

**Millbury Public Schools  
School Committee**

**Meeting Minutes**

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MILLBURY, MASS.

**Date:** November 17, 2021

**Members** Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson

**Present:** Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

Mrs. Julia Lagerholm, Member

Mr. Nicholas Lazzaro, Member

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

Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools

Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services

**Contributing** Angelique Bouthot, Millbury Resident

**Guests:** Mr. Joshua MacCreery, Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Athletic Director

Mrs. Laura Overdevest, Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Athletic Trainer

**Location:** Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

The regular session minutes of November 3, 2021 were tabled until the next meeting.

Mrs. Lagerholm motioned to approve the executive session minutes of November 3, 2021, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed, 5-0.

**2. Guest Presentation**

Millbury resident, Ms. Angélique Bouthot, addressed the Committee about the need for a comprehensive sexual education curriculum. She requested that the Committee review the district's current curriculum, which is based on the "Michigan Model," and look for a more updated model. She cited several reasons that the school should provide a more up-to-date sex ed curriculum, including student health, wellness, and success.

**3. Report of the Administration**

**a. Student Council Update**

Juniors Gianna Fields and Katelyn Garden provided the Committee with an update on recent and upcoming events at the Jr./Sr. High School, including the upcoming wellness day, a pep rally for

students before the Thanksgiving break, and the “Woolies Got Talent” talent show hosted by Best Buddies.

b. Student Trip Abroad: Update on Status, Options, and Potential Challenges/Solutions

Mr. Christopher Lowe, Jr./Sr. High School Principal, updated the Committee on the status of the international trip and asked the committee to grant permission to move forward with planning. There are approximately 36 students attending and staff chaperones have been contacted. There will be a parent meeting to go over the details. EF, the travel company has provided specific information as to where the students will be going, timeframe, travel logistics, etc. They also have alternatives in mind in case there are travel restrictions related to COVID-19. The cut off date for confirming the trip is December 25, 2021. The families may receive a travel voucher if they cancel before the date or receive their payment back minus \$500. All travelers must be vaccinated to attend this trip during April vacation week.

Ms. Bristol asked what it would look like if a student were to contract COVID and how that might affect their return to school, school work, etc. Mr. Lowe replied that it would depend on the specific circumstances at the time, but that he anticipates following the quarantine protocol issued by the host country. Mr. Lazzaro asked if the travel company offers domestic travel as an option if students do not travel overseas. Mr. Lowe said that this has not been discussed basically because they have planned this trip with the hopes of the students being able to travel abroad. Mrs. Neitupski asked about changing the trip to only a single destination rather than all four. Mr. Lowe said he would have to speak to the company to see if that would be possible.

Mrs. Lagerholm motioned to give preliminary approval for planning the student trip abroad, seconded by Mr. Wilbur. The motion passed (5-0).

c. Current COVID-19 Infection Data and Trends, Pooled Testing and Test-and-Stay Data

Ms. Ryan provided the Committee with an updated overview of COVID-19 infection rates, noting that there have been 85 cases in the district. An email was sent out to families asking if they would be interested in being part of a vaccination clinic if it were to be offered at school. As of this Monday, all staff who are not vaccinated must test twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays.

d. Report of the Athletic Director & Recognition of MHS Athletic Trainer

Athletic Director, Mr. Josh MacCreery, provided an overview of this fall’s athletic season. He also spoke of the Unified Basketball team, which participated in seven games this season. There will not be a unified sport this winter, but Unified Track will be offered in the Spring. He also recognized MHS Athletic Trainer, Laura Overdevest, for the work she has done in the department. This work has qualified MHS to receive the SAFE sports award this past March. This award is given to schools who pass the 8-point checklist for health and safety. Millbury was voted 1 of 18 schools in Massachusetts to receive this award.

c. Report of the Food Services Department

Mr. Bedard provided the Committee with an update on the food services department.

More than 44,000 meals (breakfast and lunch) have been served to our students this year (through the end of October). The average daily participation for breakfast is 13% and 53% for lunch,

which is about 880 meals served a day for students. Compared to previous years, breakfast has been consistent and lunch participation has increased by 10%. There has been discussion of free meals continuing through the next school year, but we do not yet have a definite answer from DESE. If free meals are not approved, a slight increase may need to be considered in order to cover expenses. Additionally, an increase may need to be considered if we continue to have supply issues, increasing costs of food/paper products as well as a likely decline in participation if parents have to start paying for lunches again. Late deliveries and supply issues continue to plague us; weekly deliveries are consistently 4-5 days behind schedule. To make matters worse, ordered items are sometimes not even on the truck. We are very fortunate to have a new dishwasher installed at the Jr./Sr. High school last week. This purchase along with the Elmwood Street School domestic hot water tank was purchased with available FY 2022 budgetary funds after we pre-paid some special education tuition in FY 2021. We also received an anonymous donation of \$750 to the School Lunch program for the suggested purpose of paying off outstanding student balances.

Mr. Lazzaro asked about the nutritional facts and if they are still being met with the lack of product that we are receiving. Mr. Bedard said that Mrs. Barstow is posting the daily menus and knows what she has on hand to make sure she is meeting the nutritional needs stated

#### 4. Finance and Operations

##### a. Acceptance of an Anonymous Donation

Mr. Bedard asked the Committee to accept an anonymous donation of \$750 to the School Lunch program for the suggested purpose of paying off student lunch debt.

Ms. Bristol motioned to approve the acceptance of the anonymous donation, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed, 5-0

Mr. Wilbur asked that a revolving account be made with the donation to be put towards funds next year if we do not receive free lunch from the state. Mr. Wilbur also asked Mr. Bedard to send a letter of thanks to the anonymous donor for their contribution.

##### b. Fiscal Year 2021 Fall Green Communities Grant

Mr. Bedard provided the Committee with an overview of the 2021 Fall Green Communities Grant application, which includes two projects for the school district: a \$34,104 lighting upgrade at the Jr./Sr. High School and the purchase of a new propane-powered mini bus. In the past, we have consistently received this grant and because we have received this before, we are capped at a maximum \$100,000 award.

##### c. Proposed Increase to AfterCare Tuition for FY 2023

Mr. Bedard provided the Committee with a proposal to increase tuition rates for AfterCare by \$5.00 per week effective with the start of the new school year. The BeforeCare rates will remain the same. The Committee has not considered an increase to AfterCare tuition since September, 2019.

Mr. Lazzaro asked if there might be some federal funding available instead of increasing rates and if we could use utility savings to support the program. Mr. Bedard stated that he was not aware of federal or state funding for AfterCare and that tuitions go into a revolving account, not a school account. Mr. Wilbur asked if some of our surrounding towns might have a sliding scale which we

could offer for families with financial hardships.. Mr. Bedard said the information would have to be asked of the families who are in the after care program and kept confidentially to decide how much the families would be granted towards the total amount that they pay for the entire week.

Mrs. Lagerholm informed the Committee that since she has a child who may be going to AfterCare next year, she would abstain from a vote in order to avoid any appearance of a conflict.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve an increase to AfterCare tuition rates as proposed, but there was no second. The motion failed.

Mr. Lazzaro motioned to table the discussion until the Committee's December 8 meeting, seconded by Ms. Bristol. The motion to table passed 4-0-1, with Mrs. Lagerholm abstaining.

d. Proposed Increase to Pre-Kindergarten Tuition for FY 2023

Mr. Bedard asked the Committee to consider increases to PK tuition rates, effective August, 2022, in order to help defray negotiated salary increases. Proposed increases are:

5 days per week, ½ day: \$3,125 per year (currently \$3,000)

5 days per week, full-day: \$6,750 per year (currently \$6,500)

Currently, we have 58 students paying for PK. Students with an IEP do not pay for PK schooling. We currently still have a waitlist and are planning to hire another full time PreK teacher.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the proposed increase to PK tuition rates, seconded by Mrs. Nietupski. Mrs. Nietupski then took a roll call vote: Ms. Bristol-NO, Mr. Lazzaro-NO, Mrs. Lagerholm-ABSTAIN, Mrs. Nietupski-YES. The motion failed (2-2-1).

4. Unfinished Business

- a. Mr. Myers provided an update on the Shaw School building project, noting that the insulation of exterior masonry on the north side of the building is covered in scaffolding. Slab on grade for section C was placed last week and is now secure for people to walk on. We are underway with procurement for fixtures, furniture and technology.

5. New Business

- a. School Field Use Policy and Rates

Mr. Lazzaro updated the Committee on the policy subcommittee's recent work update Field Use Policy (Policy KFC) considering the new athletic fields at the Jr./Sr. High School and fields planned for the new Shaw School.

5. Executive Session

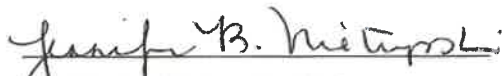
- a. The Committee voted to move into Executive Session in accordance with MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a)2 to conduct contract negotiations with the Superintendent of Schools and MGL Chapter 30A, §21(a)3 to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with SEIU Local 888 since an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Committee's bargaining position.

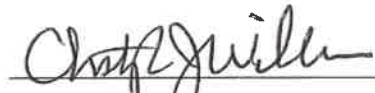
At 8:41 p.m., Mrs. Nietupski held a roll call vote to enter executive session: Mr. Lazzaro-YES, Mrs. Lagerholm-YES, Mr. Wilbur-YES, Ms. Bristol- YES, Mrs. Nietupski- YES. All in favor (5-0).

7. Adjourn

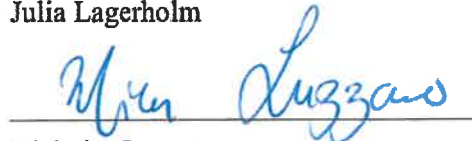
At 9:23 p.m., the Committee returned to the regular session meeting. Without further discussion, Mrs. Lagerholm motioned to adjourn the regular session, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion passed, 5-0.


Approved:

  
Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

  
Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

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Julia Lagerholm

  
Nicholas Lazzaro

  
Jessica Bristol