

Millbury Public Schools School Committee

Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Date: April 14, 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 Present: Mr. Richard Bedard, Jr., Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Ms. Elizabeth Boutiette, Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Andrew Tuccio, Principal of the Raymond E. Shaw School
Mr. Christopher Lowe, Principal of Millbury Jr./Sr. High School

Location: Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Time: 7:00pm

Mrs. Nietupski called the meeting to order at 7:02PM and led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

- a. Mrs. Lagerholm made a motion to accept the regular session minutes of March 24, 2021, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (5-0).

2. Report of the Administration

- a. Ms. Ryan updated the Committee on the District's COVID-19 pooled testing program, noting that testing will be available to all students at the Jr./Sr. High School starting April 26, 2021. She also informed the Committee of the district's pooled testing volume, summarized pool testing results thus far, and confirmed that the nursing staff have had more positive interactions with families since the Committee's last meeting. While testing is optional for students attending school, all extracurricular participants will continue to be pool tested.
- b. Mr. Tuccio provided the Committee with an update on the first eight days of full enrollment at the Shaw School. He stated that there are only 35 students still receiving remote instruction, with the possibility of two students returning from remote instruction after April break. Mr. Tuccio summarized results of a recent survey that asked parents and students about their full-return concerns. Mrs. Nietupski asked if there have been any issues regarding drop-off and dismissal now

that the building project is underway. Mr. Tuccio said that they have had no issues and all staff are working together to make sure drop off and dismissal remains a smooth process. He also mentioned that the recess area has been moved to the front parking lot and is blocked off with jersey barriers and screening for safety. In addition, the general contractor agreed to allow students to paint on the barriers to add color to the area.

3. Finance and Operations

- a. Mr. Bedard reviewed the status of the proposed FY22 budget, noting the Finance Committee's recent recommendation that the school reduce its budget increase from 2.56% to 2%. The Town Manager had previously requested a reduction to 1%. Mr. Bedard said that ESSER I, II, and III grants will provide sufficient funding to balance a reduced school budget. Mr. Wilbur expressed concern about replacing operating funds with one-time grant funding, noting that eventually core programming will be negatively affected when the grants are gone. Mr. Wilbur stated that he would not agree to such a reduction in the school's budget proposal. Mrs. Nietupski agreed, and stated that this is not the year to use the municipal operating budget to purchase police cars and DPW trucks (rather than following the past practice of using free cash), which essentially reduces funding for teaching and learning.

4. Unfinished Business

- a. Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on the Millbury Jr./Sr. High School Field Renovation Project, stating that the project is basically complete. Only minor work is left to be done (reseeding certain areas, fixing out-of-place pavers, etc.)
- b. Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on the R.E. Shaw School Building Project, stating that heavy equipment is not on site and workers have begun removing loam from the former soccer and baseball fields. Poles for fencing are in and a safe area for recess is being established.
- c. The Committee discussed options for its book read on equity and asked Mr. Myers to provide additional titles at their next meeting.

5. New Business

- a. Mr. Myers and Mr. Lowe asked the Committee to consider modifying the MPS Reopening Plan to allow for the reduction in physical distance minimums in static environments (classrooms) from 6 feet to 3 feet and the mixing of cohorts at the Jr./Sr. High School in order to allow for the full return of students in grades 7-12 after April break. Mr. Bedard informed the Committee that there will not be more than 40 students on a bus, which is the same amount we have at Elmwood and Shaw, and thorough cleaning will continue to be done during the day and night as well as on weekends.

Mr. Wilbur motioned to amend the Return to Learning Plan to allow for three feet of physical distancing and the mixing of cohorts, seconded by Mrs. Lagerholm. The motion was approved (5-0).

6. Adjourn

Mr. Wilbur motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:10PM, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro. The motion was approved (5-0).

Approved:

Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

Julia Lagerholm

Nicholas Lazzaro

Jessica Bristol