

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn C.C. School District 24

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Nov. 2, 2009

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

Ellen Mauer, Superintendent
Elizabeth Keefe, Special Services Director

VISITORS

Jason Leber

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 -- Jason Leber said he represented a group of Boy Scout leaders that has used the Millburn School facilities in the past for monthly meetings. Since Millburn recently raised its Building Use fees, however, the group can no longer afford it, and has moved its meetings to a different location. He emphasized that he represents a not-for-profit organization, and all the adult leaders are volunteers. He said the group realizes use of the facilities can not be free, but they hoped the fees could be reduced. He said the members of his organization also would be willing to trade service work for a portion of the fees, such as help with Menzer's Acres.

ADDITION OF NON-ACTION ITEMS -- Diane Campbell suggested the Board send a thank-you note to Bernadette Hanna, office manager, for coming to school last Saturday to help set up for a Board training session. Shawn Lahr said he would send a handwritten note.

Dr. Ellen Mauer reported that today at Millburn West the absence rate was 12 percent. Because the rate exceeded 10 percent, Dr. Mauer e-mailed a letter to all West parents to notify them of the absence percentage, as recommended by the Lake County Health Department. She explained that the percentage includes all absences, not just those due to illness.

Dr. Mauer gave a short recap of the Board training session that was held over the weekend. Topics included the protocol for Board meetings, Public Comment at Board Meetings and the district website.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

PROGRAM COSTS/CLASS SIZE -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented the Board with data regarding the financial implications of class size. The data compared current class sizes with scenarios as the sizes increase. She emphasized that the information is being provided as part of an ongoing discussion of various program costs and financial projections. She is not asking the Board to make any decisions for next school year.

Various aspects discussed included: the correlation between class size and student performance; a tiered approach, with smaller class sizes in the younger grades, then increasing as students get older; the effect of class size on teachers and classroom management; social and emotional implications for students; the effect of class size on special education; options for paying down the district debt; and community perception.

HOUSE LEASE -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented information regarding the home to the west of Millburn Central that is owned by the district. The current lease to a school employee expires June 30, 2010. The Board discussed various options for future use of the property. These include: continuing the current situation, with minor adjustments in the lease; rent the home at a rate that covers costs, or at market value, including the cost of property taxes; and evaluate which renter will provide the best service to the district in return for the benefit of living in the home. Dr. Mauer said that the house does not meet the requirements needed to be used for student services. The Board will continue to research options for viable use of the property. The topic will be added to a future Committee Meeting agenda.

FACILITIES RENTAL -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said that the district's attorney has strongly recommended that a non-certified employee be on the premises during the entire time facilities are in use. This is because of property liability issues. Board Members generally agreed that they should follow the attorney's recommendation.

Dr. Mauer explained the background on how the fees were determined. Robert Reding distributed a written statement of why he thinks the fees should be reduced.

The Board discussed how the rental fees are affecting various community groups, and the cost to the school district when outside groups use the buildings. Board Members discussed some potential fee reductions, and the option of eliminating the different fee structure for residential and non-residential use. Proposed changes to the Facilities Use rates will be an item on the next Regular Board Meeting agenda.

ACTIVITY FEE CAP -- Dr. Ellen Mauer presented a survey of Activity Fees charged by area school districts, including information on any family caps. She prepared the information in response to a parent who asked if there would be a cap on the amount of fees paid per family. The Board reviewed the reasons why Millburn's fee was set at the current rate. Dr. Mauer pointed out that the current fee schedule allowed the district to reinstate activities that had been cut. The fees do not, however, cover the costs associated with all activities. The Board generally agreed that the Activity Fee Schedule should remain unchanged, and that a family cap on fees should not be instituted.

THIRD READING OF BOARD POLICY -- Shawn Lahr explained that a third reading of School Board Policy 2:110 was added to the agenda in order to hear the opinions of Board members who were absent for the second reading. The policy sets the term of Board President at two years. Robert Reding said he supports a one-year term because he believes it will create a stronger Board. He said he supports the idea of shared power and responsibility. Kenneth Dewitt, who served as Board President for four years, was asked for his perspective. He replied that the information he received as President was the same as the other Board Members. He said that he would speak to the superintendent before each meeting to be briefed on the agenda items. It was emphasized that any Board Member can call the superintendent at any time. Mr. Dewitt said the President controls the Board Meeting and is "the face of the Board" in the community. A fourth reading of the policy will be added to the next Regular Meeting agenda.

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

- Board of Education 2:230 Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings and Petitions to the Board
- Students 7:50 School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools
- Students 7:325 Student Fund-Raising Activities
- Community Relations 8:90 Parent Organizations and Booster Clubs

She said the policies have been updated to include more specific guidelines that are required by state law or to coordinate with other school policies. Dr. Mauer said she was reviewing various fundraisers throughout the district, including those sponsored by the PTO, the Foundation, Booster clubs, and other charitable causes.

EXECUTIVE SESSION -- The Board determined there was no need for an Executive Session.

There being no further business, the Committee Meeting adjourned at 9:45 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