net school spending and that the School Department's budget with 60% reductions does not even come close, it is 2.7 to 3 million dollars over net school spending. He also stated that it not true that the Town was not cutting positions. He said that this kind of information hurts when it is done at high levels.

Mr. Spain explained Free Cash and how it is used. Mr. Spain also stated that the Town is not hiding any money. He also stated that after hearing Senator Moore speak about the Municipal Relief package at the School Committee meeting last Wednesday, he believes that if it passes it will provide the overlay account with an additional \$325,000. Mr. Spain stated that he is proposing to put \$82,000 less in the overlay account and pass the \$82,000 to the School Department. He stated that he would like to submit a budget that both sides could live with and not have a civil war at the Town Meeting. He stated that he hoped both boards would approve this proposal.

Mr. Spain stated that many questions have come up regarding the Warrant Article for new fire trucks. This article is not part of the this year's budget and if you do not pass the Warrant Article for new fire trucks it will not save a teacher, a head clerk, or a pencil.

Mr. Spain stated that not everyone on the Board of Selectman agree with a meal tax increase, however he strongly urges everyone to vote for it. Mr. Plante stated that Millbury residents will pay the meals tax increase in other towns so why not have people from other towns pay our increase when they shop at the Millbury Mall.

Mr. Borowski thanked Mr. Spain and the Board of Selectman for there innovative solutions to balance the budget. He stated that for himself he does not believe in a 60-40% split this year and he proposes that a 50-50% split to the budget. We know that the Town is not hiding any money.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she and the Administrative Team have been working since the beginning of March to reduce the budget with as little impact as possibly on our students. Mr. Spain asked if any of the administrators in the School Department are receiving raises this year. Mrs. Hitchcock answered no. He then asked Mrs. Hitchcock to explain on page 3 the increase to the Shaw Elementary School Principal's salary. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the Shaw Principal earned more money coming in than the principal that was leaving. Mr. Spain then asked why a new School Psychologist was hired. Mrs. Hitchcock explained that the Shaw Psychologist retired last year and therefore a replacement was hired.

Mr. Borowski stated that this was not the time for a line by line explanation on either the town or school budget. He stated that once we go off a certain cliff there was not coming back. We need to make sure as a community what the priorities are because we are cutting teaching positions than teachers should not be attending any conferences this

year. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that a Classroom Imagine II had to be added to the Shaw School for medically fragile students. This classroom needed a special education teacher, a nurse, and an aide. We also had to add a preschool classroom at Elmwood. These positions were funded by the Federal Stimulus Package for three years. We are in our second year of using these funds. She also stated that all teacher conferences have been cut the previous year.

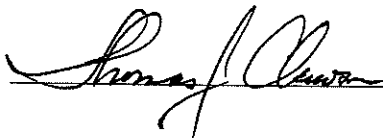
Mr. King of the Board of Selectman asked if Mrs. Hitchcock could explain the mandates placed on the School Department by the State of Massachusetts. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that there was not enough time to single out each mandate; however, the major mandates are special education which is the most costly. Chapter 74 mandates vocation programs some of them from Blackstone Vocational. Some of the vocation programs are internal such as the engineering programs, robotics, business, and ELL Learners. Staff must be trained in CPR in the elementary schools. She also stated that losing the Reading Coach at the Shaw Elementary School and cutting the Curriculum Director to a .5 position it will not sit well with the Department of Education.

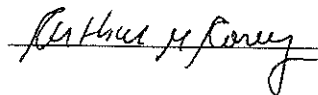
Mr. Plante stated that he and the Chairperson of the School Committee will meet and come to some kind agreement as they have always in the past. He thanked everyone for coming.

Respectfully Submitted

Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:





only 2 s/c
members could
sign, A & B