

Milford Board of Education

Board of Education Meeting

January 10, 2011

Board members present:

Dave Amendola
Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Jack O'Connell
Josip Jukic
Gregory Oliver
Mark Stapleton, Chair
Jay Tranquilli
Robert M. White

Board members absent:

Diane Kruger-Carroll

Administration present:

Michael Cummings
Philip Russell
Wendy Kopazna
Susan Kelleher

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a Regular Business Meeting on Monday, January 10, 2011, in the Media Center at Jonathan Law High School. Chairman Stapleton called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

II. STAFF RECOGNITION

Mr. Cummings recognized two groups. The first group was fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Deborah Rogers and her class from Calf Pen Meadow Elementary School. Mrs. Rogers' class created a book which highlights thoughts about 2010 and the class' vision for 2035. The class then attended the 375th Anniversary Time Capsule burial at the Governor's residence on November 30th and buried the book, along with some items. The time capsule will be opened in 25 years. Recognized were:

Victoria DiPietro	Student Representative
Kevin Lanese	Student Representative
Ryan Luth	Student Representative
Michael Shannon, Jr.	Student Representative
Deborah Rogers	Teacher

The next recognition went to Tess Gildea, who is an eleventh grade student at Foran High School. Tess will be traveling to Washington, DC to serve as a Congressional Page. She was nominated for this position by U.S. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro. Tess will run errands for the House of Representatives and will be attending classes at the Library of Congress. Mr. Cummings congratulated Tess on this prestigious honor.

III. CONSIDERATION OF MINUTES:

Mr. White made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 7, 2010 Board of Education meeting. Mr. Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2010 Board of Education meeting. Mr. Amendola seconded. Mrs. Casey wants the minutes to reflect the following:

The Milford Board of Education is to authorize the addition of the Energy Consultant position before an employee is hired for the position. This was agreed upon at the meeting. The motion passed with the noted change.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT:

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni thanked Mr. Cummings for calling an early dismissal on Friday, January 7th. She further said that Milford does an excellent job with the delays and closings because of the intricate weather system purchased by the City.

Kathy Bonetti – 157 Seaside Drive – President of PTA Council, told the board the next PTA Council meeting will be held on January 20th at Meadowside Elementary School.

Deanna Hiller – 182 Meadowside Road – Ms. Hiller explained that winter athletics will only benefit the students and the district. She supports the addition of track. The only cost would be for coaches and transportation

V. CHAIR'S REPORT:

Dr. Stapleton told the public that they would be making a very important announcement later in the meeting. He deferred his comments until Board Comment. He then reminded the public of the upcoming Budget Workshop dates. They are January 11, 13, 18 and possibly the 20th.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

1. Student Reports

Courtney Murray and Kevin McFadden reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Jonathan Law High School. Kate Sylvester and Dan Evanich presented the report for Joseph A. Foran High School. Both reports are on file.

2. Instructional Report

Milford Prevention Council

Mr. Cummings turned the meeting over to Mr. Barile for an update of the Milford Prevention Council.

Mr. Barile told the board that he is the Milford Board of Education representative to the Milford Prevention Council. The Council is a coalition of professional's in the community that has a sole aim to reduce substance abuse. He then introduced Tanya Schweitzer, MSW as the Project Director.

Ms. Schweitzer explained the mission of the Council to the board. The mission of the Milford Prevention Council is to implement a variety of intervention resources through education, treatment, and enforcement issues relating to substance abuse in Milford. The Council will identify and address these issues in a way that is equally productive, sustainable, realistic and valuable to the community and its young citizens, now and in the future.

Ms. Schweitzer is very excited to be part of the coalition against substance abuse among young citizens.

Dr. Stapleton is looking forward to hearing more about the work of the Council. He supports the endeavor.

Mr. Cummings then referred to a request to add additional athletics by the high school principal's.

Additional Athletic Programs

Mr. Cummings explained that for years parents have been requesting additional sports programs at the high school level. He recently asked the principals to conduct a review of athletic programs supported by the Southern Connecticut Conference. Upon the review, it was found that most schools in our league have both indoor track and lacrosse as part of their athletic program. He further said that as part of the recommendations made by the recent CIAC audit, it would behoove Milford to offer those sports programs.

Mrs. Casey asked Mr. Cummings what steps need to be taken to add another athletic program. She also questioned the timing of this request. The board is awaiting the results from the CIAC audit and that could change the outcome of the entire athletic program. The athletic program will be thoroughly discussed in February.

Mr. Cummings explained that all programs will need to be in place by March. Waiting until the February Committee of the Whole Meeting will be too late. He further said the first step would be to submit a letter of intent to add an athletic program.

UNAPPROVED

Mrs. Casey asked if there would be a penalty for submitting a request and not following through with it. She was told no. She suggested that the board authorize the superintendent to write a letter of intent.

3. Operations Report

Personnel Report

Mrs. Kopazna presented the Human Resources Report to the board. Included in the report are job openings, terminations, retirements, resignations and stipend appointments.

A discussion ensued about the education specialist.

Mrs. Casey reminded the administration that new positions require board approval. Therefore, the board should approve the position before a person is hired. Mr. Cummings agreed to have the position on the February business meeting agenda as an action item. He then reminded the board the position is entirely funded by the energy education program. However, the salary will come out of the MBOE budget and then the district will be reimbursed.

Quality Budget Report

Mr. Russell presented the Quarterly Budget Report to the board. He noted that 94% of the budget has been encumbered. Administration is monitoring the 5600 and 5601 accounts. As of now, the accounts are in the red. However, the ECS grant will cover the shortfall. He also noted that rebates will cover half of the shortfall in the telephone account.

Mr. O'Connell said he was surprised the 4300 accounts are under spent. The 4300 account is for repairs to building and grounds.

Mr. Russell explained that the reconfiguration required a lot of work by the maintenance and custodian crew. They are still working on summer projects. However, administration tries to reserve some funds for emergencies i.e. burst pipes, boilers etc.

Energy Policy

Mr. Russell then reviewed the Energy Policy with the board. The policy will help define the scope of responsibility of the Energy Specialist. The policy is being presented as a first read. The board would take action on the policy at the February business meeting.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. White asked for a motion to approve consent agenda items a & b. Mr. Amendola seconded.

Mr. O'Connell asked to remove b and add it to New Business.

Mr. Amendola removed his second and Mr. White withdrew his motion.

Mr. White made a motion to approve consent agenda item a. Mr. Amendola seconded.

The consent agenda approved was:

- a. Voucher List (Disbursements): Administration recommends approval of the Disbursement report. (EL-6, EL-7)

The motion passed.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

- a. Unfinished Business
Mr. White read the following prepared statement:

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"With the appointment of a new Superintendent later in this meeting, the Board and I would like to publicly recognize Mike Cummings for his leadership and dedication since assuming responsibilities as Interim Superintendent of the Milford Public Schools in November 2009. Mike took on these responsibilities in addition to his responsibilities as Assistant Superintendent without any hesitation, and has served Milford very well during this time. While most of the time someone in this role would maintain the status quo, Mike led our schools through a very difficult budget season, which required significant changes, some of which weren't necessarily the popular way forward. The Board would like to thank Mike for his work, his dedication and the significant additional time away from his family that he gave to Milford to ensure a well-run school system. With this said, I would like to recommend a \$25,000 special payment to Mike to recognize him for a job very, very well done."

Mr. White made a motion to approve a one-time compensation, in the amount of \$25,000, be given to Michael Cummings, effective immediately. Mr. Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Members of the audience stood and applauded.

Mr. Cummings thanked the board. He told them that he appreciated both their gratitude and compensation. He told the board that the dedication of staff and parents has helped make the district stronger.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the addition of Lacrosse and Indoor Track as outlined by administration. Mr. Amendola seconded.

Mrs. Casey said the motion is incorrect. The board has agreed to authorize the acting superintendent to submit a letter of interest by March. It is not to add two sports.

Mr. Amendola withdrew his second. Mr. White withdrew his motion.

Mr. White made a motion to authorize Mr. Cummings to notify the SCC of the district's intent to add Lacrosse and Indoor Track. Mr. Amendola seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Agreement for the Resolution of Negotiations for the Successor Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Milford School Custodians and Maintainers Union Local 2018. Mr. Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. White made a motion to approve the Foran Band field trip to Baltimore, Maryland from March 31-April 3, 2011 to perform at the All Eastern Music Festival. Mr. Amendola seconded.

Mr. O'Connell feels the board should absorb the entire cost of the field trip.

Mrs. Casey said she would need to understand the context before supporting it.

Mr. Cummings explained the trip encompasses one student who has been selected to participate at the All Eastern Festival.

Mrs. Casey said there are groups that have to pay a portion to go on field trips. Why would this be different?

Band is an academic program while cheerleading falls under extra-curricular.

Mr. Amendola asked if this is something that could be done on a case by case basis.

Mrs. Casey said that making the change will set precedent.

Mr. O'Connell asked to amend the motion by adding "the board will fund 50%". Mr. Oliver seconded the motion. By a roll call vote 8N-1Y (Mr. O'Connell), the motion failed.

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Mr. White made the original motion to approve the Foran Band field trip to Baltimore, Maryland from March 31-April 3, 2011 to perform at the All Eastern Music Festival. Mr. Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. White made a motion to elect Dr. Elizabeth Feser to be the Superintendent of the Milford Public Schools, effective April 4, 2011 and authorize the Board Chair to enter into an agreement with her on behalf of the Board in the form presented to the board this date, January 10, 2011. Mr. Amendola seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Stapleton read the following prepared statement:

“Today is a great day for the City of Milford and the Milford Public Schools. This evening is the culmination of a thorough and rigorous search process that included input and involvement from virtually every segment of the Milford Community. Tonight, it is with a great deal of excitement and enthusiasm that we officially introduce to you the next Superintendent of the Schools, Dr. Elizabeth E. Feser.

Dr. Feser comes to Milford with a lengthy and highly successful record of educational leadership in Connecticut. She has worked in small and large school districts, public and parochial school systems, school districts with the highest levels of student achievement and those that had significant student achievement challenges. More important than the depth and breadth of her experiences is that she has been very successful in each of her prior positions. In all places she has served as a leader, she has made a very positive and significant difference.

Dr. Feser is also highly educated and extremely knowledgeable about programs, policies and issues that impact public education in Connecticut. She has a reputation as a tireless worker who is dedicated and passionate about providing children with the very best education possible. She is involved and actively engaged in professional associations, professional learning and she routinely models the importance of continuous improvement through her own behavior. In speaking to those that know and have worked with Dr. Feser, she is consistently described as a person of substance with impeccable character and ethics. Her working relationships with staff, the BOE, City officials and other organizations are characterized by direct communication, collaboration and integrity.

In short, the people of Milford can be quite confident that we have appointed someone, who has a stellar reputation and who is fully prepared by both education and experience to continue to be a highly successful Superintendent. To quote a Connecticut State department of Education staffer “Milford has struck gold with this appointment”.”

Dr. Feser approached the podium. She told the board she was moved by the warm reception. She is honored to help the Milford Public Schools.

IV. BOARD COMMENT:

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. White made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Amendola seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Robert M. White

UNAPPROVED

Corresponding Secretary

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary