

**Millbury School Committee Meeting  
REGULAR SESSION  
Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS

**Date:** December 11, 2013

**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. (6:30 p.m. Tour)

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

Principal Mandy Vasil conducted a school tour of the Millbury Junior-Senior High School prior to the meeting.

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Mrs. Nietupski welcomed Ryan Mercier, Millbury Junior/Senior High School senior, as the representative of the Student Advisory Council.

**1. Approval of Regular Session Meeting Minutes of 11/13/2013 and Executive Session Minutes of 11/13/2013.**

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions or deletions to the Regular Session Minutes of November 13, 2013.

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

Mrs. Nietupski stated that if there are any changes, additions or deletions to the Executive Session Minutes of November 13, 2013, they will have to be made in Executive Session.

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

**2. Report of the Student Advisory Council**

Members of the Student Advisory Council presented a PowerPoint presentation to the committee. Christopher Lazzaro noted the PowerPoint handout on Backpacks in Our School reflects the proposed new "procedure" on backpacks in schools rather than "policy," as listed under General Rules 3 in the student handbook. He noted that students are expressing the concern of having to go to their locker and not making it to class on time. A survey was given to students in both the Junior and Senior High School.

Andrew Borus presented the results of the four questions in the survey:

1. **Do You Wear Backpacks During School?** 12% of students wear backpacks during school; 69% of students do not wear backpacks; 19% of students wear backpacks to only certain classes. He noted that 31% of students are already breaking the backpack rule, and the string bags that are allowed do not accommodate all of their materials.
2. **Should the Policy be Changed?** 62% of Students agree that the policy should be changed to allow backpacks; 10% of students say the policy should not change; 28% of students have no preference on the matter.
3. **If this policy were changed, would you use a backpack during school?** 48% of students would carry backpacks if the policy was changed to allow it; 30% of students would sometimes wear backpacks to certain classes; 22% of students would not wear backpacks at all during the school day.
4. **Would you be willing to carry around a clear backpack?** This question was added at the request of Principal Mandy Vasil. 83% of students indicated they would not wear a clear backpack; 16% of students indicated they would wear a clear backpack; 1% of students are indifferent. He noted the main objective to the clear backpack was a privacy issue for medical or other private items and students not wanting to pay for another type of backpack.

Gianna Okuliczki reported on the teachers' opinions. She noted that most agreed on the benefit of getting to class on time. Some concerns with the backpacks were cluttering the walkways and allowing drugs and weapons to go unnoticed. She noted a list of area schools that allow backpacks or do not have anything against them in their handbooks, noting that Millbury is the only school allowing strictly string bags.

Ryan Mercier presented the proposed rule that students be allowed to carry backpacks during the school day as long as they can fit under the desk. He indicated the council is working with Principal Vasil and Assistant Principal Bresnahan on their proposal. He thanked the committee for their attention and will keep them updated.

Mr. Borowski questioned Mr. Mercier on the students' response regarding the majority of students not wanting to carry clear backpacks due to the privacy issue of medications. He stated that these medications should be held with the school nurse. Mr. Mercier agreed to research this further, and noted some student interest in carrying the clear backpacks as long as they were provided by the school. Mrs. Vasil stated this type of backpack is what is permitted in athletic arenas due to safety and security issues.

Mr. Corey questioned Mr. Mercier on the students' response of not having enough time to go to their lockers between classes and getting to class on time. Andrew Borus noted there is now a shorter time span (3 minutes) between classes. Mrs. Vasil noted that there has been conversation on extending this time span from 3 to 4 minutes in lieu of allowing the backpacks.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated the committee will look forward to the council's update.

### **3. Report of the Administration**

#### **a. Student Council Report**

Student Council President, Gabriella Prominski, and Council Secretary, Robyn Thornburg updated the committee on recent events at Millbury Junior/Senior High School.

**Mrs. Vigneau**

**b. Technology Update**

Mrs. Hitchcock updated the committee on information from the technology department on equipment installation in the district. All teacher computers have been replaced and updates to older equipment is in progress. The High School Guidance office student computers and High School teacher room computers have been upgraded. Classroom student computers at the Shaw and Elmwood schools are next in line to receive updates.

Mrs. Hitchcock reported the cable installation for wireless service has begun. She noted that this was previously approved by the school committee as part of the 3-year technology plan. She noted this will be brought before the community in terms of a warrant article. Plans are being developed on revising the staff wireless use policy for students and staff to bring in their own devices. Mrs. Hitchcock stated this will be presented as a policy amendment at the next meeting.

Mr. Borowski inquired if Mr. Bellville, Technology Director, can recommend a tablet type system (i.e., iPad) for the district. He noted that at some point, we will need to take that leap. He understands that it is a multi-year process, however, asked the board begin to explore this change. Mrs. Hitchcock noted the Curriculum Director will also need to be involved.

**c. Decision Regarding PARCC/MCAS Testing**

Mrs. Hitchcock notified the committee of Millbury's decision regarding the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers initiative. She noted that this testing would not be possible in our district if we had not updated our technology. This pilot project will take place in the spring of 2014. A random selection of two grade 4 classes at the Shaw School will be chosen by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to participate in the PARCC English/Language Arts testing. The DESE is allowing each district to decide if these selected students will also take the MCAS in ELA. Mrs. Hitchcock stated the decision was made not to have students participating in PARCC also take the MCAS ELA testing. They will only be tested in MCAS Math. This decision was made due to the age of the students and the fact that they are not accomplished test takers. The negative aspect is that these students will not have comparative MCAS assessments for this year. She also noted that these grade 4 parents will not receive information on individual test taker scores with PARCC, and will receive only their MCAS Math scores. She stated there will be a message regarding the PARCC assessment on the home district and Shaw School's website. Parents were invited to call Mrs. Hitchcock; Mrs. Bellville, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; or Mrs. Friedman, Principal of Raymond E. Shaw School, with any questions.

Mrs. Nietuspki asked how this will affect the annual progress. Mrs. Hitchcock stated there will be a dip in overall performance.

**d. NAEYC Re-Accreditation Granted for Elmwood Street School**

Mrs. Hitchcock acknowledged Ms. Frederick and Mr. Burke for their efforts in receiving NAEYC re-accreditation at the Elmwood Street Elementary School.

**e. Title I Program Review – DESE Approval of Actions Implemented**

Mrs. Hitchcock reported to the committee that Director of Curriculum has complied with all of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's findings from the Title I Coordinated Program Review in the spring of 2013.

**4. Budget**

**a. Atlantic Express Update**

Mr. Bedard referred to his memo on the recent filing of Millbury's school bus contractor for in-district busing, Atlantic Express, for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. He noted that Millbury is in the middle of a 3-year contract that expires in the middle of 2015. The district is currently looking at a contingency plan, as the company expects to terminate all employees on or about December 31, 2013.

Mr. Bedard noted there is the possibility that the Millbury contract will be sold to a competitor through the bankruptcy court. However, if no bids are made for the Millbury contract, there are two scenarios to consider:

1. Emergency waiver: Instead of going out to bid, the district may contract with a new contractor under the emergency waiver provision. Mr. Bedard has been in contact with Ron Ernenwein of AA Transportation in Shrewsbury. Mr. Ernenwein has expressed interest and the capability of taking over the Millbury contract under the same contract price and terms.
2. Mr. Bedard received word today that there is one bidder, "Bidder H," for all of the Massachusetts' contracts. He noted that our attorney informed him they do not know who "Bidder H" is and that "Bidder H" has not visited Massachusetts or reviewed the current contracts. They can also take back their bid by December 16<sup>th</sup>. Our attorney is filing an objection for us, and looking into other motions.

Mr. Bedard stated that based on information he has received so far, there is a very slim chance on someone stepping in from the bankruptcy and he is continuing communication with Mr. Ernenwein of AA Transportation. Mr. Ernenwein will need to start making preparations for inspections, drivers, CORI checks and bus stops. Mrs. Hitchcock added that Mr. Ernenwein will hire the same bus drivers that Atlantic Express has employed up until now.

Mr. Bedard indicated that Atlantic Express' contract termination is out of our control and will need to be accepted by debtors before we can enter into a new contract. He requested authorization of the school committee to terminate the current contract with Atlantic Express. Mr. Corey questioned how this will affect us financially. Mr. Bedard noted that we pay as we go each month for transportation. Mrs. Nietupski asked if AA

Transportation will take on the contract as written. Mr. Bedard noted the current bid specs and pricing were given and accepted by Mr. Ernenwein through June 2014.

Mr. Corey asked if AA Transportation will house their buses in Millbury for the excise tax gain, as done by Atlantic Transportation. Mr. Bedard stated they have agreed to, even if they are housed outside of Millbury temporarily. Mrs. Nietupski asked if AA has the same electronic devices on their buses as Atlantic Express. Mr. Bedard noted all buses have inside cameras and exterior cameras may be added eventually. Mr. Plante suggested the termination date be changed to on or before December 31, 2013. Mr. Borowski made the motion to terminate the current contract with Atlantic Express on or before 12/31/2013, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

Mr. Bedard recommended another meeting to award the contract to AA Transportation once the district receives resolution from bankruptcy court. Mr. Corey felt there is no need to meet again if the contract is awarded to AA Transportation. Mr. Borowski made a motion to approve the Superintendent or Business Manager to fulfill the contract agreement with AA Transportation, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

#### **b. Review and Approval of Increase in School Lunch Cost Effective August 2014 – Vote Required**

Mr. Bedard referred to his memo on the proposed lunch increase of 15 cents for the 2014-15 school year. Current lunch prices are at \$2.35 at the Elmwood and Shaw Schools, and \$2.60 at Millbury Jr./Sr. High School. He noted the last increase of 10 cents occurred two years ago. Factors for the increase include the cost of fruits and vegetables, an increase in labor costs, capital purchases, the need for additional capital purchases, and electricity costs. With this proposed increase, Mr. Bedard noted our lunch prices will be equal or below local school districts.

Mr. Corey questioned our district wide rate for free and reduced lunch. Mr. Hitchcock noted we are about 25%. He asked if this price increase will make this number change. Mr. Bedard noted that free and reduced numbers are based on the family income threshold.

Mr. Borowski questioned if the additional \$14,000 in additional revenue will be used for offsetting costs, and if it is enough? Mr. Bedard noted it does offset costs, and Mrs. Hitchcock added that we preferred to increase lunch costs in small increments over the years to bring us in line with the other districts. Mr. Borowski made the motion to accept the increase in school lunch to 15 cents, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

### **5. Old Business**

#### **a. First Reading of the Amended Policy on Policy Adoption: BGB (Board Governance and Operations) – Vote Required**

Mrs. Hitchcock introduced File BGB, Policy Adoption, to the committee for the first time. This policy will allow the second reading as the final reading, with the option for a third reading only if needed. She noted that the previous policy had no designation on how many readings were required.

Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to accept the first reading of File BGB, Policy Adoption, seconded by Mr. Borowski. All in favor (5-0).

**b. Second Reading of Amended Millbury Policies; Section A (Foundation & Basic Requirements) – Vote Required**

Mrs. Hitchcock asked for the second and final readings of Files AA School District Legal Status, AB The People and Their School District, AC Nondiscrimination, ACA Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex, ACAB Sexual Harassment, and ACE Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap. She noted that all requested changes were made and once all bolded text will be removed once finally approved. Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Corey. (All in favor 5-0).

**c. Revisit the Decision Pertaining to Locking School Building Doors during Weekend Events**

Mrs. Hitchcock was asked through a member of the committee to revisit the procedures on locking the school doors on weekends. Mr. Plante stated there is no consistency and questioned why doors are locked at the Elmwood and Shaw Schools and not at the high school. Mrs. Hitchcock noted the procedures were intended to be done across the board at all schools. Mr. Plante noted there is more concern during the winter months with students waiting at a locked door.

Mr. Corey noted there is usually more than one group at the high school after school hours and there is a question on who is responsible for monitoring the door.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated this is a decision she is not making alone and she is open to hearing more opinions/solutions from the committee. Mr. Borowski agreed that the locked door is a bothersome policy, but that the nuisance outweighs the risk. He noted that school doors are locked during the daytime for safety reasons, but that having buildings open after 3:00 p.m. is not logical. Mr. Corey noted the responsibility goes away at 3:00 p.m. and that this detail should not fall on just one group using the building. The committee agreed to look at the policy in depth to find a more comfortable solution. Mrs. Hitchcock reminded the committee there is no policy, rather a procedure in place. The procedure of monitoring the door is problematic when there are traveling teams visiting the school. Mr. Corey suggested the groups using the buildings may need to be reeducated on the procedures. Mr. Borowski is not in favor of an appeal of the procedures, but there may be areas to tweak to be more user-friendly. Mr. Plante stated use of the buildings on Saturdays and Sundays is more controlled and suggested having the buildings unlocked on those days. Mrs. Hitchcock noted there is a false sense of security with door monitors not knowing who is on the traveling league. She noted that the Leadership Team will take up the discussion at their next meeting. Mr. Plante asked what procedures are followed in other districts. Mrs. Hitchcock state she will report back to the committee.

**6. New Business**

**a. Review and Approval of the New Assabet Valley Collaborative Agreement for Member Communities – Vote Required**

Mrs. Hitchcock spoke on the new regulations required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education between Collaborative members and School Committees. She noted the language in the Assabet Valley Collaborative Agreement requires the committee's approval through signatures of the Committee Chairperson and Superintendent. Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Borowski. All in favor (5-0).

Mrs. Hitchcock acknowledged receipt of a \$472.00 donation from the Millbury Credit Union from the Millbury Chain of Lights. She noted that this donation will be placed in the high school's student activity fund. Mr. Borowski made the motion to approve the donation, seconded by Mr. Plante. All in favor (5-0).

Mrs. Hitchcock noted the Eight Year Budget Analysis from Michael O'Connor, Chairman of the Millbury Finance Committee, is included in the packet for review.

**7. Executive Session, if needed**

**8. Future Topics/Events**

**a. Presentation of 2015 Proposed Budget**

**b. Transportation Decisions**

**9. Next Meeting: January 8, 2014 MHS Media Center - 7:00 p.m.**

**10. Adjourn**

Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Mr. Borowski made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Corey. All in favor (5-0).

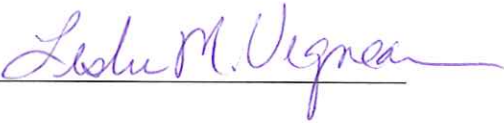
Respectfully submitted,

*Sandra Femino*

Sandra Femino

Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Approved:

  
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**Items in Packet:**

Draft of Regular Session Minutes of 11/13/2013  
Draft of Executive Session Minutes of 11/13/2013  
PowerPoint on Backpacks in Our School (Student Advisory Council)  
Technology Status Update – 12/3/2013  
Memo from MA DESE on FY13 Title I Program Review  
Memo from R. Bedard of 12/5/2013 on Atlantic Express School Bus Transportation Update  
Memo from R. Bedard of 12/5/2013 on FY 2015 School Lunch Price Increase  
File BGB – Policy Adoption  
File AA – School District Legal Status  
File AB – The People and Their School District  
File AC – Nondiscrimination  
File ACA – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex  
File ACAB – Sexual Harassment  
File ACE – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap  
AVC Timeline and Amendment Process March 2012-February 2014  
AVC Summary of Primary Changes to 2011 AVC Collaborative Agreement  
Amended Agreement for the AVC  
Eight Year Budget Analysis for FY2007-FY2014 (Millbury Finance Committee)  
RE Shaw Newsletter  
Thank You Letters (3)