

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

March 24, 2011

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee met in the Media Center 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
Diane C. Robin, Assistant District Treasurer
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary
Michael J. Buckley, Member
John J. Eldridge, Member

Also in attendance at the meeting was Kimberly B. Shaver-Hood, Superintendent of Schools and Student Representative, Luke Perreault.

Absent from the meeting was Lisa C. Oliveira, Member and Alycia Dery, Student Representative.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously voted** to approve the Consent Agenda which includes Minutes of Meeting of March 16, 2011, Warrants and a field trip request by the Athletic Department.

Luke Perrault gave the Student Report. He reported on the band activities and Winter Percussion and spoke about the Dodgeball Tournament and Mr. BMR show tonight.

This is the last meeting that Ann Lesperance will attend.

Representative Ryan Fattman presented a citation to Mrs. Lesperance from the House of Representatives. He extended best wishes and hope for future success on all endeavors.

Chairman Singleton presented another citation to Mrs. Lesperance from Senator Moore for her dedicated service. He stated that the Massachusetts State Senate extends their wishes for success.

Superintendent Shaver-Hood presented a citation from the School Committee and had a few interesting stories to share. Previously, Mrs. Lesperance entered the Middle School in a sharpie contest. She generated signatures which enabled the District to receive \$25,000 in school products.

Mrs. Lesperance was also presented with a citation from Governor Patrick.

Mr. Eldridge has been impressed with Ann's service and dedication. He goes back a long way with her and never thought he would have the pleasure of working with her again until he became a member of the School Committee. He feels that good people like Ann are hard to find.

Mr. Tringali had the pleasure of dealing with Ann while on the Finance Committee and feels that she has done so much for the Town and has gone above and beyond for all things that she has been involved in.

Mrs. Robinson feels Ann is irreplaceable.

Mr. Buckley asked Ann to run in 1997. At the time she didn't feel she had the time to commit to the job but decided to run. She has done an outstanding job and is a fantastic Committee member. He wishes her well.

Chairman Singleton urges the Millville residents to write her name on the ballot. She is going to be truly missed.

Mrs. Lesperance wishes the Committee good luck in their endeavors. She urges parents to consider running for the School Committee to advocate for parents.

At this time a 15 minute break was taken to enjoy cake with Mrs. Lesperance.

After the break the Committee went into **Public Forum-**

Parent, John lodge spoke on behalf of the band as well as other things. He feels that the band is very successful and something we excel at. Some of the other programs have just average success. He asks the Committee to keep this in mind when making their decision on whether to cut the 5th grade band or not.

Parent, Maureen Vasquez gave a handout to the Committee and spoke on behalf of the band. She stated that students who are in the music program tend to test higher. She believes that her own child's growth with leadership and tenacity far outweigh her music education. She believes the band is vital to our community and pleads once again to keep the 5th grade band.

Parent, Patricia George stated that her children love the band and feels it helps with their growth and development.

Parent, Lauren Reilly stated that her two children were interested in staying at BMR because of the band. She feels they have grown in so many ways. She feels that we need the band to keep our town great. She realizes it is a tough decision but feels we need the band for our children.

Wayne Bouchard is an alumnus of the class of 1983 and participated in band while at BMR. He believes it is a superior program with superior instructors. He feels that keeping it intact will be tax dollars well spent.

Parent, Joyce Duquenoey stated that she looked into BVT for her children but they stayed here at BMR to be part of the band.

Senior Abby Fernald feels that kids who are not athletically inclined would struggle without band. She feels it is such a huge part of school.

Haley Bouchard stated that she always wanted to be in marching band and discovered that she wanted to be a drum major. Haley feels that the younger generation carries on through the older kids. She believes it is a very important program.

Cynthia Kelly stated that her son has been accepted to four band colleges and gives the credit to the band program at BMR.

Student Representative, Luke Perreault believes he is who he is today because of the people in the band.

Chairman Singleton appreciates all who took the time to attend the meeting this evening.

Mr. Eldridge feels it is nice to see so many people here. He appreciates that Representative Fattman attended the meeting. Mr. Eldridge believes that public education in our state is broke. He feels it needs to be fixed on the state and federal level. He believes that government needs to earmark money for the important school programs that need to be saved and asks Representative Fattman to carry this message back to the state and federal level. Mr. Eldridge feels we cannot keep getting the funding from the local taxpayers and asks the question, "Why do we shortchange these kids?" Mr. Eldridge believes that if we mean what we say we need to prove it with our actions. When we stand in numbers it is the best thing.

Adoption of the FY12 Fiscal Budget

Mr. Buckley spoke on adopting the FY12 budget tonight. We cannot raise the budget after tonight but we can lower it if need be.

We will still be short by \$1,189,139. They will need to get to zero somehow. He recommends they adopt the budget out of balance and send the figures to the Towns of Blackstone and Millville and ask for the additional contributions.

Mr. Buckley stated that if they go to phase 2 of the cuts it will mean an increase in class sizes, loss of programs and high school accreditation, the possibility of middle school restructuring and the loss of the maintenance of facilities and an overall loss of educational opportunities for our students.

Mr. Eldridge wants the citizens of the Towns to understand that phase 2 would be a disaster. He suggests that they schedule a meeting with the Boards of Selectman and have the citizens of the two Towns there as well.

Chairman Singleton stated that band is saved from cuts in the first phase but if phase 2 of cuts are implemented band could very well be affected.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance to adopt a gross operating budget for the year 2011-2012 in the amount of \$22,470,000. The motion was followed by a roll call vote in which all members were in favor.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lesperance, seconded by Mrs. Robin and **unanimously voted** to apply the following reimbursements to reduce the gross operating budget for 2011-2012:

Chapter 70	\$10,511,449
Regional Transportation	\$277,301

The amount equals \$10,788,750 and leaves the total net operating budget for 2011-2012 at \$11,681,250.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lesperance, seconded by Mr. Eldridge and **unanimously voted** to assess the Town of Blackstone the amount of \$6,914,364 of which \$5,888,144 is the minimum contribution and \$1,026,220 as their share of exclusionary costs.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lesperance, seconded by Mr. Eldridge and **unanimously voted** to assess the Town of Millville the amount of \$2,115,756 of which \$1,679,708 is the minimum contribution and \$436,048 as their share of exclusionary costs.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously voted** to apply additional contribution funds in the amount of \$60,000 in Medicaid funds, Miscellaneous funds in the amount of \$2,600, Pre-School funds in the amount of \$30,000, Athletic Reserve funds in the amount of \$4,000, Interest Earned in the amount \$10,000, Music and Athletic fees in the amount of \$40,000, E & D funds in the amount of \$350,000 and Circuit Breaker funds in the amount of \$140,000 for a total in additional contributions of \$636,600.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously voted** to adopt a capital and interest budget in the amount of \$271,175 of which \$260,755 represents the interest figure on the debt for Frederick Hartnett Middle School and \$10,420 for the sewer connection to be assessed to the Town of Blackstone.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously** voted to adopt a capital and interest budget in the amount of \$115,124 of

which \$110,797 represents the interest figure on the debt for Frederick Hartnett Middle School and \$4,327 for the sewer connection to be assessed to the Town of Millville.

Motion: It was moved by Mr. Eldridge, seconded by Mrs. Lesperance and **unanimously voted** to reduce the operating budget through cuts in the amount of \$825,991.

Discussion of the possible adoption of Section 18 and 18A

Attorney Harold Gould and Ken Lombardi from EBS Foran spoke on the above plans which would mean the possibility of adopting a plan where retirees would get insurance coverage through Medicare.

Plan Section 18 is a state law that when adopted requires Medicare eligible retirees, spouses and dependents to enroll in a Medicare supplemental plan. All retirees including those currently retired and any future retirees would be mandated to take this plan. An exception is provided for retirees who have a non-Medicare eligible dependent who must be covered by a family plan.

Plan Section 18A would mean that all future retirees who retire after the date of adoption would be mandated to take this plan and it would be voluntary for current retirees.

According to Medicare you are eligible if you or your spouse worked at least 10 years in Medicare covered employment and you are retired, and 65 years old.

In order for this to take affect the School Committee would need to adopt one of these plans.

The problem with the plan according to Attorney Gould is that it would need to be adopted by March 31st. The employee organizations would have to be given the information and given time to bargain with the School Committee. It isn't realistic to try to accomplish this before March 31st. The School District may need to consider putting this off until next year.

Attorney Gould feels it is a great policy and a win, win situation for both the retirees and the School District as far as dollar savings and totality of insurance coverage.

A meeting has been scheduled with the current retirees for next Tuesday, March 31st. Mr. Lombardi recommends meeting with them to explain the process even though it will not be voted on by the School Committee and the official change will not be in affect.

Mr. Buckley wants to be sure that the retirees understand that the School District will not be taking anything away from them.

Mr. Tringali would like to set up a schedule to set everything in place for next year and conclude by November of this year so they can get everyone enrolled on time. The key is

to be sure that everyone understands it. If they take the time to thoroughly explain the change it should be accepted by all.

Attorney Gould stated that the retirees can voluntarily go into the plan now if they would like to, however, they will incur a penalty. Even with the penalty, it would still be financially beneficial to them.

Chairman Singleton asked why this information was only brought to the School Committee on March 18th.

Mr. Lombardi explained that MIAA was about a month late in getting out the proposal. He did state that the plans are extremely comprehensive and better than what these folks currently have.

Report of the Superintendent of Schools

Superintendent Shaver-Hood stated that there were no Use of Facilities waiver requests for this evening.

School Committee member packets will continue to be sent electronically.

The majority of staff will be present during the April school vacation school hours and they will not need many subs.

The last day of school will be Wednesday, June 22nd.

Committee Forum

Mrs. Lesperance requested that the May 12th School Committee meeting be changed.

Mrs. Robin spoke on the Strategic Plan and bringing in Teachers 21. She would like to see them schedule a block of consistent time to plan in June when things are starting to wind down.

Chairman Singleton stated that there is an open seat on the School Committee in Blackstone and Millville. He encourages interested citizens to run.

The next School Committee meeting will be held on April 14th at 7:00 p.m. at the Frederick Hartnett Middle School.

Mr. Singleton thanked all who attended tonight's meeting and thanked them for their comments. He encourages the citizens of the two towns to attend the School Committee meetings.

Motion: It was moved by Mrs. Lesperance, seconded by Mrs. Robinson to adjourn the School Committee meeting. The motion was followed by a role call vote which resulted in a **unanimous vote**.

Respectfully submitted,

Monique F. Simard
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Steven J. Tringali, District Secretary