

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

**March 16, 2011**

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee met in the BMR High School Auditorium at 7:00 p.m. for the Open Hearing with the following members present:

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

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

Michael Buckley, member and Chairman of the Budget Sub-Committee gave a presentation to the community.

The District tried to keep the FY12 budget level funded, but went back in and asked the principals and administrators to cut another 8%.

We are currently operating under the state average in all areas except for payments to other districts which is higher than the average.

The budget busters are electricity, heat, insurance, transportation and salaries.

The proposed FY12 budget is \$23,547,362.18 without grants and \$22,470,000 with grants.

The School District anticipates grants as follows:

Kindergarten - \$78,200

Early Childhood- \$21,691

Title I - \$169,991

Unity- \$464,769

Title IIA- \$52,707

Ed Jobs - \$290,000 (this represents ½ of total grant – ½ spent in FY11)

Total grants - \$1,077, 358

We will be losing the AARA grant in the amount of \$263,933.

Anticipated revenue which includes Chapter 70, regular transportation and town contributions totals \$19,818,870.

Other Anticipated FY12 revenues are:

Medicaid – 60,000

Misc. - 2,600

Pre-K funds - 30,000

Athletic Reserve - 4,000

Applied Interest - 10,000

Music and Athletic Fees - 40,000

Excess and Deficiency funds - 350,000

Circuit Breaker funds - 140,000

Total revenues total \$20,455,470.

The School District is encountering a revenue problem and is trying to come up with solutions on how to address this.

Present deficit – \$1,191,585 (without reducing professional staff)

Mr. Buckley addressed some of the ways they are addressing the deficit by trying to minimize costs:

Using French River to get best bids on things

Transportation – number of buses

Job sharing with other districts

Energy program

The following are possible budget cuts but are not definite:

**Phase I cuts:**

Supplies and equipment

Contracted services

Loss of fifth grade instrumental program

Several support staff cuts in elementary

Library cuts at the elementary and middle school levels

Clubs and other student activities – all levels

**Phase 2 cuts:**

Cutting classroom teachers if they need to go to phase 2

Class sizes will increase

Faced with shortfall and at wits end with this

A Net school spending comparison was done which compared several towns in our area – four year average:

Uxbridge up 23 percent

Bellingham up 12.2 percent  
Mendon-Upton up 12 percent  
Hopedale up 12.5 percent  
Blackstone-Millville Regional – up 5.5 percent  
The state average is 15.5 percent  
The District has not asked for more than minimum contribution from Blackstone and Millville in 2 years.

**Impact:**

Increased class sizes  
Loss of programs  
Possibility of losing High School accreditation  
Middle school restructuring  
Maintenance of facilities  
Loss of educational opportunities – students may have trouble getting accepted into the better colleges.

Cutting transportation includes the cutting of the special needs pre-school busing if need be. The law does not require the District to bus pre- school students. The cost for this busing is \$71,000.

Middle School restructuring – the middle school has failed to meet (AYP) Adequate Yearly Progress. If you fail to do this you can be put on probation. The Middle School is probably the least effective school in the District at this time.

We have a student in the District attending the Tri-County Vocational School. The area he wanted to study was not offered at BVT. The cost is the responsibility of the town he resides in. The School District continues to investigate this.

Currently there are no funds in the budget which provide for raises. If a raise is negotiated it will mean further cuts in programs and staff.

This is the worst year in 40 years that the District has encountered.

The School District factored in 12% increase in health insurance. They are hoping it does not go beyond the 12%.

Band director Ronald Bibeault stated that there are currently three band instructors who service the entire school district and a chorus teacher who teaches one period per day. To bring them down to two teaching staff and eliminate the 5<sup>th</sup> grade band program would be a disaster. He wants everyone to know that music and fine arts are a core curriculum. He wanted to clarify the situation by letting everyone know that we have something special here.

Teacher Mrs. Rousselle stated that all but four of her 5<sup>th</sup> grade class participate in band. It would have such a large impact to remove this.

Mrs. Pratt, President of the BMMA feels that cutting out one instructor at \$55,000 is just not worth the impact it will have on the music program. She feels the cut should come in another area. The music program is utilized by 75% of the students.

Mr. Buckley noted Finance Committee members present from Blackstone but not from Millville. He is concerned that Millville does not have any representation at this meeting. He heard that Millville is proposing the possibility of a 2.5 property tax override.

Mr. Buckley stated that the District has cut 40 staff in the last two years. They have not seen any major downsizing of this nature coming from the Towns. The District does not feel they can be the only ones taking and making the cuts. People need to be informed and go and talk to their neighbors and friends about these issues.

Mr. Buckley stated that our teachers are some of the lowest paid in the area and pay 25% of their health insurance. Therefore, if the District sees a large increase in health care costs the teachers and other staff members will as well. They will research alternative health plans as well.

Mr. Buckley stated there are no guarantees that it won't be worse next year. Cuts made in federal aid are not under the District's control.

For the last 3 or 4 years the gross budget figure has remained at 20 million dollars because they have reduced staff.

They may need to include the cutting of 2 or 3 custodians in the School District. The schools have carried the burden of the cuts but the towns have not cut to the level of the schools.

Chorus teacher and parent Paula Ryan is concerned that if the student's needs are not being met by our District they will opt to school choice elsewhere or go to private schools. She feels we need to entice them to stay here by putting more money into our District.

Mr. Buckley stated that families can choice their kids to other schools which can cost us a lot of money if we don't make a decision to support our schools now. The District tries to take in the same amount of kids as we choice out to even things out.

Mr. Buckley stated that the District is looking to hire an Assistant Superintendent since they have been without one for the last two years. More assistance is needed in this area. However, the Committee has not made a decision on this yet.

Parent, Maureen Vasquez wanted to say that everyone is minimizing the situation if they just say they want to save 5<sup>th</sup> grade band. It is must larger than this. It affects every aspect of our children's education. The music education program has done so much for our students.

Parent, Mr. Crivello has been pleased and proud to send his children to the school so far. He feels they just can't handle further cuts. It is not just about band anymore. Everyone supports what the Committee is trying to do. He feels the Towns need to support the schools and wants the Committee to know that everyone wants to help.

Mrs. Perreault asked if the District could charge a transportation stipend for those who choose to ride the bus.

Mr. Buckley stated that because we are a regional school district and receive reimbursement for transportation from the State we are not able to charge for busing.

Mr. Haughhey is so concerned that we are cutting it so close. He wants to know how the community can help to support the School District.

Mr. Buckley stated the Ed jobs money has been used for salaries. Half in FY11 and the other half to be used in FY12.

Mr. Eldridge warned the community that the final decision will be made by the people who attend the Annual Town Meeting. He wants a commitment from the citizens to tell our Senator and Representatives that something must be done to improve the situation in our schools.

Chairman Singleton stated that there have been no definite decisions on whether 5<sup>th</sup> grade band will be cut. He noted the support for the program was overwhelming this evening. In closing he stated that cuts are never easy to make.

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary

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DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING**

**March 16, 2011**

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee met in the Teachers Room of the BMR High School at 10:45 p.m. for the Regular Meeting with the following members present:

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

Also in attendance were Kimberly B. Shaver-Hood, Superintendent of Schools, Donna Scungio, Office Manager and Attorney Harold Gould.

Donna Scungio gave the report on the current expenditure ledger.

Chairman Singleton stated that the Town Administrators from Blackstone and Millville were not present at the meeting. They were needed to vote on contract negotiations. This will now go to the Commissioner.

The School Committee voted on the following items.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Buckley, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and unanimously voted that the vote of the District School Committee adopted on September 6, 2007 for the sewer project at the Regional High School be and is hereby amended and supplemented so as to permit the funds authorized to be borrowed thereunder to be used to pay the costs of various additional capital repairs to the Regional High School to the extent that such funds are no longer needed to complete the sewer project initially contemplated by said vote.

**Motion:** It was moved by Mr. Tringali, seconded by Mr. Buckley and unanimously vote that, within seven (7) days from the date on which the foregoing vote is adopted, the Secretary be and hereby is instructed to notify the Board of Selectmen of each of the member towns of the District as to the adoption and subject matter of the aforesaid vote as required by Chapter 71, Section 16(d) of the General Laws, as amended, and the District Agreement, as amended.

The contract of the Superintendent of Schools for FY12 was distributed to the School Committee members for their signature and approval.

The School Committee meeting adjourned at 11:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique F. Simard  
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary