

1 MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD
2 MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 20, 2017 MEETING
3 MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, LECTURE HALL #182
4

5 1. Call to Order

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

11
12 2. Board Member Comments

13 Mr. Dargie reminded everyone that the Board typically cancels the meeting before the
14 local voting day, which this year is being held on March 14, 2017. He asked if any Board
15 Members needed the meeting to stand, and they did not. He then announced that the
16 March 6, 2017 meeting of the School Board would be cancelled.

17
18 Mr. Dargie expressed his thanks to everyone who attended the deliberative session last
19 Saturday. He said that there were very good discussions and that it was well attended.

20
21 Mr. Dargie noted that this is his last meeting of the Milford School Board after having
22 been a member for 15 consecutive years. He thanked everyone for a great experience.
23 He said that he will be available for other Board Members if they have any questions
24 about anything. In particular, he noted that he is willing to train other board members
25 on how to update the CIP (Capital Improvements Plan) spreadsheet and the enrollment
26 projections spreadsheet, as he has handled these tasks in the past.

27
28 Mr. Dargie reminded everyone that voting is Tuesday March 14, from 6:00 AM – 8:00
29 PM at the Milford Middle School. He encourages everyone to vote that day and to vote
30 yes on all school district warrant articles.

31
32 3. Public Comments (for items not on the agenda)

33 There were no public comments.
34

35 4. Reports and Presentations

36 a. Superintendent's Report

37 Superintendent Bob Marquis began his report by letting the Board and the public know
38 of a few bills that are passing through the legislature in Concord which are of concern to
39 the District. The first is senate bill 193-FN (SB 193-FN) which mentions an "educational
40 savings account." Essentially this would establish a voucher system which will affect the
41 amount of revenue the District receives each year. Mr. Marquis gave the example that
42 each year, an average of 6 students leave the District to attend private high schools. This
43 represents a loss in revenue of \$21K, or \$84k over 4 years. The second piece of this bill
44 has to do with homeschoolers, the exact number of which is unknown as there is

45 nothing in place for keeping track of homeschoolers in the District. If, for example, 30
46 students were homeschooled in the District, this would mean a loss in revenue of
47 \$105K. Mr. Marquis has given the Board a copy of the legislation as well as a letter from
48 Dr. Carl Ladd, Executive Director of the NH School Administrators Association opposing
49 the bill.

50
51 The second bill to be aware of is House Bill 413 (HB 413). This bill would provide some
52 relief to the District with respect to the amount it pays into the NH retirement system by
53 moving 15% back to the State.

54
55 Both bills will be voted on next Thursday. Mr. Marquis encourages everyone to read the
56 legislation and contact their local legislators with their support or opposition to the bills.

57
58 Mr. Dargie commented that the NH School Boards Association has spoken out against
59 SB 193-FN as the bill violates one of the NHSBA's standing resolutions. He also said that
60 the District spends approximately \$2.5M/year on retirement so a 15% deduction off
61 that would be significant.

62
63 Mr. Willette said that if the vote is scheduled for a Thursday, then it is a committee
64 vote, not a vote of the whole house. The House vote would be the following
65 Wednesday. So that gives Milford residents more time to contact their representatives.

66
67 Superintendent Marquis continued with his report:
68 This week is Read Across America week at the Jacques and Heron Pond schools. There
69 will be guest readers coming in for the kids and even a visit from the Cat in the Hat!

70
71 The Center for Excellence in Food Safety Research in Child Nutritional Programs (a USDA
72 funded program) has chosen Heron Pond and the Jacques School at random for
73 participation in training and evaluation of our food service staff. There will be days of
74 observation of staff at both schools (March 8, March 27 and May 4) and a full day of
75 training of March 14th, the costs of which are covered by a grant provided from the
76 Center.

77
78 On Thursday February 23, 2017, 5th graders at Heron Pond will be participating in their
79 annual Ellis Island Day. This is the culmination of much teaching and curriculum work
80 over the past weeks. Mr. Marquis extended an invitation to the Board members to
81 attend the event.

82
83 Due to the weather-related school delays and cancellations thus far this year, the last
84 day of school will now be Friday June 23, 2017.

85
86 This month's themes at Project Drive focused on persistence, determination and a
87 positive attitude. On Friday February 24, students will be competing with one another to
88 make a geometric shape out of newspapers to demonstrate their understanding of

89 math concepts.

90

91 4b. Unified Basketball Presentation

92 Coach Steve Erdody, student partners, and student players of the Unified Basketball
93 Team presented to the Board about the program. Milford has participated in the Unified
94 Basketball program for 6 years. This program brings together high school students with
95 intellectual disabilities and students without intellectual disabilities to play basketball,
96 allowing the students with intellectual disabilities to have the experience of sports
97 participation and conditioning. Many members of the team spoke to the Board about
98 how much the program means to them and how it has influenced their experience
99 during high school and their plans for the future.

100

101 Mr. Willette mentioned that his son teaches Special Education in Alaska and the only
102 resource they have there is a gym. He asked Coach Erdody to send him the particulars of
103 the program.

104

105 Mr. Drew asked how many games are played in a season and if the team travels. Coach
106 Erdody said they play 4-6 games and they do travel which has been excellent for the
107 student athletes as it challenges their independence. Mr. Dargie commented that he
108 had attended one of the games and that the spirit on display was great. He said that it
109 brings the entire school together. Coach Erdody concluded by saying that coaching the
110 Unified Basketball Team was the best thing he ever did. He said it is not about beating
111 the opposing team but about making sure everyone has a good time.

112

113 There were no public comments.

114

115 4c. Auditor's Report – Matt Murray, CPA – Vachon, Cluckay & Co., PC

116 Mr. Murray brought the Board up to date on what the auditor's report had found.

117 1. There are no changes to the governance letter. The auditor's examined the
118 District's internal controls over government regulations and everything was in accord.

119 2. The only significant audit adjustments to fair value were in regard to food
120 service deficit adjustments. Mr. Murray said that the program used by the District to
121 track student account balances did not account for the liability involved if a student left
122 the district and had a balance to be returned to him/her.

123 3. There were no necessary changes and adjustments for the student activity
124 funds. Mr. Murray said this was a high-risk area and no problems were found.

125

126 Mr. Murray concluded by saying the District was getting an "unmodified opinion" which
127 is the best opinion you can receive. He said that in regards to internal controls and
128 compliance, the District is also getting an "unmodified opinion."

129

130 Board Member Comments:

131 Mr. Dargie asked about the alteration to the food service funds to account for the
132 liability issue. He said it was being counted as an asset but not recognized as a liability.

133 He asked what the approximate dollar value in question was. Mr. Murray said it was
134 about \$16,900. He said the District has done more due diligence in asking for more
135 information and working towards a more enticing food service program for the
136 students. Mr. Murray said an entry was created for the liability at the end of the year.
137

138 Mr. Murray commented that the pension issue has driven many districts to a deficit.
139 Mr. Dargie asked if, in summary, everything is pretty good and Mr. Murray said it was.
140 He said the final documents would be submitted to the Board by the end of the week.
141

142 There were no public comments.
143

144 5. New Business

145 5a. O'Connor Trust Fund

146 Mr. Dargie explained that we have received some more documents about the
147 establishment of the O'Connor Athletic Trust Fund (SEE EXHIBIT). Ms. Burk said that she
148 and Janice French had gone to the Town Hall to look through the documentation. It was
149 not particularly organized but she was able to get the documents included in tonight's
150 packet, including the governing documents. Ms. Burk said she decided against trying to
151 copy and assess the financial history documents as they went back years and were in
152 disarray. She said that it may take weeks of work to identify all the individual
153 transactions from 1995 to today.
154

155 Board Comments:

156 Mr. Carvell said that there are still two important pieces that the Board should get: the
157 establishment statements of the fund and the last quarterly statement. He stressed that
158 it should be a statement and not a spreadsheet of transactions. Mr. Carvell said that he
159 thinks the authority is with the committee to spend any expenditure of funds. He said
160 there is nothing that says it can't be spent. Mr. Dargie agreed and referenced the
161 original will that set up the trust (SEE EXHIBIT). He said his interpretation is that it
162 transitioned to the Athletic Association 5 years after being established. The Athletic
163 Association transferred the money to the trustees in 1995 but that their instructions to
164 the Trustees of the Trust Funds was not irrevocable. Ms. Burk referenced the letter by
165 Attorney Bill Drescher (SEE EXHIBIT) which states "income only" and "distributed by
166 trustees."
167

168 Mr. Dargie clarified that this instruction to the trustees was not irrevocable. The Athletic
169 Association can send new instructions to the trustees. Mr. Dargie said that his
170 interpretation is that the Trustees must follow the directions that were given to them by
171 the Athletic Association, but that the Athletic Association could change those directions.
172 Mr. Carvell agreed and said the Board should find out who should be asked to review
173 this. Superintendent Marquis suggested drafting some specific questions for whoever is
174 hired so they know exactly what we are looking for. He proposed that by the next Board
175 meeting his office will work to uncover the two documents Mr. Carvell is requesting and
176 draft a few questions. Mr. Carvell said just go ahead and don't wait for the next

177 meeting. Ms. Burk suggested involving the Athletic Association. Mr. Dargie asked to
178 obtain a list of who is on the Athletic Association. Mr. Mannino stated his agreement
179 with Mr. Carvell.

180

181 Public Comments:

182 Mr. Rick Wood of Homestead Circle asked if the high school Athletic Association has a
183 separate student activities fund and if some funds may have been transferred there. If
184 this is the case he advised obtaining documentation of non-trust revenues. He also
185 pointed out that the documentation submitted to the Board indicates that a School
186 Board Member is on the Athletic Association and asked if this was current.

187

188 Mr. Dargie concluded the discussion by directing contact with Bill Drescher and if he is
189 too busy to review the trust documents then to provide the Board with a referral. He
190 said to ask if we can legally use the principal (after defining what is considered the
191 principal) and any capital gains.

192

193 5b. School Board Goals Review

194 Mr. Dargie reviewed the goals of the Board for the 2016/2017 school year. (SEE EXHIBIT)
195 This is the final accounting for this year. In the next month the Board will be drafting
196 new goals for the 2017/2018 year. Mr. Dargie said that all of the six goals were met,
197 with various outcomes. (SEE EXHIBIT) He commented that the Board did not do as well
198 on goal #6.

199

200 Board Member Comments:

201 Mr. Mannino commented regarding goal six (improve communication with the
202 community) that the Board meetings are televised; we have a website; we make
203 documentation available. He said that beyond that the greatest challenge is convincing
204 people to show up and vote and they just don't. "We can't make them listen." He said
205 that social media is our best bet in terms of marketing. He suggested using the phone
206 notification system (for school cancellations) for reminding people to vote.

207

208 Mr. Dargie said that he thinks we do an okay job of communicating with the public but
209 the point of goal six was to find a way to do even better. Mr. Carvell said he felt that this
210 year was very positive in terms of communication with the public. We had a few topics
211 this year like full day kindergarten that had a lot of public interest, and we heard what
212 the public had to say and we came up with a plan based on that. Additionally there are
213 weekly blasts from the school principals but we also need to reach people without kids
214 in the schools.

215

216 There were no public comments.

217

218 6. Old Business

219 There was no old business.

220

221 7. Housekeeping items
222 7a. Approval of Minutes from 02/06/2017: Mr. Drew and Mr. Carvell seconded a motion
223 to approve the minutes. Of 02/06/2017. Motion passed 5-0.
224

225 7b. Approval of Budget Hearing Minutes from 02/11/2017: Mr. Drew moved and Mr.
226 Carvell seconded a motion to approve the minutes of 02/11/2017. Mr. Wood
227 commented that the vote referenced in the minutes was 5-0, while there were only 4
228 board members at the meeting. Mr. Dargie agreed and declared that the minutes
229 would be amended to change the vote to 4-0. The motion to approve the minutes as
230 amended passed 4-0-1, with Mr. Mannino abstaining as he was not at the meeting.
231

232 8. Public Comment: Mr. Rick Wood and Ms. Tricia Shea both expressed their thanks to
233 Mr. Dargie for his service and dedication over the years that he had been on the board.
234

235 9. A motion was made by Mr. Willette to go into non-public session for the annual
236 review of sealed minutes. Mr. Drew seconded. Motion passed 5-0.
237

238 10. The meeting of the School Board was adjourned at 8:20 PM.
239

240 11. Non-public meeting was convened at 8:27.
241

242 While in non-public session, a listing of the minutes of school board meetings that were
243 sealed in the past was reviewed. It appeared to the board members that there were no
244 changes in situations or circumstances that warranted a change in status of any of the
245 minutes. No minutes were unsealed and no action was taken.
246

247 12. Mr. Drew moved and Mr. Carvell seconded a motion to exit non-public session.
248 Motion passed 5-0 at 8:36 PM.
249

250 13. Mr. Drew moved and Mr. Carvell seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion passed 5-0
251 at 8:36 PM.
252

253 The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.
254
255

256 _____
257 School Board Chair

Date of Approval

258
259 Note: If there is a "DRAFT" watermark on this document, then it is an unapproved version of
260 the document and it is subject to change. If there is no "DRAFT" watermark then this
261 version has been approved by the school board, and it is a copy of the approved final
262 version of the document. The original signed copy of the minutes is stored in the SAU 40
263 office at the rear (northeast corner) of Milford High School, 100 West St, Milford, NH 03055.