

Approved
Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
November 12, 2013

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Michael DeGrego
Suzanne DiBiase
Laura Fetter
George Gensure
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
Beverley Pierson
Christopher Saley
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Michael Cummings
James Richetelli
Susan Kelleher
Wendy Kopazna

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Casey called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Casey turned the meeting over to Dr. Feser for the Student and Staff Recognition.

II. STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION

Erin Dunn (Foran), Michael Alderman (Foran), Kira E. Topalian (Law), and Soumya Kundu (Law) were recognized for being named National Merit Commended Scholars by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Rhonda Sullivan, a Language Arts teacher at The Academy, was recognized for being selected, from a wide range of candidates across Connecticut, to attend a month-long Connecticut Writing Project fellowship held at Fairfield University this past summer.

The final recognition was given to World Language teacher, Pam Sheppard. Dr. James Zavodjancik, Assistant Principal of East Shore Middle School recently nominated Pam for the “Pegasus Pride Award”, which is presented by the Connecticut Council of Language Teachers (COLT). The COLT Pegasus Pride Award is awarded to teachers who, day in and day out, work hard in their classrooms to underscore the importance and to promote the development of foreign language skills among their students.

Dr. Feser congratulated the recipients.

III. BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER RECOGNITION

Chairman Casey reflected on the past two years and the work that has been done. She then offered remarks of gratitude to the following outgoing Board members: Laura Fetter, 1st District; George Gensure, 2nd District; Dora Kubek, 5th District and Beverley Pierson, 4th District. She applauded them for their dedication to the children of Milford.

Chairman Casey then asked student liaisons to update the Board on the recent events.

IV. STUDENT REPORTS

Soumya Kundu and Gabe Salles reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Jonathan Law High School. Erin Dunn and Andrew Jones presented the report for Joseph A. Foran High School. Both reports are on file.

V. PUBLIC COMMENT

Jennifer Ju – 22 Saranac Road – Thanked Mr. Cummings for speaking to the Milford Education Foundation. It was a very informative talk about mastery learning. She then updated the Board of recent activities of the Milford Education Foundation. The Foundation looks forward to appearing before the Board again to update them as more progress is made.

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – She thanked the administration for holding the recent CCSS presentations. She then thanked the Board for conducting the Special Education Audit. Her hope is the new Board chooses to make it a priority and follow through with the process. She reiterated communication between regular education and special education has to get better. The Board needs to be the driving force. Now is the time for thinking outside of the box.

VI. CHAIR'S REPORT

Mrs. Casey welcomed Cub Scout Den 196 from East Shore to the meeting. The cub scouts are doing work to earn a citizenship badge.

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to move the Athletic Report to the first item of the Superintendent's Report.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to move the Athletics Report, Item VII. D. to Item VII. A. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mrs. Casey turned the meeting over to Dr. Feser for the Superintendent's Report.

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Feser reported Milford Public Schools has been selected to receive a school security competitive grant of 1.3M dollars. The district applied for the grant in the summer. The district did not anticipate receiving any funds.

Dr. Feser then updated the Board on the activities and events that took place in the schools on Veterans Day. There were nearly 150 veterans in the schools. The schools were adorned with decorations including walls of honor and other memorabilia. Some schools had assemblies while others had flag raising ceremonies. All of this was done with the intent of trying to instill the meaning of a veteran to the children.

Athletic Program Financial Report

Mr. Richetelli provided the Board with the annual athletic financials by navigating a PowerPoint presentation. He explained there are 20 sanctioned high school sports. Two sources fund the athletics, general funds and the athletic activities accounts.

Mrs. Casey requested a breakdown of the "Miscellaneous" account.

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Ms. Glennon asked the administration if lacrosse has been added into the budget. She was told yes.

Priorities and Assumptions

Mr. Saley asked administration if there would be a hardship if the Budget Priorities and Assumptions were tabled until the new Board was seated. Dr. Feser explained the budget process has already begun. The next Business meeting of the Board would not be held until December 9th. A large part of the budget is finished by mid-December.

A Board discussion ensued. Some Board members were mixed over the postponement. Others felt the need to move forward with approval.

Mrs. Casey reminded the Board that the common practice has been to approve the Budget Priorities and Assumptions at the December meeting. She also reminded the Board members that the Budget Priorities and Assumptions could be altered by the new Board.

Mr. Saley commented that he felt strongly about having the new Board members review and approve the Budget Priorities and Assumptions.

Ms. DiBiase agreed with Mr. Saley.

Mrs. Casey asked if anyone would like to make a motion to postpone the Priorities and Assumptions until the December meeting.

Mrs. Fetter and Mr. Gensure agreed the new Board would not be familiar with the items on the Budget Priorities and Assumptions, i.e. the SRO's.

Mrs. Casey called for a motion.

Mr. Saley made a motion to postpone the Budget Priorities and Assumptions until the December Board meeting. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion.

Mr. Saley asked if items could be removed from the list until new members are seated.

Mrs. Casey explained the administration needs to work on the budget. It is very frustrating with the timing of the election. However, administration has been preparing the budget since September. It needs to be presented, approved and submitted to the Mayor by January 31st.

By a roll call vote, the motion failed 7-No/3-Yes (DeGrego/DiBiase/Saley).

Ms. Glennon motioned to approve the 2014-15 Budget Priorities and Assumptions as presented by administration. Ms. Kubek seconded. By a roll call vote, the motion passed 7-Yes/3-No (DeGrego/DiBiase/Saley).

District Objectives 2011-14

Dr. Feser reminded the Board the District Objectives were reviewed at the October 28th Committee of the Whole meeting. The administration brought forth revised Objectives Tied to the Overarching Goals that included: Objectives Set in 2011 to be met by June 2014; Additional Objectives to be Met by June 2014; and Objectives for 2014-2017. In the discussion of the proposed objectives, the Board indicated that it

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wanted to focus on the current objectives and suggested some changes. Dr. Feser shared those changes with the Board.

In addition to the changes, administration added three new objectives. Those are:

1. Researching and selecting an alternative literacy measure(s) to the DRA with the purpose of developing a more complete literacy profile. The district needs to have appropriate/additional measures to correctly identify student progress towards literacy achievement.
2. Achieving 75-80% of 6-12 students meeting or exceeding standards on designated district common assessments. This is a one year goal.
3. Conducting necessary research in order to declare a goal on the graduation rate. The goal is to increase the graduation rate. However, the State continues to send information about how the rate will be calculated. The administration still needs some clarity before the administration declares a graduation rate.

A Board discussion ensued regarding specifically how to measure post graduates going on to college, both four and two year colleges.

Mrs. Casey offered some suggestive language changes.

A discussion ensued around Objective 6. The original intent was to have students go onto four-year colleges. However, the economy has changed. Therefore, the intent should be changed to credit students for going onto two-year colleges.

Ms. Glennon asked if the administration would be comfortable with changing the language to read “Increasing by 5% the number of students accepted to college whether it be 2 or 4 year colleges”?

Mrs. Casey noted the changes:

Objective 1 – change the word from *having* to *increasing*

Objective 6 – as stated above

Objective 7 to define the EER

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve the District Objectives for 2013-14 with the noted changes. Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Durham Contract

Mr. Richetelli announced the administration wishes to extend the Durham bus contract. The contract term is three years with a 5/3/3 proposed increase. Durham will fulfill most of the recommendations submitted in the audit. He then reviewed the requirements of the contract.

Ms. Kubek questioned the length of time it will take to install cameras.

This sparked a discussion about safety and it will need to be resolved before moving forward.

The Durham representative explained the cameras could be installed if the Board agreed to the wholesale price. The current contract has a phase in over three years but they could have them installed by the start of school. The cost would be \$14,850.

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to recess.

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Ms. Glennon made a motion to recess (9:10 p.m.). Ms. DiBiase seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mrs. Casey called the meeting back to order at 9:20 p.m.

Mr. Richetelli told the Board Durham has agreed to install the additional cameras needed at no additional cost.

Mrs. Casey asked for a motion to approve the Durham contract.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve the 3rd addendum to the Durham Services Bus Contract incorporating the change that cameras would be installed by the end of the first year of the contract at no cost. Ms. DiBiase seconded. Motion passed.

Student Transportation Program Review

Mr. Richetelli then reviewed the follow up plan to the recent transportation audit that was conducted by TAS. The plan included waiving the requirement of the performance bond, elimination of courtesy riders, hiring a traffic safety expert to review routes to ensure safety as well as compliance with the policy, and increased ridership. The goal is to increase ridership while staying within a 30 minute timeframe.

Ms. Glennon raised concerns over the number of students who might be at combined stops with the elimination of busses. She reminded the administration safety is the priority.

Some Board members were confused with the language using the elimination of courtesy riders and increasing ridership.

Dr. Feser reminded the Board the safety expert will assist in determining the ridership.

Mr. Saley feels the administration is being resistant. He thinks more could be done to save the district money.

Mrs. Casey called for a motion.

Ms. Glennon made a motion that the Board approve the Follow Up Response Plan to the TAS Student Transportation Program Review. Ms. DiBiase seconded.

Mr. Saley told the Board they need to be open to different ideas.

Mr. Whiskeyman recommended the administration use careful language when notifying the parents about the elimination of ridership.

Ms. Glennon repeated the motion on floor. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna updated the Board on the recent human resources activities.

Teacher Evaluation Plan

Dr. Feser explained the State is now requiring changes to the Teacher Evaluation Plan to be approved by the Board. The Board approved the plan in April, 2013. Some changes were made over the summer and shared with the Board. The Board will need to approve those changes.

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Mrs. Casey asked for a motion.

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve the Milford Teacher Evaluation Plan with the required revisions. Ms. DiBiase seconded. The motion passed.

VIII. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Glennon made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda Items

- A. Disbursement Report
- B. Minutes
 - a. October 15, 2013
 - b. October 22, 2013
 - c. October 28, 2013

IX. NEW BUSINESS

None.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

XI. BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Kubek told the Board she walked in the Veterans Day Parade with a 91 year old veteran. She was disappointed in the lack of attendance at the parade. However, she is very supportive of children in session on Veterans Day. She felt the schools did a great job on Veterans Day. She then thanked Mrs. Casey for her leadership.

Ms. DiBiase told the Board she too attended the parade. She also was disappointed in the attendance. She told the outgoing Board members that it has been a pleasure working with them.

Mr. DeGrego marched in the parade with Ms. Kubek, Ms. Glennon and Dr. Feser. He thanked the people that did come out.

Mrs. Casey thanked the administration for coordinating the school events on Veterans Day. She attended events at Law and Meadowside.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

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

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

Approved

Ms. Susan Glennon
Corresponding Secretary