

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

May 1, 2008

The Blackstone-Millville Regional District School Committee met in the library/media center of the Frederick W. Hartnett Middle School on Thursday, May 1, 2008. The following school committee members were in attendance:

Toni M. Harvey, Chairperson
Ann M. Lesperance, Vice Chairperson
Lynn M. Landry, District Treasurer
Catherine A. Robinson, Asst. District Treasurer
Thomas J. Conlon, Secretary - *arrived at 7:25 p.m.*
Michael J. Buckley
Diane C. Robin
Charles K. Singleton

Also in attendance were:

Superintendent Herbert W. Levine, Ph.D., Student Representative Lindsay Poirier and other interested parties.

At 7:05 p.m., a quorum being present, Chairperson Harvey called the meeting to order.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States followed.

Dr. Levine presented the Consent Agenda which included a field trip request from the senior class to go to High Meadow in Granby, CT and the minutes of the meeting of April 3, 2008.

A motion was made by Mrs. Lesperance and seconded by Mrs. Landry to approve the minutes of the meeting of April 3, 2008. The vote was **4 in favor, 3 abstained (Mr. Buckley, Mrs. Robin and Mr. Singleton)**.

A motion was made by Mrs. Landry and seconded by Mrs. Robinson to approve the field trip request from the senior class. **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED**

At 7:15 Chairperson Harvey welcomed Jack Delaney and Bill Walsh who were seeking approval to use the middle school as an emergency shelter. Chairperson Harvey asked why they chose the middle school. It was explained that the middle school is an ideal location because it has everything that is needed for a shelter such as handicap accessibility, showers, and the lay out of the rooms. They also explained that this shelter would be for residents of the Blackstone. Millville and other surrounding towns have their own shelters.

Mr. Delaney also explained that in the case of an emergency, the Red Cross would be running everything and they would never turn someone away because of where they live. He also explained that depending on the type of emergency would decide who would be in charge along with the Red Cross. For example, if it was a case of the avian flu the Board of Health would be involved or if it was a fire emergency, it would be Fire Chief Sweeney.

Chairperson Harvey asked if the school committee would have to give up their authority to the Red Cross during an emergency. Mr. Delaney said it would be a partnership.

Chairperson Harvey also wanted clarification as to whether or not the middle school would be used if there was an emergency in Woonsocket or another surrounding town. Mr. Walsh explained that every surrounding town has their own shelter already. He also explained that the school district would not be bound to anything but the ability for the residents to come and use the middle school in the case of an emergency.

Mr. Delaney also explained that expenses are reimbursed from grants.

It was agreed that the committee would table the request at this time to discuss it with District Counsel. They will contact Mr. Delaney and Mr. Walsh with the committee's decision as soon as possible.

Dr. Levine feels the new principal and new administrators should be involved with this decision.

At 7:30 p.m., Chairperson Harvey reviewed the budget process to the many citizens that were present at the meeting. She explained that committee members, administrators, finance committees and boards of selectmen have been working together for months to construct the budget. After several meetings and reaching an increase of 3.83% over last year, the committee went to a meeting in Millville and was informed by the members of the finance committee that they would support the budget at the Annual Town Meeting.

Following several meetings with the Town of Blackstone, the committee was informed that they have to make additional cuts.

The committee instructed Dr. Levine to make a list of possible cuts. Chairperson Harvey stated that the committee will not make any cuts until they are informed that they have to.

Chairperson Harvey encouraged the community to support the budget and attend the Annual Town Meetings. Millville's meeting will be held on May 12th and Blackstone's meeting will be on May 27th.

Dr. Levine reviewed the following potential cuts:

- High school matron – \$14,660
- Music teacher - \$45,011

- Two fifth grade teachers – \$44,732 x two = \$89,464
- Hockey program – \$30,000
- Guidance secretary summer hours – \$4,000
- Unemployment - \$10,950

It has also been suggested that user fees be increased to \$100 with a \$400 maximum.

Mr. Buckley asked what the impact would be at the high school on class size. Dr. Levine stated the classes would go from 19 and 20 students to 23 and 24 students per class. Mr. Buckley also stated that he would like a session scheduled to go line by line of the budget. He also asked how many team chairs there are in the district. Chairperson Harvey responded that there are three and a half team chairs in the district. Dr. Levine clarified that they are not considered administrators and they do not get paid as administrators. Dr. Levine also stated it is mandated by the Department of Education and we save more money if we do our due diligence rather than not complying with DOE. Mr. Buckley would still like to look at out of district tuition; he would like to keep some students in-house. Mr. Buckley also stated that he is not going to support the music cut or the fifth grade teacher cuts. Chairperson Harvey stated that if Mr. Buckley would like to go through the budget line item by line item she will do that.

Mrs. Lesperance expressed her feelings of how important it is for the citizens to attend the town meetings.

Ronald Bibeault, Director of Fine Arts, asked how much in cuts the committee proposes at this time. Dr. Levine stated that it is probably over \$200,000. Mr. Bibeault voiced his concerns over the fifth grade music program being considered as a cut.

Mr. Buckley would like to discuss cutting a physical education position at the high school; he feels there are too many cuts at the fifth grade level. Mr. Buckley would also like Dr. Tyrie and Ms. Shaver-Hood involved with the budget review.

Mr. Singleton stated that the committee requested Dr. Levine to present a list of possible cuts totaling more than the amount that the Town of Blackstone is requesting because it would not be fair to put the burden on Dr. Levine. The list will give the committee several items to choose from.

Russ Arnold voiced his concerns over the possibility of cutting the fifth grade music program.

Vin Andrews of Liberty Hill Drive also voiced his concerns about the music program. He stated that music is a year round program and spoke on the many positive activities the students in the music program are involved in.

Paula Ryan of 21 Liberty Hill Drive feels that all the students have at BMR is the band and discussed the per pupil expenditures at BMR compared to BVT.

Student Representative Lindsay Poirier said she understands how important this is and that all the students in the audience tonight will not be affected by this; they are here for the future of the music program.

Mr. Buckley asked Mr. Bibeault to report on the number of students involved with the music program. Mr. Bibeault stated that the fifth grade band includes about 80 students which is a small number compared to years past; it is usually about 120. Mr. Bibeault said they usually begin with about 80 percent of the class size and end up with about 65 percent. District wide 554 students participate in some part of the music program.

Art LaMan of Hopedale stated that both of his daughters have attended BMR as school choice students primarily because of the music program. He echoed Mr. Bibeault's concerns that it is easier to get students interested in a program at the earlier grades. Mr. LaMan encouraged residents of Blackstone to fund this program.

Lauren Reilly of Millville voiced her concerns and also feels that the children have to start music when they are young. She hopes the music program will be kept in our schools.

Jim Hault of Cork Circle of Millville would like to figure out how we can get out of the bad Agreement that we have with BVT with regards to per pupil expenditures.

Chairperson Harvey stated that the district does not have anything to do with the cost of vocational students; that is an Agreement between the schools and towns.

Dr. Levine thanked everyone and stated that we are not offering these cuts but they have to be ready to move to cuts if we lose at the town meeting. He also explained that they have been working on the budget since November and that Ms. Shaver-Hood has been involved in the budget process. Dr. Levine stated that the committee has gone through every line item twice and asked the administrators for justifications. The last five months have been all about the budget.

At 8:45 p.m., Dr. Herbert W. Levine, Superintendent of Schools, gave his report.

- Dr. Levine requested that the high school student activity account move to the policy subcommittee. A motion was made by Mr. Conlon and seconded by Mrs. Robinson to move the high school student activity account to the policy subcommittee. **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED**
- A motion was made by Mr. Singleton and seconded by Mrs. Robinson to approve the schedule for next year's school committee meetings. **UNANIMOUSLY VOTED**

Dr. Levine also gave the report of the Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Kathleen A. Montagano, Ed. D., who was not present at the meeting.

- Personnel packets are included in member's packets.

- The job description for the assistant treasurer will be tabled until the next meeting.
- There is one bill for \$5,500 for repairs to the drains at the high school that does not have a purchase order at this time.

At 8:40 p.m., Chairperson Harvey asked if there were any subcommittee reports to be made at this time.

Mrs. Lesperance stated that the next CoRE meeting will be held on Thursday, May 8th at the Millville Elementary School. Dr. Tyrie will be present at the meeting.

At approximately 8:42 p.m., Student Representative Lindsay Poirier reported on activities that have been taking place at the high school. Lindsay explained the *Invisible Children of Uganda* program that members of STUCO are involved with at this time. They are trying to raise money to send to the children which will be used to help with education.

Crafty Readers was held at Millville Elementary School today; Walk for Hunger, the senior citizen prom and the STUCO banquet are also upcoming events. The NHS Induction will be held on May 16th. FBLA will have a blow out sale soon. Members of FBLA recently attended a conference and all members came in first, second and third place. SADD is sponsoring *Awareness of New Drugs* this month. Lindsay also reviewed sports and music activities.

At 8:50 p.m., Chairperson Harvey asked if there were any issues for the Committee Forum.

Chairperson Harvey reported that Attorney Gould received a letter from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) notifying us that we are approved for the sewer project with one contingency. Attorney Gould contacted DEP again and the contingency has been lifted. We will begin to move forward at this time.

Chairperson Harvey is seeking members to join subcommittees. If you are interested, please contact her.

Mrs. Lesperance reported that 44 people were in attendance at the senior citizen luncheon. The citizens did not have any questions regarding the budget. Chairperson Harvey feels the luncheon is a great idea and the committee should continue doing this every year.

At the next school committee meeting there will be an update on the full day kindergarten program. The kindergarten committee will continue to work through the summer and have a presentation for the committee in the fall.

Mrs. Lesperance stated that the school committee will be presenting two \$500 scholarships to graduating seniors.

At 8:55 p.m., a motion was made by Mr. Buckley and seconded by Mrs. Lesperance that the Regional District School Committee **adjourn the meeting.**
UNANIMOUSLY VOTED

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia A. Robinson
Recording Secretary

ATTEST: _____
Thomas J. Conlon, District Secretary