

**BLACKSTONE-MILLVILLE REGIONAL
DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING**

March 10, 2011

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

Charles K. Singleton, Chairman
Ann M. Lesperance, Vice Chairperson
Catherine A. Robinson, District Treasurer
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary
Michael J. Buckley, Member
John J. Eldridge, Member

Absent from the meeting was Diane C. Robin, Assistant District Treasurer and Lisa C. Oliveira, Member.

Also in attendance was Kimberly B. Shaver-Hood, Superintendent of Schools.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Buckley, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously voted** to enter into the Open Meeting.

Consent Agendas

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Buckley, seconded by Mr. Eldridge and **unanimously voted** to approve Consent Agenda A which includes Minutes of Meeting of February 3rd, Warrants and three Field Trip Requests.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance (**4 in favor, 2 opposed – Mr. Singleton and Mr. Buckley**) to approve Consent Agenda B for a home schooling request from Mr. and Mrs. John Gonya.

Discussion of Days (Student-Teacher) for make-up.

Information was presented on the makeup days for the School District due to recent snow days and school closings.

Mrs. Lesperance shared a survey she had taken. She asked the parent organizations from Millville and Blackstone to conduct a survey to see if parents in the communities were interested in having school during the April vacation. Many parents were interested in opening school during the April vacation.

Mrs. Lesperance proposed that the JFK/AFM Complex would be in session for 3 days during the April vacation. The Hartnett Middle School would be in session for 2 days during the April vacation. The BMR High School and Millville Elementary School

would not need to make up days during the April vacation. All schools would need to make up an additional three days at the end of the school year taking them until June 22nd.

The teachers would need to make up additional days on their own which would be discussed at a later time.

Mrs. Lesperance does not feel it would be beneficial to keep the schools open past June 24th.

Superintendent Shaver-Hood asked if a teacher from the High School or Millville Elementary School could go over to the Complex or Hartnett Middle School as a substitute during the April vacation if there is a shortage of available teachers during that time. This would enable them to work off some of their extra time as well.

Mr. Eldridge liked the proposal presented by Mrs. Lesperance.

Mrs. Robinson isn't so sure. She feels that absenteeism will be high and isn't so sure that the students will get the same quality of education during the vacation week as any other day of the year.

Mr. Tringali who is also a teacher feels that any days they can makeup prior to MCAS testing is best. If it would have been feasible he would have liked to see them make up days during the February vacation.

Superintendent Shaver-Hood stated that the D.O.E. website does not state that they need to have a certain amount of students in attendance during a school day. School needs to be in session for so many days per year.

Chairman Singleton agrees with much of what was proposed. He believes there wasn't enough time to get the days in during the February vacation. He thanked all who responded and thanked Mrs. Lesperance for her great suggestions and for putting the survey together. He wants input from all areas but ultimately it is the decision of the School Committee.

All were in agreement that if you go too far into June the students will not be concentrating on learning.

Parents and teachers in attendance at the meeting agreed with the proposal of Mrs. Lesperance.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mr. Buckley (**5 in favor, 1 opposed – Mrs. Robinson**) to adopt the presentation given by Mrs. Lesperance to have the JFK/AFM Complex in session for 3 days during the April vacation, Hartnett Middle School in session for 2 days during the April vacation and the Millville Elementary School and BMR High School closed during the April vacation. All schools would make up three additional days on June 20, 21 and 22nd.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Buckley, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance to enter into Impact Bargaining to address the new schedule issues and to allow the Superintendent of Schools to go into Collective Bargaining with Units A, B, and C. A vote was taken and all members of the School Committee were in favor.

Presentation of the District FY12 budget by the Budget Sub-Committee

The next order of business was the FY12 Budget. The members of the budget sub-committee are Mr. Tringali, Mr. Buckley, Mr. Eldridge and Chairman Singleton. Mr. Buckley is the Chairperson of the committee and will take charge of this portion of the meeting along with Superintendent Shaver-Hood.

Mr. Buckley stated that they will be losing federal and state aid for FY12 in the area of \$700,000. Portions of the salary of the Student Services Director, Student Services secretary and some teacher aides came from grant funds which will be lost in FY12. These salaries will need to come out of the regular budget.

Insurance costs could increase as high as 25 % for FY12. Superintendent Shaver-Hood will meet with our insurance consultant tomorrow and will begin shopping around to see what is out there in health care coverage prices.

On the up side the treasurers bond is going down which is a good thing for the District.

Some areas that are out of our control are utilities and fuel.

Consumables, supplies, and textbooks are the only areas that we can make cuts. They have continuously been cut year after year. There will be very little supplies coming into the buildings next year.

There could be a reduction in staffing. There is the chance of cutting 10.5 non-professional staff and approximately 11 professional staff.

They have now cut the budget by an additional 8% and are trying to make further cuts to the current projected operating budget of \$22,470,004.08.

The School District will contribute approximately \$600,000 into balancing the budget through Pre-School funds, Athletic Reserve Funds and Medicaid funds. The District invests this money in interest bearing accounts.

If the towns of Blackstone and Millville make minimum contributions we will be left with a large deficit. Over the last two years the School District has not requested more than the minimum contribution. If they do not get more than the minimum this year they will have no choice but to cut staff and increase class sizes to where families will likely consider moving out of the community or decide to school choice their children to other Districts.

He thanked the Superintendent for her hard work and effort as well as the Principals and Directors.

In answer to a question it was stated by Chairman Singleton that the School Committee cannot ask for a Proposition 2.5 tax override. The School Committee can ask for the additional funds needed but not for the override. If the town decides to give the additional funding to the School District it is then up to the Town to decide how they will fund the additional contribution.

Chairman Singleton stated that the town of Millville has already talked about the possibility of the Proposition 2.5 tax override.

Mr. Eldridge doesn't see this happening in Blackstone.

The towns of Blackstone and Millville are also looking at a very tight budget.

Chairman Singleton read a letter submitted to the Committee by member Lisa Oliveira. In her letter she stated that she will not be running in the April election. She thanked everyone and is sorry she could not attend tonight's meeting but had a prior school commitment. She wanted to voice her opinion on how class size matters and how it will impact student achievement. She asked that the Committee present a budget at the town meeting that will preserve programs for our children.

Mr. Tringali has been on the School Committee for a few years now. He has learned that they do not have a spending problem but a major revenue problem.

Chairman Singleton stated in closing that in the last two years they have not looked to the Towns of Blackstone and Millville for more than the minimum contributions. The District is now losing funds in the area of \$700,000 and find they have nowhere left to draw from.

The Open Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary