

**Millbury School Committee Meeting
FY2015 Public Budget Hearing
REGULAR SESSION
Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS

Date: February 26, 2014

Present: Mrs. Nietupski, Chairperson; Mr. Borowski, Vice Chairperson;
Mrs. Vigneau; Mr. Corey; Mr. Plante; Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent of
Schools; Mr. Bedard, Business Manager;
Ryan Mercier, Student Advisory Council

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Media Center

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. FY2015 School Department Budget Hearing

Mrs. Hitchcock presented a brief PowerPoint to outline the highlights of the FY2015 budget. The proposed budget of \$19,523,195 reflects a 3.99% increase (\$749,357) over the 2014 final budget. She noted that percentages of the categories of Personnel, Special Education Contracts and Tuitions, Transportation, Utilities and Operations, and Discretionary Expenses are very similar to those in previous years.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the Special Education contracts currently represent 22-23 students and that this is always a moving target due to significant needs of students and unavailability of services and staffing to maintain day, collaborative or residential programs. Student transportation includes buses, mini vans and Out of District placements. Mrs. Hitchcock noted the seamless transition to AA Transportation through the efforts of Mr. Bedard, after Atlantic Express Transportation announced they were bankrupt in mid-November. She noted that while we have managed to save some money under Utilities and Operations, the Discretionary Expenses remains the smallest amount of the Millbury school budget. Therefore, the only way to reduce school department costs is through personnel.

Mrs. Hitchcock responded to the Finance Committee's letter of January 24, 2014, by reading aloud the committee's questions and the school department's responses (see packet) pertaining to Early Retirement, Sequestration, Transportation, Technology Warrant and Net School Spending.

Mr. Borowski made a motion to officially open the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mrs. Nietupski stated the meeting was open for public comment.

Mr. O'Connor addressed the committee as a member of the Millbury Finance Committee. He thanked Mrs. Hitchcock for responding to the Committee's letter. While stating that it is

difficult at this time to get into specifics, he noted that the school department's proposal of a \$747,000 increase over last year along with a technology warrant article of \$60,000 and an expected increase of health benefits will pose a problem with the anticipated shortfall of 1.1 million dollars in the local budget. Mr. O'Connor stated that adjustments to the school and municipal budget will have to be made to compensate for the 1.1 million dollar shortfall, or the town will have to expect a 2 1/2 proposition override. He noted that more information will be announced from the Town Manager at the March 6th meeting.

Mr. Borowski made a public statement to set an expectation on how the budget process works. He noted that in creating a school and municipal budget, there are several unknown variables such as homeless students and transportation costs. He noted the vote this evening is not the final vote (the amount cannot go up – only down), but it sets a baseline on which discussion can begin.

Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to close the public hearing portion of the meeting. Mr. Borowski made the motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mrs. Vigneau. All in favor (5-0).

2. Approval of Regular Session Meeting Minutes of February 12, 2014

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions or deletions to the Regular Session Minutes of February 12, 2014.

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (4-0) *Mr. Plante abstained from the vote.*

3. Report of the Student Council and Student Advisory Council

Robyn Thornburg, Secretary of Student Council, and Gabriella Prominski, President of Student Council, updated the committee on current events at the high school.

Student Advisory Council members Ryan Mercier, Andrew Borus, Christopher Lazzaro and Gianna Okuliczki provided a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the importance of providing funding in the school budget to support student clubs and extracurricular activities other than sport teams.

Data provided in the presentation showed similar numbers of students involved in clubs and athletics, however, the stipend amounts ranged from \$40,000 for the clubs stipends to \$150,000 spent yearly on athletics. A funding application process was presented whereby clubs would have to state how much funding is desired and what it will be used for. A Club Funding Committee would be developed to determine which clubs are most deserving and to allocate the funds.

Although Council President Ryan Mercier stated the council realizes this may not be possible for this coming year, he referred to Grafton Public Schools, which has a line in their budget for student clubs and activities in the amount of \$5,000. He urged the committee and the superintendent to make this a possibility in the future.

Mr. Borowski commended the council on their use of data. Although he admired their practicality in relation to the lack of funds this year, he recommended the board entertain and

offer support in the future. He requested that Mrs. Hitchcock table this for future discussion and analysis.

4. Report of the Administration

a. Shaw School Update by Mrs. Friedman

Mrs. Friedman updated the committee on celebrations that have taken place this year at the Shaw School. She referenced the following events:

- Annual Geography Bee which was won by 5th grader Matt Powers
- Teacher Deborah Lacey provided students the opportunity to participate in the UMass Lowell Cool Science Poster Contest on climate change won by Shaw student Lauren Kirk and honorable mentions by Antonio Vaccaro and Joey Daley
- Art Teacher Lorna Pezzanelli honored at the Blackstone Valley Business and Education forum for leadership and participation in Art in the Valley
- Students Gianna Borowski and Emma Guyan selected from 600 applicants to participate in the Massachusetts All-State Treble Chorus
- Annual Basketball fundraiser with funds raised through the efforts of teacher Anna Vaillancourt to support positive student behavior as part of the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) initiative
- Teacher Michael Tarka's hair cutting fundraiser tied to a food drive to support Millbury food pantries
- 6th grade students Olivia Corey, Marina Kazmierczk and Sydney Westerlind coordinating a bath products drive to support the Abby House in Worcester
- Mrs. Schonberg, Reading Specialist at Shaw, running an after school program for extra support in ELA and Math
- Parent Volunteer Trish Desmarais completing a second session of Club Intervention focusing on science and math
- Parent Volunteer Mary Kate Christe starting a new after school club called "Think Tank" with a focus on science and math
- Upcoming Discovery Days field trips and Camp Bournedale trip
- Donation of two classroom sets of desks and chairs from Wheelabrator through the efforts of Shaw custodian, Pam Higginbottom

Mrs. Hitchcock noted that improving parent communication is one of the district goals and it is being accomplished through school newsletters and the school websites, but more effectively through the reporting of a building principal.

Mrs. Hitchcock announced the upcoming Destination Imagination Tournament being held on Saturday, March 8, 2014 at Millbury Junior/Senior High School. This will be the third year that Millbury has hosted the tournament and the district is proud to highlight the event with five teams from Millbury participating. Mrs. Vigneau questioned if the Millbury groups will be selling refreshments as a fundraiser. Principal Vasil stated the Music Parents, Robotics Team and DI teams will be hosting fundraisers.

b. Other, as Needed

5. Budget

a. Approval of the FY2015 Proposed School Budget of \$19,427,159-Vote Required

Mrs. Nietupski requested a motion to approve the FY2015 Proposed School Budget of \$19,427,159. Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Bedard noted the figure of \$19,427,159 does not include the separate Medicaid Warrant Article of \$96,036, bringing the total to \$19,523,195.

b. Discussion /Vote on Proposed FY2015 Warrant Articles for Submission to Town Hall-Vote Required

Mrs. Hitchcock referred to an additional article that she and Mr. Bedard have decided not to bring forward due to the current issue of finances in the Town of Millbury. A Video Surveillance/Security System Warrant Article in the amount of \$75,000 for improvements to the indoor and outside cameras and a new Shaw School Security System will not be included for submission to the Town under the FY2015 School Department ATM Warrant Articles. Mrs. Hitchcock noted the importance of the article due to safety concerns, however, the Technology Article for \$60,000 (\$100,000 less than originally projected) is required to complete the 3-year technology plan to bring wireless throughout the district.

Mr. Bedard noted the Student Parking Fees Revolving Account Warrant Article spending amount has been increased from \$15,000 to \$25,000. This increase will enable the necessary updates to the parking lot pavement. Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve the Student Parking Fees Revolving Account Warrant Article, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve the School Department Medicaid Warrant Article in the amount of \$96,036, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve the School Department Technology Warrant Article in the amount of \$60,000, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Bedard noted all of these articles are part of the School Department's capital project list earmarked for FY2015.

6. Old Business

Mrs. Vigneau requested congratulatory letters be sent from the Superintendent on behalf of the School Committee to Shaw students Gina Borowski and Emma Guyan for being selected to participate in the inaugural Massachusetts All-State Treble Chorus, and to Millbury Junior High student Thomas Machacz as the student representative to the Governor's Project 351.

7. New Business

a. Proposed 2014-2015 School Calendar

Mrs. Hitchcock presented the proposed 2014-2015 Millbury school calendar for approval. The noted change from last year's calendar is to hold the fifth Professional Development Day on January 16, 2015, the Friday prior to the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, rather than after the last day of school in June. New Teacher Orientation will take place on August 20 and 21, all staff will report back on August 25, Professional Development Day will be held on August 26,

students in grades 1-12 will start on August 27, Kindergarten students will start on August 28 and Preschool students will start on September 2, 2014.

Mr. Borowski referenced the three half-days of November 24, 25, and 26 and opened discussion on the possibility of lapsing the school busing procedure in the schools for those days to accommodate working parents. Mrs. Hitchcock acknowledged that it is difficult for working parents, but she did not recommend doing so. Discussion followed on publicizing the half-days in the school newsletters and on the website for parent awareness.

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve the 2014-2015 School Calendar, seconded by Mrs. Vigneau. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Corey requested a letter be sent through the Superintendent on behalf of the School Committee to acknowledge the accomplishments of the students and staff at the Shaw School this year.

8. Executive Session

At 8:10 p.m., Mrs. Nietupski requested a roll call to *“move into Executive Session, in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, S21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.”*

Mrs. Vigneau – Yes; Mr. Corey – Yes; Mrs. Nietupski – Yes; Mr. Borowski – Yes; Mr. Plante - Yes

9. Future Topics

a. New Student Discipline Regulations

b. New Fingerprint Identification System for Employees

Next Meeting	March 12, 2014	MHS Media Center – 7:00 p.m.
	March 26, 2014	MHS Media Center – 7:00 p.m.

10. Adjourn

The Regular Session of the School Committee was adjourned following the Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Femino

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Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Approved:

Janice B. Hitchcock

Kevin Skene

Arthur J. Kony

Josh M. Unger

Items in Packet:

Draft of Regular Session Minutes of 2/12/2014
MPS School Committee Proposed FY15 Budget
FY2015 School Department ATM Warrant Articles
Copy of 2013-2014 School Calendar and Draft of 2014-2015 School Calendar
Letter to Sherriff Evangelidis dated 2/14/2014 from R. Bedard

Hand-Outs at Meeting:

PowerPoint on FY2015 Budget Hearing
Millbury Finance Committee Letter of 1/24/2014 with Responses by S. Hitchcock
PowerPoint on Funding for Student Clubs by Student Advisory Committee
Funding Application