

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn C.C. School District 24

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Jan. 4, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Buehler
Diane Campbell
Kenneth Dewitt
Shawn Lahr
Robert Reding
Lisa Scanio
Chris Stream

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Dr. Ellen Mauer, Superintendent

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mary Taylor

BOARD CLERK

Dorothy Pazanin

The Committee of the Whole of the Board of Education of Millburn C.C. School District 24, Lake County, Illinois, held at Millburn West School, was called to order at 7 p.m. by President Shawn Lahr. Roll call was taken, with the following Board Members in attendance: Robert Buehler, Diane Campbell, Kenneth Dewitt, Shawn Lahr, Robert Reding, Lisa Scanio and Chris Stream.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- There was none.

ADDITION OF NON-ACTION ITEMS -- Kenneth Dewitt said he would like to share information on school consolidation that he learned during a session at the recent IASB convention. A discussion on that topic was added to the end of the agenda.

Shawn Lahr said that Board Member Lisa Scanio would give a presentation on the benefits of foreign language instruction. This was added to the agenda in place of the Chevron Proposal, which had to be postponed.

Chris Stream discussed two recent items in the news that will affect the Millburn School community. The first is that Community High School District 117 has hired co-superintendents for next year. They are the current principals of Antioch Community High School and Lakes Community High School. Two new principals have been hired to replace them. Other Board Members and Dr. Ellen Mauer said they also heard the news and have talked to some of those involved. It is a unique situation that Board Members said they will be interested to follow.

Secondly, Mr. Stream said he heard that traffic roundabouts are planned for two intersections within Millburn boundaries: Hunt Club and Wadsworth roads and Hunt Club and Millburn roads. He said he would like an assurance that the traffic design will be able to accommodate school buses. Dr. Mauer said she will contact the county transportation department for information on the project.

It was suggested that the school should remind parents of a new Illinois law that prohibits cell phone use when driving through a school zone. Dr. Mauer said she plans to include this information in the next Digital Digest.

2

The Board discussed the recent resignation of a principal in Grayslake and how the new Freedom of Information laws will affect school personnel. Dr. Mauer said there will probably be test cases to determine what personnel information can be released to the public. She said she has discussed the new laws with the staff.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

PROGRAM COSTS -- As part of a continuing discussion of program costs, Mary Taylor reviewed the costs associated with the lunch program. Dr. Ellen Mauer pointed out that this is a program with off-setting revenue, and the district should not make a profit on lunches. The district is required to go out for bid on the lunch program every three years, with the next time being in June. It was suggested that the bid proposal have an alternate bid option that includes an electronic purchase procedure.

FIRST READING OF BOARD POLICIES -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented the following Board Policies for First Reading:

Instruction 6:15 School Accountability
Operational Services 4:120 Food Services
Operational Services 4:130 Free and Reduced-Price Food Services
Operational Services 4:150 Facility Management and Expansion Programs

When discussing the Food Services policy, the Board reviewed the various sales of snacks during the school day, including middle school Snack Shack and PTO ice cream sales. Board Members discussed the ramifications as far as nutrition, social interaction and money collection.

CHEVRON PROPOSAL -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said she postponed a presentation on the Chevron proposal regarding the school buildings. She said that during a preliminary meeting with Chevron, several topics were not sufficiently addressed, including equipment life expectancy, electrical costs and roofing issues.

WORLD LANGUAGE PRESENTATION -- Lisa Scanio spoke to the Board about the benefits of foreign language study. She said research shows that foreign language learning supports academic achievement and improves cognitive abilities. She said that learning a second language is an essential skill in the 21st century. Including foreign language in the Millburn curriculum would allow Millburn students to remain competitive with their peers in other high-achieving districts. Without foreign language, Millburn is not eligible to apply for the No Child Left Behind Blue Ribbon Award. Ms. Scanio recommended that the Board consider the benefits of foreign language as the district works on its strategic plan and future goals.

Board Members discussed previous plans to add foreign language to the curriculum, the financial implications, the best age to teach a second language, and which language or languages should be offered.

REVIEW OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that Board Members are required to approve all Closed Session Minutes every six months. She said Board Members soon will be receiving a packet of Executive Session Board Minutes along with her recommendations as to whether the Minutes can be opened to the public or whether they should remain closed. After the Board Members have reviewed the Minutes, they will advise Dr. Mauer if they agree with her recommendations. Any discussion about her recommendations should take place during a closed session. Board Members will receive the packet of Minutes and instructions before the Jan. 19 Regular Board Meeting.

CONSENT AGENDA -- Dr. Ellen Mauer asked Board Members if they would like to reconsider the use of a consent agenda at Board meetings. The Board discussed the issue during the summer, and at that time decided to postpone a decision on the matter. In a consent agenda, all previously discussed items and regularly scheduled approvals are included in one vote. Any Board Member is allowed to remove an item from the consent agenda for more discussion or to be approved separately. The Board agreed to try using a consent agenda for the Regular Meeting in January.

BOARD SELF-REFLECTION -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said she has scheduled a free Board Self-Reflection session for April 6, the date of a Committee of the Whole Meeting. The session will be conducted by a representative from the Illinois Association of School Boards.

HOUSE LEASE -- The Board discussed options for use of the house and property adjacent to Millburn Central School that is owned by the district. The lease with the current renter expires June 30, 2010. Dr. Ellen Mauer summarized past discussions, and reviewed options that already have been discarded. Two options are still being considered: continue the lease with the current renter, with some clarification regarding the related job duties; or lease to another renter, with possible changes or additions to the job duties. Dr. Mauer pointed out that the cost savings realized by having the renter do weekend building checks is about \$22,464, which is higher than originally stated.

Dr. Mauer said the current renter and several other persons have expressed interest in leasing the house. Board Members agreed that there was no dissatisfaction with the current renter or her job performance. Several aspects regarding the lease were discussed, including: the background and qualifications of any potential renter; financial implications for the district; maintenance of the property; the perception of fairness in awarding the lease; the length of the lease; and the job duties of the renter.

The Board generally agreed it would extend the lease with the current renter for one more year with some clarification of the job duties. In the future, the lease will be offered on a lottery basis. Action on the house lease will be added to a future Board Meeting agenda.

SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION -- Kenneth Dewitt reported that one of the sessions he attended during the recent convention of the Illinois Association of School Boards was on the topic of school district consolidation. He said he learned that consolidation does not necessarily result in a cost saving, as many people believe. However, there is a benefit in expanding the academic and extracurricular options available to students.

Mr. Dewitt said Antioch and Lake Villa school districts considered consolidation in the past, but that the idea appears to have been dropped. He suggested Millburn consider opening consolidation discussions with Lake Villa School District 41.

Board Members discussed various aspects of consolidation including the quality of education currently offered, the possibility for expanded academic and extracurricular offerings, community reaction, changes in pay scales, demographic variables, alignment with high schools, partial annexation, labor union issues, the property tax base, tax liabilities and Board representation. It was generally agreed that the issue would need to be discussed further in a strategic planning session before any action was taken.

It was noted that Mary Taylor exited the meeting at 9:50 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Lisa Scanio to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing employee contracts. On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Chris Stream, Robert Reding, Kenneth Dewitt, Lisa Scanio, Diane Campbell, Robert Buehler and Shawn Lahr. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed. The Board entered Executive Session at 9:50 p.m.

A motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Robert Reding to exit Executive Session at 10:02 p.m. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE MEETING RESUMES

The Committee of the Whole Meeting resumed at 10:03 p.m. A motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Lisa Scanio to adjourn. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed. The Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:03 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education
Millburn C.C. School District 24

ATTEST:

Chris Stream, Secretary
Board of Education
Millburn C.C. School District 24

Date