

Regular Meeting
October 17, 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 the rules were suspended at this time to take items out of order.

Report on Attorney General's *When You Turn 18 Program*

Superintendent Belson stated that this program is an important component of helping our young people make the transition to legal adulthood. He introduced Attorney General and Medford resident Martha Coakley. Attorney General Coakley thanked Mayor McGlynn and Superintendent Belson for inviting her to present this new initiative. She said that her department is working in many ways to keep kids safe. She also stated that eighteen is a crucial time for young adults. They have many legal rights including the right to vote, jury duty, establishing credit and signing of leases. The guide gives an overview of some of these new opportunities to participate as a legal adult and gives some tips for handling finances, understanding the legal obligations involved when signing a contract, fully participating in our civic duty and more.

Discussion: Mrs. Van der Kloot asked why she didn't think of the program sooner. All members thanked Attorney General Coakley for her hard work.

On the motion to accept the report and place on file.

Voted:

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Debbie Steiner-Hayes, President of the Medford Family Network was given permission to speak regarding the Medford Family Network fundraiser "Night of 10,000 Balloons" which will be held at Spring Step on Friday, November 4th from 7:30 – 11:00p.m. A great night of food and dance is planned.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot, that the minutes of October 3, 2011 be approved:

Voted: Approval of Minutes.

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

On the motion of Ms. Guzik that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:

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

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 – O’Keefe

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

Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 6 - Cugno, Falco, Guzik, Scarpelli, Van der Kloot, McGlynn

Nay: 0

Absent: 1 – O’Keefe

Discussion of Middle School Mathematics

Alexander Pancic and Theodora Stratis, 12 Cushing Street Medford were given permission to speak on the subject. Mr. Pancic told the committee that the reason that he was at the meeting was that his daughter had been placed in pre-algebra due to her grade on the qualifying test. He started on September 8th to try to get her class changed to algebra but had not been successful. Principal Edwards told him that he could not change his daughter’s class. Mr. Pancic said that his daughter is a top science student and will not be able to move along because of algebra. Superintendent Belson said that he understands that they are advocating for their child but that the placement was not just based on one test. Mayor McGlynn stated that he was not comfortable speaking about a student in a public forum and suggested that Superintendent Belson have a meeting with the parents.

Mr. Scarpelli said that he spoke with other parents regarding this subject and that there are a few students in this category. He learned that it is not only one test score but also the recommendation of the math teachers. Mrs. Cugno feels there is a miscommunication here and that she also is not comfortable discussing this in public. She said that she had previously inquired whether taking pre-algebra in middle school would affect the high school curriculum and was told that it would not. Mrs. Van der Kloot said that this is not the first time; this was discussed a couple of years ago. If the parent requests the move, it should be done. Is this class at the maximum numbers? If there is room why not move the student. Superintendent Belson said that he is comfortable with the decision made and will meet with all involved. Ms. Guzik asked if there were equal sections of algebra at both the McGlynn and the Andrews. She was told that there are three sections at the McGlynn and only one at the Andrews. At this time Carolyn Joy spoke to the committee regarding the clarification of the prerequisite behind the placement. She said that a standardized test was used to assess basic skills. We do not want to set students up for failure. Mrs. Van der Kloot once again said that the thing that bothers her is that the parents want it. Mr. Scarpelli asked if the students were given the option to double up on math during the freshman year. Ms. Joy said that if a student comes to her and discusses

their intent they can be approved to double up in the sophomore year giving them the chance to reach calculus. Mr. Falco asked Ms. Joy how many students were in each section? She answered that the average class size is twenty-four.

On the motion of Mr. Falco, that the item be moved to subcommittee on curriculum.

Voted:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve Concussion Policy

Eileen DiBattista, Supervisor of Health and Kristen Goodell M.D. made the presentation to the committee. Ms. DiBattista said that the preliminary work on the policy began in the spring but the guidelines for schools were not issued until August 2011. Key provisions of the regulations include school policies and procedures, training, participation requirements for students and parents, exclusion from play, medical clearance and return to play, roles and responsibilities of key school personnel, record maintenance and reporting. Schools must provide affirmation of the development of school policies to DPH no later than January 1, 2012. Additionally, schools must provide annual statistics regarding the total number of Report of Head Injury Forms and the total number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in any extracurricular athletic activities. All forms must be maintained for three years. Also of importance is the pre-participation requirements and training for all students and must be completed prior to practice or competition. The following persons annually shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Medford Public Schools: coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers, school and team physicians, school nurses, athletic directors, director of a marching band, parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity and students who participate in an extracurricular activity.

Discussion:

Mr. Scarpelli asked if Dr. Krueger was on board with the recommended policy because of the academic piece. He also asked Dr. Goodell if they would be implementing a baseline test that he feels is very important. Dr. Goodell replied that they have been looking into three different baseline tests. They are very expensive so they are still investigating all options.

On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli, that the recommendation be approved

Voted:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Report on Kindergarten Assessment Pilot Program

Superintendent Belson presented the report. He said that Massachusetts Early Education Commissioner Sherrie Killins has asked the Medford Superintendent to participate in the development of the Massachusetts Kindergarten Entry Assessment (MKEA) system. The purposes of this initiative are to produce a common measure of children's school readiness and to track learning across all developmental domains (e.g. cognitive,

physical, social, emotional). Ultimately, communities will be required to use an evidence based tool to generate common data and metrics for measuring school preparedness. Medford will take a lead role in the development of this instrument and in so doing will be eligible for early infusions of ELCP funding.

On the motion of Mr. Falco that the report be accepted and placed on file:

Voted:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Federal Education Program Update

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has announced that it will apply for a “waiver” of NCLB regulations. The waiver process announced by Education Secretary Arne Duncan has been welcomed by states and communities across the nation. The initial Congressional reaction to the process was mixed because many in that body saw the waiver process as an attempt to avoid congressional legislative authority. Over time, however, it has spurred Congress to renew its interest in revising NCLB/ESEA which has not been reviewed since 2007. Senator Thomas Harkin (D. Iowa), Chairperson of the Senate Education Committee, issued a proposal that would dramatically change the NCLB accountability system. This proposal would scrap the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) measure and would substitute a state requirement to demonstrate “continuous improvement” for all students. The proposed bill would keep testing programs in place but remove the 2014 deadline for achieving 100% proficiency. It would also require states to develop new teacher evaluation systems. Massachusetts is already on that road. States would also be required to set college and career ready standards. This proposal is only in its nascent stage and will have opposition from a wide variety of groups. However, it represent the first significant attempt at dealing with the obvious flaws of NCLB and the myriad of issues generated by its implementation over the last ten years.

On the motion of Ms. Guzik that the report be accepted and placed on file:

Voted:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

Financial Report

Anne Giombetti, Director of Finance and Administration presented the financial report as of October 12, 2011. Overall, expenditures are reflective of this time of the school year. Schools spend most of their supply budgets early in the year. Salaries paid are on schedule. A few items of note include substitute teachers, unemployment, elementary supplies and textbooks, special education summer learning, utilities and heat and sped out of district. These accounts will be carefully watched over the next few months. You will be kept updated and informed of potential financial issues.

On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli that the report be accepted and placed on file:

Voted:

Yes: 6

No: 0

Absent: 1

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Lidia D'Alleva. Mrs. D'Alleva was the grandmother of Paul D'Alleva, Principal of the Andrews Middle School.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Justin Goguen. Justin was a graduate of Medford High School Class of 2009.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Angela Lepore. Mrs. Lepore was the wife of former Medford School Committee member Attorney Amato Lepore. She was the mother of Dr. Lorenzo Lepore and his wife Nelida, Medford High School teacher and Amato Lepore Jr. and his wife Elizabeth. Mrs. Lepore was active in community affairs for many years.

A moment of silence was held.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot that the meeting be adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Respectfully submitted:

John Falco
Secretary