

Millbury Public Schools School Committee

Regular Session **Meeting Minutes**

2020 OCT -0 AM 8:42

MILLBURY, MASS

Date: April 29, 2020

Present: Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson
Mr. Chris Wilbur, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Sue Teixeira, Member
Mrs. Julia Lagerholm, Member
Mr. Nick Lazzaro, Member
Mr. Christopher Lowe, High School Principal
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Special Education
Ms. Lizz Boutiette, Curriculum Coordinator
Mr. Rick Bedard, School Business Manager
Mr. Greg Myers, Superintendent

Location: This meeting was held virtually using Zoom. The Zoom invitation link was included on the meeting agenda, which was posted publicly.

Time: 7:00pm

Mrs. Nietupski opened the meeting at 7:00 PM.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. Regular Session Minutes of April 8, 2020.

Mrs. Nietupski asked for corrections to the Regular Session Minutes of April 8, 2020. Hearing none, Mr. Wilbur motioned to approve the minutes from the April 8, 2020 meeting, seconded by Mrs. Teixeira. Approved, 5-0.

b. Executive Session Minutes of April 8, 2020.

Mrs. Nietupski asked for any changes, additions, or deletions, to the Executive Session Minutes of April 8, 2020. Hearing none, Mrs. Teixeira made a motion to approve the Executive Session Minutes of April 8, 2020, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. All approved (5-0).

2. Report of the Administration

a. Later School Start Times

Ms. Keryn Reno, a senior at WPI, gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding earlier school start times and explained the logistics and financial implications involved in changing start times to later in the day. She explained four possible options in depth: "SWAP" - changing start times with the High School and Shaw; "PUSH" - pushing all schools start times back 1 or 2 hours; "REDUCE" - three tiers to two tiers and combining Shaw and Elmwood Street School students; and "REDUCE/COMBINE" - High School and Shaw school start at same time (it would be necessary to purchase additional buses). She also considered a fifth option: "SAME" - Purchase tens new buses and the high school could start at anytime, however this would increase the transportation budget by 80.6%.

Ms. Reno presented how a later high school start time would affect families. The School Committee followed up the presentation with questions. Ms. Reno stated she was going to make the presentation available to the school department so that it could be made public.

b. COVID-19 Update on School Operations

Mr. Myers stated that Governor Baker has closed all schools until the end of the school year. He stated that our last day will be June 22nd. He stated that the Commissioner of Education has issued updated guidelines. Mr. Myers stated that the Commissioner has given specific instructions on which standards must be covered in depth. Mr. Myers stated that Ms. Boutiette met with the Instructional Coaches and they have determined that students have met 80% of the standards. Mrs. Nietupiski stated that 2nd graders would learn to read and comprehend a sentence before they are promoted. She asked if the 2nd graders we promote to third grade this year will be as developed as the 2nd graders we promoted last year or will we need to add a catch-up phase.

Ms. Boutiette stated that mid way through the second grade is when students begin to read to learn from learning to read. She stated that for students that are not as prepared as other students interventions have been put into place to get these students prepared. She also stated that next year will look different but the District is ready to make those adjustments.

Mr. Myers stated that the Commissioner also emphasized why some students are not participating, or are participating on a limited basis in remote learning. Mr. Myers stated that they are sending out a parent survey to hopefully find out why some families are not participating. He stated that he knows that some families have taken this time to unplug, which is their choice, however, there are other students who feel that on-line learning is not a priority. They are needed to watch younger siblings.

Mr. Myers stated that we had entered into a Vaping Cessation Program with Shrewsbury Youth and Family services for students that needed such a program. He stated that these services will continue virtually with students and counselors. He also stated that Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services offers a wrap-around families program which will be offered to some of our families.

Mr. Myers stated that the School Lunch Program led by Mary Leslie has distributed 6,000 lunches in the school closing. He also stated that a small number of lunches have been distributed to "Meals on Wheels" clients.

Mr. Myers stated that our school nurses are working with the Town Nurse to track COVID 19 cases. He stated that Millbury has as of April 28th 138 cases, Grafton 47, Auburn 44 and Sutton 24.

Mr. Myers stated that the Leadership Team is ranking end of the year student activities by what is feasible and which are not feasible. He stated that Commencement for 2020 students on June 5th at Mechanics Hall will not take place, however, it will take place with limited attendance. He stated that the Governor has set May 15th to decide if the state will reopen and he would like to use that date for the District to decide on graduation and other end of the year activities.

Mr. Myers stated that approximately 450 chromebooks have been borrowed by students. He stated that if a student needs a chromebook they should contact their school's principal to schedule time to pick one up. He also stated that he has not heard any problems with chromebooks.

c. Blackstone Valley Technical Admissions

Mr. Myers stated that 41% or 56 8th grade students applied to BVT. Fourteen students have been accepted which is 10% of the class. He stated that this is a dip as last year 26 students were accepted and the year before 36 students were accepted. Mr. Myers stated that BVT is changing their admission process due to directives from the Commissioner to have their classes represent their member schools. Mr. Myers stated that at BVT it has been years without accepting students with IEPs and are being forced to change the admission process to include students with IEPs. A more representative of students with IEPs will be accepted. Mr. Myers stated that they receive over 800 applications and can only accept 315 maximum admissions. Mr. Myers stated that he would like to see more students accepted that would like to pursue a plumbing, electrical, or carpentry career.

Mr. Myers stated that Jake Brodeur, a Blackstone Valley senior designed and built a Buddy Bench for the bench for the Elmwood Street School playground for his Eagle Scout project.

4. Budget

a. Vendor Payments during COVID-19 School Closure Period

Mr. Bedard stated that we have contracts or agreements with transportation companies. He stated that at the next meeting he will bring the adjusted contracts for the School Committee to vote on. He stated that AA Transportation is the primary in-district transportation for the district. He stated that the Business Managers from Wachusett and Shrewsbury have negotiated (nonbinding) for the thirteen districts in the cohort to pay 75% of the regular day cost for March 16th - through the end of the school year. Mr. Bedard stated that AA had originally laid off employees but after receiving funds from the CARES Act they have begun paying their employees. He also stated that it stipulates in the contract that if AA receives any additional aide they will negotiate a new contract amendment with the cohort. It also states in the contract that AA Transportation will not lay employees off if they receive a contract for 75% of services. Mr. Bedard stated that this is an official amendment and will be drawn up accordingly. He also stated that our District is completing their contract with AA at the end of the year. It was stated that if another district does not agree to the 75% they may negotiate on their own with AA but that will not affect our District. Mr. Myers stated that this was a fair deal at 75%, other districts have agreed to 100%, 90%, or 85%. Mr. Wilbur asked Mr. Bedard to inquire about receiving a reduced increase for the new school year.

Mr. Bedard stated that VanPool which is associated with Assabet Valley Collaborative is also concerned that they will not be viable for Special Education Out of Districts Transportation in the fall. Cathy Cummins is in the process of negotiating with Van Pool and has agreed to 80% for the remainder of the year. They have never laid off their employees.

Vendetti Transportation is the transportation provider for students to Norfolk Agricultural School. They have agreed to 82.5% of costs through the end of the year. They have never laid off their employees.

Mr. Bedard stated that these contracts are consistent with the guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. He also stated that the Town Manager and Finance Director are aware of the contract amendments.

Mr. Myers stated that the Board of Selectmen voted to postpone the Town Meeting until June 23rd and the election until June 30th.

b. Revolving Account Update

Mr. Bedard stated that the Aftercare and School Lunch revolving accounts are anticipated by the end of the school year to have a deficit. He stated that he would make a journal entry to charge the budget for the School Lunch Program of \$60,849.75 and to make a journal entry of \$29,026.32 for the Aftercare Program salaries. These amounts represent the amount needed at this time to cover the potential deficits. For School Lunch it represents four (4) payroll amounts and AfterCare two (2) payroll amounts. A discussion took place regarding the continuation of providing lunches to all Millbury families after the school year ends. It was stated that the cost of food may increase as the cost of food is rising. Mr. Bedard stated that he may have to return to ask the School Committee for an additional journal entry.

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to approve the journal entries for the Aftercare Program and School Lunch Program, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. All approved (5-0).

c. Food Service Director

Mr. Bedard stated that Mary Leslie, Food Service Director is retiring on June 30th. He stated that Mary Leslie has worked for the District for eight years and has improved menu options, ordered new equipment, and has done an amazing job on the distribution of lunches during the COVID 19. Mr. Bedard stated that Justine Caggiano will be conducting the search for a new Food Service Director. The position has been posted and the new Food Service Director will start on July 1st. Mr. Myers will write a letter thanking Mrs. Leslie for her services.

5. Old Business

a. Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Athletic Field Renovation Project

Mr. Bedard stated that the bid from Green Acres Landscaping is the apparent low bid. He stated that the School Committee will vote to award a contract to GreenAcres Landscaping at the next meeting after the Athletic Field Build Committee makes their recommendation.

Mr. Bedard stated that the Amenities Building general contractors bids were very high due to the fact that the sub-contractors bids were extremely high. He stated that one bid was received for plumbing for \$186,660 and the budget was \$96,000. He stated that we received three bids for electrical; the lowest bid was for \$106,000 and the budget was for \$39,000. Mr. Bedard stated that he recommended to the School Committee to reject the bids and to scale down the amenities building and put out bids later in the project. He stated that the horizontal field work would begin on June 1, 2020.

A discussion took place regarding graduation and where it would take place. Mr. Myers stated that the decision on where graduation and what it will look like will be decided on May 15, 2020.

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to reject all the bids for the Amenities Building because they were significantly higher than the budgeted amount, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. All approved 5-0.

b. Shaw School Project Update

Mr. Myers stated that the OPM Report for March is available. He stated that the Building Committee met on April 15th and discussed the budget. Mr. Myers stated that the project is under budget. He stated that the building was designed to meet LEED Gold. He stated that there are no incentives for LEEDS Gold therefore cutting back on some of the design will not affect the building LEEDS Silver.

Mrs. Teixeira would like the results of the survey to families regarding Remote Learning on a future agenda.

Mrs. Nietupski would like to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation on the next agenda.

6. New Business

7. Executive Session

Pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A. §12(a)3., the committee will consider voting to enter executive session in order to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with SEIU Local 888 because discussing in open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Committee's bargaining position and the Chair so declares:

AND

Pursuant to M.G.L. chapter 30A. §12(a)3., to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with the Superintendent.

Mrs. Nietupski took roll call: Mrs. Teixeira - YES, Mrs. Nietupski, - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, and Mr. Lazzaro - YES

Mrs. Nietupski closed the open meeting and stated that when the Committee returns to Open Meeting they will adjourn with no further discussions.

8. Future Topics

- a. Student Activity Accounts: Review of Subaccounts
- b. Committee Reorganization
- c. School Committee 2020-2021 Tentative Meeting Calendar (May 27, 2020)
- d. Annual Review and Appointment of School Attorney (May 27, 2020)

9. Next Meeting: May 13, 2020 Regular SC Meeting, 7PM


****This meeting will be held virtually using Zoom****

10. Adjourn

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Teixeira. Approved, 5-0

Approved:

Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson



Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson



Julia Lagerholm



Nicholas Lazzaro

Jessica Bristol