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2 MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD
3 MINUTES OF OCTOBER 3, 2016 MEETING
4 MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, LECTURE HALL ROOM #182
5

6 1. Call to Order

7 School Board Chair Paul Dargie called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM in Lecture Hall
8 #182 at Milford High School. Board members present were Mr. Ron Carvell, Mr. Len
9 Mannino, Mr. Bob Willette and Board Vice-Chair Mr. Kevin Drew. Also in attendance
10 were Superintendent Robert Marquis and Business Administrator Jen Burk. The
11 recording secretary was Ms. Dana Laviano.
12

13 2. Board Member Comments

14 There were no board member comments.
15

16 3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda)

17 Mr. Bob Thompson, Milford resident, addressed the board regarding its alleged
18 instructions to the administration to provide a flat or a level-funded budget as the
19 preliminary budget presentation. Mr. Thompson felt that giving this directive to the
20 administration would make the administration the keeper of the bottom line of the
21 budget instead of being the chief instructional officer for the district. He stressed that
22 the priority of the administration should be to establish their educational objectives. He
23 felt that it was the responsibility of the school board and the budget committee to
24 worry more about the bottom line, and that it was only a secondary consideration for
25 the administration. He also expressed that the lack of budget approval over the last
26 several years could be attributed to lack of effective communication with the public.
27

28 Mr. Dargie responded that this was discussed at the last two meetings of the school
29 board. He said that the administration was actually asked to develop a preliminary
30 default budget using common default budget interpretations, and that the bottom line
31 of the preliminary proposed budget be near the bottom line number of the preliminary
32 default budget. He said this bottom line number would not be a flat or level-funded
33 budget, as there are many items in the default budget that will have increases built into
34 them. The preliminary proposed budget would therefore be more like a maintenance
35 budget and that it will be conservative in tone as a starting point. He said that the final
36 budget might be more or less than the preliminary starting point budget. The
37 administration was also asked to separately identify any items that they would prefer to
38 have, but they were not able to fit into the proposed budget. An example that was cited
39 would be if they wanted to get a lot of Chromebooks to ramp up the transition to a
40 Google environment, but they were too expensive to fit into the budget and still meet
41 the bottom line guidelines.
42

43 4. Reports and Presentations

44 a. Superintendent's Report

45 The first grade from Jacques went on a field trip to a farm to learn all about the annual
46 life cycle of plants. They also enjoyed their Autumn Adventure Day.

47
48 On October 13, a special STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) night will
49 be held at the high school for girls in grades 5-8, including surrounding towns. The
50 purpose of the event is to inspire and motivate females to aspire to a career in those
51 fields.

52
53 Project Drive at the Bales School had a field trip to the Crestwood Nursing Home on
54 Crosby Street. This had a dual purpose of introducing the students to possible career
55 options, and also to give them the chance to interact with residents. They separately
56 created about 300 baggies of items to be used at the upcoming pumpkin festival for the
57 scarecrow making area.

58
59 The high school band recently went to a band competition in South Berwick, Maine, and
60 this Thursday students will be hosting an apple crisp fundraising event that
61 Superintendent Marquis encourages everyone to attend. They will not be disappointed!

62
63 On October 5, Windows on West St. will be open for the season from 11:15 AM to 12:15
64 PM.

65
66 Superintendent Marquis reported that the Department of Labor had followed up last
67 week on their visit to check on our compliance with their recommendations. He is
68 pleased to report that all areas of concern have been taken care of, with the exception
69 of the three eyewash stations that are scheduled to be installed in the next 30 days. Mr.
70 Marquis expressed his thanks to all who helped with this effort to satisfy their requests.

71
72 An enhanced 911 system is being installed throughout the district. This will allow for the
73 location of a 911 call to be specifically identified down to the individual room level
74 which will aid any first responders in an emergency.

75
76 The additional bus route to the Souhegan Valley Boys and Girls Club that was authorized
77 at the last board meeting is up and running as of late last week. Some of the sixth,
78 seventh, and eighth graders that are going to the club are now using it. Mr. Marquis
79 reported that some students have renewed their club membership as a result of its
80 availability. High school students are also welcome to take the bus. On Thursday
81 September 29th there were 18 students on the bus, and on Friday September 30th there
82 were 20 students on the bus.

83

84 There were no questions or comments from the board or the public regarding the
85 Superintendent's Report.

86
87 4b. NEASC Report

88 Milford High School Principal Dr. Brad Craven presented an overview of the highlights of
89 the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report that was received a
90 few months ago. The report was the outcome of a review done last year by a panel of
91 educators from throughout New England. They assessed the school on various factors
92 to determine the accreditation status of the school. The full report of the NEASC's
93 findings and recommendations is available on the school/district website
94 (www.milfordk12.org), and hard copies are available in the high school main office.

95
96 A letter was received at the end of July stating that the NEASC continued in its full
97 accreditation of the Milford High School. It also reported approximately 40
98 commendations and approximately 20 recommendations. Dr. Craven read through the
99 commendations and recommendations for the board. These comments can be found at
100 the end of the NEASC report.

101
102 Dr. Craven also outlined the Response Plan his team has created to address the NEASC
103 recommendations. A progress report will be submitted to NEASC by May 1, 2017 with a
104 status of each item indicating that it is either completed, in progress, planned for the
105 future, rejected, or that no action had been taken on it. He said that he does expect any
106 items to fall into the final two categories. The district report will also include a narrative
107 component with detailed explanations. There will be a small group or committee to
108 address each individual recommendation. Dr. Craven said that nothing in the NEASC
109 report came as a surprise, and that its findings were consistent with the team's findings
110 from their self-study process. Many of the items on the recommended list are within the
111 school administration's control because they just involve time, and they do not involve
112 significant funding. The three items that require significant funding will need the input
113 of the school board to craft the response.

114
115 Mr. Dargie expressed his congratulations for the favorable report. He asked if some of
116 the committees would need board involvement. Dr. Craven said that was a possibility.
117 Some of the items may already be on the Capital Projects List and would be addressed
118 there. Mr. Dargie asked for school board member volunteers for the three items/areas
119 needing school board input: Gymnasium and Parking (Mr. Carvell), Analysis of custodial
120 staffing (Mr. Willette) and Technology planning and implementation (Mr. Dargie).

121
122 Mr. Mannino also expressed his congratulations and asked about the timeline to fully
123 integrate the analytic rubrics, and if these differed from the ones used for standardized
124 testing. Dr. Craven stated that they were similar but that the rubrics mentioned in the

125 NEASC recommendations would be District Curriculum Rubrics which would allow for
126 more specific findings for the school.

127
128 There were no public comments on the NEASC report presentation.

129
130 4c. Quarterly Reports

131 Granite Town Media Advisory Committee: Mr. Drew reported that this is a busy time of
132 year for them with fall sports tapings.

133
134 Wellness Committee: Mr. Dargie reported that the committee had not met yet this year,
135 but a meeting would occur soon.

136
137 ATC Regional Center Advisory Committee: Mr. Drew reported the committee met a few
138 weeks ago. They discussed program advisory committees and how they best do their
139 job, Perkins funding, and how to get additional members. There is a concern in the
140 business community that students are leaving school not prepared adequately for the
141 workforce or college. The ATC committee is there to tackle that.

142
143 Technology Committee: Mr. Dargie reported that they had not met yet this year, but a
144 meeting would occur soon.

145
146 Professional Development: Mr. Carvell reported that the committee met a few weeks
147 ago, and primarily discussed the Google docs training that happened this summer. They
148 also planned for the new Chromebooks and the transition to Google docs for the
149 district. They will update the professional development plan this year.

150
151 Capital Improvement Plan: Mr. Dargie reported that this report is being drafted now and
152 once it is completed, will be submitted to the Planning Board and to the Board of
153 Selectmen regarding a \$3M bond issue.

154
155 There were no public comments.

156 5. New Business

157 a. Wireless Access:

158 Superintendent Marquis reviewed a memo to the board regarding a request by Jerry
159 Stajduhar, Director of Technology, to spend leftover warrant article monies on
160 upgrading wireless access. These monies were the result of a voter-approved warrant
161 article in 2013. The surplus from this was approved by voters in 2014 to be repurposed
162 for specific items, including technology upgrades. There is another surplus this year – of
163 about \$86k.

164
165 Mr. Stajduhar spoke to the board about the need to upgrade the wireless system at this
166 time. When our current 802.11n system was first being installed in 2014 a new

167 technology called 802.11ac was emerging that was not recommended for our needs at
168 that time. The issues at that time were that the protocol was brand new and very
169 expensive. The concern was that since it was brand new, that there was a risk that
170 problems would occur during the initial installations. The protocol has since become
171 well established and mainstream, and the costs have come down. Since the installation
172 of our system in 2014, we have increased the amount of infrastructure in our present
173 system and it is now reaching its limits. We would need to install additional access
174 points to properly handle the loads as the number of devices in the district increases.
175 The devices that we installed first came out in 2009 and Ruckus (the manufacturer) has
176 said that they will only be supporting them for another 5 years. They are offering to buy
177 these devices back for almost exactly what we paid for them if we buy replacement
178 devices based on the 802.11ac protocol. This buy-back results in a significant discount
179 on the new devices that will give the benefits of doubling the amount of traffic that we
180 can handle, double our speed, and will have a technology life cycle of about 10 years
181 instead of the 5 years with the current equipment.

182
183 Public Comments:

184 Ms. Marcia Brew, a Milford resident, asked about safety/lockdown items on the Capital
185 Projects list which she felt should take funding precedence over technology upgrades.
186 Mr. Dargie explained that the monies in question must be used for specific things and so
187 are not available for the safety/lockdown items on the Capital Projects list.

188
189 Mr. Carvell asked if the district had addressed the issue of increased bandwidth. Mr.
190 Stajduhar replied that the bandwidth had just been upgraded a few weeks ago and that
191 the new bandwidth is sufficient to handle our needs for the near future.

192
193 Mr. Dargie made a motion to authorize the administration to spend up to the amount
194 left on the bond proceeds, or about \$86,000, on wireless network infrastructure
195 improvements. The motion was seconded by Mr. Drew. Mr. Carvell asked if there were
196 any other items that were addressed by the original bond warrant article language or by
197 second bond warrant article that could still be helped by the remaining funding. Mr.
198 Dargie replied that all the other identified purposes for the bond funding had been
199 completed so there were no other areas that could use the funding. The motion passed
200 5-0.

201
202 5b. Annual School Board Goals – Progress Review

203 The School Board tries to target between 3-5 goals each year. Mr. Dargie reviewed the
204 goals as follows:

205 1. Collective Bargaining Negotiations: The negotiations with two collective
206 bargaining groups is ongoing with nothing to report at this time.

207 2. Capital Needs Analysis: The first draft of the plan will be reviewed tonight. We
208 will continue to make revisions to the draft until the warrant article is ready by end of
209 the year.

210 3. Bales School: This was discussed at the last meeting of the board. Renovations
211 will cost an estimated \$3M. No suitable alternative facility has been located in Milford.
212 To build a new building (which would be smaller than the current building) would also
213 be an estimated \$3M, based on a need for roughly 15,000 square feet at \$200 per
214 square foot. The administration had looked for another building in Milford that could be
215 used for the Project Drive program, but there were none available that were even close
216 to proper size. The board will continue to look at this throughout the budget season.

217 4. Explore limited self-funded, all day Kindergarten; this was also discussed at the
218 last meeting. We are still assessing the costs associated with it. It has been determined
219 that it could be only partially self-funded so the warrant article for next year would have
220 some cost associated with it. There would be five full day classes and four half-day
221 classes for Kindergarten.

222 5. Additional Revenue Sources: Pay-for-Play was reviewed in September and the
223 board decided to not support it. There was significant public input on the topic of Pay-
224 for-Play at that time. Mr. Willette asked about the possibility of advertising on school
225 property. A discussion ensued over the feasibility of this. Mr. Carvell suggested that
226 researching it be a project for the marketing and business students. Superintendent
227 Marquis said he would bring it up with that department. No other ideas for additional
228 revenue sources were brought forward.

229 6. Improve Communications with the Public: Mr. Dargie mentioned that there
230 would be increased Facebook notification postings and that the board would be creating
231 a public service announcement for public TV access channel 20 to advocate for
232 whatever warrant articles were proposed for this year. The PSA would likely be similar
233 to the one that was done by the library folks a year or two ago to show the problems
234 with the existing library and to advocate for a new library. Milford resident Ms. Jennifer
235 Siegrist addressed the board saying that she does not have broadcast TV in her home
236 and she relied on the district website for communication but that it is frequently not
237 updated in a timely way or at all. She asked if there could be additional items added to
238 the school district web site. Mr. Marquis said that we have had a turnover of staff for
239 the video recording and production area but that he would like to see more students
240 involved in the future. Mr. Dargie explained that the board has discussed doing live
241 filming similar to what is available in the Milford Selectman's conference room which
242 makes the video immediately available but that would require about \$30k in building
243 upgrades for the high school to make it possible.

244 5c. Enrollment Projections

245 Mr. Dargie reviewed the enrollment projections. He reported that readiness dropped off
246 the list for the first time. The first page shows the overall combined projections for the
247 district including Mason and Milford together. The left side of the page shows the
248

249 actuals for the previous six years, and the right hand side shows the projected
250 enrollments for the next ten years. The second page shows the Mason projections and
251 the Milford projections separately, with the two charts added together for the data on
252 the first page. Mr. Dargie explained how the projections are determined, using a
253 “cohort survival rate” analysis. This method looks at the historical average change from
254 one grade to the next and extrapolates that change rate to forecasted years. He noted
255 that the exception to this is the Kindergarten forecasts which are based on average
256 enrollments of previous years since there are no previous years to review for
257 Kindergarten. He explained that only the 2017/2018 numbers will be used in
258 determining the budget, while the remaining forecasted years are for interest only. In
259 first grade there are seven classes this year, while next year there will be eight
260 classrooms due to increased enrollments. This will impact the space needs at the
261 Jacques School for the proposed kindergarten expansion. As enrollments fluctuate
262 there will be changes in teacher staffing needs which will have to be addressed. The
263 administration will have a staffing proposal as part of the budget. He noted that at the
264 bottom line that in grades K-12 there are 2,346 students enrolled this year and that we
265 are projecting that there will be 2,306 for next year, or 40 fewer students for next year.
266 This decline in enrollments is consistent with the trends in enrollments in recent years,
267 and is expected to continue.

268
269 Mr. Willette stated that a few years after offering full-time Kindergarten we might see
270 an increase in Kindergarten enrollment due to parents being able to bring children for a
271 full day program who might not be utilizing half-day Kindergarten due to an ability to
272 have transportation to or from school at lunchtime.

273
274 Public Comments:
275 Mr. Bob Thompson spoke regarding the unpredictability of Kindergarten numbers and
276 asked if there was a way we could survey town residents as to future enrollment needs.
277 He also mentioned the increase in single family home construction in the area and that
278 it would affect enrollment in the future so the projected numbers beyond 2018 cannot
279 be relied upon. He said that the NEASC was used to predict enrollments in Brookline,
280 and that they had forecasted decreasing enrollments, but that the enrollments had
281 actually increased.

282
283 Mr. Dargie confirmed that it is the 2017/2018 numbers that are important right now.
284 There are certain factors affecting birth rates and enrollment, such as 20 year olds
285 leaving the state and the ageing population in New Hampshire, which will ensure that
286 the numbers don't go up too much. Mr. Dargie also said that he had looked at birth
287 statistics for the town and that there was no correlation to school enrollment numbers
288 so it was not a technique for forecasting enrollments that would be suitable.

289
290 6. Old Business

291 a. Capital Needs Plan: Superintendent Marquis reviewed the updated Capital Needs
292 Project Plan which now includes all items discussed at the last meeting of the board.
293

294 Mr. Mannino asked about the proposed updating of the bleachers, as he thought that
295 they had been replaced several years ago with used bleachers. It was clarified that the
296 bleachers he was asking about were the track bleachers that purchased used from a
297 college in Long Island, while the bleachers in the Capital Projects List that were NEASC
298 recommended were the ones in the high school gymnasium. The bleachers in the gym
299 are very old and are in poor shape.
300

301 Mr. Dargie explained that in his opinion all of the items shown in the top section of the
302 plan that are shown as the highest priority by the administration are high priority items
303 and have his support. Further talks regarding the Bales School will be held later in the
304 budget season with regards to the potential window and door replacements at Bales.
305

306 Mr. Mannino asked about the door hardware lockdown items which were further down
307 the list on the plan. Mr. Dargie said that inclusion of the NEASC items may have bumped
308 some of the other things down the list, including the door replacements. He stressed the
309 need to keep the plan within the proposed \$3M as anything bigger might not get voter
310 approval. The \$3M bond proposal last year failed by 20 votes, getting 59.3% approval
311 where 60% was needed since it was a bond. His opinion was that if the proposal had
312 been higher, perhaps at the \$5M level that was originally discussed, then it would have
313 failed by a much higher amount.
314

315 Mr. Mannino asked about return on investment data for the proposed LED lighting
316 upgrade. Mr. Dargie agreed that this would need to be reviewed.
317

318 Mr. Willette asked about the proposed replacement for the new building automation
319 system. Chairman Dargie explained that the current system does not work, hence the
320 need for a new system, and that it was something that would have a payback as there
321 would be energy savings due to better energy management. Mr. Drew added that it was
322 not just a financial issue as components of some systems are no longer serviceable or
323 available and must be updated.
324

325 Public Comments:

326 Mr. Bob Thompson asked if it made sense to break the plan into categories, each having
327 a separate bond, for example, a HVAC bond, an asbestos bond, and a safety bond. He
328 also asked about having a walk-through for taxpayers so they can see exactly what
329 needs fixing and/or updating. He feels this would increase the likelihood of taxpayers
330 voting yes.
331

332 Mr. Dargie responded that the bond nearly passed last year and if you split the plan up,
333 people will pick and choose what they like and then it would be possible that nothing
334 would pass since people might have different priorities with none of them getting the
335 60% needed to pass. Mr. Drew pointed out that several of the items in the plan fall
336 across multiple categories.

337
338 Ms. Paula Durand, Milford resident and high school teacher, asked if the pipe
339 replacement line item on the plan was a NEASC recommendation. Mr. Dargie confirmed
340 that it was and asked for it to be listed as such on the next draft of the plan.
341 Superintendent Marquis noted that the two line items that were identified as NEASC
342 items were specifically added to the list due to the NEASC report recommendation,
343 while the heating pipe replacement line item had already been on the list and would
344 have been done regardless of whether it was a NEASC item or not. Mr. Dargie and
345 others noted that the pipe replacement item was the number one priority out of all the
346 projects on the list.

347
348 Ms. Durand also said that the Milford Town library held an open house/walk-through
349 and made a video when it had a bond before the town for a new building. She asked if
350 the board could do something similar for our bond proposals. Even smaller video clips
351 could be put on social media or on the school district web site. Mr. Carvell responded
352 that once the plan is finalized, that he and Mr. Mannino were going to work on raising
353 awareness in the community.

354
355 Ms. Durand asked why the LED lighting was such a big expenditure. Jen Burke, Business
356 Administrator, answered that it was not just a matter of replacing bulbs, but usually
357 requires that entire fixtures and wiring throughout the classrooms in the district be
358 replaced.

359
360 Ms. Marcia Brew spoke to the board and expressed her desire to see the safety items
361 moved up on the list. She commented that a separate warrant article per category was a
362 good idea and that the Bales School items should be a separate warrant.

363
364 Mr. Mannino asked about line item 6 under the Middle School section. Why were such
365 extensive renovations needed? Superintendent Marquis and Jen Burk both explained
366 that these renovations have been needed for a long time but have consistently been
367 passed over. At this point there is a marked deterioration of classroom features that
368 need to be updated. The office at the middle school no longer fits all the staff and the
369 locker rooms have broken tiles, showers, benches and lockers that need repair or
370 replacement. The proposed update to classroom cabinetry (line item 8) also addresses
371 this overall deterioration.

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373 7. Housekeeping items:

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7a. Mr. Carvell moved and Mr. Drew seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2016 meeting. The motion passed 5-0.

7b. Mr. Willette moved and Mr. Dargie seconded a motion to approve the manifests as listed in the agenda. The motion passed 5-0.

7d. List of Co-Curricular Appointments

Mr. Ron Carvell asked about the list of co-curricular appointments and department heads. He asked where the stipends were coming from and how they are calculated. Jen Burk responded that the stipends are part of the salary accounts (a total of \$14k) and that they are set by the principal. She said they have remained flat for many years.

Mr. Carvell requested a list of all stipends in the salary accounts.

Mr. Mannino asked for clarification on the role of the department heads. Superintendent Marquis explained that department heads are responsible for facilitating meetings among their staff, developing budgets, coordinating/articulating curriculum and making sure that it is followed and that it is compatible with national standards and guidelines. It is often the same person from year to year unless there is turnover. Mr. Marquis said he would give the board a separate list of department heads and co-curricular appointments.

9. Nonpublic Session:

Mr. Dargie moved and Mr. Drew seconded a motion to enter non-public session under RSA 91 A:3 II (a) Personnel. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:35 pm.

Personnel matters were discussed in non-public session.

Mr. Willette moved and Mr. Mannino seconded a motion to exit from non-public session. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:40 pm.

Mr. Willette moved and Mr. Mannino seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed 5-0 at 9:40 pm.

School Board Chair

Date of Approval

Note: If there is a "DRAFT" watermark on this document, then it is an unapproved version of the document and it is subject to change. If there is no "DRAFT" watermark then this version has been approved by the school board and it is the final version of the document. Original signed copies of the minutes are stored in the SAU office.