

School Committee Meeting
May 24, 2018
Frederick Hartnett Middle School

The Blackstone Millville Regional District School Committee met in the library of the Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School at 7:00 p.m. with the following members present:

Jane C. Reggio, Chairperson
Erin P. Vinacco, Vice Chairperson
Caryn D. Vernon, District Treasurer
Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary
Tammy A. Lemieux, Member
Sarah E. Williams, Member
Jack R. Keefe, Member
Bethany B. Dunton, Member

Also in attendance was Allen W. Himmelberger, Superintendent of Schools.

Anita Lahue - Student Representative - Things are winding down at BMR. Senior home games are being played this week. Varsity softball and baseball had games today. Best of luck to our charger athletes. Senior exams and math MCAS testing for sophomores. National Honor Society induction was held last Wednesday. Next week is senior week. The senior field trip will be held at High Meadows Resort. June 1st is graduation. This is Anita's last meeting. She will be passing the torch to two other girls. She is hopeful that schools will still be a place for opportunity and growth for the students. Anita is going to attend Salve Regina College in the fall.

Public Forum - Kathy Stearman worried about budget and doesn't want cuts made that will stop us from moving forward. Band is huge for her children. Kids stay here for the band, sports, and AP courses. She hopes we can keep as much as we can to keep our kids here.

Lisa Gervais, president of the BMMA was here also. BMMA has lifelong band memories. Multiple children choice in. The cut in middle school marching band was bad but they do not want more cuts to the band program.

Superintendent Himmelberger responded to their plea. He stated that the school committee is in favor of keeping music and athletics. They have not proposed cutting the music program. They know what the music program means to everyone.

There is probably no other district in the state that is forced to cut 7.5% of their budget. We are dedicated to the proposition of keeping the music program.

Students learn by playing music and become better at everything else because of it. They will do everything possible to preserve that important tradition.

Mrs. Reggio stated that they would have a change of order in the agenda.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Vernon and unanimously voted to move the budget discussion forward.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Vernon and unanimously voted to add Public Forum after the budget discussion.

Mrs. Reggio stated that Millville had it's meeting on May 14th. If Blackstone votes the higher amount of \$100,000 additional dollars they could then recertify that amount and go back to Millville to ask for more money. If they do this they may not have a budget by July 1st. The question remains, is it more important for the Committee to have the additional \$139,000 or to have a budget on July 1st? It makes it tough to meet the payroll and purchase items. It's not an ideal situation and with a new superintendent coming in. Millville has already stated that an extra \$39,000 would be a huge challenge for them.

Mrs. Lemieux stated that the cuts in their packets tonight are still \$200,000 short. She gets tired of always basing things on what Millville is willing to do or can do to contribute. One town is willing to go more than the other. It is very frustrating.

Mrs. Reggio feels that if the Millville Board of Selectmen can commit to the amount in a non-override budget now and when they do meet to balance their budget they would get it approved. This would give the District their additional funds and we would have a budget.

Mrs. Vinacco feels neither Town had to look at cuts to this magnitude when they have to make reductions to their own budgets. We have no choice but to fight for every dollar that we can. Neither Town has to look at a list of over a million dollars in reductions. Let's think positive and maybe Millville will get the override on June 19th. We have to cut to get to a funded budget. We have to fight for the dollars. If it passes in Blackstone and we must wait for Millville we are still going to know where we stand by July 1st. We may not have the money in the bank but we will know where we stand.

If our budget passes with the \$100,000 extra in Blackstone then we go back to Millville for the \$39,000. Next wednesday we need to recertify to the higher number and then it gets delivered to Millville on Thursday and the clock will be ticking for them to post their special meeting.

Mrs. Dunton agrees to fight for the money. We are affecting the lives of people and we need to fight for every penny. She hopes that Dr. Defalco would understand and realize why we are doing this.

Mr. Keefe feels it was clear that Millville was still in the hole and there is no money in their budget to give us the \$39,000. Therefore he feels we should not pursue the money.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Dunton and voted 7 approve, 1 nay by Mr. Keefe, proposing that we as a school committee accept the Blackstone Finance Committee recommendation that an additional \$100,000 be allotted to the District.

The Board of Selectmen in Blackstone recommended \$100,000 less in the budget but the Finance Committee recommended an additional \$100,000.

The School Committee will hold an additional budget meeting with strict guidelines on May 30th. They will do their best to keep everyone's needs and requests in mind. They will meet at 5:30 p.m. at Hartnett Middle school and be on camera.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted that when we do recertify it be by cost centers.

Report of the Superintendent

The Superintendent stated that we are taking a 7.5 percent cut in our budget. The numbers are an impossibility. We listened to the recommendations of the school committee and those consisted of conserving as many programs as we could and keeping athletics and music and keeping our high school as intact as possible because we lose students at grade 8.

We can't close a school due to regional agreement and our bonds. They looked at every possible way to cut and save or postpone.

The condition of the schools is very poor. We must continue to pressure the state to fund our schools properly.

There is nothing that we can cut that will get us there.

We are going to have to cut all non-essential items in supplies, instructional materials, technology and textbooks.

We need to have computer based tests in all grade levels and all subjects next year. That has to remain in the budget.

We need to increase class sizes. We have the lowest class sizes in the surrounding towns. We will recommend to the Committee to increase class sizes.

We as a District do not get treated fairly at the state and federal level. The state has paid a lot less and the local share has gone up dramatically.

Mrs. Vinacco wants parents to purchase the chrome books themselves and take it out of our budget. The parents would purchase them through us. These kids will have it through middle and high school.

Proposed reductions:

Elementary Level - \$174,644 - Reduce 1 counselor and 1 special education teacher.

Secondary level - \$175,356 - Reduce 2 special education teachers with 1 paraprofessional and reduce 1 new school counselor.

Special Education - overall through the District a \$94,273 reduction.

MES- \$205,755 Reduce -.4 new technology teacher and reduce 2 other teachers.

Complex - \$362,561- Reduce .4 new technology teacher and .4 ELL teacher and 5 other teachers.

Middle School - \$198,324 - reduce 3 teachers, Empowering Writers and VHS. This means the loss of 7th grade purple and 8th grade purple team to create a $\frac{7}{8}$ purple team.

Tonya Curt-Hoard - at the middle school we had to pull from the other schools for the chromebooks to test. They are doing so many non-tech projects that should be done with the technology.

The Superintendent stated that we will ask Sean Bouzan, Tech Administrator to attend on Wednesday and bring us examples of other schools.

Mrs. Larkin asked if there any legal impacts on cutting in the Special Education area?

Mrs. Lemieux - feels that the school committee could possibly take a reduction in their stipends. She would like to discuss the possibility of doing this.

Mrs. Reggio has already given back to the schools with her stipend.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco to reduce the amount of the School Committee stipends. This vote did not continue.

Mrs. Lemieux wants to know the impact that research has shown on mixing first grade with second grade and third grade with fourth graders.

Dr. Haughey stated that this is not what he wants to do. He wants to open up the regional agreement immediately and fix this. Two years ago Millville did not approve opening up the regional agreement. The regional agreement can be amended.

Mrs. Reggio wanted to take the 3rd, 4th and 5th graders from Millville and move them to Blackstone and all members of both Towns laughed at her and said not this go round.

The Committee can open the regional agreement and they can ask both Towns to hold a special town meeting.

Mrs. Lemieux asked if it can be done in the time frame of this budget.

We can make the motion at any time, then we certify and the secretary sends it out to both Towns and the Towns have so many days to hold a special town meeting.

Both Towns would have to agree. If both Towns don't agree it doesn't pass at all.

They are trying to maximize the potential of all students in the District.

Mrs. Dunton feels we may want to consider charging students to park at the High School.

There are no cuts in athletics from last year to this year. This remains a level funded budget except for the mandatory increases in the stipends. We did not reduce cheerleading, athletics or music stipends.

Mr. Dudek stated that they are thinking of cutting the fall cheerleading for football. They cut the amount of games played. They cut 2 games from each sport and saved \$8,000.

2nd Public Forum - Mrs. Stearman does not feel that Millville is responsible for all the money issues.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Warrants, Field Trip request and the Minutes of the May 10th school committee meeting.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mrs. Dunton and unanimously voted to extend the retirement incentive for Unit A to June 8th.

The Superintendent spoke on extending the retirement incentive to Unit C members in the amount of \$3500 offered to para- professionals only. No motion was made so it will not move forward.

At a previous meeting the Committee voted to not renew the Special Education Administrator.

At another meeting they voted not to have a Special Education Administrator.
This is not allowed.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Keefe, seconded by Mrs. Larkin 7 in favor, one abstain, Mrs. Reggio to rescind the motion to not have a special education director in the District.

The purpose was to rename the position and possibly add more duties to the special education administrator. Due to the size of our District Mass General law says that we can have that person do other things.

Health Insurance MOA - a change is being made to the current language - If an employee retirees after June 1, 2018 they will continue to have the ability to modify their health and dental insurance enrollment.

Past practice did not allow members to change plans to a higher plan after retirement. They want to do away with this. That costs the District money since many people take the PPO plan in the last year of their employment so they can keep the better plan. It will continue to save the District money. You will not need to get insurance in your last year of employment in order to have a plan at anytime in your retirement.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Dunton and unanimously voted to offer a memorandum of understanding for unit A for article 21 insurance.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Dunton and unanimously voted to offer a memorandum of understanding for Unit C for article 16 insurance.

Handbook Changes

Mr. Dudek - BMR High School

Some of the members have not looked at the plans at all. They need time to read them but can still hear from them right now.

Mr. Dudek proposed changes to P. 38 Food and Beverage, P. 39 Extra Curricular Activities, P. 40 Dress Code, P. 41 Academic Behavior/Plagiarism and Cheating, P. 43 Senior Privileges, P.45 and 46 Student Parking Regulations, P. 49 Central Detention, P. 48 Class Cut, P. 48 Central Detention, P. 49 Use of Personal Device, Truancy and Tardiness, P. 50 Cheating/Plagiarism and various changes to Policy pages.

Mrs. Lemieux likes measurable rules in dress code.

Mrs. Brown, Mr. Tringali and Dr. Haughey - Elementary Handbook

Minimal changes. Decided to table the attendance policy until next year.

The Elementary principals proposed changes to p. 2 School Officials, P.5 School Calendar, P.10 Dismissal of Students from School, P. 28 Penalties of Misbehavior, P.31 Deficit Accounts, P.g 35 Gym Sneaker policy, and Appendix A.

Mrs. Curt-Hoard - Middle School

Minimal changes also.

Mrs. Curt-Hoard proposed changes to P.3 Academic Regulations, P.8 personal electronic devices, p. 16 Bullying and Intervention Plan, P.20 to 33 Policies, P. 42 English Language Learners, P. 44 Homelessness, P. 42 to 43 Food Service Charge Policy, P. 50 Policy, P. 56 contact numbers, p. 57 Communication Request and p. 58 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

The School Improvement Plans were also reviewed for the District.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lemieux, seconded by Mr. Keefe and unanimously voted to approve the correction of our criterion of the co-curricular and extracurricular activities File JJ of the CPR.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Larkin and unanimously voted to appoint Dr. Defalco to the Bi-County Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2018-2019 school year.

The joint meeting with Millville will be held on June 5th at 5:30 p.m. at the Hartnett Middle School.

Many schools have already passed resolutions calling for full funding of the foundation budget review commission's recommendations.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mrs. Lemieux and unanimously voted to approve the letter calling for full funding of the foundation budget review commission's recommendations.

Mrs. Lemieux wished good luck to track team on Saturday at Fitchburg State University.

Mrs. Larkin said congratulations and good luck to seniors. She hopes the Committee can get through the budget on Wednesday.

Mrs. Vinacco asked Mrs. Cobb to clarify the numbers they have in front of them. She began at the starting point of the list and she subtracted everything from there. They are going to work off of this budget on Wednesday night.

In regards to the Athletic conversation Mrs. Vinacco believes she made a motion that held the athletics at the \$180,000. It was not a cut but keeping them level funded. She believes it was done in March.

Kathy Stearman - Mrs. Reggio stated we have a general fund budget. In that budget \$180,000 is allocated to athletics. User fees help to offset the budget. Does the band pay user fees? Yes you pay user fees for band. The user fees for band are only used for band and the user fees for athletics are only used for athletics. The ancillary funds are subject to a 1099. These are for instructors that do not work in the District. The BMMA has the \$47,000 and all money is raised by the BMMA to pay for certain band needs.

Mrs. Vinacco found the athletic recommendation and motion. On February 26th they were holding the requested budget to be level funded.

Mrs. Reggio wants to include communications in the upcoming agendas.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Williams and unanimously voted to have the final re-certification by cost centers.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Vinacco, seconded by Mrs. Dunton and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST:


Tara L. Larkin, District Secretary