

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn School District 24

REGULAR MEETING
April 19, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mary Taylor

TREASURER

Roger Manderscheid

BOARD CLERK

Dorothy Pazanin

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

VISITORS

Geneen Hoetzer
Bernadette Hanna
Janice Norgard
Laura Brown
Joy Gajda
Melissa Watters
Judy Calhoun
Kevin Stone
Kevin McKeever
Jane Tabourot
Rebecca Mosher
Cindy Brugioni
Steve Cipolla
Michelle Costa
Georgene Loos
Carole Machnics
Jane Gattone
Steve Robinson
Sarah Kilcoin-Johnson
Suzanne Dekorsi

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, Robert Reding, Lisa Scanio and Chris Stream. Kenneth Dewitt was absent at this time.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- There was none at this time.

ACTION ITEMS

CONSENT AGENDA -- A motion was made by Robert Buehler and seconded by Diane Campbell to approve the Consent Agenda, consisting of the following:

1. Approval of Minutes
 - a. Regular Meeting of March 15, 2010
 - b. Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 6, 2010
 - c. Committee of the Whole Meeting of April 15, 2010

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- 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
 - c. Hire **Israel Llamas** as a full-time Network and Desktop Specialist effective June 1, 2010
 - c. Hire **Dana Ready** as a full-time Autism Teacher for the 2010-11 School Year

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

EXPENDITURES

EDUCATION

BILLS PAYABLE	\$242,093.13
PAYROLL	\$634,367.26
VOID	-\$196.00
TOTAL	\$876,264.39

BUILDING

BILLS PAYABLE	\$51,545.08
PAYROLL	\$40,375.97
void ck	-\$775.98
TOTAL	\$91,145.07

TRANSPORTATION

BILLS PAYABLE	\$23,617.93
PAYROLL	\$47,327.37
TOTAL	\$70,945.30

IMRF

BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
PAYROLL	\$33,689.18
VOID	-\$434.38
TOTAL	\$33,254.80

BONDS&INTEREST

BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
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SITE & CONSTRUCTION

BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
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TORT

PAYROLL	\$3,895.87
BILLS PAYABLE	\$0.00
TOTAL	\$3,895.87

FUNDS TOTAL	\$1,075,505.43
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AMENDED SCHOOL CALENDAR -- Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that the 2009-2010 School Calendar must be amended to reflect that school was closed on Jan. 8 as a snow day, and that the attendance day was made up on March 1, Casimir Pulaski Day. A motion was made by Diane Campbell and seconded by Chris Stream to amend the 2009-2010 School Calendar. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: Kenneth Dewitt. The motion passed.

It was noted that Jake Jorgenson entered the meeting at 7:10 p.m., and Kenneth Dewitt entered the meeting at 7:29 p.m.

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

PMA PRESENTATION -- Howie Crouse, vice president of Financial Planning Services for PMA Financial Network, presented an overview of District 24's financial picture. It included a look at trends of the last five years, projections for the next five years, and options available to the district.

He said the data shows the district has been in financial distress for the past several years. However, in the last 1-2 years, the district has made significant progress in reducing the annual deficit, mainly by reducing expenditures.

The presentation included a variety of information, including the following:

- *Enrollment is projected to decrease over the next few years, primarily because of smaller incoming kindergarten classes.

- *The current FY2010 Budget may be negatively impacted by less state funding than was anticipated.

- *Federal funding this year includes stimulus money that will not be available in the future.

- *New revenue from local property taxes is minimal for next year.

- *The proposed state budget includes a decrease in the amount of general state aid per pupil. If this budget is enacted, Millburn District 24 would receive about \$1.1 million less in general state aid next year.

- *The district is projected to be operating at a deficit starting in 2011 and for the next several years.

- *Millburn District 24 has been on the state Financial Watch List since 2007.

Mr. Crouse then focused on options available to the district. He stressed that none of the options were recommendations from PMA or the district administration. He reviewed the financial impact of increasing average class sizes to 28 or 30 students, and of configuring the two school buildings into grade level centers. Even with these changes, the district would continue to operate with deficits. He also reviewed the impact of various tax rate increases that would have to be approved by referendum. Mr. Crouse said he is willing to work with the district to quantify any other options that may be considered. He then answered questions from the Board Members and visitors.

PUBLICATION OF STATE-OWED FUNDS -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said she has heard suggestions that Millburn should publicize how much money it is owed by the state, such as a putting a banner headline on the website or using the outdoor school message boards. Dr. Mauer asked for the Board's opinion. She said the state owes the district about \$620,000. The Board was not in favor of the two suggestions but agreed that Dr. Mauer should post bi-monthly financial updates on the district website.

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INFORMATION ABOUT STATE OVERSIGHT -- Dr. Ellen Mauer said that in response to a request to find out more about state oversight of a district, she contacted a state official and Dr. Ben Martindale, Chief Educational Officer in Round Lake District 116. Dr. Mauer said a district has to ask the state to take over. When the state takes over, all contracts are null and void, and the tax rate can be increased without a referendum. The state also has the option to dissolve the district, assigning its students and assets to adjacent districts. Dr. Mauer said she does not think that state oversight is imminent for Millburn. She said there are many steps Millburn can take to avoid such a scenario.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL CONCERNS -- Elizabeth Keefe said she researched the potential social and emotional impact on students if the district switches from K-8 buildings to grade level centers. She said the research consistently shows that the most influential factor affecting students was how well the school environment fits the needs of the students. None of the articles she reviewed showed strong negative effects of transition per se. She reported that the changes in adolescence itself if then coupled with a less appropriate school climate seem to have the potential for producing negative outcomes.

CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS -- Dr. Chery Kucera presented information on the curricular considerations that would impact a change from a K-8 configuration to grade level centers. She said that currently there are significant differences in class sizes between the two K-8 schools. This difference between the schools becomes more apparent when looking at middle school math, because of the range of academic needs, the increasing expectations of state standards, scheduling, and the transitioning process to different levels of the subject matter. She summarized the advantages and disadvantages, from a curricular standpoint, of switching to grade level centers.

The Board continued to discuss many aspects of changing to grade level centers, including adapting the buildings, moving expenses, the timeline for such a change, and the prospect of renting open classrooms to SEDOL.

BOARD REPORTS

SOLICITING PARENT INPUT -- Lisa Scanio reported that the Board Sub-Committee for Gathering Parent Input has decided to seek community input in two ways. The first would be at community forums. Two forums would be scheduled--one at each school building. The forums would focus on presenting financial information, explaining options for the future and answering questions from the public. The Board agreed to schedule the forums on May 20th at Central, and on May 24th at West. The second method of seeking community input would be through a parent survey.

PUBLIC COMMENT -- Kevin McKeever, a parent in the district, commented that the Board needs to give the community the facts about the district's financial situation. He said he does not understand why the district would wait a year to implement grade level centers if the cost savings and curricular advantages could be realized now. He said action should have been taken sooner because the district has been on the State Financial Watch List since 2007.

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Carole Machnics, a parent in the district, said she believes that superintendent Dr. Ellen Mauer has made a lot of financial information available to the community. Mrs. Machnics said she would prefer to see Millburn stay exactly as it is. However, if the option is to have grade level centers or not have Millburn at all, then she would support the grade level centers.

Jane Tabourot, a teacher at Millburn Central, said the Board has done a monumental job of cutting expenses the past couple of years. She said that if the state were doing what is required to do by the state constitution, Millburn would not be facing the same financial situation. She said that changes need to be made at the state level.

Janice Norgard, a teacher at Millburn West, said she has seen a lot of changes at Millburn. She said that all the talk about what should have been done in the past in non-productive. The Board needs to evaluate the present situation, and look at the options that will help the district move forward.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR’S REPORT -- Joanne Rathunde said she is working on revisions to the district’s technology plan, and will resubmit it by the last week in April.

PRINCIPALS’ REPORTS -- Jason Lind highlighted the accomplishments of many students at Millburn Central. These include the more than 100 students who participated in the talent show; band and choir students who participated in combined workshops and performances with area high schools; and students who received the Principal’s Award from the Illinois Principal’s Association.

Jake Jorgenson reported on similar accomplishments of West students, including students who received the Principal’s Award; and Student Council and Leadership Team members who participated in leadership training at Lakes High School.

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

There being no further business, a motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Diane Campbell to adjourn the Regular Meeting. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed. The Regular Board Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

ATTEST:

Chris Stream, Secretary
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

Date