

**Millbury Public Schools
School Committee**

**Regular Session
Meeting Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS.

Date: February 23, 2022

Members Present: Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson
Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice Chairperson
Mr. Nicholas Lazzaro, Member
Ms. Jessica Bristol, Member
Ms. Michelle Cherfils, Student Council Representative

Administrators Present: Mr. Richard Bedard, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Andrew Tuccio, Principal, R.E. Shaw School

Contributing Guests: Joseph Antonio ('22)
Taylor-Chanel Fisak ('25)

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM and led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2023 Proposed School Budget

Mrs. Nietupski opened a public hearing on the proposed FY '23 school budget. No one requested to speak. Mrs. Nietupski closed the public hearing at 7:03 PM.

2. Guest Presentation

Ms. Ashley Kavanaugh-Russo spoke on the topic of making masking a parental choice, citing the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control on why wearing masks is ineffective and causes physical and psychological harm. She also stated that the benefits of mask wearing do not outweigh the risks to children since COVID-19 transmission and serious illness are extremely low in children and teens. She referenced a study where 39 children born between 2018-2019 were found to have significantly reduced verbal skills, motor skills, and overall cognitive performance compared to pre-pandemic children. She also asserted that states requiring masks have COVID-19 rates just as high as states that do not require masks.

3. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Bristol motioned to accept the regular session minutes of February 9, 2022, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion was approved (4-0).

Mr. Lazzaro motioned to accept the executive session minutes of February 9, 2022, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion was approved (4-0).

4. Report of the Administration

- a. Student Council members Joseph Antonio ('22) and Taylor-Chanel Fisak ('25) briefed the Committee on recent and upcoming events at the Jr./Sr. High School.
- b. Mr. Myers provided an overview of a pilot agreement between the District and the Carpenters Training Center located on Holman Road in Millbury. This agreement will allow Millbury high school students an opportunity to receive training from certified instructors in the areas of general carpentry, floor covering, drop ceiling installation, drywall installation, OSHA regulations, and cabinetry. Transportation to and from the Center will be provided by the District. The Training Center will provide instructional materials to the District at a minimal cost and there will be no charge to students. Students who complete introductory modules at the Center will receive preferential admission status if they choose to continue their training after graduating from high school. Completing these modules will also shorten the time required to graduate from the apprenticeship program. Mr. Myers thanked Senator Moore for helping to make this opportunity possible.
- c. Ms. Ryan provided the Committee with a general overview of the February 14th "Choose Love" Presentation by Scarlett Lewis, which will be aired again on Charter Channel 192 and Verizon Fios Channel 24 and can also be viewed on the Video on Demand section of Millbury's cable access website. She also provided the Committee with information regarding an upcoming presentation on basic rights in Special Education, which provides families with an introduction to Special Education laws and procedures. There will be a zoom for parents who would like to participate.
- d. Ms. Ryan provided the Committee with an updated overview of COVID-19 infection rates and trends for students and staff in the district.

4. Finance and Operations

- a. Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on the FY '23 proposed budget and answered any questions the Committee may have.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the proposed FY '23 budget as presented, seconded by Mrs. Bristol. The motion was approved (4-0).

- b. The Committee reviewed a proposed donation of a half-acre parcel adjacent to the Jr./Sr. High School from Harold and Cynthia Mallette, relatives of Brenda Mannix, a Millbury resident who passed away some time ago. Mr. Bedard recommended that the School Committee consider the approval of a Town Meeting warrant article for the May Annual Town Meeting.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the half acre parcel of land being donated to the Millbury Public Schools. Seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (4-0).

- c. Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on the status of the hot water tank at the Jr./Sr. High School, which has an estimated repair cost of \$54,000. Town Manager Sean Hendricks has agreed to commit ARPA funding to pay for this project, so a Town Meeting warrant article is not required.
- d. Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on the plan to fund the outstanding balance for a new propane-powered Type-A, 29-passenger school bus to replace our existing gas-powered, 2012 Type-A school bus, which costs \$92,000. The district received a \$60,000 grant from DESE to help

defray the cost of last year's summer school program. Since most of that program was paid for through the operating budget, the grant will make available sufficient funding to pay for the balance of the Type-A School Bus. No additional School Committee action is required.

- e. In accordance with Policy DN (*School Properties Disposal*), Mr. Bedard asked the Committee to consider declaring as surplus certain furniture and other equipment currently located at the existing Shaw School. These items are in poor shape and of no value and will not be useful at the new Shaw School.

Mrs. Bristol motioned to declare the listed furniture and equipment at the existing R.E. Shaw School as surplus, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (4-0).

5. Unfinished Business

- a. Mr. Myers updated the Committee on the RE Shaw project, noting that supply chain issues will likely delay completion by two weeks. The mill work in the library, specifically the shelving, will be delayed and books may not be placed in the library until after school starts.

Mr. Wilbur asked if there will be a long time to wait for specific products. Mr. Tuccio stated that Fontaine Brothers has done a phenomenal job reorganizing specific jobs so that the work can continue and the work that is on hold can be rescheduled so as not to hinder the opening of school. Technology was a concern, but T2 and Hill started ordering in September, a year ahead of opening, in preparation for wait times.

Mr. Lazzaro asked if there was a delay on the smart boards that were ordered. Mr. Tuccio said this was also something that was ordered in September and will be delivered before school starts.

- b. Mr. Lazzaro reviewed proposed changes to Policy KFC-R: and Field Use Policy - Fees and Available Fields.

Ms. Bristol motioned to accept Policy KFC-R, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (4-0).

- c. Mr. Lazzaro asked the Committee to consider accepting proposed changes to Policy EBCFA: Face Coverings. Mrs. Nietupski read the proposed language, which would make masking optional for students and staff, aloud. Several members of the audience expressed opposition to the policy, apparently misunderstanding what Mrs. Nietupski had read. Members of the audience continued to opine on the harm that masking allegedly does to children.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept Policy EBCFA, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (4-0).

6. New Business

Mr. Myers provided an overview of an updated MOA with the Millbury Police Department outlining the role and responsibilities of the School Resource Officer. This updated MOA provides more specific guidance on information-sharing between the SRO, the school, and other law enforcement personnel, as required by law. The last time the MOA was updated was 2018.

7. Executive Session

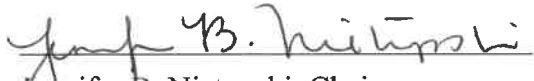
At 7:56PM, the Committee moved into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a)3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Millbury Teachers Association because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Committee's bargaining position.

Mrs. Nietupski held a roll call vote: Ms. Bristol- YES, Mr. Lazzaro-YES, Mr. Wilbur-YES, Mrs. Nietupski-YES.


8. Adjourn

At 8:59 PM, Mr. Wilbur motioned to adjourn the regular session without further discussion, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (4-0).


Approved:


Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson


Julia Lagerholm

Nicholas Lazzaro


Jessica Bristol