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**MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD Minutes
(SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT No. 40)
January 4, 2010**

- 1. Call to Order** Chairman Bragdon called this meeting of the Milford School Board to order at 7:07 p.m. on Monday, January 4, 2010, in Lecture Hall #182 at the Milford High School. Those present, together with interested citizens, were:

School Board Present Bert Becker, Peter Bragdon, Paul Dargie, Len Mannino, and Bob Willette.

Staff Present Robert Suprenant, Superintendent of Schools; Katie Chambers, Business Administrator; and Laurel Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Schools.

Recorder J. Bradford Seabury.
- 2. Board Member Comments** Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any comments from Board members. None being brought forward, he continued to the next agenda item.
- 3. Public Comments** Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any introductory comments from members of the audience. None being brought forward, he continued to the next agenda item.
- 4. Reports and Presentations**

 - a. Superintendent's Report** Superintendent Suprenant reported that the Middle School Enrichment Program would be running another parent-to-parent program next Wednesday on the topic: "Successful Kids; Parenting With Connection and Problem Solving" With a guest speaker.

Superintendent Suprenant reported that the **We The People** team would be participating in the State Finals on Friday of this week.
 - b. Board Member Monthly Reports** **Milford High School Renovations Committee** — Business Administrator Chambers reported that there would be a meeting this Thursday with the architect.
 - c. Board Member Quarterly Reports** **PEG Committee** — Mr. Mannino said the organization had changed its name prior to the holiday season to the Granite Town Media Advisory Committee. He then noted that a very informative spirited debate had recently been broadcast about a warrant article.

Wellness Committee — Mr. Willette said Superintendent Suprenant had more details. Superintendent Suprenant said the committee had met just before Christmas and was working on two goals, with one dealing with a

self-assessment model (based on Primex modules) and the other being to look at bullying issues throughout the district, with a “bullying curriculum” being considered.

CIP Committee — Mr. Dargie reported that the group had met several times and had lined up the various projects, with the final report having been completed, but he had not seen that report as yet.

ATC Regional Center Advisory Committee — Mr. Becker said there was nothing new, with no further words on a potential petitioned warrant article.

Technology Committee — Mr. Dargie reported that the School District had not won the grant that it had been looking for but had applied for another grant for a Website.

Professional Development Committee — Mr. Dargie said he had not been able to attend the last meeting, which was a straightforward review of the overall program.

LEIP Committee — Mr. Bragdon reported he had been to two meetings and Mr. Becker had been to all three, adding that the committee was establishing the 5-year goals. Mr. Becker demurred, saying he had had to miss one meeting.

5. New Business

- a. Chairman Bragdon said there was no **New Business** this evening.

6. Old Business

- a. **Budget Work Session** Chairman Bragdon reported that the Board had approved a revised Option B at the last meeting. Superintendent Suprenant noted that some questions had been raised, saying he had done some research, finding that he had not been able to get good results about what other districts had experienced in getting new employees. He said internal research had shown that there were already 19 part-time positions in the district, with 11 of those having been in place, with the same people, for 11 years. He listed some of the positions, showing the diversity involved. He confirmed that most of them had been created as part-time positions and had not been full-time jobs prior to their inception. Referring to the question of students on a wait list for woodworking class at the High School, he said this situation clearly was not uncommon, even after a position had been added for the art program a few years ago, but that students eventually were able to get the desired classes. Referring to concerns about the stipends and how they were determined, he reported that a committee had gotten together several years ago and had come up with a formula for determining those stipends, based on responsibilities, duties, travel time, etc., adding that the point system used at that time was still used today, although some adjustments had been made in interim years.

Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any motions with respect to the budget. Mr. Becker moved that the amount shown in the warrant be reduced by \$28,685 to \$35,335,519, by restoring the \$345,071 that had been taken from salaries and benefits and reducing co-curricula and associated transportation to zero. Business Administrator Chambers noted that Mr. Becker had used the original Option B figures, but the Board had adopted a revised Option B at the prior meeting. Following discussion of the revised figures, Mr. Bragdon said the general concept was to add \$313,264 back in under salaries and benefits and to eliminate all the co-curricular items at all levels, for a net reduction of \$31,007. Following further refinement of the numbers, Chairman Bragdon restated the motion as being to reduce the total warrant article amount by \$59,692 to a new bottom-line figure of \$35,304,512, with such savings that come from adding back in all of the items cut under Option 4B Revised, totaling \$314,464 added back, and taking out \$363,976 for all co-curricular activities and associated costs. Mr. Dargie seconded the motion for discussion purposes, saying he planned to vote against it, however. Mr. Becker said that there had been indications in the past to get the co-curricular costs reduced, and he felt this would have the least impact on the system and the School District and that it would provide for overall morale for staff, which he felt to be very important. He noted that he had listened for a long time before becoming a member of the Board, hearing the superintendent praise the staff. Chairman Bragdon noted that co-curricula included not only sports but a lot of clubs and other organizations. Mr. Becker confirmed that the proposed cuts would go across the Board.

Mr. Willette asked if he understood that the intent was to take out all of the stipends—including, for example, the football coach, so there would be no team, which meant that there would be other associated reductions. Chairman Bragdon concurred.

Mr. Dargie said he disagreed, as he felt co-curricular activities were a vital element of education that needed to be supported.

Superintendent Suprenant noted that the transportation costs also included transportation involved.

Chairman Bragdon asked for comments from the public.

Mr. John Parker said his life revolved around sports, noting he taught physical education and was a coach, but he applauded Mr. Becker, saying these were tough times that took a major effort. He then asked if pay-for-play options had been explored. Chairman Bragdon said had it had been discussed in the past, having been brought up by Mr. Willette in previous years. He noted there were costs involved in administering such a program, with the Board having questioned whether it brought in enough money to make a difference. Mr. Parker said most parents were paying

right now in lower grades, and this would just be a continuation through the higher years.

Mr. Willette said his previous research showed that pay-for-play had a lot of plusses, but coaches and former players had come in to argue against it. Mr. Parker said co-curricular was basically self-sustained in the district in which he worked. Superintendent Suprenant said he had given a presentation on the topic after what he thought had been thorough research; he said pay-to-play was fairly common in Massachusetts, where just about every school district had it in some form, but was not very common in the State of New Hampshire, with only three out of 23 school districts in the Class I league having any form of it (including Amherst and Hanover), together with Nashua and some of the private schools. He said those three districts had nominal fees of \$40 or \$50, which fell far short of the \$384,000 co-curricular budget at Milford. He said he had done some national research, finding one of the basic concerns was the effect on students, finding that there was no effect when nominal fees were required, but for higher-cost sports, such as football and hockey, where as much or more than \$500 was involved, there was less student participation, even in areas where scholarships were offered. Mr. Becker said he had looked into the Mustang Website last year and found it cost \$200. The District receives a large amount of money coming in from the trust fund. Superintendent Suprenant said the trust fund contribution was in the area of \$25,000 to \$30,000 per year, noting that one of the factors in the Board's not having taken any action was the belief that parents were already contributing money and time, so there was a question as to how much more could be asked. Superintendent Suprenant cautioned using the "limited number of children" term in considering this, saying about 70% of High School students participated in some form of co-curricular activities, with over 600 students involved, as well as what he would guess were 50% of the Middle School students. He said it was not a minimal amount of students, and cutting the programs would have an impact. Mr. Parker said the figures would appear to work out to be about \$300 to \$400 per student. Mr. Willette said it came out to be more than that, as most families had two or more students involved. Mr. Parker suggested that the concept should be looked at again.

Ms. Tricia Shea, Stable Road, said she had a great deal of respect for Mr. Becker, but she did not think co-curricular should be cut, saying the cuts in the budget that she took issues with were the ones that directly affected the kids, and it was the teacher salary cuts that she felt should be looked at.

Ms. Wendy LaBlente asked how this whole cutting process had started. Chairman Bragdon discussed the budget process, explaining that the Board had asked for a \$1,000,000 reduction in the Administration's original proposal, adding that this was still a 3% increase in the budget. Ms. LaBlente asked if the Board members had students in the Milford School District; Chairman Bragdon noted that Mr. Dargie had two, Mr. Mannino had

four, and others had grandchildren or were graduates. Ms. LaBlente stated that 100% of the students would be affected by cuts in art and music.

Mr. Mannino said he had four children, one in each building, saying they might be affected but his concern was the best interest of the students, and he felt the Superintendent had done a great job in coming back with a revised option, which the Board had approved. He said it was painful, but that it also painful for people who could not pay their mortgage, and money had to come from somewhere, which was property taxes—adding that it would be a non-issue if the economy were better and jobs were available.

Chairman Bragdon said the initial proposal was \$36.1 million, and the Superintendent had come back with a 2% decrease.

Mr. John Parker asked what happened to the overall bottom line with this proposal. Chairman Bragdon said it went down, so it made sense. Mr. Mannino said it was not all about taxes, but the Board had to be concerned about the students, and he felt it met what the Board was trying to accomplish. Chairman Bragdon noted that there were about 500 people in Milford out of work, saying he agreed with Mr. Mannino that it was all about trying to find the balance, not the bottom line.

No other comments or questions being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on Mr. Becker's motion. **Vote:** Mr. Becker voted in favor; Mr. Dargie, Mr. Willette, Mr. Mannino, and Mr. Bragdon voted in opposition. Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have failed (1–4).

Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any further discussion on the budget at this time. No one came forward from the audience. No motions were raised by members of the Board.

b. Default Budget Chairman Bragdon said the Default Budget would stand as it was approved at the last meeting, at \$35,699,871.

c. Warrant Articles Chairman Bragdon addressed the warrant articles. Business Administrator Chambers distributed a handout that had been reviewed by Atty. W^m Drescher and the Department of Revenue Adjustment. Chairman Bragdon reviewed the articles put together at the last meeting. Ms. Chambers said the DRA had suggested changes in Article 3, as shown on her handout for Article 3 & 5. Business Administrator Chambers said it was complicated to put into words for a single warrant article. Chairman Bragdon asked if there were a motion to adjust the language in Article 3 as per the DRA recommendation. Mr. Dargie so moved; Mr. Bragdon seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0). Chairman Bragdon said Article 5 would be discussed in nonpublic session.

d. Policy Proposals

(1) *Policy # 2328, Requests For Federal Funds (2nd Reading)*

Superintendent Suprenant discussed his response to concerns that had been raised at the prior meeting. Mr. Becker moved to approve Policy #2328 for its second reading; Mr. Bragdon seconded the motion. Mr. Dargie asked if the School Board had to approve or sign off on particular requests, or if it were up to the Superintendent. Superintendent Suprenant said the Board was not required to sign off on many of the entitlement grants, but he had thought in fairness the Board should given a chance to express its feelings. Chairman Bragdon said the issue was the word "consideration"; he suggested changing it to "approval," ruling this was not a substantive change. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).

Chairman Bragdon declared a 5-minute break at 8:08 p.m., calling the meeting back to order 9:13 p.m.

(2) *Policy # 2419, Publishing Collective Bargaining Unit Contracts (2nd Reading)*

Superintendent Suprenant commented on his changes. Mr. Becker moved to approve Policy #2419 for its second reading; Mr. Bragdon seconded the motion. Chairman Bragdon said the change was not a substantive change. Mr. Mannino asked if the contract were actually ratified by the Board or by the voters. Business Administrator Chambers said the voters made the appropriation; Mr. Bragdon noted that the contract would in effect be unratified if the voters turned it down. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).

(3) *Policy # 6040, Flags (2nd Reading)*

Bb/pb to approve; **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0). Mr. Dargie noted that it had been listed as a 1st reading but actually was the second. Chairman Bragdon noted that he had observed flags still flying at 11:00 last night, adding that they were not illuminated.

(4) *Policy # 2327, Default Budget (2nd Reading)*

Chairman Bragdon referred to the handout, listing changes he had made since the last meeting, based on the discussion at that time. He moved that the Board approve the second reading as proposed in that handout; Mr. Mannino seconded the motion.

Mr. Dargie moved to amend the proposed policy by replacing it by his own version, which he then distributed as a handout. Mr. Bragdon seconded that motion for the purposes of discussion. Mr. Dargie said he was fairly certain his motion would fail, but he had tried to incorporate his philosophy in his version, saying he would welcome any merging of the two versions if that were desired. He explained that he felt the default budget was

intended to be what was done last year, moved forward by any contractual changes and subtracting out any unusual expenditures that would not be repeated—not the least possible amount the Board could get away with. He noted the continuing desire to include ongoing expenses of maintenance and equipment replacement, which he had capped at 125% to cover any unusually high expenses. He expressed a belief that new equipment involved with the curricula cycle should be there, but other new equipment, such as a truck, should not be. He noted that he had included an amount for replacement equipment, again with a 125% cap. He then concluded by saying he did not think positions should be eliminated from the default budget unless there was a declining enrollment, but that any Special Education costs should go in

Chairman Bragdon expressed a belief that the default budget amount would go down if the costs went down for any year. Mr. Dargie said he had used 125% of the previous year to account for that.

Mr. Willette said co-curricular activities which were new were being added, which did not agree with the philosophy. Mr. Dargie demurred, saying the language at the top, being the RSA for the definition of the Default Budget, said there was no guidance in the law, and the School Board could decide what it wanted as to whether it should reoccur or not. He pointed out, for example, that the same library books would not be purchased the following year, but new, different books were needed.

Chairman Bragdon noted that this was not a new debate, saying he tended to agree with Mr. Dargie that there was a lot of overlap in the curriculum. Mr. Mannino expressed thanks for Mr. Dargie's having put it together; he then asked, as a hypothetical question, if the Default Budget were to equal the previous year's, and the previous year had a surplus, would Mr. Dargie seek to reduce it? Mr. Dargie said he would use the appropriations, which was what the law specified. Chairman Bragdon noted that a large part of the surplus this year was because of something that the School District had decided not to do. Mr. Dargie said that would be a special case, noting that there was a surplus every year, with different amounts.

Mr. Bragdon also expressed thanks to Mr. Dargie, saying he would prefer to have a policy in place that could be adjusted as then Board went along, but there were things in Mr. Dargie's handout that deserved discussion.

Mr. Becker asked how Mr. Bragdon's proposal would cover the library purchases in succeeding years if there were a large purchase. Chairman Bragdon said he would leave it as a value, saying he agreed that the same books would not be purchased, but the history had not been to get down to that level of the budget. Mr. Becker said he was asking what happened to the library's purchase. Mr. Bragdon said the default budget for a following year would include that amount of money (for library books) as it did not fall

into categories for adjustment. Mr. Dargie said an unusually large purchase could be backed to what was normally spent in the preceding years.

No further discussion being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the amendment motion. **Vote:** Mr. Dargie and Mr. Becker voted in favor; Mr. Willette, Mr. Mannino, and Mr. Bragdon voted in opposition. Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have failed (2–3).

Chairman Bragdon addressed his original policy proposal, calling for a vote. **Vote:** Mr. Willette, Mr. Mannino, and Mr. Bragdon voted in favor; Mr. Dargie and Mr. Becker voted in opposition. Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried (3–2).

7. Housekeeping Items

a. Approval of Minutes Chairman Bragdon addressed the 12-21-09 meeting minutes. Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the minutes as listed; Mr. Bragdon seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0).

b. Approval of Manifests Chairman Bragdon addressed the manifests awaiting approval, listed as including Vouchers Nos. 16, 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108, 1109, and 1110. Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the manifests as listed; Mr. Becker seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0).

8. Public Comment Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any closing comments from members of the audience. None being brought forward, he continued to the next agenda item.

9. Non-Public Session Chairman Bragdon moved to go into non-public session under the provisions of NH RSA 91-A:3 II (c), *Matters which, if discussed in public, likely would affect adversely the reputation of any person*, and (d) *Consideration of the acquisition, sale or lease of real or personal property which, if discussed in public, would likely benefit a party or parties whose interests are adverse to those of the general community*. Mr. Dargie seconded the motion. **VOTE:** Messrs. Becker, Bragdon, Dargie, Mannino, and Willette all voted in favor of the motion, which carried unanimously (5-0). Chairman Bragdon then declared the Board to be going into non-public session at 8:36 p.m., and all members of the public left the room at that time.

The Board discussed an issue related to real estate. Mr. Bragdon then moved that the following article be added to the warrant as Article 5:

"To see if the Milford School District will vote to authorize the governing body to acquire property located at 90 West Street in the Town of Milford,

identified as Map 24 Lot 26-1 on the Town of Milford 2009 Tax Maps, which property is adjacent to Milford High School on the north side of the property, and further, to raise and appropriate up to \$300,000 of the proceeds from the previously authorized sale of all or any part of the District's two-lot subdivision at the end of Brookview Drive (conditionally approved by the Planning Board in 2008), and in payment for the same to expend up to \$300,000 of said appropriation or, alternatively, in the judgment of the School Board, to convey all or any part of such subdivided property in exchange for the 90 West Street property, and take any other action in the District's interest thereto. This is a special warrant article in accordance with RSA 32:3, IV, and will not lapse until June 30, 2015.

Note 1: The voters of the 2008 annual school district meeting authorized subdivision and sale of the two-lot subdivision on Brookview Drive, approximately 5 acres, originally a portion of the Heron Pond School property. This article gives the School Board permission to use the proceeds of the sale of those properties to acquire the West Street property.

Note 2: Any proceeds from the sale of the two properties that are not expended in the acquisition of the property will be returned to taxpayers through "surplus" as a reduction in the tax rate after the acquisition process is complete."

Mr. Willette seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0).

The board then discussed a personnel issue, with no action being taken.

No further nonpublic business remaining before the Board, Mr. Bragdon moved to exit from the nonpublic session; Mr. Dargie seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, with the Board returning to public session at 9:14 p.m.

10. Adjournment

All scheduled items having been addressed, Mr. Bragdon moved to adjourn; Mr. Dargie seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, with this meeting adjourning at 9:15 p.m.

Chairman of the School Board

Date of Signing