

Regular Meeting  
December 7, 2015  
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 7:00 p.m. Those present were Ms. DiBenedetto, Mr. Falco, Mr. Scarpelli, Mr. Skerry, Mayor McGlynn and Superintendent Belson. Ms. Cugno and Ms. Van der Kloot were absent.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that the minutes of November 16, 2015 be approved:  
Vote:

Yes: 5  
No: 0  
Absent: 2

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved:  
Voted: That the Bills/Transfer of Funds be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 5 DiBenedetto, Falco, Scarpelli, Skerry, McGlynn  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 2 Cugno, Van der Kloot

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto that the Payrolls be approved:  
Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 5 DiBenedetto, Falco, Scarpelli, Skerry, McGlynn  
Nay: 0  
Absent: 2 Cugno, Van der Kloot

Ms. Van der Kloot arrived at 7:05 p.m.

Recommendation to Approve MHS/MVTHS Graduation Date – June 8, 2016  
Superintendent Belson stated that Dr. Perella has requested the Commencement Exercises for the Medford High School Class of 2016 be held on Wednesday, June 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry the recommendation was approved.

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve the Site for MHS/MVTHS Graduation  
Superintendent Belson stated that Dr. Perella has requested that the 2016 Commencement be held at the Gantcher Family and Convocation Center at Tufts University.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot the recommendation was approved.

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

#### Recommendation to Approve Oral Hygiene/Dental Health Program

Superintendent Belson introduced Health Supervisor Toni Vento to present the report. Ms. Vento stated that oral hygiene and dental health are very important considerations that should be addressed at an early age. The Medford Public Schools has formed a partnership with Children's Dental Associates to provide a program that will help our preschool, kindergarten and first grade students to develop the right attitudes and practices that will promote good dental health.

#### Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto commented that it is a great idea and thanked Ms. Vento for putting this together for our students.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry the recommendation was approved.

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

On the motion of Mr. Skerry to suspend the rules to take papers out of order

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Negotiations and Legal Matters has been moved to the end of the calendar

Resolution submitted by Mr. Skerry commemorating the 74<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pearl Harbor. Jim Barry and Joseph Reynolds both of Medford fought at Pearl Harbor. Thank you to them and all our brave men and women who serve this country.

A moment of silence was held.

#### Report on Impact Ability Program

Superintendent Belson presented the report. He stated that the Impact Ability program teaches personal safety and assertive communication skills to individuals with a wide range of disabilities. The program is research based and is designed to help students with disabilities recognize abusive and unsafe situations as well as protect and advocate for themselves. People with disabilities are three times as likely to experience violent crime as those without disabilities. Women with disabilities in Massachusetts experience more than twice the rate of sexual assault as those without disabilities. Impact Ability is a part of the Triangle disability service and advocacy organization founded by parents and business leaders in Medford, Malden, and Everett. For over forty years Triangle has worked to integrate adults and teens with disabilities into their local communities through employment and residential supports. The program started in Boston in 2011 with support

form the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. A grant from the Cummings Foundation has enabled the program to collaborate with the Medford Special Education Department his school year. Dr. Jan Hollenbeck of our Sped Department is coordinating the implementation in Medford. On Tuesday, December 8, 2015 there will be a program celebration form 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at Medford High School. Triangle Board Member and State Representative Paul Donato will be the keynote speaker. As we prepare our students with disabilities to make a successful transition to adulthood it is essential that we take a comprehensive approach. Impact Ability adds an important dimension to their preparedness.

Discussion:

Ms. Skerry asked where the event is taking place. Superintendent Belson responded in the MHS Library.

On the motion the report was accepted and placed on file.

Yes: 6  
No: 0  
Absent: 1

Recommendation to Approve Girls Hockey Merger with Malden

Superintendent Belson reported that it is not uncommon for schools to collaborate on ice hockey programs especially with regards to the girls programs. This is a way to preserve the program activity. At this time there are three Malden students who have expressed interest.

Ms. Cugno arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked why the application is dated November 25, 2015 and they are being asked tonight to approve this. Why weren't they asked prior to submitting the application? She also asked how does Malden pay? Superintendent Belson said that the program merger will not happen without the School Committee's approval and all the details have not been worked out with Malden yet. Players will pay user fees. Ms. DiBenedetto asked what the cost is to run the program? Superintendent Belson replied between \$35,000 - \$40,000. Ms. DiBenedetto asked about the liability? Superintendent Belson answered that Malden will be covered. Mr. Falco asked if approved could we opt out in future years? Superintendent Belson said yes. Ms. Van der Kloot commented that she thinks that it is a great way to bring the two communities together.

On the motion the recommendation was approved.

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

Report on Status of Federal ESEA Renewal

Superintendent Belson reported that on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 the federal House of Representatives passed the "Every Student Succeeds Act" by an overwhelming

majority of 359 yeas to 64 nays. We expect the Senate to vote in favor on Monday, December 7, 2015. This new act will replace the very flawed and unpopular “No Child Left Behind” legislation. This new version of the ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) has been years in the making, NCLB was passed fourteen years ago. The original ESEA was crafted in the early 1980’s. Essentially the new legislation scales back the federal role and returns substantial authority to the states on the key issues of accountability, teacher evaluation, and school improvement. It maintains annual testing in reading/ELA and mathematics in grades 3-8 and once in high school. The Act will still require that we disaggregate student subgroup performance data but there is greater flexibility on how we can determine progress and appropriate intervention. It encourages states to incorporate more than test data into accountability systems. There is a lot of detail in this Act that will need to be worked out in the implementation phase. It remains to be seen how Massachusetts will use the new flexibility. Obviously we will all be seeking input on how Massachusetts moves forward. It is our hope that the evaluation of students, teachers, and schools will be more progressive and encompassing of the total school mission. Attached to this cover report is a detailed explanation of the many facets of this new Act. Please read through the materials and we will schedule sessions on the specific topics. The implementation phase will not happen overnight and undoubtedly there will be issue differences to be worked out among the various stakeholders. Overall, it is a significant improvement over NCLB but the “devil” will be in the actual implementation. We will be an active voice in this state and therefore we must prepare well.

Discussion:

Mr. Skerry asked if we will receive any financial supplement for preschool, homeless or construction? Superintendent Belson answered that this act is subject to approval. However, the homeless is a state mandate. We do not get much impact aid. The construction monies will probably go to the poorer communities.

On the motion the report was accepted and placed on file.

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

Report on DESE Board Assessment Decision and Recommendation for Spring 2016  
Medford Public Schools Test Selection

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson presented the report. Ms. Nelson stated that the purpose of this report is to update the current status of student assessment for Massachusetts and to recommend approval for the district’s assessment system for this spring. For the past few years there has been discussion about transitioning from the state MCAS exam to a new test, PARCC, which is a test of the Common Core. In the spring of 2013 students in all school districts took MCAS but also targeted schools took a PARCC tryout. Medford participated in this tryout. Last year school districts were asked to select between administering the MCAS or the newly developed test PARCC for students in grades 3-8 in English language arts and mathematics. (MCAS remained the test for grade 10 ELA and mathematics and science tests grades 5,8 and high school). Districts were encouraged to select PARCC with the promise of being held harmless for

2015 accountability levels. Therefore in the spring of 2015 for grades 3-8 in ELA and mathematics about half the districts administered MCAS to students and half administered PARCC. Those districts that administered PARCC were allowed to choose either the paper/pencil or electronic versions for students. With input from the Committee and based on the fact that the Board of Education had not yet made a decision about a new state test system, Medford decided to remain with MCAS for the Spring 2015 test. On November 17, 2015 the Massachusetts Board of Education made an important decision. They will not adopt the PARCC test but will develop and use a new version of MCAS called MCAS 2.0. Over the past few weeks administrators have met and discussed which exam to administer in 2016. They feel that administering PARCC this year will help our teachers and students become familiar with the type of questions that will be on the new MCAS 2.0 exam. Dr. Ricciardelli discussed the differences between the current MCAS and the PARCC test questions. The administration requests that the Medford School Committee adopts PARCC as the assessment for students in Spring 2016.

#### Discussion:

Mr. Skerry asked if we have prep programs? Dr. Ricciardelli answered that the department directors have been sharing sample questions and working with students. Mr. Skerry said that he wants students to have all the help they need. Ms. Cugno feels that you can call the test whatever you want we are all going to be taking PARCC. We have no choice but to go to PARCC. Ms. Nelson said that most districts are taking PARCC this year. Superintendent Belson said that our responsibility is for our students to learn the most they can going forward. He feels if we stay with MCAS we will be penalized. Ms. DiBenedetto feels that they took the questions and put them in a new test. She asked if there is any cost difference? She also commented on how the state could better spend the \$37 million that is spent on testing. Ms. Van der Kloot agrees with her colleagues and feels that Commissioner Chester must be laughing all the way. She said the challenge is to educate the students not to fall for tricky questions. She predicts districts that took PARCC last year will do better this year. Mr. Skerry asked how the teachers feel. Dr. Ricciardelli said that they don't know definitely yet but will know after the vote.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto the recommendation to administer the PARCC test was approved.

Yes: 7  
No: 0  
Absent: 0

#### Financial Report

Director of Administration and Finance Pat Velie presented the report. Ms. Velie stated that the general fund budget is 32.11% expended to date. Currently 6 teachers are on maternity leave with 2 pending. A districtwide professional development day was held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> for teachers, paraprofessionals and kindergarten aides. Also provided was a half-day for secretaries and administrative assistants. A list of all revolving funds and a short synopsis is attached to this report. It is the intent of the MPS to renew the contract with the Japanese Language School for a 3 year period at \$100,000 per year effective FY 16 which is a \$10,000 increase. She continued with an update on security

reporting that MPS is replacing eight key cameras and resumes are being considered for the building monitor positions. Pricing has been secured for identifiable clothing for the building monitor and the Raptor Technologies system purchase order has been sent to the vendor. The telephone conversion has begun in the high school but may take until the end of January to fully complete. Discussion is still ongoing with DCR regarding crossing guard location. Transportation routes are posted on the website. Pricing and details are in the process for the addition of a Wednesday middle school late bus. Additional safety training has been initiated by Eastern and will continue for all drivers over and above their mandatory monthly meeting. Unemployment is budgeted at \$75,000 and to date is \$28,789.91. Electricity cost for July through October are higher than last year which can be attributed to a warmer summer and fall and also the operation of the pool. Natural gas costs for the period of July through October were \$8,574 resulting in 78% decreased spending from last year. Rates are monitored by the school and city departments. All building will be monitored closely for usage as MPS begins a process to conserve electricity and natural gas by identifying possible areas for potential savings. Each year evolves with new financial challenges, FY 16 is progressing as planned.

#### Discussion:

Mr. Falco questioned the crossing guard at the Fellsway and Myrtle Streets. He feels that the Fellsway and Fulton is the concern. Ms. Velie explained that there are more users at the Myrtle stop. She said that the DCR is very understaffed and they are still discussing this matter. Mr. Falco said that the area from Salem Street to Fulton Street is still without a crossing guard and this is a great concern. Ms. Cugno said that there is a crossing guard at the Fellsway and Fourth Street. Ms. DiBenedetto asked if we can't get a DCR guard can't we put a Medford one there. Superintendent Belson replied no, it is not our jurisdiction. Mr. Scarpelli asked if we should contact our state representatives on this issue. Ms. Velie said she will continue to contact and work with DCR. Ms. Van der Kloot is concerned with the sizable increase in electricity and asked how much the pool actually costs? Ms. Velie said that it is not broken down so we can't be sure. Mr. Skerry suggested conducting an energy review. Ms. Velie said that Alicia Hunt was at all buildings recently regarding energy conservation. Mr. Scarpelli suggested looking into incentives for solar energy. Mayor McGlynn said that the city is working with Blue Waves who are currently doing an evaluation. Ms. DiBenedetto asked what the cost is for the additional late bus. Ms. Velie answered \$130 for each Wednesday. Ms. DiBenedetto asked if \$10,000 was enough of an increase for the JLS with the increase in utilities. Superintendent Belson answered that it is a very good increase. Ms. DiBenedetto said she has many questions about the rental agreements and prices etc. Superintendent Belson is working on this item and will have a meeting the first of the year.

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

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

#### Report on Snow/Inclement Weather Emergency School Cancellation Protocol

Superintendent Belson reported that as we head into the winter season we are prepared to provide comprehensive notifications to parents, students, and the community should

conditions require the closing of our schools. Experience tells us that the number of school closings can vary from year to year. Last year we closed school seven times, but there have been years when no days were cancelled for inclement weather. The decision to close schools results from a process that evaluates multiple factors. The paramount consideration is student, faculty and staff safety. We must consider not only the storm conditions but also our ability to clean school areas, streets, and sidewalks. We will consult with the weather service, our D.P.W., and public safety officials. We speak with colleagues in neighboring school districts and transportation providers. As you know we must conduct school for 180 days to meet our DESE requirements. Waivers are not given frequently by the state. This year our calendar gives us eleven days to work with as compared to the normal eight days. By contract with the MTA we must complete the school year by June 30<sup>th</sup>. We are mindful that when school is cancelled that it can be a hardship for working parents. Therefore, it is important that parents/guardians begin planning for coverage now in anticipation of closings. We are also aware that for a significant number of students that the schools provide safety, warmth, and nutrition. There are too many latch key children in communities across the state. We will always try to provide the earliest possible notification to families and staff as possible. However, many times storms intensify and conditions are unpredictable and change throughout the night and early morning. Our preference is to let people know the night before but in any case no later than 6:00 a.m. We do not favor delayed openings as they impact bus schedules and generally result in less productive learning days. We do make provisions for unpenalized late student arrivals.

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

Yes: 7  
 No: 0  
 Absent: 0

On the motion of Mr. Scarpelli to go to Executive Session at 8:28 p.m. for the discussion of negotiations and legal matters pertaining to an update report and recommendations on collective bargaining with all units and an update report and recommendations on non unit personnel negotiations

The Committee returned from Executive Session at 9:30 p.m.

The Committee voted on the following salary increases:

|                                 | <b>FY 16</b>                                       | <b>FY17</b>                 |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| John McLaughlin                 | \$85,232 includes longevity                        | \$92,032 includes longevity |
| Patricia Velie                  | \$105,000 base salary                              | \$108,000 base salary       |
| Beverly Nelson                  | \$147,881 base salary                              | \$151,881 base salary       |
| Diane Caldwell                  | \$124,050 base salary                              | \$128,050 base salary       |
| Kathy Medaglio                  | \$124,894 base salary                              | \$128,894 base salary       |
| Building Principals             | 2%   | 2%                          |
| Lunch Attendants                | .50/hr.  | .50/hr                      |
| Andrews Principal Paul D'Alleva | parody with Sr. Principal at McGlynn Middle School |                             |

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Falco, Scarpelli, Skerry, Van der Kloot, McGlynn

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

The Committee voted to establish the position of Public Information Officer

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Falco, Scarpelli, Skerry, Van der Kloot, McGlynn

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion that meeting be adjourned at 9:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Skerry Jr  
Secretary

