

Millbury Public Schools School Committee

Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Date: February 10, 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, Elmwood Street Elementary School Assistant Principal
Mr. Andy Hall, Elmwood Street Elementary School Principal
Mr. Christopher Lowe, Jr./Sr. High School Principal
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services

Contributing Mrs. Angela Avramidis, Head Nurse
Guests: Mr. Josh MacCreery, Athletic Director

Location: This meeting was held virtually with Zoom

Time: 7:00pm

Mrs. Nietupski opened the meeting at 7:08 PM.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. January 27, 2021 Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of January 27, 2021, seconded by Mrs. Bristol. Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, Mrs. Nietupski - YES. Motion approved (5-0).

b. February 3, 2021 Special Session Meeting Minutes

Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept the special session minutes of February 3, 2021, seconded by Mrs. Bristol. Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, Mrs. Nietupski - YES. Motion approved (5-0)

2. Report of the Administration

a. Update on COVID-19 District Dashboard

Mr. Myers reviewed recent COVID-positive cases in the District, noting a sharp decline in reported illnesses.

b. Abbot BinaxNOW Pooled COVID-19 Testing Program

Mrs. Avramidis presented an overview of the pooled testing program, including information about testing protocols, consent forms, and implications for staffing.

c. Update on MIAA Modifications for Fall 2

Mr. Josh MacCreery provided the Committee with an updated overview of the proposed Fall II season, including newly-released guidance regarding football. Mr. MacCreery noted that area schools participated in Fall 1 and basketball without incident.

d. Review of Proposed Modifications to MPS Reopening Plan

Mr. Myers requested that the Committee consider two modifications to the District's reopening plan:

i. Reduce physical distancing requirements from 6 feet to 3 feet in static environments and allow mixing of cohorts at Elmwood Street Elementary School. Mr. Myers explained that these modifications will allow students in grades 1-3 to return to school full-time. Mr. Hall and Mr. Burke both spoke of the benefits of a full return at Elmwood and felt that it could be done safely.

Mr. Wilbur made a motion to accept the proposed modifications to the District's reopening plan as described, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm.

Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, Mrs. Nietupski - YES. Motion approved (5-0)

ii. Allow mixing of cohorts at the Jr./Sr. High School for extracurricular activities. Mr. Myers explained that this modification will allow for Fall 2 sports, drama, band, etc.

Mr. Lazzaro asked if the district had sufficient resources to conduct regular pooled testing for extracurricular participants. Mr. Myers indicated that we do have sufficient resources.

Mr. Wilbur spoke of the importance of extracurricular activities for students' mental wellness and noted that the MIAA's modifications, coupled with pooled testing, would make Fall 2 sports safe.

Mrs. Bristol emphasized the importance of keeping students engaged through extracurricular activities.

Mrs. Nietupski noted that a pooled testing program for extracurricular participants would limit potential negative effects on the academic day and provide a way to monitor student safety.

Mrs. Lagerholm stated that the mixing of cohorts will introduce additional risk to students and their families. Certain activities, such as returning students to the classroom, warrant taking on this additional risk. Other activities, such as extracurriculars, do not. Mrs. Lagerholm referenced her husband's recent and very difficult experience with COVID-19 and his ongoing efforts to fully recover.

Mrs. Bristol made a motion to accept the proposed modifications to the District's reopening plan as described, seconded by Mr. Wilbur.

Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - NO, Mrs. Nietupski - YES.
Motion approved (4-1)

e. Graduation Requirements

Mr. Lowe briefed the Committee on recent changes to graduation requirements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that allows seniors to earn competency determinations via coursework rather than a passing MCAS score.

3. Finance and Operations

a. Review of Proposed Fiscal Year 2022 School Department Budget

Mr. Bedard reviewed the Governor's "H-1" budget, which includes per pupil Chapter 70 increases. Proposed aid to public schools has declined across Massachusetts because of a state-wide dip (3.7%) in enrollment.

Mr. Myers updated the Committee on recent budget meetings with the Town Manager. Early estimates indicate a reduction in local receipts and may require adjustments to both the municipal and school budgets.

b. ESSER II Grant

Mr. Bedard informed the Committee that Millbury is entitled to \$601,494 in grant funding from the state ("ESSER II") to help defray the cost of operating budget expenditures.

c. Coronavirus Prevention Fund Grant

Mr. Bedard informed the Committee that Millbury is entitled to \$82,225 to help defray the cost of COVID-related expenditures.

d. Student Activity Account Sub-Account Listing

Mr. Bedard reviewed a listing of Student Activity subaccounts, for the Committee's consideration.

Mr. Lazzaro made a motion to accept the student activity account sub-account listing as described, seconded by Mr. Wilbur.

Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, Mrs. Nietupski - YES. Motion approved (5-0)

4. Unfinished Business

a. Report on the Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Field Renovation Project

Mr. Bedard noted that "as-built" plans are currently being completed and we are nearing the close-out phase necessary for an occupancy permit. Two major items remain to be completed: installation of the softball scoreboard and completion of the press box fencing and lift.

b. Report on the Shaw School Building Project

Mr. Bedard noted that filed subcontractor bids were 11% below estimates, potentially saving \$1,798,643 in project costs. Based on favorable subcontractor bids, we anticipate general contractor bids to come in below budget as well, which may make all four alternates feasible.

5. New Business

Mr. Wilbur asked Mr. Myers to provide an update on potential amendments to the Committee's Facilities Use Policy in light of the new field project.

Mrs. Nietupski asked if Senator Moore was available to update the Committee on the status of the state's FY22 budget as he has done in the past. Mr. Myers agreed to invite the Senator to a future meeting.

6. Adjourn

Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to adjourn at 9:26 PM. A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Wilbur, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm.

Mr. Lazzaro - YES, Mrs. Bristol - YES, Mr. Wilbur - YES, Mrs. Lagerholm - YES, Mrs. Nietupski - YES. Motion approved (5-0).

Approved:

Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

Julia Lagerholm

Nicholas Lazzaro

Jessica Bristol