

Millbury School Committee Meeting Minutes

Date: April 28, 2010

Present: Mrs. Vigneau, Chairperson, Mr. Corey, Vice Chairperson, Mr. Clawson, Mr. K. Plante, Mrs. Nietupski, Mr. Bedard, Business Administrator, and Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent

Location: High School Media Center

Time: 7:00 pm

Mrs. Hitchcock formerly opened the School Committee meeting. She welcomed new members Mrs. Nietupski and Mr. K. Plante. She also congratulated Mrs. Vigneau, this will be Mrs. Vigneau's eleventh year on the School Committee

Reorganization took place on the School Committee. Mr. Clawson nominated Mrs. Vigneau as the School Committee Chairperson and Mr. Corey seconded the motion. A vote followed the recommendations. Mr. Corey – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes, Mr. Plante – yes, and Mrs. Nietupski – yes.

Mrs. Vigneau thanked the School Committee for electing her Chairperson. She also stated that there have been only two previous Chairpersons; Mr. Hanratty and Ms. Brady-Pojani during her time.

Mr. Clawson nominated Mr. Corey as Vice Chairperson and Mr. Plante seconded the motion. A vote followed the recommendations. Mr. Clawson – yes, Mr. Plante – yes, Mrs. Nietupski – yes, and Mrs. Vigneau – yes.

Mr. Corey nominated Mr. Plante as the Representative to the Windle Field Advisory Committee. Mrs. Nietupski stated that she already served on the Windle Field Advisory Committee and would be happy to serve as the School Committee representative. Mr. Corey withdrew his nomination and Mr. Clawson nominated Mrs. Nietupski. A vote followed the recommendation; Mr. Corey – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes. Mr. Plante – yes and Mrs. Vigneau – yes.

Mr. Clawson nominated Mrs. Vigneau to sign payroll at the Town Hall. Mr. Plante seconded the motion. A vote followed the recommendation; Mr. Corey – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes, Mr. Plante – yes, and Mrs. Nietupski – yes.

Mr. Clawson made a motion that the School Committee meetings will be governed by Robert Rules. Mr. Corey seconded the motion. A vote followed; Mr. Corey – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes, Mr. Plante – yes, and Mrs. Vigneau – yes, Mrs. Nietupski – yes.

Approval of Executive Minutes

Mr. Corey made a motion to accept the minutes from the March 24th Executive Meeting. Mr. Clawson seconded the motion. All approved (3-0) Mrs. Nietupski and Mr. Plante abstained.

Mr. Corey made a motion to accept the Executive minutes from April 14th and Mr. Clawson seconded the motion. All approve (2-0). Mrs. Vigneau, Mrs. Nietupski, and Mr. Plante all abstained. It was stated that a 2-0 was enough to approve the minutes as long as nobody voted against the motion.

Report of the Administration

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she and Mrs. Swenson were invited to the grand opening of Best Buy. She also stated that Best Buy has donated \$10,000 to Millbury High School. The check will arrive in four to six weeks. The money will be used to fund a new light board and replace parts of the sound system in the auditorium. This will benefit both students and the community. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that Mrs. Saucier is working with Best Buy to begin an internship for students.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she is still in the process of convincing Mrs. Swenson to postpone her retirement; however, she will be retiring on August 31, 2010 after thirty six years of service to the Millbury Public Schools. Mrs. Vigneau asked Mrs. Hitchcock to read what she had written about Mrs. Swenson in her Informational Items Report. Her accomplishments, throughout the system, are numerous and her leadership as an Assistant Principal for four years and now Principal for the past four years has been outstanding. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she has worked with nine or ten Principals in her career and have never had the pleasure of working with someone who serves as such a strong role model for students and staff; creates a climate of collaborative decision-making and a culture of acceptance and nurturing; attends all events with enthusiasm and a keen eye for quality and safety; supports the community with her time and talents and continues to send the message that a quality education is the right of every student and should be the number one focus of the Millbury Public Schools. She will be missed by all of us and very difficult to replace.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that at this time she is considering hiring a one year interim Principal. There are people who have served many years in that capacity, having retired and are willing to step in for a year. She also stated, that it is very late in the school year to secure the right candidate by July 1st. This plan would also allow the Assistant Principal to be mentored for one more year by an experienced administrator. Mrs. Hitchcock said she believed that after one more year Ms. Vasil would be a strong candidate for Principal. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that it might make more sense to begin searching in November or December. She asked if the School Committee had any

thoughts or suggestions regarding this issue. Mr. Clawson and Mr. Corey thought it sounded like a great idea and cost effective.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that over the past week regarding some of the budget cuts that occurred in discussions. A question regarding the account called Conference/Dues/Travel for the Superintendent has a balance of \$13,000. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that we have to set line items up the same way the Department of Education specifies because we have an end of the year report to submit to the Department of Education. Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that she has not attended a single conference nor has she been out of state since she began in Millbury. She stated that this was due to the fact, that teachers could not attend conferences she felt that it was unthinkable for her to attend conferences. Mrs. Hitchcock went on to say that the account is used for dues to different organizations that benefit the students and the School Department, such as the Blackstone Valley Educational Foundation.

Budget

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the School Department and Town have come to an understanding that the FY2011 Budget presented at Town Meeting on Tuesday, May 4th will be a balanced budget. Which is basically a 50-50% split with the addition of \$82,000 from the Town's Overlay Account.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that she didn't understand the Tiers and where the cuts were coming from. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she would not use Tiers in the future to show reductions. She also stated that as she received higher amounts to be reduced she began adding tiers. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that what she has heard from the parents is that they want professional positions restored first to restore class sizes to acceptable ranges. Therefore, to meet the needs and honor the parents request the reductions will be taken from different Tiers. Mrs. Hitchcock asked the School Committee if they would like to propose anything under Tier 3 or should we not include this tier in the budget.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that in the past once Tier I was voted on; if necessary they would move down the line of Tiers voting on each tier. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she found it hard to understand that some of the reductions will be taken from Tier I while other reductions will be taken from other Tiers. Mrs. Hitchcock stated again that she is looking to restore professional positions so that class sizes will remain in the acceptable range as much as possible. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that she could not tell the School Committee tonight what positions will be restored and that her Leadership Team will be meeting on Friday to discuss the matter.

Mrs. Terry Dion, audience speaker, asked if due to the fact that the enrollments for the incoming kindergarteners is low will the positions of kindergarten teacher and aide be moved to Tier I. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that those positions will be talked about in the Leadership Group on Friday and will do what is best for the District. However, it is very likely that these positions will move to Tier I.

Mr. Corey asked what the past practices have been regarding late kindergarten registrations. Mrs. Hitchcock responded that two years ago there was an influx of students and schools were not prepared.

Mrs. Judy Bastarache, audience speaker, stated that she would like to bring up the subject of athletic fees again. She also stated that she had been approached by a person leaving the School Committee on Monday. We had lengthy discussion regarding fees. Mrs. Bastarache stated that this situation is leaving a bad taste in people's mouth regarding the elected officials in this town. Last year, employees agreed to take a cut in their Health Insurance Benefit to restore positions. The School Committee had stated that they would seriously look at instituting a fee for student athletics, however they did not. Mrs. Bastarache also stated that the townspeople have made it clear that they would rather pay fees than lose a teacher especially the Shaw School's reading coach as they are in level 3 nearing level 4. Mrs. Bastarache stated that she learned that the School Committee is using this as a negotiating tool. She questioned the use of activity fees as a negotiating tool. She stated that at the last meeting she asked the School Committee members how they felt about fees, but never received an answer. She again encourage the School Committee to consider athletic fees.

Mrs. Vigneau stated that she thinks the School Committee will take a vote on the athletic fees.

Mrs. Terry Dion stated that she knows the Board of Selectman and the School Committee are putting education first and working together, however, she stated that we have to remember the importance of town services such as the Police and Fire Department to keep our children safe.

A discussion took place regarding how the \$67,000 was derived and how the fees would be implemented. It was also stated that the Parents' Club has always said they would help if a student could not financially afford to pay fees. Mrs. Nietupski stated that she felt the students of the Millbury Public Schools have been lucky to have gone this long without fees.

Mrs. Nietupski made a motion to approve charging athletic fees to students. She stated that personally she would rather see fees than cut a professional position. A discussion took place regarding what activities would have a fee. It was also asked what school year the student would be in when fees begin. It was suggested that when a student begins junior high school. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she would like to see fees implemented in the Shaw School.

A discussion took place regarding how many surrounding communities charge activity fees. It was stated by an audience member that two hundred and forty one communities were surveyed and that all but 40 communities charge fees. Mr. Clawson asked Mrs. Hitchcock if it would be possible to send a survey home to all parents to see how the majority of parents felt regarding fees. Mr. Corey stated that due to the fact that the Athletic Director of Millbury's position is part time now, he felt that that more

responsibilities would be added to the position and reasoned that it should be increased to a full time position. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the added responsibilities that charging fees will create is more of a clerical role and, therefore, it would not be necessary to increase the Athletic Director's position to full time. It was decided that Millbury Parents' Club will under the direction of Mrs. Hitchcock send out surveys regarding the fees and will tally the results. It was asked if when the economy turned around could the fees at that time be voted out. Mrs. Hitchcock stated that yes that could be done and that it is possible to vote on fees every year according to the economic times.

Old Business

Nothing to report

New Business

Mrs. Vigneau stated that she enjoyed the High School newsletter included in the packets. She would like to send a congratulatory letter to the student athletics mentioned in the newsletter.

Mrs. Vigneau asked for a vote to go into Executive Session for Contract Negotiations. Mr. Corey – yes, Mr. Clawson – yes, Mr. Plante – yes, Mrs. Nietupski – yes, and Mrs. Vigneau – yes. Mrs. Vigneau stated that the School Committee would not be coming back to the open meeting.

Meeting adjourned 7:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Lane
School Committee Clerk

Approved:






