

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

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Date: March 12, 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. Approval of Regular Session Meeting Minutes and Executive Session Meeting Minutes of February 26, 2014

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions or deletions to the Regular Session Minutes of February 26, 2014.

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

Mrs. Nietupski stated any changes, additions or deletions to the Executive Session Minutes of February 26, 2014 will have to be made in Executive Session.

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

2. Report of the Administration

a. Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School Profile

Mrs. Hitchcock included the MHS Profile for 2013-2014 in the committee's packet which notes information on School and Community, Faculty, Curricula, Grading, Class Rank, Calculation for Weighted Rank and G.P.A., Graduation Requirements, Further Schooling of Graduates, SAT Mean Scores, and the list of 4 year colleges to which Millbury high school students have been accepted during 2009-2013. Mrs. Hitchcock noted the Profile is available to the public through Principal Vasil at the high school. Mrs. Vigneau requested this information also be made available on the school website, if not already posted.

b. Other, as Needed

Mrs. Hitchcock provided a brief PowerPoint presentation on the 10 new initiatives mandated by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education over the last 2 ½ years:

1. **Common Core Standards in ELA and Math** – This initiative was implemented in year 2012-2013 and replaces the old curriculum frameworks. The new standards require more depth and will require a great deal of time to implement fully.
2. **Educator Evaluation** – This plan began in year 2012-2013 and involves a continuous 2-year cycle with half of the 163 MTA members and 11 administrators evaluated the first year and the remaining half the second year. This initiative involved significant professional development and the need to hire two full time assistant principals at both the Elmwood and Shaw Schools. Mrs. Hitchcock noted she will bring back the costs associated with this initiative at a later time.
3. **RETELL (Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners)** This initiative began in year 2013-2014 and requires all teachers going through the relicensing process to eventually be certified in ELL by the date of 2016, in addition to their general license. A number of Millbury staff are attending a 45-hour training, with administrators attending a 15 hour training. Mrs. Hitchcock noted that 3 graduate credits will be awarded at the completion of the staff training.
4. **PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers)** The PARCC initiative began in January of 2014. The goal of this electronic assessment is to increase the rates at which students graduate from high school prepared for success in college and the workplace. Mrs. Hitchcock referred to the increase in our local budget, along with the 3 technology warrant articles, 2 previously approved at the Town Meeting and the 3rd to be voted on as a warrant article for FY15. She stated that we would not have been able to comply with this online statewide assessment without the recent technology upgrades.
5. **District Determined Measures** were put in place for the second half of this school year. Millbury currently uses MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) to forecast MCAS in ELA and Math in grades 3-9, DIBELS used to assess decoding and fluency, Fontas & Pinnell for comprehension and Lexia for phonics. In addition, a writing assessment is required in every content area at every grade level.
6. **MKEA (Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment)** is a very specific instrument to assess students entering kindergarten and requires training for teachers. This initiative is not negotiable and training will begin in the spring of 2014 and the assessments will be first used during the 2014-2015 school year.

7. **New Behavioral Standards/Regulations** will begin in year 2014-2015 and requires districts to provide specialized tutoring or placement in a day program for all students who are suspended for more than ten days. We currently have services for internal suspensions at the high school, and local Collaboratives are working to meet the letter of the law and provide this service in a cost effective way. Mrs. Hitchcock noted that all school handbooks will have to be updated to include this new regulation.
8. **Educator Evaluation Ratings/Impact on Learning** – The current rating system is done by staff supervisors or administrators. The state is currently looking to implement student/staff surveys as part of the evaluation process in 2014-2015. Mrs. Hitchcock complimented the value of the Educator Evaluation Plan and the fact that it had to be negotiated into the teacher contract. However, she noted surveying students and staff as part of the evaluation process is quite different and may not be easily negotiated.
9. **Fingerprinting – 2013-2014 New Hires** – All public school employees hired in the 2013-2014 school year will be required to have a federal database fingerprint check done at their own cost. The cost will be \$55 for licensed educators and specialists and \$35 for all others. Locations are currently being determined throughout the state. All current or existing employees will be required to have fingerprint checks on a phased-in schedule leading up to the 2016-2017 school year. This is in addition to the current Mass. CORI check.
10. **Next Generation Science Standards** – These standards have just been announced by the state. Mrs. Hitchcock will keep the committee posted on the timeline.

Mrs. Hitchcock noted it is a struggle to complete these initiatives in the timelines expected. She plans to have a conversation with Senator Michael Moore to bring this to the attention of the Commissioner of Education.

Discussion followed on the need to negotiate Items #8 and #9 in the teacher contract.

Mr. Borowski noted his frustration with the state on mandating initiatives and not providing the funding to back them up.

3. Budget

a. FY2015 Proposed School Budget - Discussion

Mr. Borowski commented on the Town Manager's budget presentation last week and the fact that the cuts are based on a certain percentage ratio for the school and the town budget. He stated that with respect to Mr. Spain, to his knowledge no school committee member has ever agreed to such a ratio. Discussion continued on the proposed \$600,000 cut expected from the school department and the \$400,000 cut from the town (a 60/40 split).

Mrs. Hitchcock noted the school department's substantial cuts over the past years of 1.3 million dollars and 14 FTE positions were publically addressed and outlined every year. She stated that she is not willing to make any further cuts in the school department budget until she sees the cuts from the town, something she has not seen in the past seven years.

Mrs. Nietupski noted that she was asked by the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen if the Committee was aware of the \$600,000 cut and she responded that the Committee has not agreed to that amount. She noted the town's 3.2% increase over the last year's budget should have also reflected an increase to the school department's budget.

Mr. Corey stated that he has never agreed to the 60/40 ratio. He stated that while the Committee has always tried to cooperate to balance the budget, the school department has been more than generous at the expense of the 1800 plus students in the town. Mrs. Hitchcock noted this also includes the expenses for running three school buildings.

Mr. Borowski noted the importance the budget has on the next generation and how it will eventually impact the Town of Millbury. He indicated the willingness to compromise and negotiate, but he is not willing to balance the budget on the back of the students.

Mr. Corey added his appreciation to Millbury Selectman Brian Ashmankis for addressing the enrollment process at the Blackstone Valley Technical High School and the fact that the top percentage of students are being selected to attend. Mr. Corey stated his profound belief that many students who are not accepted end up falling through the cracks.

Mrs. Hitchcock reported on a recent email from Senator Michael Moore's office regarding an additional 125 million dollars in local aid that was not included in the Governor's budget for 2015. While this will help, she stated the need to address the budget issues at the Town Meeting.

Mrs. Nietupski added the suggestion to cut back on teacher's hours is not plausible. Mrs. Hitchcock concurred stating that the 990 hours of learning time is regulated by the state and we are very close to the minimum hours.

b. Transportation Bid Results -Vote Required

Mr. Bedard reported on the opening of bids for the regular day school bus transportation for the next three years beginning on July 1, 2014. Only one bid was received from AA Transportation Company of Shrewsbury. The expiring contract has a price of \$319 per bus and the new price is \$334 per bus, which represents a 4.7% increase. He noted that the district was bracing for a 7% increase. Mr. Bedard included the complete proposal from AA in the committee's packet and stated that it is also available online on the district's website.

Mr. Bedard recommended awarding the regular day school bus transportation contract at the stated bid price to AA Transportation. Mrs. Nietupski questioned the quality of their service over the past months. Mr. Bedard stated his satisfaction with their service. Mrs.

Hitchcock noted that the decrease in the transportation line item from 7% to 4.7% will be revised in the school budget.

Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

4. Old Business

5. New Business

Mrs. Hitchcock read her letter to the Committee announcing her retirement as Millbury's Superintendent of Schools effective August 15, 2014.

Mrs. Nietuspki accepted her notice of retirement on behalf of the Committee, and thanked her for her leadership in the district over the last seven years.

6. Executive Session

The School Committee will vote to move into Executive Session, in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, S21 (a) (3) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining

The Committee did not hold an Executive Session.

7. Future Topics

a. New Student Discipline Regulations

b. New Fingerprint Identification System for Employees

Next Meeting	March 26, 2014	MHS Media Center – 7/00 p.m.
	March 27, 2014	Joint Meeting of the SC, BOS and Finance Committee at the Millbury Town Hall– 7:00 p.m.
	April 9, 2014	MHS Media Center – 7:00 p.m.

8. Adjourn

Mrs. Nietuspki asked for a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Mr. Borowski made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Femino

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Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Approved:

Joseph B. Higgins, Jr.

Kevin O'Leary

Arthur M. Gagny

Joslin M. Vignea

Items in Packet:

Draft of Regular Session Minutes of 2/26/2014

Draft of Executive Session Minutes of 2/26/2014

Memo from R. Bedard dated 3/3/2014 Re: Regular Day School Bus Transportation Three Year Bid Award

Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School Profile 2013-2014

Congratulatory Letters (4)

R.E. Shaw Newsletter January/February 2014

Supt. Hitchcock's letter of resignation