

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2012

Board members present:

Tracy Casey
Suzanne DiBiase
Susan Glennon
Dora Kubek
James Maroney
Christopher Saley
Mark Stapleton
Earl Whiskeyman

Administration present:

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

Board members absent:

Beverley Pierson

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held a board meeting on Tuesday, November 13, 2012 in the Board Room in the Parsons Complex. Mr. Maroney called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Maroney welcomed the Girl Scouts to the meeting. The scouts were in attendance to fulfill a merit badge requirement.

II. STUDENT AND STAFF RECOGNITION

Dr. Feser recognized four Foran students for their work in making a video that won an award for MSG Varsity. The video is about two friends hanging out spending a day together playing catch, talking and riding the train. The students also added the music to the video.

III. STUDENT REPORTS

Ratan Manohar & Hayley Soulier reported on the latest activity and upcoming events occurring at Jonathan Law High School. Hamsa Ganapathi presented the report for Joseph A. Foran High School. Both reports are on file.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

Donna Corey – 902 W. River Street – Ms. Corey is the current president of Milford's Promise. She handed out a brochure about the organization to the board. Their mission is to enhance the mechanisms in place that foster the good in children and the community.

Linwood Schulte – 64 Austin Street – Mr. Schulte asked the board to look at the structure having only one track and field coach. He told them that he has worked for the board for 40 years. In the beginning, there were only 12 kids on the team. Today, there are more than 100 boys and girls who participate. He strongly encouraged the board to hire another coach.

Elizabeth Bran – 22 Norway Street – Ms. Bran followed up on an email that she sent the board. She supports Mr. Schulte's request to hire another coach.

Kristina Sancher – 13 Beach Avenue – She would like the board to keep the Academic Calendar contingency plan. It is stated clearly on the calendar. She suggested the elimination of February break in the upcoming year.

Donna Theirault – 49 Soundview Avenue – She would like the board to stick with the current Academic Calendar contingency plan.

Cathy Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – Mrs. Berni referenced the increase in Special Education in the Budget Priorities and Assumptions document. She told the board she supports the increase and it is probably due to transportation.

Unknown name – 11 Sperry Street – Her daughter attends Foran. She will going to Italy on February break. She also told the board that many other students will be going as well. She requested that the board not take away from the February break.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Feser told the board that it has only been one year since she was reporting on Hurricane Irene. And now, Hurricane Sandy has impacted many families in Milford. Some families have lost their homes and have been displaced. She told the board that she has tried to reach out to all families. She was very happy to report that attendance on November 5th was at 95% for the district. Milford has proven to be a very close community. Staff members, parents and neighbors have been considerate to those affected and she thanked them all for their assistance.

Budget Priorities and Assumptions

Dr. Feser told the board the assumptions and priorities were being presented as a second read. She asked the board if there were any questions.

Mrs. Casey asked if there would be an increase in transportation if the hurricane did not happen. Mrs. Kelleher told her that the philosophy has not changed. We continue to keep children in district. In some cases, the students will be better served out of district. However, the increase would not have risen to the degree it did if there wasn't a hurricane.

Mrs. Casey asked Dr. Feser if administration would continue to support Lacrosse. Dr. Feser told her the intent is to support Lacrosse. However, that discussion would be part of the athletic report.

Mrs. Casey asked if the savings from participating in the energy savings initiative could be separate from the district's overall savings efforts. Mr. Richetelli told her that everything has been benchmarked.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve the Budget Priorities and Assumptions as amended by administration. Dr. Stapleton seconded. Motion passed.

High School Schedule Change

Mr. Barile and Mr. Thompson shared a PowerPoint relative to the high school schedule change. The change would add one period to the day. The new eight period day would consist of four days with 57 minute periods and two day with 78 minute periods. This change will give students the opportunity to take a variety of courses. It also lessens the class time change while increasing the credits from the current 22.4.

Mr. Barile told the board that a committee was designated to work on the overall development of the new schedule. Some members were in attendance. Committee members then talked about the constraints of the schedule. They researched other school districts in the state that had eight period days. The schedule took two years to develop.

Mr. Cummings explained the quality of instruction increases significantly because you will be transitioning less. The eighth period will eliminate almost 1,000 transition minutes.

Mrs. Glennon asked if we will max out on class sizes because of the change. Mr. Cummings told the her district should be fine. However, we would have to wait for live data.

Dr. Stapleton thanked administration for the new schedule. He likes the format. It appears to that it will be more challenging.

Mr. Whiskeyman told administration the student will have more effective learning time. Teaching impact should improve.

Mr. Saley asked if the state has a mandate for course time in place. He also said that you are eliminating 18 hours. Mr. Thompson told the board the committee analyzed the time loss to the transition time and the quality of learning outweighed the loss of time.

Mrs. Casey asked for a recess at 8:50 p.m.

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

Transportation Update

Mr. Richetelli gave the board some background on how administration attempted to achieve maximum savings to reach a savings of \$200,000 to the proposed budget. He then shared a PowerPoint that explained how many bus runs are made daily. He assured the board that all bus runs were reviewed. Mr. Richetelli reminded the board the goal is to maximize the efficiencies while keeping the bus runs to three per day, with a ride time of no more than 30 minutes.

Mrs. Casey asked Mr. Richetelli for clarification on the bus times. She told him the board's goal is to have the bus time limited to 30 minutes. In order words, while the board asked the administration to save

\$200,000 in the budget under transportation, the philosophy has not changed. The goal to have the bus rides kept to 30 minutes did not change.

Mr. Richetelli then gave an explanation of three ways to save 200,000.00. The hope was to eliminate one bus transporting students to Trumbull VoAg and combine busses for the private schools and

The administration chose to implement scheduled stops for the Trumbull VoAg students. This allowed the administration to eliminate one bus. The administration looked at the elimination of a bus for the private schools. The routes were so long, they did not have time to return to do a second or third tier. Mr. Richetelli then turned to Durham for help. Runs were then consolidated for Platt, St. Mary's, St. Gabe's and Laurelton. The routes were so long, they did not have time to do a second or third tier. Administration then re-examined private school runs for a second time. Routes were combined with minimal disruption to families. In summary the savings are \$165,157. The \$35,000 shortfall will be found in the budget where potential savings can be obtained. He then told the board that parents can opt to not participate in transportation. However, he warned the board, there are many legalities that get involved. From the practical standpoint, it has not been met with a positive response across the state. He also told the board that if one student opts to continue transportation, they are entitled to transportation.

Mr. Saley asked for the timing of the private school busses. Mr. Richetelli told him that if you combined the two parochial schools on one bus, the ride time was about one hour. He also told him that they were not able to get the students to the second school stop on time. Therefore, this plan was not an option.

Mr. Saley asked what the average time students are on the bus. He was told most runs are near 20 minutes.

He then asked Mr. Richetelli how many children ride the bus. He was told it is different for every grade level.

Mr. Saley asked if administration has tried to use the busses for four tiers.

Dr. Feser told Mr. Saley that the high schools are already starting at 7:20 and the elementary is ending at 3:30.

Mr. Saley told her that he would like to see the school hours changed to accommodate four tiers. Mrs. Casey asked Mr. Saley is he is trying to change the philosophy.

Mrs. Glennon asked about the loss of ridership. Mr. Richetelli explained a story of a route that was added due to the building of a bridge. The bridge is now complete. However, the students are still being bussed. He told the board that they route could be changed with the upcoming school year.

Mr. Gensure told administration that a policy is in place and should be followed.

Mr. Whiskeyman said that it should be on the table.

Mrs. Casey told Mr. Richetelli that administration should follow board policy.

Ms. Glennon told the board she would assume there would be a bus savings.

Mr. Saley asked what the figures would be using a four tier format.

Mrs. Casey asked the board members if they would have an interest in changes the hours of the school for bus purposes. The members indicated that they would not be in favor of changes the school start times to accommodate four bus runs. Therefore, administration would not need to do any further research.

Mr. Whiskeyman asked if the Durham bus contract was an annual contract. Mr. Richetelli told him that administration has the ability to add or subtract a bus.

Mr. Saley told the board that he feels better efficiencies can be found by adding a fourth tier.

Mr. Gensure disagrees. He told Mr. Saley that the board hires professionals to handle this work. He would not want to risk safety of students.

Mrs. Casey asked the board for a second time if anyone would be interested in reviewing a transportation contract with a four tiers. The consensus was no.

Human Resources Annual Report

Mrs. Kopazna reviewed the annual report with the board.

Human Resources Report

Mrs. Kopazna reviewed the monthly report with the board.

Ms. Glennon asked if non-academic vacancies were posted on School Spring.

2012-13 Calendar Proposed Change

Dr. Feser gave the rationale for the existing and proposed calendar. Hurricane Sandy caused the district to close for five days. Following that, the district had to close for a snow day. She added a week to the existing calendar. Then, a day would be taken from February. While the current language is as follows: you would remove from February beginning with Friday. She then told the board that she is not wedded to that date. It doesn't make sense to have the students have a long weekend and then go back to school for a couple days only to be off again. Dr. Feser also told the board that she canvassed other districts regarding how they handle snow days. The commonality was most districts begin adding days at the end of the school year.

Mrs. Casey told the board that they need to look at the calendar in totality. For every one person that says don't take away a day, there is a person saying don't extend the year. She would like to hear from the board about what they would like to see.

Dr. Feser told the board that there has only been one full week of school.

Ms. Glennon told Dr. Feser that the disruptions have been from the early dismissal days. She believes the board has put a contingency plan in place that allows for 12 days out of school.

Mrs. Casey told the board that this has not been normal year. The district has already been out for six days.

Ms. Kubek told the board members that she remembered her daughter going to school. February break was moved to March. It seemed to work fine. The break in February is very close to the break in December.

Ms. Glennon told the board a contingency plan was put in place. It should be followed.

Mr. Saley asked if you could open school on Saturday. Dr. Feser told him that you can't do that until all other options have been exhausted.

Mrs. Casey asked Dr. Feser if she was interested in changing her original recommendation.

Dr. Feser said that she has heard from some parents who feel the calendar policy should be followed. She feels that there is merit to ending the school year on a Friday instead of a Monday.

Ms. Glennon asked if the calendar contingency plan was based on administration's recommendation.

Dr. Feser told the board the calendar language was developed two years ago. She doesn't agree with the logic and it would be changed going forward.

Dr. Feser told the board her recommendation is to go to school until June 21st and cancelling vacation for February 21 & 22nd.

James Maroney made a motion to change the school academic calendar making the last day June 21st with the elimination of February 21 and 22nd. Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Gensure asked the administration to redo the language to clear up any confusion.

Ms. Glennon moved to question.

After a roll call vote, the vote passed 7-2 (Glennon/Saley).

VII. CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approve Consent Agenda items 1-3.

1. Disbursement Report
2. Overnight Field Trip Request – Foran Band
3. Overnight Field Trip Request – Foran Choir
4. Consideration of Minutes – October 9, 2012 & October 22, 2012.

Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

IX. NEW BUSINESS

X. BOARD COMMENT

Ms. Glennon asked that presentations not be added to minutes.

Mr. Maroney made a motion to approval the agreement between MASA and the board of education beginning July 30, 2013 – June 30, 2016. Dr. Stapleton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Maroney made a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 10.50 p.m.

Pam Griffin
Recording Secretary

James Maroney
Corresponding Secretary