

**Millbury School Committee Meeting
REGULAR SESSION
Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: April 10, 2013

Present: Mrs. Nietupski, Chairperson, Mr. Borowski, Vice Chairperson,
Mrs. Vigneau, Mrs. Hitchcock, Superintendent of Schools,
Mr. Bedard, Business Manager

Absent: Mr. Corey
Mr. Plante (*arrived at 8:05 p.m.*)

Time: 7:00 p.m.

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

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Nietupski stated that although two School Committee members had prior obligations and are unable to attend the meeting, the committee still had a full quorum with the three present members.

1. Approval of the Executive Meeting Minutes of 3/20/2013 and the Regular and Executive Session Minutes of 3/27/2013

Mrs. Nietupski stated if there are any changes, additions or deletions to the Executive Session Minutes of March 20, 2013 they will have to be made in the next Executive Session.

Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Borowski. All in favor (3-0).

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions or deletions to the Regular Session Minutes of March 27, 2013.

Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Borowski. All in favor (3-0).

Mrs. Nietupski stated if there are any changes, additions or deletions to the Executive Session Minutes of March 27, 2013 they will have to be made in the next Executive Session.

Mrs. Vigneau made the motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Borowski. All in favor (3-0).

2. Report of the Administration

Mrs. Hitchcock expressed her disappointment in the outcome of attendance from parents who had requested a response to their letter to the School Committee dated March 22,

2013. Mrs. Hitchcock provided handouts of data in response to the questions and concerns cited in the letter. She addressed the following five concerns through a Power Point presentation:

1. "Our primary concern is that a Needs Assessment has not been conducted" in the past ten years. (Mrs. Hitchcock stated the Superintendent's Entry Plan delivered to the School Committee on January 17, 2008 cited the needs of the district. This plan was made available in each school building, town hall, and is available electronically upon request.)
2. "We are concerned with the lack of established goals and priorities for our school system." (Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the five goals listed for the current school year are the same goals listed in her entry plan.)
3. "Due to the large turnover in administration during the past five years, there are inconsistencies that create an unstable learning environment in our schools." (Mrs. Hitchcock stated this information is inaccurate as she has been in the district for six years, and that she will address this concern further in her presentation.)
4. "This is not conducive to quality education and does not promote productivity in the classroom with students or with staff." (Mrs. Hitchcock stated the district has soared academically and behaviorally.)
5. "It is evident that the quality of education is suffering in Millbury." (Mrs. Hitchcock stated she will present information in her presentation to address this concern.)

Mrs. Hitchcock noted these concerns come primarily from Elmwood parents and that she has never received a request to meet with her to discuss these concerns. She reviewed the Superintendent's Entry Plan outlining her goals upon her entry in 2007:

- Established relationships with students, teachers, administrators, parents, community members and elected officials
- Acquired knowledge about the history of the Millbury Public Schools and the current critical issues
- Identified the strengths of individual schools and the district
- Identified the educational issues which must be addressed, learned about the complexities of each issue and determined how and by whom the issues should be addressed
- Utilized the qualitative and quantitative data to formulate proposed goals for the Superintendent, which will be presented to and reviewed by the School Committee on January 23, 2008 (*goals were presented to the School Committee on January 17, 2008*).

After interviewing approximately 135 people for their feedback, Mrs. Hitchcock developed five main topics for her Entry Plan: Communication, Policies/Procedures/Systems, Programs Supporting Academic Achievement, Facilities and Funding.

Communication – Mrs. Hitchcock reported that each building administration distributes communication to parents. During this past year, the Shaw School and Junior/Senior High School has put out a monthly newsletter. The Elmwood Street School previously

used the publication, "The Echo," which was produced by students along with the school's technology teacher. She noted that the Connect-Ed Technology Notification system was implemented in August of 2007 allowing her to inform parents and staff of important notices and announcements.

Mrs. Hitchcock stated that the Mentoring Program for new teaching staff fosters open communication and support for and from colleagues. The new program being implemented this September has been developed by teachers. She noted the Mentoring Program, along with 90% of what we do in the district, is required by state guidelines.

Policies/Procedures/Systems – Mrs. Hitchcock spoke of the student handbooks that are updated annually to reflect changes in policy and procedures in the district. The district has also developed an Employee Handbook which outlines district requirements for all newly hired school personnel.

Programs Supporting Academic Achievement – Mrs. Hitchcock reported on the full-day kindergarten program, the Integrated Preschool and the class size numbers in the district which allow the system to provide academic intervention and re-teaching, as needed.

Some of the other programs discussed were:

- Art, Music and Theatre programs at all grade levels
- The addition of an Assistant Principal at the Elmwood Street School
- Development of a District Literacy Plan for grades K-12
- The high school Engineering Program
- AP Courses offered at the high school
- Professional Development Days provided to staff to become competent in Common Core Standards and a better understanding of technology and instruction

Facilities – Mrs. Hitchcock reported on the upgrades to the Shaw School parking lot and the playgrounds at both Elmwood and Shaw Schools which are now handicapped accessible.

Funding -

Mrs. Hitchcock reported on securing 1.3 million dollar in federal and state grants, which prevented teachers from being laid off and supporting the new Classroom Imagine II class at the Shaw School.

Mrs. Hitchcock welcomed further discussion on the Entry Plan.

The five District Initiatives (*goals*) were outlined as follows:

1. Adopt and Implement the DESE Model Plan as Millbury's Educator Evaluation System

Mrs. Hitchcock stated this state requirement has been adopted and training was implemented on the second day of school.

2. **Implement the Common Core in English Language Arts and Mathematics**
Mrs. Hitchcock noted that the district is still working on this goal. This is a requirement of the state and is not optional.
3. **Continue to Administer the District MAP Assessment to Analyze Curricula Weaknesses and Gaps in Student Achievement**
Mrs. Hitchcock noted that after keeping students safe, this is the most important goal. The district wide MAP assessment is used to identify weakness and gaps in student achievement and is a strong indicator for MCAS testing.
4. **Review and Analyze Elementary and Junior High Math Textbook Options and Recommend a New Textbook Adoption**
Mrs. Hitchcock reported that the Every Day Math program was not working for students and teachers. Additional resource material was required to support this program.
5. **Continue to Implement the District and Building-Based Literacy Plans Until All Goals Have Been Met**
Mrs. Hitchcock noted the District Literacy Plan has been implemented in the district from 2011-20

“It is evident that the quality of education is suffering in Millbury.”

Mrs. Hitchcock spoke on some of the several accomplishments outlined in her Power Point presentation:

- 77% of teachers responding to a recent survey said they either agreed or strongly agreed there is a plan in place and district had goals or initiatives; although there was not a high return on the survey
- Improvement in MCAS scores in 2012 to a Level 1 score for Elmwood and Shaw Schools and a Level 2 score for the Junior/Senior High School with plans in place to improve. Mrs. Hitchcock noted that upon her arrival to the district, it had been identified at the “Needs Improvement” level.
- The DSAC (District and Schools Assistance Centers) committee formulated by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education complimented Millbury on academic improvement on all of its students and had no corrections for the district
- The district added a School Social Worker at the Junior/Senior High School for assistance with families in need of help with outside agencies
- Conversion of Title I Tutors to direct-service Reading Teachers at Elmwood and Shaw Schools
- Implemented the PBIS (Positive Behavioral Intervention Supports) program at the Shaw School, which provides positive intervention and rewards for students to take responsibility of their own behavior
- Secured \$1,348,000 in federal and state grants preventing the lay off of teachers and supporting the new Classroom Imagine II classroom at the Shaw School
- Identified the funding needs for technology infrastructure

“Due to the large turnover in administration during the past five years, there are inconsistencies that create an unstable learning environment in our schools.” Mrs.

Hitchcock addressed the concerns on the Administrative Turnover from July 2007 to present

Elementary Principal

This principal sought a position elsewhere with a smaller school population and no MCAS testing

Elementary Assistant Principal

The principal reduced this position to ½ time after strong recommendation by senior members of the Leadership Team to not reduce the position; this individual sought employment elsewhere because she could not afford to work part time.

Elementary Part-time Assistant Principal Added

A retired veteran administrator was hired on a part time basis to fill this position for 2.5 years

Interim 1 Year Junior/Senior High School Principal

This position was a one year interim position since the principal of the Junior/Senior High School chose to announce her retirement in April, well after the pool of qualified candidates had secured new positions.

Director of Curriculum/Instruction/Assessment

This individual was actively recruited back to the community where he served as a principal, into the position of Assistant Superintendent offering greater compensation and a position closer to his home

Mrs. Hitchcock also stated that five individuals in the district have gone through the Educator Leadership Program, and have since decided that they do not want an administrative position. She noted that Millbury has been fortunate as one of only six districts in the state to be able to fund the two new assistant principal positions using local funding.

The final concern addressed was the four year drop-out comparison. Millbury's drop out rate was compared with Auburn, Grafton, Uxbridge and Oxford. This 2012 data reflects a 90.2% 4-year graduation rate and a 2.4% drop-out rate for Millbury.

Mrs. Hitchcock ensured the viewing audience that this information is not her opinion, rather all information is available on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website at www.doe.mass.edu She welcomed any questions or concerns be directed to her office.

At this point, Mrs. Nietupski invited any member of the audience to speak. No one chose to speak at this time. Mrs. Nietupski responded to the inquiry regarding a request of correspondence received by the school committee and the superintendent for the past five years. She stated that on the advice of the school's attorney, that because of the volume of this request, it will have to be narrowed for specifics and a time frame. Mrs. Nietupski stated that any further questions need to be formulated and addressed directly to the superintendent.

a. Millbury's Participation in the 1st Annual Blackstone Valley Education and Business Forum

Mrs. Hitchcock reported on the recent opportunity to attend the 1st Annual Blackstone Valley Education and Business Forum on April 4, 2013 at the Pleasant Valley Country Club. Millbury was invited with 8 other school districts to prepare students for the workforce with an emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) skills. She noted that Mark Goretti also attended as a one of Millbury's business leaders. This forum was an opportunity to meet with businesses and talk about ways educators can help students be more successful in the workplace. Lieutenant Tim Murray was the keynote speaker at the event.

b. Reminder – Upcoming Annual Town Meeting; Tuesday, May 7, 2013

Mrs. Hitchcock stated a mistake was made on the Meeting Agenda and that the Annual Town Meeting is being held on Tuesday, May 7, 2013 and not on Tuesday, April 30, 2013. The meeting will be held at the Millbury Junior/Senior High School auditorium beginning at 7:00 p.m. She noted the importance of the public support of the two 2014 School Budget warrant articles on the math textbook adoption and technology infrastructure.

c. Questions Posed by Officials Regarding the Possible Use of the Access Road to Mall at Shaw during the Holidays; Explanation of School District's Position

Mrs. Hitchcock informed the committee that Mr. Bedard received a phone call from Sergeant Desorcy on the possible use of the access road behind the Shaw School to the mall on holidays. Mrs. Hitchcock stated the school district is against this proposal due to safety of the students and those using the building on weekends. Mrs. Vigneau stated that she served on the building committee and the access road was developed for emergency use only. Mrs. Hitchcock has had a conversation with the Town Manager to relay the position of the school department on this issue.

d. Explanation of the DESE RETELL Initiative and Accompanying Challenges

Mrs. Hitchcock explained the district's difficulty in implementing this new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's RETELL (*Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners*) initiative due their lack of specific guidance and recruitment of trainers. Districts have been divided into 3 cohorts, with Millbury in cohort 2. Cohort 2 districts are required to implement the initiative in the fall of 2013. Mrs. Hitchcock indicated this training will impact three-quarters of our professional staff of 165 members. Teachers will be required to take a full 45-hour course or one of 2 mini courses if they have had previous training. Mrs. Hitchcock noted that ELL teacher, Maeve Hitzenbuehler, is onboard to take on the role as the trainer of Millbury staff.

3. Budget/Facilities

a. Notification that the Town's Energy Advisory Committee is Evaluating Whether to Place Solar Panels on the Elmwood Street School Roof

Mr. Bedard informed the committee that the Millbury Energy Advisory Committee is looking into municipal property to install solar panels. Jim Dunn of the Energy Advisory

Committee, Facilities Manager Chet Hanratty and Mr. Bedard met with a structural engineer on using the roof of the Elmwood Street School. This location is suitable due to the hours of sun exposure, the flatness of the roof and the amount of space available. The structural engineer will put together a report on the weight limits that the roof can support. The structural engineer will produce a RFP (Request for Proposal), which will be paid for by the contractor. Mr. Dunn estimates these panels will produce 200-300 kilowatt hours of electricity with estimated energy savings of \$19,000 per year. Mr. Bedard stated this is an exciting opportunity for the district and he will keep the committee posted.

b. MHS Students will be Painting Artwork on the Town’s Snowplows, per the Request of the DPW Director, Mr. Rob McNeill, III

Mr. Bedard informed the committee that eight of the town’s plows are being stored in the parking lot behind Millbury Junior/Senior High School. Principal Mandy Vasil explained the details of the project initiated by Millbury DPW Director, Rob McNeill. The plows have all been base painted yellow. Art teacher, Gail Fairbanks and Mrs. Vasil are working with students on design topics including the DPW, Millbury’s Bicentennial, Woolie Pride and the Town of Millbury in general. Sketches will be presented to Mr. McNeill for his decision. The plows will be revealed at the May 18th DPW Field Day.

4. Old Business

5. New Business

Mrs. Vigneau – showcase of percussion, flute, talented musicians and winter guard program last night (4/9) thrilled for students and teachers – encourage what is going on in school system –

Parents encouraged to attend – logo contest with youth commission Mrs. V

6. Future Topics/Events

7. Executive Session

Mrs. Nietupski made a motion at 8:25 p.m. to move into Executive Session *“In accordance with MGL Chapter 30 A, S 21 (3), the Millbury School Committee will vote to move into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.”*

Roll Call:

Mrs. Vigneau	Yes
Mr. Corey	Absent
Mrs. Nietupski	Yes
Mr. Borowski	Yes
Mr. Plante	Yes

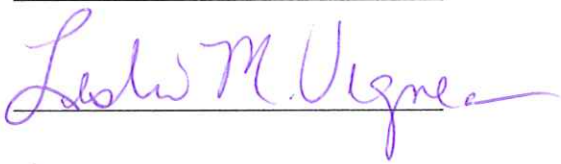
8. Next Meeting: April 24, 2013
May 8, 2013

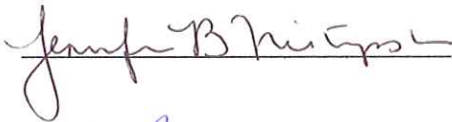
9. Adjourn

The Regular Session Meeting will be convened for adjournment following the Executive Session.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Femino
Sandra Femino
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

Approved:







Items in Packet:

Draft of Executive Session Minutes of 3/20/2013
Draft of Regular and Executive Session Minutes of 3/27/2013

Hand Outs at Meeting:

Draft of Regular Session Minutes of 3/27/2013
Letter to SC Members dated 3-22-2013
PowerPoint Presentation 4-10-2013
District Initiatives 2012-2013
Superintendent's Entry Plan - 1/17/2008
Agenda of 9/12/2012
MA DESE 2012 Graduation Rate Report for All Students