

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn C.C. School District 24

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Feb. 1, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Dr. Ellen Mauer, Superintendent
Elizabeth Keefe, Special Services Director
Dr. Cheryl Kucera, Curriculum Director
Joanne Rathunde, Technology Director
Jake Jorgenson, Principal

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mary Taylor

VISITORS

Dan Brandolino
Sharon Uslan
Catherine Loney
Barb Hubbard
Laura Brown

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 Central School, was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by President Shawn Lahr. Roll call was taken, with the following Board Members in attendance: Robert Buehler, Shawn Lahr, Robert Reding and Lisa Scanio. Diane Campbell and Kenneth Dewitt arrived later during the meeting. Chris Stream was absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- There was none.

ADDITION OF NON-ACTION ITEMS -- There were no additional non-action items. However, it was decided to change the order of the agenda until more Board Members arrived.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

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

School Board -- 2:25 Access to District Public Records
Operational Services -- 4:10 Transportation
General Personal -- 5:10 Equal Opportunity and Minority Recruitment
Students -- 7:20 Harassment of Students Prohibited

Dr. Mauer explained that the policies have been updated to reflect new laws and to update the names of compliance officers.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) OFFICERS -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that new laws require the district to appoint FOIA officers who will need yearly training. She recommended appointing Office Manager Bernadette Hanna and Board Clerk Dorothy Pazanin. It was agreed to add this item to the Consent Agenda at the next Regular Meeting.

REVIEW OF 2010-11 CALENDAR -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented a proposed calendar for the next school year. It was designed to have as many 5-day weeks as possible and to cluster the non-attendance days. Three staff development days are scheduled before school starts. Any snow days will be made up at the end of the year, not by waiving a holiday in the middle of the year.

It was noted that Jake Jorgenson entered the meeting at 6:25 p.m.

REGISTRATION AND ACTIVITY FEES -- Dr. Ellen Mauer reviewed the Registration and Activity fees, both of which were raised last year. She recommended keeping the fees the same for next year, but suggested they be reviewed every year.

BENEFITS PRESENTATION -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that as part of the on-going budget discussions, a focus this month is employee benefits. She introduced Catherine Loney, of GCG Financial, Inc. Ms. Loney is the manager of Cooperative 90's, the insurance cooperative to which Millburn School District belongs. She said that Millburn has grown to be the largest entity in the self-funded plan. The cooperative is looking at options such as a higher-deductible plan and an HMO. Dr. Mauer said a question had been brought up concerning whether the district would be better off to have employees opt out of the insurance plan if the employees had coverage elsewhere. Ms. Loney said this option was popular about 20 years ago, when employees were offered a cash payout to opt out of an insurance plan. However, there were several disadvantages to managing the opt-out program, including creating a high-risk pool of claimants, inflating premiums, and difficulty finding insurance carriers. She also discussed the history of rates and rate increases, and the advantages of the Flexible Benefit Plan.

It was noted that Kenneth Dewitt entered the meeting at 6:40 p.m., and Diane Campbell arrived at 6:42 p.m.

Dr. Cheryl Kucera exited the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

CHEVRON PRESENTATION -- Sharon Uslan and Dan Brandolino addressed the Board concerning a proposal from Chevron to renovate the school buildings, focusing on utilities, security, maintenance and energy conservation. Chevron proposes using leveraged funds within the existing school budget that are earmarked for capital projects. Ms. Uslan reviewed the building needs of the district as determined by Chevron, and presented two options for completing the work. Robert Buehler pointed out that the Chevron plans are designed to use money set aside in the Site and Construction Fund. The district, however, relies on that money for intrafund loans throughout the fiscal year. Several issues were discussed including the risk factors of major building systems and the future need for construction funds. The Board agreed to discuss the proposal further and respond to Chevron at a later date.

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GRADE LEVEL CONFIGURATIONS -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented another informational budget topic for the Board: the K-8 school configuration compared to the K-5 and 6-8 configuration. Data shows that with the K-5 and 6-8 configuration, the district could keep class sizes at current levels while saving about \$240,000. She emphasized that the information was being presented as a financial discussion item, not necessarily a plan for the future. The Board discussed issues such as the K-8 philosophy, duplication of services, busing, community support, class size flexibility and financial implications. The Board also discussed the community reaction to any changes and timelines for a possible referendum. Dr. Mauer said she would prepare a short community survey. It would present the basic options faced by the Board in terms of programs, class sizes and costs. It would ask community members what path they would like the Board to follow.

ENROLLMENT AND STAFFING -- Dr. Ellen Mauer discussed enrollment projections and staffing for next school year. Her goal is to keep staffing and class sizes relatively the same as this year. There are four teachers currently on leaves of absence. Dr. Mauer has asked them to notify her by March 1 if they plan on returning.

A change was proposed for the technology department. A full-time employee who is retiring could be replaced by with one full-time employee and one part-time employee for about the same cost. Joanne Rathunde is preparing job descriptions. She said the improved website and the increase of equipment has created the need for additional help. The Board discussed the ramifications of creating the additional position and whether the new hires would be certified teachers.

The Special Services department also would like to post for a BD/ED teacher and an autism teacher. Elizabeth Keefe said the autism position would be considered cost-neutral because students would return to Millburn instead of attending out-of-district programs that charge tuition. The BD position would involve adding an additional 0.6 or 0.7 FTE position, not a full-time person as previously discussed.

Dr. Mauer said it is important to be able to post the openings. The actual decisions to hire can be made at a later date.

Dr. Mauer said the building principals also have asked for a reading specialist in the middle school grades. She said she could not recommend this because of the cost. Reading support is available through RTI services and other programs.

ITEMS TABLED -- Due to time constraints, it was decided to table the following agenda items: PMA Financial Services; Online Fee/Cafeteria Payment; Financial Forecast Update; and Review of Closed Session Minutes.

SECRETARY PRO-TEM -- Because Board Secretary Chris Stream was absent, it was decided to name a Secretary Pro Tem. A motion was made by Lisa Scanio and seconded by Kenneth Dewitt to appoint Robert Reding as Secretary Pro Tem. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: Chris Stream. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Robert Buehler to adjourn the meeting. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: Chris Stream. The motion passed and the Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

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

ATTEST:

Robert A. Reding, Secretary Pro Tem
Board of Education
Millburn C.C. School District 24

Date