

Regular Meeting
February 29, 2016
School Committee Meeting
Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Medford School Committee was called to order by Mayor Burke in the City Hall Council Chambers at 7:05 p.m. Those present were Ms. Cugno, Ms. DiBenedetto, Ms. Kreatz, Ms. Mustone, Mr. Skerry, Ms. Van der Kloot, Mayor Burke and Superintendent Belson.

On the motion of Mr. Skerry that the minutes of February 1, 2016 be approved:

Vote:

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

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: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot that the Payrolls be approved:

Voted: That the Payrolls be approved.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke
Nay: 0
Absent: 0

Ms. Di Benedetto inquired about items in the minutes that she would like follow-up for: has a curriculum sub committee meeting been scheduled? Does the administration have any further information regarding the Roberts School's scores and were the letters regarding such sent to all schools or just the Roberts. Superintendent Belson answered that Mayor Burke recently finalized the subcommittee assignments so they will be scheduling a meeting soon. The administration recently met with DESAC regarding the Roberts and further information will be forthcoming. Ms. Caldwell answered that the letters were sent to all Title 1 schools as required.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot to suspend the rules to take papers out of order.

Report on Boston Globe Scholastic Writing Awards

Director of Humanities Dr. Nicole Chiesa presented the report. Dr. Chiesa reported that the awards competition is supported by the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in partnership with the Boston Globe. The competition is open to all Massachusetts students grades 7-12. Over the years Medford students have performed exceptionally well in this competition. This year again is no exception. Medford had 35 winners including

5 gold keys, 8 silver keys and 22 honorable mention. This year represents the first time middle school students earned an award. The students were presented with certificates from the School Committee.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Community Participation

Ms. Valdez, 130 Fellsway West was given permission to speak. Ms. Valdez said that the reason she was at the meeting was the cancellation of the GSA Washington trip. She appreciated that the School Committee put the students safety first that was not her concern. Her concern was with the communication regarding the refund. She said that since November there has been no meeting or next step for the 25% that was not reimbursed. She asked what has been discussed and what the plan is? Her major concern is communication to parents.

Discussion:

Superintendent Belson said that unfortunately the trip had to be cancelled because of the concern of the safety of the students. He said at the time we said that we would try to convince the insurance company CFAR (Cancel for Any Reason) to refund 100% due to the circumstances. He said that 32 families lost \$230 each. He said that if the committee wants to make this whole then you can vote to do so but remember that it will be setting a precedent or we can make it a one time refund.

Ms. Cugno said that she has discussed this with the Superintendent and asked if they did not receive a full refund that we should try to do something for the students. She asked if anything has been done? Superintendent Belson answered at this time no specifics are in place. Ms. Cugno said that the students were so excited to meet the legislators. We should try to schedule something for them. Ms. Van der Kloot said that anytime a student goes on a trip there is a risk. That evening the tone was that we would try to work something out. Personally I don't think we can refund all the money but possibly we could do \$100 or \$115 per family. Parents know there is a risk.

Ms. Van der Kloot made a motion to refund \$115 to each family.

Mr. Skerry asked Ms. Valdez if she was aware of the 75% refund. Ms. Valdez answered yes and she realized that it was an emergency. The thing that concerned her was that the students filled out the insurance forms not the parents. Mr. Skerry said that any time there is a cancellation there is a penalty and we need to make the parents aware of this.

We need to put our heads together to get a meeting with legislators or something else for the students. Mr. Skerry suggested meeting with the students and chaperones at a subcommittee meeting. Ms. DiBenedetto said that the students were so excited.

Communication is the important piece of this. It was an extremely unusual situation. We should require all parents to attend a meeting prior to going on a trip. Ms. DiBenedetto asked if they skyped into a meeting in Washington? Ms. Valdez said that she thinks they did. Ms. DiBenedetto said that we need to help the families but as a one time only. Ms. Cugno feels that it is unusual that parents didn't sign the insurance form. Ms. Cugno suggested that perhaps the students could attend the Day on the Hill in April. She would be willing to advocate with the legislators to bring our students.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot, seconded by Ms. DiBenedetto to refund each family \$115 as a one time only agreement:

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Recommendation to Accept Gifts to McGlynn Elementary School

Assisant Superintendent Diane Caldwell introduced Principal Diane Guarino to present the report. Ms. Guarino said that the McGlynn Elementary School received a donation of \$600. This donation will be used for assemblies, field trips and special events. The family who gave the donation wishes to remain anonymous. In addition, the McGlynn also received a \$400 grant from the Medford Arts Council. This money will be used to teach second grade students about the Latino culture and its impact on our music and dance.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto to accept the donations:

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Report on Professional Development Day March 1, 2016

Deputy Superintendent Beverly Nelson stated that the second required professional development day for teachers will be held on Tuesday, March 1st. There is no school for students that day. Various workshops are planned for the different grade levels based on major district initiatives. Consultants as well as members of our own staff will facilitate the workshops. Teachers in attendance will receive 5 professional development points that they can use towards relicensure. We thank those individuals who have contributed to making all the logistical arrangements for this important day. Assistant Superintendent Diane Caldwell said that the theme for the high school is inclusive teaching for all students. The Andrews School will be having a PARCC presentation.

On the motion of Ms. Van der Kloot the report was accepted and placed on file.

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

Report on Parent-Child Home Program

Superintendent Belson reported that the Medford Public Schools is an active participant in the Parent Child Home Program. This program works with families with children 2-4 years old who are challenged by poverty, literacy and language barriers, limited education, and isolation. PCHP is a nationally certified program with a strong research base. PCHP is a home visiting program that enables trained personnel to introduce educational materials that help parents and children develop knowledge, skills and connections needed to successfully achieve in school. Each family receives 92 hours of home visits over a two-year program period. Our trained specialists model reading, play, and conversation activities for parents, and children together. Building the parent and

child together is a proven method to achieve a sustainable intervention. We believe that the program also has a powerful role in preventing child abuse. This year in Medford we will serve 28 families. We have five home visitor specialists and a part-time coordinator. One of our home visitors speaks Arabic which is a growing language among Medford families. The program is a very effective part of our early childhood initiatives. Often parents who complete the PCHP program become active members of our Family Network to continue their learning and to enhance their community connection. PCHP is paid for by state grant funds and by private foundation resources coordinated through the State and National PCHP program.

Discussion:

Ms. Mustone asked how parents are identified? Superintendent Belson said that we are always looking for new people. Ms. Kretz said that she viewed the video online and it shows how the program works. She asked if there is any way to donate to these families. Superintendent Belson said that during the holidays we help these families.

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

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on Proposed Closing of St. Clements Elementary School

Superintendent Belson reported that the Pastor of St. Clements has announced his intention to close St. Clements Elementary School at the end of this year (June 2016). While there is some opposition to the decision, it is likely that the elementary portion of the school will close in June. There are currently 21 Medford students who will need to be re-located in grades k-5. While some will want to move to other area parochial schools, we must anticipate that some may decide to try a charter school. While we respect parental choice, any new enrollment in charter schools by these students will cost the City of Medford added tuition payments. Since the matter has not been fully decided it is a sensitive situation. We will be reaching out to the St. Clements administration to offer them re-location assistance.

Discussion:

Ms. Cugno asked how we are going to reach out to these families? Ms. Caldwell answered that we are going to arrange a meeting with the families and have them tour our schools and learn our curriculum. We want to schedule it as soon as possible and are planning on March. Ms. Cugno feels that the personal approach is the best. Ms. DiBenedetto said that she graduated from St. Clements and the alumni are trying to raise funds to keep the school open. She wants to welcome them into our schools but not rush them.

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

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Report on Chamber of Commerce Meeting

Superintendent Belson stated that over twenty-five people from Medford's Chamber of Commerce attended a luncheon hosted by the Medford Vocational Technical High School's Culinary Arts and Hospitality Programs on Thursday, February 25, 2016 in Café Electra. Also the event was attended by Mayor Burke, Representative Donato, School Committee Members Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry and Van der Kloot along with the administration team. Charlotte Scuderi, the Chamber President, welcomed everyone, including Superintendent Roy Belson, Mayor Stephanie Muccini Burke, State Representative Paul Donato, Headmaster Perrella and School Committee Members Kathy Kreatz, Mea Mustone, Bob Skerry and Paulette Van der Kloot. Dr. Heidi Riccio, Director of the Medford Vocational Technical High School opened the luncheon by speaking about the eighteen major courses of study available at MVTTHS along with the rejuvenation of the Adult Education Program at MVTTHS. She presented a ten-minute video on the outstanding opportunities for learning and occupational skill development available at our vocational school. Lisa Berube, MVTTHS Cooperative Education Coordinator, explained the need for partnerships with the local business community as a number of the MVTTHS majors do require a cooperative education placement in the student's senior year. Timothy Klein, Medford High School's Internship and Civic Engagement Counselor advocated also for partnerships with local businesses for MHS students who desire experience in the public or private sector. He provided statistics that showed how employers value positive work experience over GPA when it comes to employability. Dr. Jan Hollenbeck, Medford Public Schools Special Education Transitional Coordinator also expressed the need for partnerships for special education students who would like to enter the work force. Dr. Hollenbeck presented a three-minute video that emphasized how "customized employment" can be mutually beneficial to both employers and special needs students. "It's a win-win situation for both our students and for employers. It helps to build bridges for our students who upon graduation will be entering college, the military or looking for full time employment. Cooperative work placement or an internship not only builds a student's resume but also self-confidence. We are encouraged by the Chamber of Commerce's membership and their willingness to form a partnership with our schools" said Superintendent Belson.

Discussion:

Ms. Cugno said that she couldn't attend but she is so happy this took place. This gives the business community a sense of our students and what they are about. It was also a great opportunity for our students.

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

Yes: 7
No: 0
Absent: 0

Financial Report

Director of Finance and Administration Pat Velie presented the report. Ms. Velie reported that the budget is 64.84% expended and is on target for this time of year. She highlighted the following items. The Governors Budget does not appear to project major changes for Medford Public Schools. Chapter 70 funding would not provide for much in the way of monetary change. Changes to the Quality Kindergarten Grant program are still in process and the impact is unsure. Heating of Buildings for the month of January utilized 13% less therms than a year ago; overall we have used 20% less that last year. Unemployment expenditures are as projected. As of the report Medford has used two

snow days. The snowless February break allowed for painting and hallway cleaning in the MHS A wing as well as some deep cleaning in other areas. The expectation is that MPS will complete the year as per budgeted.

Discussion:

Ms. DiBenedetto asked why the buildings and grounds and athletic line totals are rising faster than the rest of the district lines? Ms. Velie answered that much of the work is done in the summer so it will balance out and the heating line will assist in covering if necessary.

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

Yes: 7

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto that all rentals including fields, gymnasium and batting cages be placed on hold. Also she requested that the committee receive a quarterly report on revenue from community schools and athletics presented in the same format as the bills and payrolls.

Ms. DiBenedetto informed the committee of an article that she had read regarding the Middlesex Reds. The article stated that the team practices inside at the MHS facilities including the new batting cages. It also stated that this has been going on for four years. Ms. DiBenedetto said that she is very upset. Superintendent Belson said that he is as surprised as anyone else. He was not aware of this situation and he is learning that coaches make deals through the booster clubs. He said that when someone uses our facilities and our name, it needs to go through the proper channels. He said that he recently toured the facility and he spoke with the Mayor about the need to set up a process for rentals, fee structure and maintenance. He also stated that he is very angry and he spoke to the Athletic Director and will speak to the coaches. Ms. DiBenedetto said that she would like a report on all facilities, an overview of all facilities and the need to separate athletics and community schools. It is a lot of work for one person but we need answers. Superintendent Belson said we need to have a meeting to discuss athletics and community schools. Ms. Cugno asked if Mr. Maloney is aware of this program using the facilities for four years? Superintendent Belson replied that he did not know. Ms. Van der Kloot said that it is definitely time to discuss the school facilities and the usage by outside groups. This needs to be at a Committee of the Whole. Ms. DiBenedetto recommended the committee tour the new facility and have a ribbon cutting. Mayor Burke replied that a ribbon cutting ceremony is being planned.

On the motion of Ms. DiBenedetto that:

1. all rentals including fields, gymnasium and batting cages be placed on hold
2. that the committee receive a quarterly report on revenue from community schools and athletics presented in the same format as the bills and payrolls.

On motion as amended by Ms. Cugno:

That all rentals for the batting cages be placed on hold and that the committee receive a quarterly report on revenue and expenses from community schools and athletics presented in the same format as the bills and payrolls.

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Robert Drennan. Mr. Drennan was a longtime Medford resident. He was an outstanding football player at Medford High School and Harvard University. He also served as a member of the Medford City Council.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Nina Rexrode. Mrs. Rexrode was a teacher at Kids Corner Day Care.

School Committee Resolution

Be it resolved, that the Medford School Committee express its sincere condolences to the family of Gladys Mazaka. Mrs. Mazaka was a retired custodian for the Medford Public Schools. Mrs. Mazaka was the mother of Medford Security Guard Captain William Mazaka, custodian Stephen Mazaka and the grandmother of elementary art teacher Michele Mazaka.

A moment of silence was held.

On the motion to go into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. for the discussion of school security protocols, update on legal matters and update on collective bargaining

Roll Call:

Yea: 7 Cugno, DiBenedetto, Kreatz, Mustone, Skerry, Van der Kloot, Burke

Nay: 0

Absent: 0

Executive Session ended at 10:15 p.m. with no return by the Committee.

Respectfully submitted:

Robert E. Skerry Jr.
Secretary

