

Millburn C. C. School District 24
Board of Education

Committee of the Whole Meeting
Minutes of July 6, 2010

Board Members Present

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

Clerk

Bernadette Hanna

Administration Present

Dr. Ellen E. Mauer, Superintendent
Joanne Rathunde, Director of Technology
Cheryl Kucera, Director of Curriculum
Elizabeth Keefe, Director of Special Services
Mary Taylor, Business Manager

Visitors

Jane Gattone

The Committee of the Whole meeting was called to order at 7:01 p.m. by Board President Shawn Lahr, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call noted the following members present: Chris Steam, Diane Campbell, Kenneth Dewitt, Shawn Lahr, Robert Buehler, Lisa Scanio, Robert Reding. Absent: none.

Diane Campbell requested that at the next committee of the whole meeting, the Board review Policy 4:60 Business and Non-Instructional Operations-Purchases and Contracts, which was approved at the August 3, 2009 Special Board meeting. She also stated the need to go into Closed Session at this meeting.

Lisa Scanio requested that the policy items be moved to the end of the agenda since the other items take more discussion time. Ms. Scanio also requested that the Board complete the self-evaluation as suggested in the ISBA training.

Referendum Options - In moving forward with the referendum, the Board needed to decide whether to go with the Education Fund or the Working Cash and at what rate. An unofficial vote or "straw poll" was taken to see how many Board members wanted to run a referendum in November. The following members said YES: Ms. Campbell, Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Lahr, Mr. Buehler, Ms. Scanio, Mr. Reding. NO vote: Mr. Stream, who felt too many voters would be voting anti-incumbent/anti-tax. The Board members also stated that they wanted to run an Education Fund referendum and then began discussing what rate. The PMA presentation showed how a \$.35, \$.65, or \$.95 rate would affect the financial health of the district. The \$.65 rate only replaces the funds lost by the State's failure to make payments to the school district. After much discussion, the Board directed the Superintendent and Business Manager to find out the exact rate that is lost by the State's failure to pay and add a few cents.

The Board turned to the administrators in attendance to ask how they felt. Joanne Rathunde, Director of Technology spoke up to state that asking for a smaller rate and coupling that with other cost-cutting options would be more favorable. The survey sent to parents had more favorable responses to run a referendum than negative. Elizabeth Keefe, Director of Special Services agreed and said that we should consider grade level centers if it will save teachers and keep class sizes reasonable. Cheryl Kucera, Director of Curriculum, expressed her opinion that we need to find a way to contact the residents in the district who no longer have students in the school.

Public Comment – Mrs. Gattone stated that there were houses for sale in Heritage Trail by parents who wanted to get out of Millburn. She has spoken with parents in different neighborhoods who said they would pass a referendum. She cautioned the Board to be upfront with the scenarios that are being considered and the money involved in the referendum. She said there are still trust issues that have to be resolved between the Board and the parents.

Dr. Mauer discussed the timeline regarding the referendum. The Board would have to vote on the resolution at the regular meeting of July 19 as the official documents need to be at the County Clerk's office by the August 15 deadline.

What can the Board do after the referendum vote? The Board members can go to "coffees" or other events that arranged to promote and inform voters about the need to pass the referendum. They cannot speak to it at Board meetings. They must give factual information – not personal opinion. No school funds, equipment, or supplies can be used. Donations can be made by board members as private citizens.

Tentative Budget – As the tentative budget was removed from the last agenda, Dr. Mauer asked for it to be on the July 19 agenda for approval. Dr. Mauer explained that the tentative budget is just that – tentative. It just gives the district permission to pay the bills and run payroll. Expenditures are not changed, only revenue. Ms. Keefe cited an example about the Reading Grant, which was approved for \$14,000. However, the General Assembly voted no to fund this. Mr. Reding asked if the TAWs would go up this year. Ms. Taylor answered that she didn't think so unless a large item repair was needed, such as a boiler going out. We will be asking for a \$4 million dollar TAW strictly for cash flow. The Tentative Budget will be placed on the July 19 agenda for approval.

Staff Increase – The Board discussed the request to increase a part time secretary to full time at Central. Currently there are two full-time secretaries at Millburn West for 495 students and two and a half full-time secretaries at Millburn Central for 1,138 students. Board members asked if we could find the money from somewhere else, perhaps by bringing back payroll or getting rid of PMA? Ms. Scanio felt that is was a bad time to hire a secretary because of public perception. Mr. Dewitt felt that the district had cut too much secretarial staff and the principal had to pick up paperwork that needs to be done. Discussion then turned toward the real needs of Millburn Central, which would be to add an assistant principal. After much discussion about costs to add another administrator, it was decided to direct Dr. Mauer to put the reinstatement of a .5FTE office position on the July 19 agenda.

Review of Closed Session Minutes - Dr. Mauer said that this item would be the six-month review of closed session minutes. With the Board's permission, this item would be on the July 19 agenda with her recommendation of which minutes should remain closed and which could now be opened.

Red Apple Academy Facilities Use – The director of the Red Apple Academy completed paperwork requesting one room for kindergarten enrichment program at Millburn West and two rooms for pre-school at Millburn Central. They will pay 8.5% of gross receipts, which may amount to approximately \$856 per month. This is a private facility in our district run by a Millburn parent. They are certified through the Illinois Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS). They will not be utilizing district phones or secretarial support. They will arrange their start and end times so they do not interfere with the schools' start and end times. The district reserves the right to cancel if things do not work out. They maintain their own insurance and list the district on the policy. Ms. Campbell stated her concerns about more kids in the building when the principal is already overworked. She also wanted to know if the Board should be concerned about the foreclosure of the Red Apple Academy building. Dr. Mauer said that the building in foreclosure is rented by Red Apple, not owned by them. Ms. Campbell felt the Board should have been informed of this request before it was agreed to rent the space since the difference is renting space during the school day.

Mr. Reding and Mr. Buehler both feel the district needs to rent out vacant rooms. On a straw poll vote on the issue of whether to move forward with the request to rent to Red Apple, the following members

said YES: Mr. Dewitt, Mr. Lahr, Mr. Buehler, Ms. Scanio, Mr. Reding. Ms. Campbell and Mr. Stream said NO. On a 5:2 vote it was agreed to rent to Red Apple Academy.

A last request was made to direct Dr. Mauer to look into a policy about renting space during the school day.

First Reading of Board Policy – Dr. Mauer presented four policies for updating. The first one was 5:80 Court Duty, which changed the current policy so that staff could just sign the court issued check to the district instead of having that amount deducted from their pay. The next policy 5:90 Abused and Neglected Child Reporting changed the current policy to include language regarding a hotline, informational items, and forms that must be kept. Since Board members are Mandated Court Reporters, a request was made for training on this topic. Ms. Keefe will share the information for the online training opportunity. The next policy 5:100 Staff Development Program changed the current policy language regarding the training of ADD/ADHD, the application of behavioral interventions, and the use of certain medications for children. It also requires training on educator ethics, teacher/student conduct, and school employee-student conduct. The last policy 5:120 Ethics deals with removal of the section on political activities and inclusion of that section under Ethics and Gift Ban. The section on Ethics and Gift Ban is new to this policy. These policies will be placed on the July 19 agenda for a second reading and adoption.

Closed Session – A motion was made by Ken Dewitt, seconded by Diane Campbell to enter into Closed Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter. On a voice vote, all members in attendance voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: none. Closed Session was entered into at 9:25 p.m.

A motion was made by Lisa Scanio, seconded by Ken Dewitt, to exit Closed Session and return to the Committee of the Whole meeting. There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 10:23 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

ATTEST:

Chris Stream, Secretary
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

Date