

Milford Board of Education

Meeting Minutes

Committee of the Whole Meeting

May 26, 2009

Board members present:

David Amendola
Tracy Casey
David Hourigan, Board Chair
Cindy Kopazna
Jim Quish
Joanne Rohrig, Minority Leader
Jim Santa Barbara
Pamela Staneski
Greta Stanford, Majority Leader
David Steinlauf

Administrators present:

Harvey Polansky, Superintendent
Philip Russell, Deputy Superintendent

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Milford Board of Education held its regular business meeting on Tuesday, May 26, 2009 in the Board of Education Meeting Room in the Parsons Complex. Board Chair David Hourigan called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance immediately following.

Mr. Hourigan then introduced Mr. Gordon Beinstein as the newly appointed principal of Harborside Middle School. He is currently an assistant principal of a Darien middle school. The board welcomed Mr. Beinstein to the district. He will begin his tenure on July 1, 2009.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

Eileen Doyle – 14 Andover Drive

Ms. Doyle is an educator in Milford and a tax payer. She sent the board a letter asking them to reinstate the media aides. She supports the media aides and stated that the school district would be at a loss if the media aides were cut. The technology assistance the aides perform on a daily basis is assisting the district in moving to the 21st century. She wants the media aides reinstated.

Janet Cichowski – 1528 New Haven Avenue

Ms. Cichowski's son attends Orchard Hills Elementary School preschool. Her daughter attends Live Oaks. She understands the transportation of the preschool students will be eliminated in this budget. She is a daycare provider and relies on the transportation offered by the Milford Public Schools. It will create a hardship on parents in similar situations. She simply cannot be at two places at the same time. She requested that the preschool transportation for regular education students be added back into the budget.

Christine Jackson – 18 Barton Road

Ms. Jackson is a media aide at Harborside Middle School. She explained her daily duties. She urged the board to reconsider their decision to eliminate media aides.

Renee Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue

She hopes the stimulus money will help bring some funds into the district.

III. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS

Board Chair David Hourigan turned the meeting over to Dr. Polansky.

Dr. Polansky began by stating that eighty percent of the budget represents human capital. The cuts being recommended will allow the district to maintain some instructional core. Special education funding will absorb 18 positions over the next two years. The recommendation is that 15 paraprofessional teachers and 3 special education teachers get removed from the operations budget and get funding from the IDEA funding. \$400,000 from the IDEA act can be used for jobs. The remaining funds must be used for programs. The following reductions were recommended:

- ❖ \$445,048 Movement of three teachers/15 paraprofessionals
- ❖ \$96,000 Elimination of 2.0 elementary teachers due to lower enrollment
- ❖ \$30,000 Elimination of Microsoft Offsite host; the district will manage in house
- ❖ \$20,000 Reduction in the utilities account due to lower negotiated rate for oil
- ❖ \$10,000 Elimination of summer math packets
- ❖ \$40,000 Reduction in printing costs; delay in textbook purchases
- ❖ \$45,902 Deferral of purchases of equipment
- ❖ \$15,000 Deferral of purchases of furniture
- ❖ \$172,000 Deferral of purchases of computers
- ❖ \$11,000 Capital equipment – purchase of van
- ❖ \$50,000 Reduction in professional development – paid by grant

Those cuts made by the Board of Finance (\$117,000) and the Board of Aldermen (\$817,950) reflect a reduction of the Board of Education approved budget by \$934,950. The cuts recommended will equal the reduction.

A discussion ensued relative to budget transfers made from the 2008-09 budget. Administration explained that the transfers were made to allow purchases to be made with the current budget and allowing them to be cut in the 2009-10 budget.

Mrs. Casey requested a list of what has been transferred vs what was in the budget.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked how kindergarten class size would be small with the reduction of two teachers. He was told the enrollment numbers are down.

Mr. Steinlauf asked for an explanation of how the IDEA funds work. Dr. Polansky explained 50% can be used for local effort. The only caveat is that you could not be on focused monitoring. The district has moved off of that list. However, the remaining funds are unclear.

Mrs. Casey asked for clarification of the cancellation of the math packets. Mr. Cummings told the board that the curriculum is being revised; therefore, the current packet does not align with the curriculum. Eighth and ninth graders will continue to receive math packets to help prepare them for high school.

Mr. Santa Barbara asked if the technology teachers would be performing some duties of the media aides and was told no. Dr. Polansky stated the reduction of media aides will decrease services.

Dr. Polansky said that if and when the stimulus money comes to the district, the board can then look at reinstating the media aides.

Mrs. Kopazna would like the board to go back to the unions and with the final budget number and request concessions. The discussion should take place prior to any lay offs. Mrs. Staneski agreed.

Mrs. Staneski stated the board voted on an amount, not on the cuts. Now, personnel reductions have been recommended. She asked how the reduction of media aides will affect the accreditation at Foran. Mr. Cummings told her it will be a decrease in service. Therefore, the accreditation will be affected.

Mrs. Casey asked Dr. Polansky if he was comfortable with the reduction of media aides. Dr. Polansky said the original discussion with the board was to eliminate all media aides. Administration has eliminated five positions. While he would not want anyone to lose their job, administration had to work with a 1.5% reduction with the Board of Aldermen approved amount.

Mrs. Rohrig would like to the board to have discussions with the unions about concessions.

Mr. Steinlauf agrees the board should have those discussions with the unions.

IV. ACTION

Mrs. Stanford made a motion to postpone the approval of the Board of Education budget and direct the chair to seek concessions from the unions. Mrs. Rohrig seconded. Motion passed 9-1 (Abstain-J. Santa Barbara).

V. BOARD COMMENT

Mr. Amendola congratulated Ken Saranich on his new job. He will be greatly missed.

Mrs. Staneski reported that the PTA Council honored Dolores Hannon at a recent meeting. She will retire at the end of this school year. She is a remarkable individual. She will be missed.

Mr. Santa Barbara echoed Mrs. Staneski's comments.

Mrs. Stanford also extended her congratulations to Mrs. Hannon.

Mrs. Casey congratulated Phil Russell for his recent award. Phil has been named CASBO's Connecticut School Business Official of the year. Dr. Polansky nominated him for this award.

Mr. Hourigan congratulated Ken, Dolores and Phil for outstanding work.

VI. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Stanford made motion to adjourn to executive session to discuss matters pertaining to MEA negotiations. Invited in were Dr. Polansky, Mike Cummings and Phil Russell. Mr. Hourigan and Mr. Santa Barbara recused themselves from any vote. Meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

VII. RECONVENE

The board reconvened into public session at 9:53 p.m.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Stanford made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Rohrig seconded. The meeting adjourned at 9:55 p.m.