

BOARD OF EDUCATION
Millburn School District 24

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
Sept. 7, 2010

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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

BUSINESS MANAGER

Mary Taylor

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

David Dabney	Chris Guss
Laura Brown	Kelle Yoder
Kim Dodd	Nomita Umarwadia
Chandra Solberg	Bridget Sieracke
Bernadette Hanna	Holly Hill
Jason Hutchinson	Alicia Keys
Jane Gattone	Khyle Keys
Steven Loos	Geneen Hoetzer
Mariana Bibian	Angela McMahan
Cindy Brugioni	Deborah Pineau
Carole Machnics	Kandice Silk
Joan Green	Patti Weinberg
Michael Scholler	Amber Stewart

The Committee of the Whole Meeting 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 Board 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 COMMENTS – David Dabney addressed the Board concerning a busing issue. He said his children wait for the school bus, with a total of 10 children, at a bus stop at Buck Court in the Deerpath Subdivision. After the first four days of school, the children at that bus stop were changed to another bus route. Children at the stops before and after that one remained on the original bus route. He wondered why his children were being passed by, and asked the Board to consider the issue from a standpoint of logic and fairness.

The Board discussed the issue from many perspectives including: the Board's role in setting policy and managing school issues, such as bus routes; reasons why the bus routes had to be changed; the length of time children spend on the bus; expenses involved in creating an additional route; and how bus routes are created. Dr. Ellen Mauer and Mr. Dabney agreed to meet at some time during the week to discuss options for resolving this issue.

It was noted that Kenneth Dewitt entered the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

DISTRICT HOUSE LOTTERY – Dr. Ellen Mauer explained that the Board had previously set September as the time the district would hold a lottery to determine which staff member would be allowed to reside in the district-owned home. The rental agreement allows the employee to reside in the home rent-free in exchange for labor and services valued at about \$20,000.

Five employees applied to be considered, and their names were put in a container. The names were drawn in this order: (1) Cindy Pederson; (2) Mariana Bibian; (3) Angela McMahan; (4) Keiko Johnson; and (5) Cynthia Gallagher.

SNOW REMOVAL BID – Mary Taylor explained that the district will be going out for bid this month for snow removal and salting for this school year. The bid opening will be set for Oct. 1, and approval of a bid will be on the agenda for the Oct. 18 Regular Board Meeting.

BOARD MEMBER BUDGET PRESENTATION – Robert Reding gave a power-point presentation on his ideas for changing the budgeting process. He outlined five major ideas: hold vision sessions; expand the budget horizon from 1 to 5 years; better incorporate contingencies into the budget; create scorecards with narratives; and establish a finance subcommittee. He discussed each of the ideas, including an overview of the proposed process, examples of outcomes, and possible solutions.

The Board discussed the presentation, including their views of the current budget process, the district's current financial condition, lessons from the past, the culture of Millburn School District, and the structure and mission of the proposed Board Finance Subcommittee.

DISTRICT PRIORITY DISCUSSION – Lisa Scanio said she had asked that a discussion of school district priorities be added to the agenda. She pointed out that the Board has been discussing financial issues all year, but has not focused on the district's values. She said some issues are divisive, such as school configuration: K-8 or grade level centers. She suggested that the Board discuss this topic first, before the referendum, so the community would know if there is a Board consensus.

Each Board Member voiced their views on the issue of school configuration. The pros and cons of each configuration were discussed, including the participation of middle school parents, personal family experiences, reasons why people moved to Millburn District, the financial consequences, current research, enrollment projections, proposed class sizes, student achievement, academic options, extracurricular opportunities, and the Millburn culture. As the discussion progressed, at least four members expressed a preference for the buildings remaining K-8.

DISTRICT PLAN DETERMINATION DISCUSSION –The Board discussion of priorities led into a review of the various plans that could be enacted if the referendum passes or fails. Three of the plans were based on a K-8 format, and three were based on the grade level center format. The Board discussed the value of presenting all six options at the upcoming public forums, or just the three options that would be considered for the K-8 setting. Since a majority of the Board had expressed a preference for the K-8 format, it was determined to only present the K-8 options at the public forums.

COMMUNITY FORUM FORMAT – Different ways of staging the upcoming public forums were discussed, including small group discussions or a large group question-and-answer format. Laura Brown, chairman of the Citizens for Millburn committee, was asked her opinion. She said that parents have told her that they want an opportunity to ask questions. The Board discussed narrowing the number of options that would be presented to two: one plan if the referendum passes, and one if it fails. The Board said it plans to make that decision at the Regular Board Meeting scheduled for Sept. 20.

MOTHBALLING REPORT: 2015 – Dr. Ellen Mauer said that she is often asked what would happen if the district were to close Millburn West. She said a review of the demographics for 2015 shows that the only way the district could close West would be to have eight mobile classrooms, or trailers, at Millburn Central. She said the Regional Office of Education would not allow the district to use trailers if it owned a viable school building. She also pointed out that if a building were closed, the district would still be responsible for appropriate maintenance or “mothballing” the building.

It was suggested that when Board Members or administrators are asked the reasons why the district built Millburn West, that they direct the questioners to the district website where this type of information can be found. The Board generally agreed that closing Millburn West would not be a viable option until all the students could efficiently be housed at Millburn Central, and that is not anticipated in the foreseeable future.

PUBLIC ACT 96-0434 COMPENSATION REPORT – Dr. Ellen Mauer said that Public Act 96-0434 requires an annual review and report on administrator compensations, and for the

information to be posted on the website. She presented the current data that has been posted, as required.

FIRST READING OF BOARD POLICY – The following policies were presented for a First Reading:

- Operational Services – 4:40 Incurring Debt
- Operational Services – 4:70 Resource Conservation
- Operational Services – 4:90 Activity Funds
- Operational Services – 4:140 Waiver of Student Fees

The policies will be included on the Consent Agenda at the next Regular Board Meeting for a Second Reading and Approval.

BOARD OF EDUCATION REPORTS

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Shawn Lahr reported on a recent meeting conducted by the Illinois Department of Transportation concerning the proposed Rt. 45 bypass. He said citizens can express their opinions by completing an online survey. Dr. Ellen Mauer said she has participated in the discussions and reviewed all the proposed plans. She said she is confident that none of the final three plans would negatively impact the Millburn schools.

SCHOOL VISITATION REPORT – Lisa Scanio reported that she and Diane Campbell recently visited Gurnee Options, a K-8 school in District 56. She said the school format was created in an effort to attract families to a building that some considered undesirable. She discussed characteristics of Gurnee Options, such as the use of multi-age classrooms and the process of transporting students to specials such as music and art at another school in the district. Ms. Scanio said she found it helpful to articulate with another K-8 school in the area.

SEDOL REPORT – Kenneth Dewitt reported on a recent meeting of the SEDOL Board, held at the new Laremont building, which houses severely handicapped students. He said the Board passed its budget, of which 90 percent is salaries. It was announced that SEDOL Superintendent Bill Delp is retiring at the end of the year, and a search firm has been hired to help find a replacement.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Jane Gattone asked how the sale of land to the Forest Preserve District and home foreclosures are affecting Millburn School District. Dr. Ellen Mauer answered that the land being bought by the Forest Preserve District was zoned as farmland and would not make a big difference in the school district's Equalized Assessed Valuation. Tax revenue from foreclosed property is received at the bank sale. Ms. Gattone also

commented that a recent district survey showed that residents are split almost evenly on their preference for either a K-8 or grade level configuration. She asked if the Board is adequately confident that they know the opinions of their constituents. She said there may be a lot of fallout from the voters on this issue.

Holly Hill said she was awestruck by the Board's discussions. She said the Board Members expressed their personal choices, and that they are, in effect, telling voters that support the grade level centers that their opinions don't count. She said the referendum should not be about what the district "will lose." She said there is a financial responsibility to keep running top-notch schools with academic options such as geometry and foreign language. She said a decision to endorse K-8 before the referendum is putting a spin on the referendum as a choice between K-8 and grade level centers.

The Board decided to take a short break before entering into closed session.

It was noted that Mary Taylor, Elizabeth Keefe, Dr. Cheryl Kucera, Joanne Rathunde, Jake Jorgenson and Jason Lind exited the meeting at 9:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

A motion was made by Kenneth Dewitt and seconded by Lisa Scanio at 9:39 p.m. to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing personnel and the residence of a family. On a roll call vote, the following Board Members voted Aye: Chris Stream, Kenneth Dewitt, Lisa Scanio, Robert Buehler, Shawn Lahr, Robert Reding and Diane Campbell. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Diane Campbell and seconded by Robert Reding to exit Executive Session at 10:20 p.m. On a voice vote, all Board Members voted Aye. Nays: none. Absent: none. The motion passed.

COMMITTEE MEETING RESUMES

The Committee of the Whole Meeting resumed at 10:21 p.m.

SPECIAL CLOSED SESSION SET – The Board discussed the need to have two Special Meetings: one to discuss the superintendent's contract and one to make a final decision on the superintendent's contract. The Board agreed to hold a Special Meeting at 7 p.m. Sept. 13 at Millburn West. The only item on the agenda will be a closed session to discuss personnel issues.

There being no further business, the Committee Meeting adjourned at 10:29 p.m.

Shawn Lahr, President
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24

ATTEST:

Chris Stream, Secretary
Board of Education
Millburn School District 24