



## DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes

**DATE:** February 28, 2011

**LOCATION:** Harmony Hall

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Matthew Sheehan, Chairman  
Mrs. Bonita Elie, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson  
Dr. Michael McNamara, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson  
Mr. Ronald Mercier  
Mr. Michael Miles

**SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:**

Dr. Stacy Scott, Superintendent of Schools  
Mr. Thomas Rose, School Business Administrator  
Attorney Kevin Murphy  
Cynthia Curtis, Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER:**

The regular session meeting of the School Committee was called to order by Chairman Matthew Sheehan at Harmony Hall at 7:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:**

Chairman Sheehan called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for Niall Murphy, brother of Lauren Akashian, Dracut High School Teacher.

**PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE FOR FY12 BUDGET**

1. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Miles to open the public hearing on the proposed budget for the 2011-2012 school year with the bottom line amount of \$29,053,810.14

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mrs. Elie	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes

Dr. Scott gave an overview of the budget. Since the initial budget was created more reductions have been made bringing the bottom line to \$28,638,009.69 with a budget increase of \$474,534.69. A series of budget workshops were held reviewing various lines of the budget.

No one was present to speak at the Public Hearing.

2. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Mercier to close the Public Hearing on the 2011-2012 school year proposed budget.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mrs. Elie	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Mercier, to approve the Budget Workshop minutes of February 22, 2011.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

4. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie, to approve the School Committee minutes of February 14, 2011.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

5. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles, to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 14, 2011.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

Chairman Sheehan asked legal counsel if any items could be released. Attorney Murphy stated that no items are to be released at this time.

6. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to accept the Finance Sub-Committee minutes of November 18, 2010.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

7. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mrs. Elie to accept the Finance Sub-Committee minutes of December 10, 2010.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

8. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mrs. Elie to accept the Finance Sub-Committee minutes of January 7, 2011.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

9. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Mrs. Elie to accept the Finance Sub-Committee minutes of January 24, 2011.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved**

**APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:**

Bills and Payrolls were signed by Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Miles. Dr. McNamara signed warrant 20110025 and Mrs. Elie signed warrant 20110026 only.

**PRESENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

No student presentation.

**COMMUNITY INPUT:**

No Community Input

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

### ***Recognition of Junior High School Student***

Mr. Alex Corcoran, grade 8 student, was recognized for his above and beyond fundraising efforts through the Junior National Honor Society. Alex successfully raised over 183 blankets for the Lowell Wish Project. Alex was invited to the inauguration of Governor Deval Patrick as part of Project 351. The Committee presented Alex with a certificate recognizing him for his efforts. Alex thanked the Committee and Dr. Scott for their support and donations.

### ***Dracut Food Pantry Presentation***

Mr. James O'Loughlin was present to thank the Dracut Schools for their continued support and donations. The members of the food pantry thanked the School Committee, school administration, teachers, staff, children and parents for all the donations over the years. Members of the food pantry presented plaques for each of the seven school principals for their respective schools. In attendance from the food pantry were Anne Edwards, Ann Vandal, Kevin Willette, and Karen Bergeron.

### ***DECA State Competition Trip Request***

Mr. Chuck Mone, Dracut High School Business Teacher, requested permission for students to attend the DECA State Competition on March 10<sup>th</sup> – March 12<sup>th</sup>. Six students will be participating in this competition representing Dracut out of 1,200 from the state. The Committee wished the students good luck with the competition and asked that they be updated on the results after the competition.

10. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to approve the trip request for students to attend the DECA Competition.

**Vote: Unanimously Approved.**

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

No Committee Reports

## **COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS:**

March 1<sup>st</sup> Brookside Grade 3 MCAS Parent night; Campbell School Kindergarten Registration  
March 1<sup>st</sup> Dracut Scholarship Meeting  
March 2<sup>nd</sup> Brookside Kindergarten Registration; Spring Sports Registration  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> Campbell School MCAS Parent Night; Greenmont Kindergarten Registration  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> Junior High Drama Show – *Thoroughly Modern Millie Junior*  
March 4<sup>th</sup> Dracut Night at Bradford Ski  
March 5<sup>th</sup> Performing Arts Craft Fair  
March 8<sup>th</sup> Campbell School PTO: Superintendent and School Committee invited guests  
March 8<sup>th</sup> Junior High Progress Reports Issued  
March 9<sup>th</sup> Englesby and Parker PTO; Winter Sports Awards Night  
March 10<sup>th</sup> Brookside MCAS Parent Night; Englesby and Elementary Progress Reports Issued  
March 10<sup>th</sup> Greenmont PTO Meeting: Superintendent and School Committee invited guests  
March 12<sup>th</sup> Strings Orchestra Italian Dinner  
March 14<sup>th</sup> School Committee Meeting

Mr. Miles wanted to congratulate the cheerleaders for being MVC Champions at Central Catholic. Janae Gauthier performed extremely well at the competition.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

### ***Athletic Update***

Dr. Scott updated the Committee on recent athletic information.

- Ice Hockey is seeded #3 in Division III North
- Girls Basketball is seeded 15<sup>th</sup> in Division II North
- Cheerleaders took 1<sup>st</sup> place in the MVC Division II and advance to the regional competition
- Keith Hamel finished 7<sup>th</sup> in Indoor Track in the All-States while Kayla Springford placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Division II State Tournament
- Wrestlers Michael Stewart and Jimmy Ryan took 3<sup>rd</sup> in the All-States
- Wrestlers Jonathan Ryan and Alec Laganas placed 8<sup>th</sup> in the quarter final round

Dr. Scott informed the Committee that he is working on a pilot program for community service for student athletes. This will be a volunteer program for one hour per week to increase community involvement. The program is an expansion of the current community service program. This will update the Committee at a future meeting.

### ***Staffing Recommendations***

Dr. Scott recommended Dr. Sonia Diaz as the Chief Academic Officer. The contract and job description is available for review. The start date will be March 1<sup>st</sup> for this position and the salary will be prorated.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

### ***Dracut High Renovation Project Update:***

The Committee and Superintendent will continue to meet with the PTOs. Dr. Scott met with the junior high staff at a faculty meeting and with the DTA Board. Dr. Scott will continue to meet with staff at the different faculty meetings. The School Committee and Superintendent met with the Board of Selectmen who unanimously supported the project. Mr. Sheehan thanked the Board of Selectmen for inviting the School Committee and Superintendent to their meeting.

Mr. Sheehan asked Dr. Scott if he could obtain another set of blue prints of the project along with some informational flyers with questions and answers to be displayed at the Dracut Library.

Mr. Sheehan asked Dr. Scott to reach out to the Library Director to coordinate this effort.

Dr. McNamara noted that the presentation at the Board of Selectmen's meeting was well received and Dr. Scott had represented the project and the Dracut Public Schools well.

### ***FY12 Budget Review***

Mr. Sheehan noted that the bottom line number has changed since the last budget was presented to the Committee. The bottom line number was originally \$29,053,810.54 and the new bottom line number is \$28,638,009.69. The new bottom line number is an increase of \$474,534.69 over FY11.

Dr. Scott indicated that some increases are due to grades and step increases, tuitions and utility increases. Dr. Scott also noted that with this budget there will be no reduction in force and that grants will be incorporated into the budget over the next few years.

Mr. Miles thanked Dr. Scott and Thomas Rose for their efforts on putting together the budget. Mr. Miles inquired about the grants such as technology, media and Title I and asked for an update on the grants for the Committee. Dr. Scott will make available this information for the

Committee in their next packets. There are numerous grants available and they are reviewed with the Finance Sub-Committee. Mr. Miles would like to see where we are now and how the grants are distributed. Mr. Mercier inquired about grants with local companies in this area. Dr. Scott indicated that with lack of staffing it makes it difficult to move forward. Dr. Scott is looking at creating a grants committee with volunteers and indicated that the school system has partnered with local partners to help with grant opportunities.

- 11. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to reduce the School Board In-State Conference line by \$1,500 thus reducing the bottom line number of the budget.

Discussion was held regarding this line. This line is used for the Committee to attend the yearly conference and any other training workshops available. Dr. Scott indicated that this line was important for training to assist the Committee with updates on laws and regulations. Dr. Scott would like to see this line item remain to support School Committee membership. Dr. Scott offered to reduce his salary by 1% in order not to reduce the in-state conference line. Mr. Sheehan applauded Dr. Scott for his recommendation. Mrs. Elie indicated that attending the conferences/workshops are beneficial to members. Mr. Mercier noted the “Charting the Course” seminars available for Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mrs. Elie	No
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	No
Mr. Sheehan	Yes

**Motion passes 3-2.**

Discussion was held regarding the Special Purpose Legal line. Dr. Scott reviewed and gave a rationale on this line item. This will allow the school department to be more flexible if legal issues should arise.

Discussion was also held on the Special Considerations line of \$40,000. The Committee reminded Dr. Scott that any newly created positions must go before the Board for approval.

Discussion was held regarding the full day Kindergarten program. Registrations are being held and full day Kindergarten will be offered throughout the district. Placement of any overflow of students will be determined using the same procedures that are followed now. The budget reflects one additional Kindergarten teacher. Dr. McNamara asked if there would be a savings in transportation since there will be no half day Kindergarten bus runs. A cost analysis of the Kindergarten program will be available for the Committee including the reduction in transportation costs and the addition of a new teacher.

Dr. McNamara inquired about a possible savings due to retirements. Dr. McNamara asked that all positions being filled in the district are reviewed to make sure they are needed in the district.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

***Collective Bargaining***

Mr. Sheehan indicated that he had contacted area districts to obtain how they hold their collective bargaining sessions. Most school districts have one or two school board members in addition to

the Superintendent sit in on negotiations. Mr. Sheehan would like to see Dr. Scott be part of the negotiations along with the Committee.

Dr. Scott indicated that he thought it was a good idea and thought that his presence could be helpful to monitor the process. Mr. Mercier agreed that this is a good idea. Attorney Murphy noted that a union can object depending on their individual bargaining rules that have been entered into at the start of negotiations.

Mr. Miles left the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

Mr. Sheehan passed the gavel to 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairperson Bonnie Elie.

12. Motion by Mr. Sheehan, seconded by Mr. Mercier to have Superintendent Scott be part of all employee contract negotiations on behalf of and with the School Committee.

**Vote: Unanimously approved**

Mrs. Elie passed the gavel back to Chairman Sheehan.

The meeting was recessed at 8:20 p.m.

The meeting was reconvened at 8:22 p.m. and Mr. Miles returned to the meeting at this time.

13. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to accept the proposed FY12 school budget with the bottom line of \$28,636,509.69

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mrs. Elie	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes

**ADJOURNMENT:**

14. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mrs. Elie to adjourn the regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee.

**Roll Call Vote:**

Mrs. Elie	Yes
Dr. McNamara	Yes
Mr. Mercier	Yes
Mr. Miles	Yes
Mr. Sheehan	Yes

The regular session meeting of the Dracut School Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Curtis  
Recording Secretary

**List of documents and exhibits:**

1. School Committee agenda packet