



DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING Minutes

DATE: March 28, 2011

LOCATION: Harmony Hall

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Matthew Sheehan, Chairman
Mrs. Bonita Elie, 1st Vice Chairperson
Dr. Michael McNamara, 2nd 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 Edward Morris
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 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of entering into Executive Session.

Chairman Sheehan read into the record the purpose for entering into Executive Session was for an update on negotiations that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect.

1. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Miles to enter into Executive Session for the reasons stated.

Roll Call Vote:

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

The regular session meeting was recessed at 6:00 p.m.
The regular session meeting was reconvened at 7:00 p.m.

ADDITIONAL SCHOOL PERSONNEL AND OTHERS PRESENT:

Attorney Kevin Murphy

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AND MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Chairman Sheehan called for the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence for George Kelly, husband of Mary Kelly, Brookside Paraprofessional; Helen Laird, mother of Jayne Hoffman, Parker Secretary; and Raymond Desjardins, father of Joyce Desjardins, junior high school teacher.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

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

Vote: Unanimously Approved

3. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles, to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 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.

APPROVAL OF BILLS AND PAYROLLS:

Bills and Payrolls were signed as follows:

Warrant 20110029 by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles, Mrs. Elie and Dr. McNamara

Warrant 20110030 by Mr. Sheehan, Mr. Miles and Mr. Mercier

PRESENTATION OF SENIOR HIGH STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

No student presentation.

COMMUNITY INPUT:

Mr. Joseph Wilkie of 41 Regency Drive was present to give an update on the Friends of a New Dracut High School. At the recent meeting Kathy Craven from MSBA, State Representative Colleen Garry and State Senator Barry Finegold were present as well as the Superintendent of Schools. On April 9th there will be an informational day at the Sports Zone and April 14th at the Council on Aging at 10:00 a.m. The Committee commended Mr. Wilkie and the group for all the work that they have done and continuing to inform the community.

NEW BUSINESS

Merrimack Valley Conference Update:

Athletic Director Timothy Woods was present to update the Committee on the status of the athletic league alignment. Dracut High enrollment is the smallest of any other public high school in the Merrimack Valley Conference equal to Tewksbury. The MVC has enough teams to be divided into two divisions. Currently, small schools play large schools only once per season, per sport in the MVC. Dracut should compete with other schools of compatible size and educational mission. As of now the merge with DCL/MVC are only talks. The possible merger would take place in 2013-2014 giving schools a two year notice. The merger would not only affect the football program but

other sports including girls' teams. Mr. Woods complimented all the coaches in the athletic program.

Mr. Woods also noted that he would be starting a pilot for a Tennis program. This pilot program is still in the beginning phase.

Mr. Woods noted that the final decision of the merger would be with the High School Principal working with the Athletic Director and the Superintendent. Mr. Woods will keep the Committee updated.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy Sub-Committee:

Dr. McNamara and Mr. Mercier met to review the policy on service animals and admission of transfer students.

The Policy Sub-Committee recommends the adoption of the new policy *Animals in Schools* (IMG) under Educational Program. The addition is “animal-based educational programs conducted by animal experts that are solicited by the school either through the PTO groups or school staff, providing the approval of the building Principal has been granted, are exempt from the “Animals Prohibited from School” section of the policy.

In addition, administration will provide the school principals with the most current publication “Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds”.

There will be no change to the policy *JFABC Admission of Transfer Students*. Attorney Murphy noted that if a student is expelled at a Charter School then asking for a transfer to Dracut, we can expel for the reason. Dr. Scott noted that the Special Education Office will retain the right to do an assessment or evaluation.

- 4. Motion by Dr. McNamara, seconded by Mr. Mercier to recommend to the full Committee the inclusion of two policies *Animals in Schools* and *Admission of Transfer Students* as described in the Policy Sub-Committee Minutes and as discussed.

Dr. Scott reviewed both policies and recommends approval.

Roll Call Vote:

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

COMMUNITY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 30th and March 31st Preschool Registration

March 31st Renovation Advisory Committee Meeting

April 5th Scholarship Foundation Meeting
April 7th – April 9th Dracut High School Musical
April 7th Elementary and Englesby report cards issued
April 7th Special Education PAC Meeting
April 8th Englesby Activity Night
April 10th Campbell School PTO Breakfast with the Easter Bunny
April 11th School Committee Meeting

SUPERINTENDENT'S INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Dr. Scott noted that even though the Special Education PAC meeting is not part of the school district that the event is part of the community and he encourages parents to attend. Dr. Scott thanked John Kelly for his work with the PAC group.

Dr. Scott noted that the school district continues to have partnerships Middlesex College for dual enrollment, specifically with math classes.

Dr. Scott has completed the video on the high school. The video will be played on Channel 8 and 22 on DATV.

Dr. McNamara noted the recent commendation on the increase of students in advanced placement classes. Dr. Scott indicated that Dracut was acknowledged by the College Board as one of 388 school districts awarded in the country on their achievement list.

OLD BUSINESS:

Dracut High Renovation Project Update:

Dr. McNamara and Dr. Scott attended the Brookside PTO Meeting. The Parker Avenue PTO meeting is scheduled for April 13th.

Mr. Miles commended Dr. Scott for the information he provided at the Friends of a New Dracut High School recent meeting. Mr. Miles requested that a letter of thank you be sent to Representative Garry and Senator Finegold for their support. Mr. Miles asked that included in this letter that a request be made to have them send a letter of support of the project to the editor of the Lowell Sun.

Mr. Sheehan inquired about a letter to the editor on behalf of the Board be sent to the Lowell Sun or individual letters. Dr. McNamara noted he was in favor of both a combined letter and individual letters to get notice out to the community. Dr. Scott will assist with the letter to the Lowell Sun.

5. Motion by Mr. Miles, seconded by Dr. McNamara to have thank you letters sent to Representative Garry and Senator Finegold for their support and a letter by the Committee as a whole be sent to the Lowell Sun and encourage individual School Board Members to write individual letters.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Mr. Sheehan asked that a copy of the letters be sent to Mr. Wilkie and also to Mr. Sancartier.

NEW BUSINESS:

Calendar Approval

The proposed 2011-2012 school calendar was presented to the Committee. Dr. Scott noted that the Curriculum Committee met and submitted several recommendations. General teachers meeting will be on September 1st and a full day professional development will be on September 2nd. Students will begin on September 6th. There will be one ½ day professional development each month.

Mr. Mercier inquired about the return of students on January 3rd. Dr. Scott stated that since January 1st is on a Sunday that January 2nd is the day to recognize this holiday. Mr. Mercier also inquired about the ½ day in January for Professional Development. Dr. Scott stated that the first week is a short week so this was moved to the second week in January.

Dr. McNamara asked if there was discussion on starting before September 1st and having Friday, September 2nd off to allow for the long Labor Day weekend. Dr. Scott noted that there was discussion with the DTA; however, it would be more of a challenge to change the contract language in the DTA contract and this proposal is the simplest of options.

Dr. McNamara noted that some districts have been looking at Good Friday as more of a religious holiday than a school related holiday. Dr. McNamara inquired if there had been discussion regarding this day. Dr. Scott stated that there has been no discussion on this holiday and that there seems to be long term traditions with this day.

Dr. McNamara asked that Dr. Scott review the time on learning hours of 900 hours for elementary and 990 hours for secondary given that there are eight ½ professional development days being proposed. Dr. Scott noted that this was reviewed and we are in compliance.

Mrs. Elie inquired about any days off in March given the long month. Mr. Sheehan and Mr. Miles noted that eliminating Good Friday would not be an option since this has been a long standing tradition.

6. Motion by Mr. Mercier, seconded by Mr. Miles to approve the 2011-2012 school calendar.

Vote: Unanimously Approved

Dr. McNamara and the Committee sent out a Happy Birthday to Board of Selectmen Chairman George Malliaros.

Mrs. Elie acknowledged the four students who recently went to the JFK Library and were recognized for the Make a Difference Award. Mrs. Elie asked that these students be on the agenda for the next meeting.

Mrs. Elie also acknowledged Dracut High School student Richard Giadone for his recent poetry competition and that he be asked to attend the next meeting.

Mr. Mercier noted that there are still tickets available for the high school show *Chicago*. He also noted that this is Leon Grande's last play. Mr. Grande has been an asset to the district and asked that he be invited to a future meeting before his retirement.

Dr. McNamara asked if the school department had been scheduled to present the budget before the Town Finance Committee. Dr. Scott stated that we are waiting for notification from the town and the meeting should happen in early April.

Mr. Sheehan asked that Junior High Student Andrew Curtis also be asked to attend the next School Committee meeting for his recent recognition for an essay contest at the junior high school.

ADJOURNMENT:

7. Motion by Mrs. Elie, seconded by Mr. Miles 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 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cynthia Curtis
Recording Secretary

List of documents and exhibits:

1. School Committee agenda packet
2. Policy Sub-Committee Minutes