

Regular Meeting
December 19, 2011
School Committee Meeting
Council Chambers

The Regular Meeting of the Medford School Committee was called to order by Mayor McGlynn, in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:05 p.m. Those present were Ms. Cugno, Mr. Falco, Ms. Guzik, Mr. O'Keefe, Mr. Scarpelli, Ms. Van der Kloot and Superintendent Belson.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot, that the minutes of December 5, 2011 be approved:

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:

Voted: That the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, O'Keefe, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. Cugno that the Payrolls be approved:

Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, O'Keefe, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

On the motion of Mr. O'Keefe to take papers out of order for musical presentation by the Medford Public Schools Fine Arts Department.

The students played a medley of holiday music for all.

Community Participation

Melanie McLaughlin read a prepared letter. She said that she has formed a Down syndrome support group to provide support, hope and encouragement to families who are raising or have raised children with Down syndrome. She said that she wanted to make sure that all Medford families who have a family member with Down syndrome be notified of the meetings and that is why she was requesting her flyer be distributed through the schools.

Discussion:

Superintendent Belson said that Ms. McLaughlin's group should be coordinated through the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). This is the appropriate organizational arrangement to ensure that forums are consistent with the various regulatory responsibility under sped law. The school district needs to be very careful on how we identify students in the district for dissemination for specific information. There are very strict rules about confidentiality.

Kathy Aluia, Chairperson of SEPAC said she would like to clarify a point. She apologized because she was having computer problems but that in the future if enough notice is given the flyer can be put on the SEPAC newsletter or on their website.

Mr. O'Keefe said that all should strive to build better communications. He also said that there are many legalities with sped. He suggested putting the SEPAC newsletter on the MPS website.

On the motion of Ms. Guzik, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Ms. Guzik said while under suspension there were members of the group Advocating 4 Medford Public Schools that would like to speak on the technology plan:

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Bonnie McFarlene, 67 Prescott Street, Medford presented a petition with 478 signatures in support of the technology upgrade. The points of her message were the following:

- Upgrade all technology
- Dedicate a line item in the budget for technology annually
- Include professional development for all staff members

She also asked that Mayor McGlynn meet with the full technology committee as soon as possible to come to an agreement.

Principal Jake Edwards introduced four seventh grade students who read a letter to the committee that they had written. The students requested that the committee move quickly that the computers in their school need to be replaced/upgraded.

Ann Thompson a retired professor stated that she had first hand experience on the terrible technology in Medford Public Schools. She has seen frustrated students and teachers.

She urged the Mayor not to cut any more money from the plan.

Principal Paul D'Alleva said that the technology we have inhibits education to move forward in Medford. The teachers need these tools.

Michele Fenwick, a seventh grade science teacher at the Andrews said that the computers in her lab can not run the online simulations that she needs to teach. It is so important to upgrade/replace technology.

Mary Beth Landy, 67 Prescott Street Medford said that she was there to urge the committee to have adequate funding for technology. We have been neglecting equipment

for the past decade. School budget must include funding for maintenance. She urged the committee to please revisit original plan.

Max Weinstein, a member of the technology committee said that every student uses technology on a regular basis. The proposal was scaled back because of the dollar amount but committee needs to work with the technology committee to find funding to provide the best for our students.

Meryl Pearlman, 97 Boston Ave, Medford said that she was here as a professor and as a parent. The proposal effects everyone. Please act quickly for our children, it is very important.

Kirk Newton, 36 Joyce Road, Medford, also urged the committee to do at least the bare minimum of \$4 million.

Aaron Grandis, Marion Street, Medford also was in favor of a complete upgrade and said that it was for the children of Medford.

Tim Bolton said that new teachers that have been taught to use technology in the classroom are going to leave. Also stressed that a plan to continuously upgrade must be in place.

Dan Rasco, 19 Gleason Street, Medford said that there is a need to have a foundation going forward; please consider funding in full.

Bob Candy also said that teachers will leave because they have been trained in using technology. This is not an option; need to find a way to do it.

Kathy Aluia, Chairperson of SEPAC, also said there is a great need to upgrade our schools technology and is in support of universal design.

Mary Finn, 17 Wolcott Street, Medford read a letter from Douglas Carr, a 1983 MHS graduate who is in favor of the technology upgrade.

Discussion:

Mayor McGlynn said that there are no excuses just the facts. He said that the city has lost over \$48 million due to economic times. Tough decision have to be made. Yes, we have the money but we are still responsible for asking questions. The goal is to have the proposal to the committee by January 9th. We are all advocating for getting this done.

Ms. Cugno said that although these are tough financial times this is an investment that has to be made. Ms. Guzik thanked everyone for coming and for their continued support.

Ms. Van der Kloot acknowledged Trish McDonough and Rick Orlando who were there in support of the technology plan. Mr. O'Keefe asked the Mayor what the timeline looked like.

Mayor McGlynn responded that it should move quickly. Mr. Falco also thanked everyone – it is an important and passionate issue to everyone. He asked if it is going to be one or two phase? It depends on the final approved proposal.

On the motion of Ms. Guzik, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

A two minute recess was held at 8:45 p.m.

The meeting continued at 8:47 p.m.

The Chair recognized School Committee elect members in the audience Erin DiBenedetto and Robert E. Skerry Jr.

Report on Holiday Collection for Needy Families

Director of Elementary Education Diane Caldwell read the report. She said that for the seventh year employees rather than give each other gifts donate the monies to the DCF to provide gifts to children that would go without. This year \$4,000 was collected and twelve families were provided with presents. Also this year the Vocational school held a Holiday Food Drive, the MHS Key Club held a Thanksgiving Food Drive, Roots and Shoots arranged for a Giving Tree to help homeless families and animal shelters. The Above the Influence Club organized a Clothing Drive. The Brooks School continued with their tradition of adopting families in need. The Columbus School participated in the Good Neighbors Program. The McGlynn Elementary School held a food drive in November and the middle school held a Secret Santa. Medford Public Schools staff, students and families truly understand the meaning of giving; especially in these trying times.

On the motion of Ms. Cugno, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Curriculum Sub Committee Report

Chairperson Van der Kloot read the minutes of the December 8, 2011 meeting. The first item on the agenda was the Junior Naval ROTC Program by Commander Hafner. The program was explained to the committee. The key points include:

- There are 700,000 students involved in this program nationwide. It is not setup as a feeder program for the military.
- Students participate five periods and days per week. It can be a one-year elective but can also be a four-year sequential program. Open to both males and females.
- Cadets wear a uniform to school one day per week.
- There are many ways to earn merit ribbons. Many involve community service activities.
- There is no student cost for the program. School system usually pays half the cost of each teacher involved. It is generally equivalent to a starting teacher's salary. Navy picks up the remaining cost.
- There is generally a two-year waiting period to have a program approved by the Navy. States that have fewer existing programs have a better chance for quicker approval. Since Massachusetts only has five programs at this time there would be a good chance of a speedier approval. Of course, much depends upon the budget in Washington.
- Sample curricula materials and textbook were presented for sub committee review.
- The selection of teacher(s) is made by the school district from among all available

The Superintendent and members then asked Commander Hafner several questions. The Chairperson thanked him for his presentation.

A brief recess was held.

The topic of recess was then held.

The Superintendent explained that several years ago the Massachusetts Board of Education decided that school systems had great flexibility in how much time had to be official for physical education. The range could be anywhere from one time per year to every day. In recent times there has been increasing concern for offering more physical exercise to deal with childhood obesity and general health. However, there has been no regulation change. The Medford Public Schools does not have a firm policy in place regarding the uniform implementation of recess. Also, there is no policy in place about the option for teachers to use recess as a punishment. The Superintendent further explained that in some instances the denial of recess could be a safety issue when it is determined that a student could be a safety risk to either himself/herself or other students. The committee members heard comments for the elementary principals and Eileen DiBattista.

Discussion:

Mr. O'Keefe would like the process of application to begin since it is a two year process. Ms. Van der Kloot said that there is a need to have the input of the headmaster before the process can move forward. Ms. Cugno also would like a meeting with the headmaster before an application is files. Ms. Van der Kloot feels it is a great program and a possible fit with Medford and would like to invite Commander Hafner to return to speak with Dr. Krueger.

Ms. Van der Kloot made motion to invite Commander Hafner to return to speak with Dr. Krueger and explore the application process, seconded by Mr. O'Keefe:

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Communications:

Robert Maloney, Athletic Director request to approve Medford High School Varsity Boys Basketball team to participate in Orlando Florida Holiday Tournament December 27 – 31, 2011.

On the motion of approval, Ms. Van der Kloot stated that this item was not received in a timely manner. She asked that next time more notice be given for approval. She also asked why only twelve players were going? How were they selected? How is this being funded?

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Faye Adams. Mrs. Adams was a long time Medford High School secretary

and avid Mustang booster. She was the mother of Andrews Middle School Senior Custodian Warren Adams.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Peter Sabia. Peter was a star athlete at Medford High School and his family was very active in the Medford Public Schools for many years.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of James Pearson. Mr. Pearson was a custodian for the Medford Public Schools for many years. He was the husband of Ruthanne Pearson longtime secretary at Medford High School.

A moment of silence was held.

Update on Educator Evaluation System

Assistant Superintendent Beverly Nelson stated that the school districts have been waiting for guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in regards to the new regulations. On January 10th the DESE will be releasing the new evaluation model. Districts are being asked to register a team for a webinar/conference call on January 10th for one of the “Getting Started” Workshops. Administration has met with the Teachers Association regarding the new evaluation tool. At this time the school committee was asked if a member would volunteer to be on the team. Members Van der Kloot and Skerry volunteered.

On the motion of Mr. O’Keefe, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on Academic Support Programs

Assistant Superintendent Nelson presented the report. She said that the Academic Support Grant is a state funded grant that districts receive each year to develop academic programs to assist students in passing the high school level MCAS. Funds can only be used for high school programs. The program is free of charge for eligible students. The Office of the Assistant Superintendent oversees all aspects of the grant and programs it supports. This year Medford received \$34,900 in funds to support both winter and summer programs. Most of the funding is utilized to pay teachers to teach in the after school, Saturday and summer programs. The grant requires that the district provide support for all juniors and seniors as well as students who have exited high school who have not yet passed the competency determination for English, mathematics and science. Discussion: Mr. O’Keefe asked about the data collected. How many students participate in the program and does the data show an improvement in scores. He also suggested

including these results in the letter that is sent to parents. Mrs. Nelson said that data must be collected and submitted to the DESE along with pre and post test scores. On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Financial Report

Ann Giombetti, Director of Finance presented the monthly report. She said that items of note this month include homeless transportation which is up from last year. Sped Out of District Tuition is constantly being monitored at this time. Undistributed – unemployment at this time is below budget and will be watched carefully. Buildings and Grounds especially heating is showing a savings from last year. All accounts are being carefully monitored.

Discussion:

Mr. Falco asked if there are any major areas of concern? Ms. Giombetti said that the sub account is the major one at this time because of the many maternity leaves so early in the year. Mr. Falco also asked if there are any major projects that Mr. Windt is working on? Ms. Giombetti replied that he is in the process of acquiring a grant from National Grid to replace the lighting.

On the motion of Mr. Falco, the report was accepted and placed on file.

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

All members thanked Ms. Guzik and Mr. O’Keefe and reflected on the past two years. They were presented with commemorative gavels as a token for their service.

On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli to go into Executive Session at 10:00 p.m. for the discussion the following items:

- Stipend Drivers Education Coordinator
- Contract Negotiations Assistant Superintendent of Schools
- Director of Elementary Education Title Change
- Superintendent of Schools Contract Negotiations

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, O’Keefe, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

The School Committee returned to open session at 10:25 p.m. for the following votes:

Stipend Drivers Education Coordinator – that the position including the \$5,000 stipend be included in the contract between the MTA and Medford School Committee.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, O'Keefe, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Director of Elementary Education Title Change – Title changed to Assistant Superintendent and salary increase of 1% for FY12.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, O'Keefe, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Contract Negotiations Assistant Superintendent of Schools – title be changed to Deputy Superintendent - salary increase 3% FY11 and 3% FY12

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 1 – O'Keefe
Absent: 0

Superintendent of Schools Contract Negotiations – 2% FY11, 3% FY 12

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn
Nay: 1 – O'Keefe
Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. Guzik that the meeting be adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Respectfully submitted:

John Falco
Secretary

