

Millbury Public Schools School Committee

Regular Session Meeting Minutes

Date: March 10, 2021

Members Present: Mrs. Jennifer Nietupski, Chairperson
Mr. Christopher Wilbur, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Julia Lagerholm, Member (participating remotely via Zoom)
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. Corey Burke, Elmwood Street Elementary School Assistant Principal
Mr. Andy Hall, Elmwood Street Elementary School Principal
Mr. Gregory Myers, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Kate Ryan, Director of Pupil Services
Mr. Andrew Tuccio, Shaw School Principal

Contributing
Guests:

Location: Millbury Memorial Jr./Sr. High School

Time: 7:00pm

Mrs. Nietupski opened the meeting at 7:02 and led the Committee in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Myers acknowledged the passing of Ray Richards, Sr., a longtime coach of both high school and town youth sports in Millbury and noted his commitment to Millbury's student athletes.

Mrs. Nietupski asked the Committee to observe a moment of silence in memory of Mr. Richards.

1. Public Forum: School Choice for the 2021-2022 School Year

Mrs. Nietupski opened the forum at 7:04PM and asked Mr. Myers to provide a brief overview of school choice and the need for a forum. Mrs. Nietupski invited anyone present at the meeting to speak. Hearing none, Mrs. Nietupski closed the public forum at 7:06PM.

2. Review and Approval of Meeting Minutes

a. February 24, 2021 Regular Session Meeting Minutes

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

3. Report of the Administration

a. Update on Third Grade Transition to Shaw

Mr. Tuccio summarized recent preparations to ensure the third grade's smooth transition from Elmwood to Shaw when the new Shaw School opens, including the formation of a transition committee made up of 16 members representing a broad range of perspectives. This committee will address three major categories to ensure a smooth transition: curriculum and scheduling, staffing and operations, community-building and communication. Mr. Tuccio also highlighted the many benefits and some of the challenges associated with moving the 3rd grade to Shaw.

b. Nature's Classroom

Mr. Tuccio briefed the Committee on plans to bring Nature's Classroom to Shaw in lieu of a 6th grade trip to Camp Bournedale on May 24 and 25 (Cohort 1) and May 27 and 28 (Cohort 2). The program will be available to all 115 sixth graders free of charge, with opportunities to involve remote learners.

c. Review of Updated COVID)19 District Dashboard

Mr. Myers presented recent data on COVID cases in the school district and the town, noting the continuing decline of COVID cases.

d. Abbot BinaxNOW Pooled COVID-19 Testing Program

Ms. Ryan presented an update on the pooled testing program, including the testing of extra-curricular activities and plans to expand testing to Elmwood and Shaw.

e. Elmwood Street Elementary School Full Reopening Plan Update

Mr Hall and Mr. Burke provided an update on the plan to bring all students back to class full-time on March 15, citing recent preparations and parent survey data. Mr. Hall and Mr. Burke commended the custodial staff for their hard work to prepare the school for full, in-person instruction. Mr. Myers commended the Elmwood faculty for advocating for full, in-person instruction. Mr. Bedard does not anticipate any problems with adjusting transportation and food services to support a full return..

Mr. Myers noted that the Commissioner recently announced a phased reopening plan for K-12, requiring Massachusetts elementary schools to open full-time no later than April 5, middle schools no later than April 28, and high schools TBA. Mr. Tuccio summarized the planning underway at Shaw to accommodate the April 5 deadline, and thanked Mr. Hall and Mr. Burke for collaborating with him on the Shaw full-return plan.

Mr. Tuccio provided the Committee with an overview of preparations to accommodate the full return of students in grades 4-6.

4. Finance and Operations

a. Quarterly Revolving Account Update

Mr. Bedard reviewed the current status of the District's revolving accounts, noting those accounts with balances that are lower than typical. He noted that ESSER grant funds can be used to supplement some accounts.

b. Revised Financial Procedures Manual

Mr. Bedard reviewed revisions to the grants section of our financial procedures manual as recommended by the Town's auditors, such as the labeling of equipment paid for through federal grant funds, a listing of allowable and unallowable uses for grants, and new language regarding procurement thresholds. Mr. Bedard noted that several of these revisions address practices that don't affect the District.

c. ESSER II Grant

Mr. Bedard provided the Committee with an overview of the \$601,000 ESSER II Grant, including allowable uses and the required timeline for using grant funds. Mr. Lazzaro asked about the stipulation requiring districts to set aside grant funding for student mental wellness, which Mr. Myers said would be used to continue and increase services from Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services.

d. Elmwood Street Elementary School Entryway Redesign

Mr. Bedard updated the Committee on plans to restructure the Elmwood Street Elementary School entryway to improve student and staff safety, which will cost approximately \$35,000-\$45,000 and paid for through savings from this year's special education transportation. Mrs. Nietupski requested an executive session in the near future to review the plan's specific impacts on school security.

5. Unfinished Business

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

Mr. Bedard informed the Committee that the fields are ready for game use and we have secured temporary occupancy pending the completion of the press box lift. The softball scoreboard is now installed.

b. Report on the Shaw School Building Project

Mr. Myers summarized next steps for starting construction, including the staging of equipment and materials on site. Mr. Bedards also informed the Committee that we have a signed contract with Fontaine Brothers.

6. New Business

a. Tentative 2021-2022 School Calendar

Mr. Myers shared a draft 2021-2022 School Year calendar with the Committee. The calendar includes 181 instructional days, 186 teacher work days, five full PD days, and 4 half PD days. No changes were made to traditional February and April vacations. The Committee will consider voting to accept the draft at its March 24 meeting.

b. School Committee Book Study

Mr. Myers provided the Committee with an overview of four possible titles it could read as part of its Educational Equity goal, including *Me and White Supremacy*, *White Fragility*, *How to Be an Anti-Racist*,

and *We Want to Do More than Survive*. The Committee selected *We Want to Do More than Survive* considering its school-specific focus.

7. Executive Session

At 8:21PM, Mrs. Nietupski asked for a motion to convene an executive session in accordance with MGL Ch 30A §21(A)3, to discuss strategy with respect to negotiations with SEIU Local 888. Mr. Wilbur motioned to convene an executive session, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro.

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

8. Adjourn

The Committee returned to regular session at 9:00PM. At 9:01PM, a motion to adjourn the regular session was made by Mr. Wilbur, seconded by Mr. Lazzaro.

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

Approved:

Jennifer B. Nietupski, Chairperson

Christopher J. Wilbur, Vice Chairperson

Julia Lagerholm

Nicholas Lazzaro

Jessica Bristol