

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Millburn School District 24

REGULAR MEETING

Feb. 16, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Buehler
Diane Campbell
Shawn Lahr
Lisa Scanio
Chris Stream

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT

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

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mary Taylor

VISITORS

Kim Dodd
Steven Loos
Angie Demo

TREASURER

Roger Manderscheid

BOARD CLERK

Dorothy Pazanin

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Millburn School District 24, Lake County, Illinois, held at Millburn Central 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, Shawn Lahr, Lisa Scanio and Chris Stream. Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding were absent.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- There was none.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA -- Elizabeth Keefe noted that the proposal to create a new full-time ED/BD teaching position could be amended to a 0.7 FTE position. A motion was made by Lisa Scanio and seconded by Diane Campbell to approve the Consent Agenda, amending the ED/BD position to 0.7 FTE, and including the following:

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting of Jan. 16, 2010
 - b. Committee of the Whole Meeting of Feb. 1, 2010
2. Treasurer's Report and Approval
3. Bill Approval and Payment Authorization

4. Approval of Activity Funds for Millburn Central and Millburn West
5. Personnel Report
 - a. Hire **Kerri Harris** as a substitute teacher
 - b. Hire **Chad Lafferty** as a substitute teacher
 - c. Hire **Christopher Dempsey** as a substitute teacher
 - d. Hire **Michelle McGinnis** as a substitute teacher
 - e. Accept Intent to Retire from **Kathy Mark** -- June 2014
6. Create Positions for the 2010-11 School Year
 - a. Technology Department -- 0.5 FTE Tech Support
 - b. Special Services -- 1.0 FTE LD Teacher for Autism Classroom (Grades 1, 2, 3)
 - c. Special Services -- 0.7 FTE ED/BD Teacher
7. Second Reading and Adoption of Board Policies
 - a. School Board – 2:250 Access to District Public Records
 - b. Operational Services – 4:110 Transportation
 - c. General Personnel – 5:10 Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Recruitment
 - d. Students – 7:20 Harassment of Students Prohibited
8. Appoint Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officers -- Dorothy Pazanin and Bernadette Hanna
9. Approve Official Calendar for 2010-11 School Year

On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Chris Stream, Lisa Scanio, Shawn Lahr, Robert Buehler and Diane Campbell. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding. The motion passed.

Feb-10

EXPENDITURES

EDUCATION		BUILDING	
BILLS PAYABLE	\$240,995.29	BILLS PAYABLE	\$65,998.91
PAYROLL	\$645,237.91	PAYROLL	\$40,639.66
MISC	\$2,276.02		
TOTAL	\$888,509.22	TOTAL	\$106,638.57
TRANSPORTATION		IMRF	
BILLS PAYABLE	\$17,123.59	BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
PAYROLL	\$61,658.15	PAYROLL	\$38,723.40
TOTAL	\$78,781.74	TOTAL	\$38,723.40
SITE & CONSTRUCTION		BONDS&INTEREST	
BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00	BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
		TORT	
		PAYROLL	\$4,278.81
		BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
		TOTAL	\$4,278.81
		FUNDS TOTAL	\$1,116,931.74

PMA FINANCIAL SERVICES -- A motion was made by Chris Stream and seconded by Robert Buehler to approve a one-year contract with PMA Financial Services. On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Lisa Scanio, Shawn Lahr, Robert Buehler, Diane Campbell and Chris Stream. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding. The motion passed.

BUS LEASE BID -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that two bus lease bids were received. The lowest was Midwest Transit Equipment. Dr. Mauer said she will include a letter to the community on the website explaining the advantages of this lease. A motion was made by Chris Stream and seconded by Robert Buehler to approve the Bus Lease with Midwest Transit Equipment. On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Shawn Lahr, Robert Buehler, Diane Campbell, Chris Stream and Lisa Scanio. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding. The motion passed.

It was noted that Roger Manderscheid exited the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

ONLINE FEE/CAFETERIA PAYMENT -- Joanne Rathunde explained that she has researched systems by which parents can pay registration fees and buy student lunch tickets online. She said that RevTrak is a company used by many schools for such services. This type of system can be a convenience for parents. It also will save the district time that is spent processing checks. The cost charged by the company is 3.99 percent of each transaction. The Board discussed whether the transaction charge should be paid by the district or by the parents using the service. It was generally agreed that if the administration decides to offer an online payment service, the transaction fees should be paid by those using the service.

FINANCIAL FORECAST UPDATE -- Mary Taylor presented an updated 5-Year Forecast of the district's finances. Figures were adjusted based on the announcement of next year's Consumer Price index going to 2.7 percent. This is slightly higher than the estimated CPI used in the previous forecast. Mrs. Taylor is still waiting to hear from the assessor regarding the latest Equalized Assessed Valuation figures. Mrs. Taylor will continue to update the 5-Year Forecast on a regular basis.

CHEVRON STUDY -- It was generally agreed that the Board was not interested in pursuing the Chevron proposal for building renovations.

REVIEW OF CLOSED SESSION MINUTES -- A motion was made by Robert Buehler and seconded by Diane Campbell to accept the administration's recommendation for the release of some Executive Session Minutes. On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Robert Buehler, Diane Campbell, Chris Stream, Lisa Scanio and Shawn Lahr. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding. The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- Steven Loos asked for further information regarding the Bus Lease bid. Mrs. Taylor said she would make a copy of the bid specifications for Mr. Loos to review.

Angie Demos spoke regarding three issues. First, she questioned a letter from the principals regarding how class assignments are determined. She was dissatisfied with the letter, specifically portions about not seeking parent input, and about teachers making determinations about which students interact well with each other. Secondly, she said the announcement last year about which teachers would not be rehired was made too early. She said it adversely affected her children's education experience for three months. Finally, she asked if the coaches realized that the student athletes waiting in the bleachers during games are texting with their cell phones and doing their homework. She said she believes the student athletes not participating in a game should be supporting the students who are playing. She asked about the conduct code for the student athletes and if it is being enforced.

Jason Lind explained that the letter from the principals was a discussion of a process that has been in place for quite some time. Dr. Ellen Mauer said parents should meet with the school principal if their child has had a negative experience with a particular teacher. Regarding the second issue, Shawn Lahr explained that very few, if any, reductions in staff are planned for next year. Dr. Mauer said the district is required by law to give teachers at least 60 days notice if they will not be rehired. Responding to the final issue, Jake Jorgenson said athletes should not be texting during games, but that he would have a difficult time telling students they were not allowed to do their homework during the time when their team is not playing.

Kim Dodd asked if the Board was planning to reconfigure the schools into a K-5 building and a 6-8 building. Mr. Lahr said the topic was discussed at the February Committee Meeting as part of an ongoing review of the district's finances. He said there are no plans to make this type of change for next year. Mrs. Dodd also said she appreciated the district's new website design and being able to read district news in the Digital Digest.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

SPECIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT -- Elizabeth Keefe reported that she has received about 20 applications for the new positions for next year. She will attend an upcoming job fair in hopes of meeting promising candidates.

CURRICULUM DIRECTOR'S REPORT -- Dr. Cheryl Kucera reported on the following:

- * She is preparing for ISAT testing, which will begin March 2.
- * The fifth grade teachers met for a full-day inservice on strategies in guided reading. A second follow-up inservice is planned.
- * She presented a graph showing how Millburn graduates are doing in math classes at Lakes High School. She said recent changes in the Millburn math program are showing positive results when the students continue into high school
- * An evening program is planned on Feb. 18 to allow parents to experience the Reading Plus program used by students.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORTS -- Jake Jorgenson said more than 150 pints of blood were donated during a recent drive to support a student with leukemia, which is a higher total than had been previously reported. The Band hosted a successful dinner recital last week. Also, several Lakes High School students visited to share math games and activities with younger students and to promote their annual Math Night.

Jason Lind said a plan is being considered to have one start time at Millburn Central next year, as opposed to the dual start times currently in effect. A single start time would benefit families with more than one child in school. It should also benefit scheduling of sports and other after-school activities. There could be a potential cost savings on busing, and the faculty will have more efficient use of meeting times. He is working to resolve some scheduling issues that would occur with classes such as speech and AIM, and to handle the larger number students entering and exiting the building at the same time.

EXECUTIVE SESSION -- There was no need for an Executive Session.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Lisa Scanio and seconded by Robert Buehler to adjourn the Regular Meeting. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt and Robert Reding. The motion passed. The Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education

Millburn School District 24

ATTEST:

Chris Stream, Secretary

Date

Board of Education

Millburn School District 24

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn School District 24

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
March 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

Meghan Konicki
Suzanne Dekorsi
Melissa Watters
Jane Gattone
Kim Dodd
Laura Brown
Chandra Solberg
Chris Guss
Liz Carr
Felix Moran

BOARD CLERK

Dorothy Pazanin

The Committee of the Whole of the Board of Education of Millburn 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, Shawn Lahr, Robert Reding and Lisa Scanio. Kenneth Dewitt entered the meeting at 7:05 p.m. Chris Stream was absent.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT -- There was none at this time.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION

BUDGET -- Dr. Ellen Mauer opened the discussion on two ideas that were presented to her about ways to reconfigure the schools to cut costs. The first was to include the Forrest Trails subdivision, or other subdivisions, into the Millburn West boundaries. She said the Forrest Trails subdivision was too small to make a significant difference in the enrollment at West. If all the subdivisions that send students to Lakes High School were switched to the West boundaries, then West would be overcrowded. A second idea was to close Millburn West and have all students attend Central. This would put Central over capacity and there would be several other negative ramifications.

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Board Members discussed several points, including:

- * The cost of trying to equalize homeroom class sizes when the total school enrollments are so disproportionate.

- * How to address the “duplication of services” cost if both buildings remain as K-8 schools.

- * The definite need for a second building.

- * The possibility of having a Building Fund referendum to raise revenue for interfund borrowing throughout the school year.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE -- Kenneth Dewitt said it was important to have a historical perspective of the district’s finances to help understand the present circumstances. He explained that in the past 15 years district enrollment has grown from about 350 to more than 1,600. Over that time, the district has experienced periods of borrowing and two referendums. Before the building additions, there were years with classes being conducted in the hallways, “art on a cart” and no cafeteria.

To build Millburn West, the district asked for the largest tax increase that it thought the taxpayers would approve. Also, the community supported the plan to build another K-8 school. Projections at that time indicated that another Education Fund referendum would be needed around the year 2010. After Millburn West opened, new subdivisions were still being planned within the district. The Board was discussing boundary reconfigurations to accommodate the continued growth and the possibility of a third school. However, the recent banking crisis made borrowing money more difficult, and the decline in the housing market stalled the growth. By last year, the district was only able to borrow enough operating funds if it agreed to balance the budget by cutting expenditures.

Board Members said that some lessons can be learned from the past, such as staying on a balanced budget and taking corrective actions sooner. Dr. Mauer asked the Board Members if they were committed to a balanced budget and not borrowing more than the current \$3.7 million. They agreed that she should continue to plan along those parameters.

It was determined that the viable options left to consider are passing a referendum, reconfiguring the boundaries for each school, or changing the schools to one elementary and one middle school. Dr. Mauer is preparing a survey to solicit views from the community. She said the Board must decide by August if they want to have a referendum question on the November ballot.

ANNUAL AUDIT -- Mary Taylor said she has requested bids from eight accounting firms to conduct the district’s annual audit. Dr. Ellen Mauer said it has been several years since the district has changed auditors and she is interested in receiving proposals from other firms. The current auditor, Milburn Cain & Co., is expected to submit a bid. The bids will be presented at the Board’s Regular Meeting on March 15.

REVIEW OF 2010-11 CALENDAR -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that High School District 117 asked if Millburn would consider changing its school calendar for next year to use the same dates for winter break as Lakes High School. Dr. Mauer explained that the Millburn calendar was designed to have as many 5-day weeks as possible to preserve optimum instructional blocks of time. The high school calendar begins and ends its winter break mid-week. The Board did not express an interest in changing Millburn’s calendar.

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BOARD MEETING DATES FOR 2010-11 -- The proposed schedule for Board of Education meeting dates for next school year was reviewed. It was agreed to continue meeting on the first and third Mondays at 7 p.m., with a few exceptions for holidays and a superintendent conference. Dr. Mauer said the Board Meeting calendar will be on the consent agenda at the next Regular Meeting.

STAFF RECOGNITION AWARDS -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said she surveyed the staff regarding the annual Red Apple and Blue Pen recognition awards. Basically, about 60 percent of the survey respondents like some sort of recognition but do not want to continue with the way it has been done in the past. Board Members said staff comments offered some interesting alternatives. Dr. Mauer said she will prepare a plan for recognizing staff members that incorporates some of the proposed ideas.

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

Instruction -- 6:60 Curriculum Content
Instruction -- 6:290 Homework
School Board -- 2:200 Types of School Board Meetings
Students -- 7:180 Preventing Bullying, Intimidation and Harassment

A second reading and approval of these policies will be on the consent agenda at the next Regular Meeting.

STAFF UPDATE -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said a decision must be made at the March Board Meeting regarding non-renewal of several teachers' contracts. Four staff members who are currently on a Leave of Absence have said they will be returning to work next school year. Also, kindergarten enrollment projections for next year are lower than this year's class sizes. The decision for non-renewal of contracts must be made in March so that teachers receive a minimum of 60 days notice, as required by law. Some teachers may be invited back if the kindergarten enrollment projections increase. Dr. Mauer said it is important to note that no teachers were being released for cause.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- Chandra Solberg stated that she would be willing to pay higher taxes to keep small class sizes. She also asked if there was any way to tap into the Forest Preserve resources.

Laura Brown said smaller class sizes are more important to her than retaining the K-8 model.

Jane Gattone said she was glad to hear the serious financial discussion taking place. She said she is open to all types of options before raising taxes. She supports options that would bring more students to Millburn West because she foresees West enrollment as stabilizing or decreasing. She is a member of the Lindenhurst Plan Commission and said she is not aware of any new major commercial business being planned within the district boundaries.

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Chris Guss asked about the decision to build Millburn West as a K-8 school. Board members explained that there were several community forums. A majority of citizens supported the K-8 concept, knowing that it would be the more expensive option. Families liked the idea of sending all their children to the same school and creating more opportunities for children to participate in various activities.

Liz Carr said she moved into the Millburn School District about three years ago. She researched several school districts and chose Millburn because of the small class sizes and high test scores.

Felix Moran said he was a part of the referendum process six years ago to build Millburn West and that the community showed that it strongly values education. However, the economic environment has changed. He is concerned now that he may not be able to afford higher taxes.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Lisa Scanio 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 9:24 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

ATTEST:

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

Date