

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes

November 9, 2015

Board members present:

Claire Casey
Michael DeGrego
John DeRosa (by phone)
Suzanne DiBiase
Jennifer Federico
Susan Glennon, Chair
Dr. Heidi Gold-Dworkin
Anthony Piselli
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

Dr. Elizabeth Feser
Jeffrey Burt
Jim Richetelli
Wendy Kopazna

Board members absent:

C. Robert Satti, Jr.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Glennon called the business meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Room. She then asked that everyone join in the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Glennon notified the Board that Mr. DeRosa will attend by phone and Mr. Satti would not be in attendance. She then called for the Student Reports.

II. STUDENT REPORTS

David Patrick and Emily Carroll presented the student report for Jonathan Law. Lindsey Carlson and Joe Barton presented the student report for Joseph A. Foran.

Ms. Glennon thanked the students for the update. She then read the Public Comment statement.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Jagodzinski – 27 Berkeley Terrace – Mr. Jagodzinski expressed his desire for the Board to work as a non-partisan Board, making note of the five/five party split.

Danielle Pastor – 8 Hill Street - Ms. Pastor urged the Board to make the change to the Transportation Policy to reduce the walking distance for high school and middle school.

Cathy Betz – Eastern Parkway – Mrs. Betz thanked Ms. DiBiase for speaking with her. She asked the Board to do the right thing relative to the Transportation Policy.

Approved

Susan Krushinsky – 60 Crescent Drive – Mrs. Krushinsky did some research and found the high school start times have been moved to 20 minutes earlier over the years. Students in Rivercliff and Devon seemed to ride the bus dating back to 1989. Changing the walking distance will affect students all over town.

Pat Mulhall – 49 Crescent Drive – Mrs. Mulhall urged the Board to change the walking distances for the children.

Kara Flannery – 41 North Street - Ms. Flannery thanked the Board for the time they have given to the community and for keeping the schools open and converting back to K-5. As a taxpayer she believes reducing the walking distance is the right thing to do for the community.

Carol Thomas – 84 Thompson Street- She told the Board driving 40 minutes to and from work could be a deal breaker when looking for a job. She told the Board to think about the students. She also noted the policy should be fair and equitable to everyone.

Bob Thomas – 84 Thompson Street – Mr. Thomas asked the Board to consider changing walking distances.

Paul Karas – 81 Clark Street – Mr. Karas stated that he believes his son is a courtesy rider. His son is the first of three who will be in the school system. He asked the Board to consider changing the walking distances.

IV. CHAIR'S REPORT

Ms. Glennon acknowledged both Dr. Gold-Dworkin and Mr. Piselli for their work on the Board. She presented each of them with a plaque. She then called for the liaison reports.

Ms. Glennon provided the Board with an update on the PTA Council meeting. Representatives had asked about the possibility of a Junior Honor Society at the middle school and for information about the bus Opt-In program and Science CMT/CAPT. She also attended the Milford Education Foundation event at the Planetarium at Foran. She congratulated Kathy Bonetti for her work on a publication that received a CABA award.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Update of Summer Projects

Mr. Bradbury narrated a pictorial PowerPoint presentation (on file) that summarized the work that was done to the buildings and grounds over the summer. Most of the work was dedicated to the reconfiguration of the elementary schools.

Following the presentation, Mr. Bradbury and Mr. Richetelli answered questions from the Board. There are a few items that require follow up:

- Energy conservation update to be provided at a future time.

Approved

- Board will be provided a subtotal of projects by budget year, and a summary of what is being held over for the next budget.
- RFP to conduct an energy audit that will include discussion on use of differing power sources, potentially including solar.

Athletic Program Annual Financial Report 2014-15

Mr. Richetelli presented the athletics financial report for the 2014-15 fiscal year. He highlighted that 24 sports are offered through the Milford Public Schools, and are sanctioned by the CIAC. Other opportunities, such as Unified Sports, Powder Puff and Fencing Club are also offered. Mr. Richetelli gave a breakdown of the funds, by sport, remarking the funds are split between two accounts. The general funds account covers the cost of coach salaries, transportation, trainers, insurance, equipment and supplies and uniforms. The athletic activities account covers game-day costs of officials, referees, and part-time staff such as ticket takers, announcers, police officers and security. He noted the Board of Education has supplemented the athletic activities account because ticket sales are not sufficient to cover all game day expenses. Hockey is offered through a coop program and continues to be the only sport that requires a student participation fee.

After discussion and questions from Board members one item needed follow up: A difference in ticket sales was noted between pages 6 and 7. Mr. Richetelli will verify which figure is correct.

Transportation Policy P-3541 Proposed Revision to Student Walking Distance

Dr. Feser presented for a second reading the Transportation Policy with the revised walking distances as requested by the Board reducing Middle and High School walking distance.

Ms. Glennon noted the change would be implemented in the 2016-17 school year. She then asked for a motion.

Mr. Whiskeyman made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the revised Transportation Policy P-3541 as presented by administration. Mr. Piselli seconded.

Discussion ensued.

Mrs. Federico indicated support of the revision citing a long, cold walk will not allow students to achieve at the same level as students who have not had to walk. She thinks the distance is too far and too taxing on students. Twenty four other districts or 42% of the districts surveyed have shorter walking distances than Milford.

Ms. Glennon said she struggled with her decision and listened to all discussions. She agrees two miles is far, however, the Opt-In program addresses this. She noted many of the students whose parents have addressed the board do get a bus on October 1st under this provision. She would rather see the money spent on programs directly linked to

Approved

education in the schools and believes parents share the responsibility that their children start the school day ready to learn.

Dr. Gold-Dworkin indicated agreement with Ms. Glennon and said she thinks walking 20 to 40 minutes helps clear their minds and will help prepare children for school. She will not be supporting the change.

Mr. Piselli stated that his was disappointed in hearing the dissention. Exercise is voluntary and can make a person tired. Walking to school is a necessity. He believes that the Board should be supportive of helping children be prepared to learn. He also cited safety as a reason he will support the change.

Mr. DeGrego agreed we owe taxpayers consideration but that if one child gets hurt, there will be public outcry and will cost the city much more money in the way of additional crossing guards than what this change will cost. He is concerned about safety and advised the Board to reconsider \$250,000 opposed to what an exorbitant cost it could be in the future.

Mr. DeRosa reiterated his past comments that the city should be more involved in safety of the students especially during winter months. He agrees this is a safety concern. He also agrees with saving the money and putting it back into the programs at the school. But he also thinks we add programs then don't give students time needed to adjust. The Board needs to find a happy medium. He supports the change unless it could be tabled for further discussion by the new Board. He also cited the other districts around the state that have shorter walking distances.

Ms. Glennon reiterated the Opt In program does shorten the walking distance, allowing a student to be on a bus by October 1, before the winter months.

Mrs. Federico asked Mr. Richetelli if any students have been turned down for the Opt In program. Mr. Richetelli indicated he thinks there may have been one student turned down on the east side of town because the bus was full but that is rare. He further explained the district continues to do ridership audits and most busses are not full. The thirty minute window for bus runs limits how many students can be assigned a particular bus so the chance of a bus being full to capacity and students being turned down is slim.

Ms. DiBiase asked Mr. Richetelli to explain the need for an additional VO-Ag bus. He explained when the Board requested administration to find better efficiencies they consolidated some stops for those students who participate in the program which allowed the reduction of one Vo-Ag bus. If high school walking distances are shortened there will be need to add three additional bus stops. There is not enough time to pick up students at three additional stops using only one bus. As it is the first stop picks up students at 5:59 AM.

Approved

By a roll call vote of 5-Yes (DeGrego/DeRosa/DiBiase/Federico/Piselli) 4-No (Casey/Gold-Dworkin/Whiskeyman/Glennon), the motion passed.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna gave the human resources report. Included in the report were the various stipends for Team and mentors positions.

Human Resources Annual Report

Annual Human Resources Summary Mrs. Kopazna provided the Board with the annual summary of human resources activity from October, 2014 through September, 2015. The report included staffing, employee benefits, labor/employee relations, employee services, record keeping, research and reporting.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Whiskeyman made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the consent agenda items:

1. Disbursement Report
2. Consideration of Minutes
 - a. October 12, 2015
 - b. October 26, 2015

Mr. Piselli seconded the motion. By a roll call vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Glennon called a recess at 9:15 p.m.

The meeting was called back to order at 9:42 p.m.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Whiskeyman made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Working Agreement between the Milford Board of Education and the Milford Cafeteria Workers and Media Aides for the period commencing July 1, 2014 and ending through to and including June 30, 2018. Ms. Piselli seconded. By a roll call vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Whiskeyman made a motion that the Milford Board of Education approves the Working Agreement between the Milford Board of Education and the Local 1303-453 of Council 4, AFSCME AFL-CIO for the period commencing July 1, 2014 and ending through to an including June 30, 2018. Mr. Piselli seconded. By a roll call vote of 9-0, the motion passed unanimously.

VIII. BOARD COMMENT

Approved

Mr. DeGrego told the Board that he, along with Ms. Glennon and Dr. Feser attended Mr. Frank Pepe's 50th years as a coach celebration at Foran on Friday night. He will visit Meadowside on Veterans Day to participate in the events honoring veterans.

Mr. Piselli thanked his constituents of the 3rd district. It was honor to serve. He then thanked the Board and administration.

Dr. Gold-Dworkin said it has been a pleasure working with the Board and wished the new Board well.

Mrs. Federico commented she is relieved the walking distances were reduced.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Whiskeyman made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Piselli seconded. By a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Recording Secretary: _____
Pam Griffin