

Millbury School Committee Minutes

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MILLBURY, MASS.

DATE: April 22, 2009

PRESENT: Ms. Brady-Pojani, Chairperson (6:50PM) , Mr. Clawson, Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Vigneau, Mr. Corey, Mr. Borowski, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator, and Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent, Mr. Reese, Dir. of Curriculum/Inst., Ms. Swenson, Ms. Bolton, Ms. Frederick, Principals, Ms. Molnar, Dir. of Pupil Services

LOCATION: High School Media Center

TIME: 6:00 pm

Mr. Clawson began the meeting at 6:20 pm.

Budget Discussion

Mr. Borowski stated that he felt it was better served if the superintendent and the school administration make the final decision on the specific budget reductions. He stated that he didn't believe it was part of the School Committee's responsibility.

Mr. Clawson referred to Superintendent Hitchcock's five tier reduction scenario which totals \$1,042,944. It was decided to begin the budget discussion by reviewing each tier and then discussing the possibility of student activity and parking fees.

There were no questions regarding Tier 1. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the .5 Assistant Principal position at Elmwood Street School was a reduction not a lay off. A conversation regarding the lay off of 1.0 FTE custodian took place. Mr. Bedard stated that the \$60,000 savings from a 1.0 FTE (retirement and attrition) was pure salary and did not include health insurance. He also stated that other staff members who were not getting health insurance from the School Department may now choose to enroll because of the change to Blue Cross and Blue Shield. It was also stated that the new positions may also opt for health insurance. A discussion took place regarding the staff members affected by lay offs or moving to other positions. It was decided to discuss Tier 5 next and leave Tier 4, with activity and parking fees, for last. It was stated that a total of 5.5 positions were being cut with a savings of \$253,000.

A discussion took place regarding student activity and parking fees. It was stated that a student being charged a fee was a form of charging a tax to students. It was also stated that other districts that have elected to charge activity fees to their students has caused problems in their districts.

Mr. Clawson made a motion to charge a \$50.00 parking fee to high school students beginning with the 2009-2010 school year. Mrs. Vigneau seconded the motion. The motion was approved (5-0) Mr. Corey yes, Mr. Clawson yes, Mrs. Vigneau yes, Mr. Borowski yes, Ms. Brady-Pojani yes.

Mr. Borowski made a motion to charge an activity fee of \$50 student/\$100 family cap (which was one-half of the administration's recommendation). Mrs. Vigneau seconded for discussion. Mr. Corey, Mr. Clawson, Ms. Brady-Pojani, and Ms. Vigneau spoke against the motion. Mr. Bedard stated the teachers' union had sought the School Committee's approval for student activity fees in light of any possible wage freeze. The motion failed (4-1). Mr. Corey no, Mr. Clawson no, Ms. Brady-Pojani no, Ms. Vigneau no, Mr. Borowski yes.

Mr. Clawson and Ms. Hitchcock discussed the specifics of the potential lay-off scenario as outlined in the staffing chart.

A discussion took place regarding how much should be budgeted for unemployment claims for potential lay-offs. It was noted that the list of reductions was higher than the needed reduction amount so that we could account for some additional unemployment costs. Mr. Bedard expressed his concerns regarding the amount which will be needed for unemployment costs. The School Committee decided that at the May 5th meeting it would be decided how much would be put aside for unemployment. Members of the School Committee discussed not putting so much aside for unemployment costs until they know the updated numbers on May 5th. It was stated that the town has a reserved fund for any additional possible lay offs in June. Mr. Clawson asked Mr. Bedard to provide the School Committee with the inquiry from Mr. Turbitt regarding additional unemployment costs. It was also stated that the budget could change at the town meeting and that unemployment could increase if there are more cuts. A discussion took place regarding adjusting the unemployment calculation and school health insurance calculation between the May Annual Town Meeting and the proposed June special town meeting.

It was also discussed that a kindergarten teacher could be cut depending on the enrollment numbers for 2009-2010.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she wanted the ability to go ahead and provide lay off letters starting on Monday, April 27 2009. It was stated by members that there is a consensus agreeing to this request.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she will be meeting with school and town union leaders next week to discuss a potential wage freeze or furlough vote.

The next meeting will be held at 6:15 pm on May 5th. Mr. Bedard will provide the final numbers to the School Committee members as soon as possible. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the information will be part of the next School Committee packet. It was then decided that a budget vote will be taken by the School Committee at the School Committee meeting before the Annual Town Meeting.

Old Business

Nothing to Report.

New Business

Nothing to Report.

The meeting was adjourned 8:04 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:




