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Millbury Public Schools

School Committee

Regular Session
Meeting Minutes

Date: February 22, 2023

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

Members Present: Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson
Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice-Chairperson
Mr. Nicholas Lazzaro, Member

Members Absent: Ms. Jessica Bristol, Member

Contributing Guests: Ms. Jennifer O'Connell, Finance Committee Chair
Mr. Sean Hendricks, Town Manager
Mr. Scott Despres, Member of the Board of Selectmen

Administrators Present: Mr. Kofi Agyeman, Director of Facilities
Mr. Richard G. Bedard Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations
Mr. Jeffrey Berthiaume, Director of Instructional Technology
Ms. Lizz Boutiette, Director of Curriculum and Instruction
Mr. Andy Hall, Principal, Elmwood Street School
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services

This meeting was recorded and broadcasted by Millbury's Public Access Channel.

At 7:05PM, Mrs. Nietupski led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and then opened the public hearing on the matter of the proposed budget..

Public Hearing: Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed School Budget

In accordance with MGL CH71§38N, the Committee held a public forum on the proposed FY24 budget.

Jen O'Cononnell thanked Mr. Bedard for the time and effort put into the school budget packet and invited members of the School Committee to attend an upcoming FinCom meeting to discuss the budget increase. Ms. O'Cononnell stated that the budget increase is high and would like to meet to discuss ways to lower it. She also asked if our students qualifying for special education services in the district are comparable to surrounding districts. Ms. Ryan responded that we are not as high as some of the surrounding towns, mainly because we have staffing that has been able to work with students in district

rather than sending them out of district. Mrs. O'Connell also asked what the average teacher salary is for Millbury. Mr. Bedard said the current average salary ranges from \$65-\$70k. Ms. O'Connell told the Committee that the average salary of a town constituent is \$45k and she feels that teachers are getting paid more than the Town can afford. The Finance Committee would like for the School Committee to be very mindful of the salaries of folks in town who are the taxpayers and that 25% of the students are below the poverty line.

Mr. Sean Hendricks, Town Manager, spoke about the collaboration between the Town and the Schools. He thanked the Superintendent for taking the time to meet with him over the past year. He would like to see more collaboration between FinCom and the School Committee around budget season.

Mr. Scott Despres said taxpayers are asking specifically what the money is being spent on. He is asking for the Committee to take a hard look at what we want versus what we need. Taxpayers have paid a lot of money into the school system over the past few years and are asking why they need to spend another million this year as they did last year.

At 7:27PM, seeing no other speakers, Mrs. Nietupski closed the public hearing on the budget and opened a public hearing on the matter of school choice.

Public Hearing: School Choice for School Year 2023-2024

In accordance with MGLCH76§12B(d), the Committee held a public forum on school choice. There were no public comments.

At 7:27PM, Ms. Nietupski closed the Public Hearing in the matter of school choice and opened the regular School Committee meeting.

Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mr. Lazzaro motioned to accept the regular session meeting minutes of February 1, 2023, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion passed (3-0).

Report of the Administration

- a. Update on DESE's Review of Millbury Public School's Tiered Focused Monitoring Progress
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services, provided an update on the status of our most recent DESE Tiered Focused Monitoring Review, which included a requirement to form a SEPAC group, which is now in existence. As a result, we are now in compliance with DESE's recommendations.

Finance and Operations

- a. Update on Insurance Claim for Water Damage at the Jr./Sr. High School
Mr. Richard Bedard, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, provided details about an insurance claim he filed on behalf of the District to cover costs associated with repairs to water damage at the Jr./Sr. High School on February 6, 2023. Three pipes burst due to extremely cold weather, damaging ceiling tiles, flooring, and some technology in hallways, classrooms, and office

spaces. Most of the damage has been addressed, but two coils in a classroom and in Ms. Ryan's office have not been repaired yet due to lack of materials being available.

Mr. Bedard submitted a claim for over \$50k to our insurance carrier, CD Whitney, and the adjuster has been working with Mr. Agyeman, Director of Facilities, to access the damage.

b. Consideration of Fiscal Year 2024 Proposed Budget

Mrs. Neitupski asked the Committee to consider the proposed budget of \$25,443,212, which represents an increase of 4.26% over FY'23.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

Mr. Wilbur asked Mr. Bedard to examine where we might be able to decrease the proposed increase and make recommendations at a future meeting.

c. Consideration of Proposed Fiscal Year 2024 Warrant Articles

Mr. Bedard and Mr. Myers answered questions regarding the two proposed warrant articles, both of which have the town manager's support. The technology warrant article will be used to replace old equipment and purchase needed technology for new courses. The school facility security warrant article will be used to install a keyless entry system at both Elmwood and the Jr./Sr. High School, replace twelve exterior doors at Elmwood and the Jr./Sr. High School that have been damaged by years of sand/salt exposure, install a two step entry system at the Jr./Sr. High School, and replace certain security cameras.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the proposed Fiscal Year 2024 technology warrant article of \$98k and the school safety warrant article of \$298,500, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

Unfinished Business

a. Report on the Raymond E. Shaw Building Project

Mr. Myers reviewed the current status of both phases of the Shaw School building project, noting the playground area is complete, the canopy cover for the school entrance has been installed, and the building committee is exploring options for widening the driveway where it turns by the ball field to improve traffic flow; turf fabric has been delivered and is being installed. Because of the good weather that we have been having, the new field will likely be turned over to the Town by next week.

b. School Start Time- Review of Benefits/Challenges of Establishing Later Start Times for Adolescents

Mr. Myers suggested that the Committee consider forming a subcommittee to study the challenges associated with later school start times and make recommendations for the Committee to consider. The subcommittee would ideally include parents, students, MTA representatives, administrators, and School Committee members. The committee and members would be able to meet regularly and discuss issues that would come with the changing of the start and end times of the school day.

New Business

a. Request to Declare as Surplus: Outdated Chromebooks

Mr. Jeffrey Berthiaume, Director of Instructional Technology, requested that the Committee consider declaring as surplus outdated Chromebooks, which are no longer supported by Google and cannot be updated with security filters and content firewalls. These devices have no resale value and, if the Committee approved, will either be recycled or shared with Town departments

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the outdated Chromebooks as surplus, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

b. Consideration of School Choice for 2023-2024 School Year

The Committee considered continuing school choice for the coming year. Currently, we offer school choice for grades 9-12. Mr. Myers recommended that the Committee continue to participate in school choice and to expand choice to grades 7 and 8 with a total cap of 40 available seats.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to continue school choice with 40 total seats for grades 7-12, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

c. Review of Proposed 2023-2024 School Calendar

The Committee considered approving the 2023-2024 school year calendar, which includes 180 instructional days, 5 full PD days and 3 half PD days. The first day of school will be August 28, 2023.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the 2023-2024 school year calendar with the correction of Columbus day being change to Indigenous peoples day, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

d. Review of Proposed 2023-2024 School Committee Meeting Calendar

The Committee considered approving a calendar of School Committee meetings for next year reflecting the Committee's standard practice of meeting on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, with the exception of July and August, which traditionally include only one meeting each. The Committee asked to make a notation for the November 22 and December 21 meetings as "if needed" because the dates fall near holiday breaks.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the proposed 2023-2024 School Committee meeting calendar, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

e. Proposed amendments to various Policies

Mr. Lazzaro provided the Committee with updates to the following Policies as recommended by MASC:

Policy DBG: Budget Adoption Procedures*

Policy DBJ: Budget Transfer Authority *

Policy DH: Bonded Employees and Officers *
Policy DI: Fiscal Accounting and Reporting *
Policy DJ: Purchasing *
Policy DK: Payment Procedures *
Policy DKC: Expense Reimbursements *
Policy KCD: Public Gifts to Schools *

Mr. Wilbur motioned to adopt the proposed amendments to Policy DBG, DBJ, DH, DI, DJ, DK, and DKC as a slate, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0).

Mr. Wilbur asked Mr. Myers to send a thank you letter to Saint Gobain for the grant award they provided for a new science room at the Jr./Sr. High School.

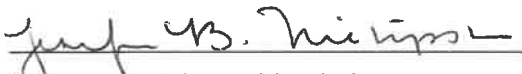
Executive Session


At 8:13, the Committee moved into Executive Session in accordance with MGI Chapter 30A, §21(a)3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the SEIU Local 888 because an open meeting may have detrimental effect on the Committee's bargaining position and the Chair so declares. Mrs. Nietupski held a roll call vote: Mr. Wilbur- YES, Mr. Lazzaro-YES, Mrs. Neitupski- YES


Adjourn

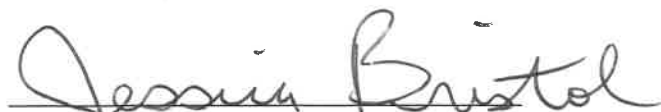
At 8:53PM, without further discussion, Mr. Wilbur motioned to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed (3-0)

Approved:


Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson


Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson


Nicholas Lazzaro


Jessica Bristol