

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
February 20, 2013

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
George Gensure
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
Christopher Saley
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher

Board members absent:

Mark Stapleton
Beverley Pierson

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a board meeting on Wednesday, February 20, 2013 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION

There were two recognitions of the evening. The first was the Foran Softball team.

Dr. Feser told the board that she received a letter Charles Casey, Scoutmaster of Boy Scout Troop 12, which pointed out the true leadership skills of Gina Georgetti. Gina wanted to do a fundraiser to help the Milford community. Serving as a captain of the Foran Softball Team, she recruited members of the team in to help. Stepping up to the plate to assist were Rebekah DeRosa, Marissa Bruno, Fallon Bevino and Sarah DeLuke. These students collected so many toys that they were still able to make a sizable toy donation to the “Milford Toys for Tots” drive after their baskets were all done. Dr. Feser congratulated all of them for their selflessness act of kindness.

Dr. Feser then recognized the Foodservice Department for all eight elementary schools winning the Healthier U.S. School Challenge Bronze Award. The challenge was part of First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! Initiative. The award is given to schools across the country for their commitment to nutrition, physical education, and promotion of a healthier school environment for all. Schools needed to meet or exceed all HUSSC criteria through demonstrated excellence in the following categories:

- School Breakfast and Lunch program offerings
- Nutrition Education coursework
- Physical Education coursework
- Opportunities for physical activity (other than physical education class time)
- School Wellness policies and practices

Approved

The classroom teachers encouraged students to try new foods and explained why they are important for a healthy life. The foodservice team incorporated new and colorful foods into our menus that taste great. As winners of the Bronze Award, each of our elementary schools will receive a banner and a plaque for the school, as well as a \$500 award to continue their healthy living programs.

Eileen was congratulated for the tremendous work. In addition, the following foodservice managers were also recognized:

Kristie Callahan	Calf Pen Meadow
Susan Scucci	John F. Kennedy
Betsy Johnson	Live Oaks
Alexandra Stephen	Mathewson
Antoinette Thibodeau	Meadowside
Tammy Ciolino	Orange Avenue
Kristen Gourley	Orchard Hills
Nancy Moran	Pumpkin Delight

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to reorder the agenda.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to move agenda item VIII. Naming the Foran Baseball Field, making it the next order of business. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey turned the meeting over the Dr. Feser to discuss Naming of the Foran Baseball Field.

Dr. Feser told the board John Barile, former principal of Foran, could not attend the meeting. Instead he submitted a letter which explained his reasons for naming the field after Ken Walker, a former coach and teacher. She then turned the meeting over to Mr. Vitelli who gave the history of Ken Walker's career.

Mr. Vitelli told the board it was a great honor to represent Foran High School and give the recommendation of naming the field after Ken Walker. Mr. Walker taught and coached in Milford for 36 years. He played three sports when he was in high school and was probably one of the best athletes in Milford. He coached and taught at Milford High School and Jonathan Law before finishing his career at Foran. Over the years, he coached three sports; football, baseball and basketball. Mr. Walker coached football and took the team to the City of Milford's only championship. However, his passion was baseball. Every one of his teams that he coached went on to qualifiers. The very one thing that made him proud were his athletes when they went on to be captains of their college teams. He will be remembered for the love of his wife and children, he was a great teacher and a wonderful coach and friend.

Mrs. Casey thanked Mr. Viteli for his comments. It is evident that he made a great impact on the community.

Ms. Glennon made motion to name the Foran Baseball Field the "Ken Walker Baseball Field". Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey applauded Mr. Walker for all that he did for the school district. She told administration that she looks forward to the celebration when the naming of the field is unveiled.

III. STUDENT REPORTS

Hamsa Ganapathi presented the report for Joseph A. Foran High School. The report is on file. Law did not report.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Robbie Silver – 55 Governor’s Way – She told the board the present calendar presents a very difficult schedule with the early dismissals and conferences. It also poses issues for transportation. The staggered starts times cause problems before and after school. The town of Wallingford implemented the same reconfiguration but had fewer issues because the K-2 3-5 schools began at the same time. She proposed a March vacation, to hold the parent conferences on the same day and the elimination of some of the early release days.

Joe Simoncek – 61 Governor’s Way – He told the board that he agrees with the previous speaker. He believes there is too much disruption. Too many early release days. He then shifted to the security of the schools. He believes the police should be on the roads to protect the kids as they leave school.

IV. CHAIR’S REPORT

Mrs. Casey told the board that Mark Stapleton and Beverley Pierson were absent. She then announced that Ms. Glennon has assumed the position as the Majority Leader replacing James Maroney who resigned effective February 1, 2013.

She then told the board that the budget was presented to the Board of Finance on February 13, 2013. She felt the budget was well received. The Board of Aldermen will be reviewing it next.

Chair Casey announced the board has been invited to march in the St. Patrick’s Day Parade. Please let Ms. Griffin know if anyone plans to march by March 1st.

Mrs. Casey then said that she had heard from many people in hopes of having her reach out to the State reduce the number of days for the school year. She then told the public that the State would only do that in a real emergent need. The calendar stands as it is.

She then asked for an update from the Permanent Schools Facilities Building Committee.

Mr. Saley reported the Committee is moving forward with the East Shore project. The BOA increased a little more than \$400,000 to add items to the list to complete the project. The budgeted amount for the second phase was not enough to complete everything. Therefore, the Board of Aldermen approved the increased amount of \$430,000.

Mrs. Casey asked if the project was still on track.

Mr. Saley said they are looking into value engineering. There have not been any firm decisions.

Approved

Mr. Saley told her that the hope is the project will be on track. However, there is a contingency component of approximately \$800,000. Again, the hope is the costs will not exceed the budget.

Mrs. Casey then notified the board of the recommendation of Laura Fetter as the replacement for James Maroney. She then asked for a motion.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve Laura Fetter as the replacement for James Maroney. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey announced that she received a letter of resignation from Mark Stapleton as of February 28, 2013. He will be moving out of Milford. Once his replacement is approved, she will schedule orientation.

She concluded her report with three quotes in recognition of African American month.

Chief Mello gave an overview of the Safety and Security in Milford. The City has formed a committee that will look at the Crisis Plan and update it as needed. CIRMA is assisting with the committee efforts. He told the board there are short term and long term changes. The department is working on short term changes currently. He highlighted the areas of communication. A direct link system is being put in place and is very close to being complete. It enables a school to push a button and directly notify the police. Every call will be treated as an emergency. Another thing he pointed out is if a school is in lockdown, police can't gain entry. They now have the ability to access the school by electronic means without having someone unlock the doors. Cameras have been linked to the police department. He concluded his report by telling everyone that we have learned and the document will be much better when it is finished.

Chief Mello shifted to the recent conversations about security guards, police presence and the school resource program. He told the board that SRO's have been in place since Columbine. The presence of a law enforcement officer has a deterrent effect. The SRO is designed to be part of the school community. Resources need to be dedicated to the schools. He then said the Federal Government spent over \$800B putting SRO's in the schools. As budgets were reduced, schools cut the program. Milford has embraced the concept of diverting children from juvenile court.

Chief Mello thanked the public for the emails he received. He said he has received many. He told them the police have not gone away. However, they cannot be at the schools every day. There is not enough money. However, they are developing a program to keep the schools safe.

Mr. Richetelli concluded by telling the board the Committee is just incredible. The working group attends any crisis drill in a school and does a written evaluation and reports out with the principal. He also noted that the working committee would like to recommend that the Police Department, with CIRMA (the insurer for the city) do the assessments. Therefore, the need for working with an outside group is not needed. The intent is to expand upon the work that has already begun. This is good news.

Mrs. Casey thanked Chief Mello and Deputy Chief Mooney for their presentation. She then told the public that she has heard from numerous people that we are fortunate to be working with the best right here in Milford. She then told the public that she committed to Chief Mello and Dr. Feser that we would put together with a working group to discuss the Special Resource Officer's. This will be a collaboration effort.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Update of Milford's Teacher Evaluation Plan

Mrs. Krois began her presentation by recapping with the board the process of the development of the Teacher Effectiveness and Performance Evaluation Plan Update. The plan was submitted to the State Department of Education for review in October, 2012. The State provided feedback on the plan in December. She reported the state felt the plan was very good. However, some changes were needed to be compliant. Those changes are: changes need to be aligned exactly to the state expectations, define the summative ratings, align the goal setting to the student growth outcomes, and continue work on developing student growth measures and the initial observations. Milford was going to do 5 mini observations the first year.

Mrs. Casey asked if the feedback given was a requirement of the state. She was told yes.

Mr. Whiskeyman has concerns that the state could make a change on the implementation and then Milford would have to change the plan.

Mrs. Krois told the board that the state can make changes as they see fit. They most likely will change as they get feedback from the pilot district of the Seed plan.

Mr. Cummings told the board the plan is focused improving instructional practice. We are able to maintain our direction because is based on the outcome.

Mrs. Krois told the board the Instructional Framework Committee has been brought together to look at the state's recommendations. Tenured teachers would receive 5 mini observations. The decision was made to reduce that to 3. One reason is the program is new and the discussions are lasting longer than expected.

She concluded by showing a slide that directs everything to the instructional core.

Mr. Whiskeyman asked if there are any other individuals trained to do evaluations. For example teacher mentors. Mr. Whiskeyman it wasn't until he became a manager that he understood the observation because he had the training.

Dr. Feser told him that the state recognizes "peer reviews." However, it is not viewed as a formal observation.

Policies

Mr. Cummings explained changes have been made to the attendance and truancy policies to be aligned with state laws. The current policies are inclusive of the regulation and the proposed policy separates the policy from the regulation to be more clear. He told the board the policies are presented as a first reading and approval would be needed at the following business meeting.

Mr. Cummings then explained the language in Policy 5111 (Age Entrance) was vague and needed to be cleaned up. The revised policy is broken out by grade level and will now enable a child whose sixth

Approved

birthday falls in January or February of the following year to enter first grade, with the approval of administration. In addition, the child would also need to have completed an accredited kindergarten program.

Mr. Gensure asked what occurs if child enters the district with only attending a ½ day program. He told placement would be in first grade. It is a rare circumstance that a child would be put back a grade.

Mrs. Casey asked if the policy is black and white for kindergarten placement. For example, the birthday dictates. Mr. Cummings told her that was correct.

Mrs. Casey then asked the rationale from changing the authority to the principal from having an appeal process. She said that is a lot of responsibility. Mr. Cummings explained the building principal knows best. However, there is a lot of dialogue among a team of people who does the assessment.

Mrs. Casey would like the language “a team of people doing the assessment” be added to expand the

Mr. Cummings reminded the board the policies are being presented as a first read by the board.

Mrs. Casey asked the administration when the attendance policy would go into effect after it was changed. Mr. Cummings told her that it primarily impacts reporting to the state. However, it would not change the high school attendance policy.

Calendar Discussion

Dr. Feser began with the impact the storms has had on the school calendar. Twelve days have been lost due to the weather. She provided the board with a calendar with the mandatory holidays, a list of options which seemed to be the most reasonable, and school calendar data from both the 2012-13 and the 2013-14 schools years in surrounding school district.

Dr. Feser told the board there is a need to capture five days. She reviewed various options to be in session. Some days discussed were Rosh Hashanah, Columbus Day, Election Day and Veterans Day. She also told the board February vacation would be reduced by 3 days. Many districts have aligned their calendars with those days being in session.

She reviewed the percentages of the districts in and out of school on the above holidays.

Mrs. Casey asked if religious preference was tallied for students. Dr. Feser told her the district does not collect that information for students. However, she did reach out to the Jewish congregation. She also spoke with the teachers’ union leadership. They were in favor of being in session on the Jewish holidays. More than 50% of schools are in session on Veterans Day. Dr. Feser also spoke with a representative from the Veterans committee. He was in support of being in session on Veterans Day, with the assurance of veteran instruction.

Mrs. Casey asked if anyone had spoken to the Registrar of Voters regarding the voting in our schools. She recalls being on the board when it was discussed. It was not recommended to have staff and students in session when outside people are in the buildings.

Approved

Ms. Glennon also pointed out Election Day was used as a professional development day. Therefore, another day would need to be designated for PD.

Mrs. Casey asked administration if a March vacation had been reviewed.

Dr. Feser told her that administration is not in support of a March vacation. Milford partners with other schools outside of Milford. Those students attending schools out of district would need to be transported. The state will be changing the testing schedule. Therefore, the consideration of a March vacation would not be implemented at least for two years out. Finally, there are only a handful of districts in the entire state of Connecticut who have a March vacation.

Mrs. Casey told Dr. Feser that she wants to do what is best for Milford.

Dr. Feser told her that there are a number of teachers who live outside of Milford. Therefore, the vacations would not be aligned. They would not be able to off the same time.

Ms. Kubek said she is not in favor of accommodating a very small group of students who are attending schools outside of Milford. She is in support of beginning school before Labor Day. She also recalled her father, a veteran, receiving a letter from a student that has since been framed. She feels a lot can be learned from being in session on Veterans Day.

Ms. Glennon asked if a survey could be conducted in the short timeframe. Dr. Feser told her that a survey could be put together.

Mr. Whiskeyman asked if vacations could be eliminated altogether. He has heard complaints about the lack thereof air conditioning. He told the board members where he went to school, the children got out early in June because they worked on a farm. However, the community may not agree and the board would need to take that into consideration.

Mr. Saley would like to capture days by eliminating some holidays and reducing the vacation by one week. He also agrees with Mrs. Casey as being the leader of changes.

Ms. Glennon asked if there are contractual obligations. Dr. Feser told her 12 month employees would be affected.

Mrs. Casey would like to see a recommendation based on the feedback provided. She wants to see what is best for the bulk Milford.

Human Resources Report

Mr. Richetelli gave the Human Resources Report for the month of January.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1-4.

1. Disbursement Report

Approved

2. Consideration of Minutes

January 14, 2013 Business Meeting

January 15, 17 & 22 Board Budget Workshops

3. Overnight Field Trips

4. Acceptance of the Phase III and IIIA Additions and Alterations Project at Joseph Foran High School
(State Project #084-0179)

Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey asked administration would like to know the rationale why the board needs to sign off on overnight field trips.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

None.

IX. BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Glennon told the board she appreciated Chief Mello's comments. The police department taking ownership speaks volumes!

X. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Glennon made a motion to adjourn. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Susan Glennon
Corresponding Secretary