

## Millbury Public Schools School Committee

### *Regular Session* Meeting Minutes

2021 OCT 14 AM 11:12  
MILLBURY, MASS

Date: September 8, 2021

Members Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson

Present: Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Julia Lagerholm, Member

Mr. Nicholas Lazzaro, Member

Mrs. Jessica Bristol, Member

Administrators Mr. Richard Bedard, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations

Present: Ms. Elizabeth Boutiette, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Mr. Corey Burke, Assistant Principal, Elmwood Street School

Mr. Andrew Hall, Principal, Elmwood Street School

Mr. Christopher Lowe, Principal, Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Mr. Pat Mara, Assistant Principal, Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools

Mrs. Abigail Rigney, Assistant Principal, Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Mrs. Erin Rosenkranz, Assistant Principal, Raymond E. Shaw School

Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services

Mr. Andrew Tuccio, Principal, Raymond E. Shaw School

Contributing Ms. Michelle Frigon, Community Member

Guests: Ms. Ashley Kavanagh-Russo, Community Member

Location: Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School Library/Media Center

Time: 7:00PM

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:00PM and led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Nietupski reminded those in attendance about the role and responsibilities of the School Committee and explained the procedures and expectations to which the Committee, the audience, and guest presenters will adhere to ensure that meetings are orderly and respectful. Mrs. Nietupski also reminded the audience how the public may be recognized at meetings, either by being recognized by the Chair or by requesting to be part of the meeting agenda.

#### 1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Bristol motioned to approve the minutes of August 11, 2021, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion passed, 5-0.

Mrs. Bristol motioned to approve the minutes of August 25, 2021, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion passed, 5-0.

## 2. Guest Presentations

- a. Ms. Ashley Kavanagh-Russo addressed the Committee regarding mask-wearing in school, stating that it was harmful to children. She referenced studies showing that masks are ineffective at stopping the spread of COVID-19, the relatively low risk that COVID-19 presents to children, and the lack of evidence that COVID-19 has ever been transmitted between teachers and students. She stated that the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education had no right to mandate masks in schools and the Millbury School Committee is wrong to force students to wear masks in schools. She also stated that there has been a lack of clear two-way communication between the School Committee and the community and questioned whether the Committee was following its own code of ethics.
- b. Ms. Michelle Frigon addressed the Committee regarding mask-wearing in school, stating that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has been inconsistent with its recommendations and that the mainstream media has instilled unfounded and unnecessary fear about COVID-19. She cited the low infection rate in children and stated that the leading cause of death for children aged 10-17 is suicide, which she attributed in part to the psychological damage that results from forcing children to wear masks. Ms. Frigon questioned whether there was an unethical correlation between the ESSER funding that the District received and the decision to force children to wear masks. At the close of her presentation, Ms. Frigon presented a document to Mr. Myers and each member of the Committee titled "Notice and Demand [Affidavit of Maladministration] Legal Notice."

## 3. Report of the Administration

- a. Mr. Myers introduced Michelle Cherfils, Class of 2022, as the Committee's Student Representative for the 2021-2022 school year, noting that Michelle has served as class treasurer throughout high school and is a member of NHS, Student Council, and various committees for the senior class.
- b. Ms. Ryan, Director of Pupil Services, provided the Committee with an update on COVID-19 trends in the district, explaining that there have been 13 cases in the District as of 9/8/21. Last year at this time the District had only one case reported.
- c. Ms. Ryan provided the Committee with an overview of the District's *test-and-stay* program, which allows asymptomatic students who have been exposed to COVID-19 to remain in school rather than quarantining at home. Exposed students will receive a BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen test for five consecutive days and may safely remain in school following each negative BinaxNOW test result. If a test does come back positive, the student will be sent home as soon as possible and that will be the beginning of their quarantine period.
- d. Ms. Ryan provided a Special Education update to the Committee, noting that out of district student placements are attending programs in person five days each week. There are currently 29 placements budgeted and one placement has returned to the district. Child find activities are taking place for students ages 3-21 in the district. We will evaluate and determine if children are eligible for student services. Parents may call the Special Education office to schedule an evaluation for

their child. She also shared with the Committee that the District had successfully completed its document review and submission process for our Tiered Focus Monitoring cycle.

#### 4. Finance and Operations

- a. Mr. Bedard shared the results of the August 27<sup>th</sup> bid opening for the replacement of the hot water tank at the Elmwood Street Elementary School. The District entered into a contract agreement with the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, EV Mechanical, Inc. of Walpole, MA for \$81,000. The low bid came in 10% below the engineer's project estimate of \$90,000. Bids ranged from \$81,000 to \$124,000.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to accept the bid from EV Mechanical, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. The motion passed, 5-0.

- b. Mr. Bedard asked the Committee to consider voting to approve the purchase of a propane-powered Type-A, 29-passenger school bus to replace our existing gas-powered, 2012 Type-A school bus. The new unit costs \$92,000 through the Anderson Bus Company. The Town appropriated \$65,000 for this purchase last May 2021 and costs beyond the appropriation (\$27,000) will likely be paid through a Fall Green Communities Grant application. Unfortunately, because grant application awards do not take place until the Spring of 2022, there is some risk that the District may have to fund the difference from its operating budget.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the purchase of a propane-powered Type-A, 29-passenger school bus, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed, 5-0.

#### 5. Unfinished Business

- a. Mr. Myers provided a report on the Shaw School building project, noting that the project remains under budget and the critical pathway is still on schedule. Slab on grade will be placed next week in section A of the building, the steel framing punch list is nearly complete, and ductwork is being hung in the building.
- b. Because the Committee received a completed application for approval from OneSchool Global just before the meeting, it agreed to postpone consideration of final approval until its next meeting.
- c. Mrs. Bristol motioned to approve the proposed School Committees Goals for 2021-2022, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. The motion passed, 5-0.

#### 6. New Business

- a. The Committee reviewed a draft of the Superintendent's goals for the 2021-2022 school year.
- b. The Committee reviewed a draft update to the job description for the role of Superintendent of Schools, which was last updated nearly eight years ago. Mr. Wilbur asked if the job descriptions for the Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Pupil Services would also be updated. Mr. Myers confirmed that the Human Resources office is currently working on these updates, drafts of which will be provided to the Committee when they become available.

#### 7. Executive Session

At 7:38PM, the Mrs. Nietpuski stated that the Committee would enter executive session in accordance with *M.G.L. c.20A, §21(a)3*, to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Millbury Teachers Association and SEIU Local 888. Mrs. Nietupski stated that no additional regular session business would be conducted after the conclusion of the executive session. Mrs. Nietuski held a roll call vote: Mrs. Bristol- YES, Mr. Lazzaro-YES, Mrs. Lagerholm-Yes, Mr. Wilbur-YES, Mrs. Nietupski-YES.

#### 8. Adjourn

At 8:15PM, Mr. Wilbur mentioned to adjourn the regular session meeting, seconded by Mrs. Bristol. The motion passed, 5-0.