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**MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD Minutes  
(SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT No. 40)  
November 1, 2010**

- 1. Call to Order** Chairman Bragdon called this meeting of the Milford School Board to order at 7:03 p.m. on Monday, November 1, 2010, in Lecture Hall #182 at the Milford High School, following a public hearing Relative to RSA 570-A:2, *Video and Audio Recording on School Buses*, as covered in separate minutes. Those present, together with interested citizens, were:

**School Board Present** Peter Bragdon, Paul Dargie, Carolyn Halstead, 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. Robotics Challenge Team Presentation** Mr. Frank Xydias, the coach for Team Robotics, discussed how the program had worked. He then introduced the overall winners. Ryan Nguyen and Ben Kaufold demonstrated the robot and control mechanism that had been produced by the team, noting that the camera on the top displayed what was in front of it. Mr. Kaufold said they could not demonstrate the performance this evening because the radio crystals had been switched, but they had been operating the robot from a distance of over 200 feet at the Expo. Director Deloge noted that the Team Robotics students had also been asked to produce signboards, noting that each team had created different kinds of robots to address different problems.

Ms. Halstead Ms. Halstead commented about the turnout that had been in attendance. Director Deloge noted that there had been 14 robots in the competition.
  - b. Superintendent's Report** Superintendent Suprenant noted that the Southern New Hampshire Business Expo had been held at the Hampshire Dome on October 21<sup>st</sup>, stating that the Milford School District had had an active presence. Dr.

Rosie Deloge then spoke about the High School's participation, noting that the restaurant had provided some foodstuffs and students had performed skits and attended the expo. She identified local businesses that had had students manning the booths, adding that the most important outcome of the Expo for the students had been the opportunity for the students to talk to the business people and attendees, saying it had been an eye-opening experience for most of them to learn what support the Town provided. She noted that a student intern had played a particular role, and the Robotic Challenge had been a significant presenter.

- b.** Superintendent Suprenant announced that Department of Education Commissioner Virginia Barry would be spending the better part of the day visiting the Milford elementary schools the following Tuesday—observing classrooms, having lunch with the students, and meeting with staff. He noted that Commissioner Barry periodically scheduled such visitation days as a way of understanding firsthand the daily operation of schools throughout the state.

Superintendent Suprenant noted that the Milford High School would hold performances of its annual theatrical productions on November 18, 19, and 20 at 8:00 p.m. and on Sunday the 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 p.m. He said the play this year would be Leading Ladies, an English farce.

Superintendent Suprenant concluded his report by reminding the School Board and any Budget Committee members present or watching the television broadcast that the annual budget session would be held on Saturday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 8:00 a.m. in the High School library.

Chairman Bragdon asked if Superintendent Suprenant had received communication from the Town regarding lighting. Superintendent Suprenant answered in the affirmative, saying he was working on that.

- c. Update on Jacques Memorial Building Project** Business Administrator Chambers said the project was still on time and on budget, noting that the building was expected to be handed over to the next week, so it should be ready for use very shortly. Chairman Bragdon noted that there was still \$193,000 left in the account. Business Administrator Chambers said they were still looking into the security system and some other things. Chairman Bragdon noted that any remaining balance, when all was said and done, would go back to the taxpayers. Mr. Dargie clarified that only one quarter would go back, as the project was three-quarters State funded.

## **5. New Business**

- a. Proposed Budget** Superintendent Suprenant distributed copies of the green-covered Milford School District Proposed Budget 2011-2012 Draft 1, the gray-covered Milford School District Proposed Budget By Object Code 2011-2012 Draft 1, and the yellow-covered Milford School District Budget Presentation 2011-

2012 Backup Draft 1 documents. Superintendent Suprenant addressed the yellow-covered document, noting that this backup document contained several supportive pages, and he listed the types of material featured on the successive pages, noting that Page 12 was a preliminary timeline for the budgetary process, currently being checked by Atty. W<sup>m</sup> Drescher. Superintendent Suprenant noted that revenue was shrinking, and he then addressed the new expenses on the first page, providing details about each item. He noted that the retirement system showed a 13% increase, with the State having paid 25% this year, but the budget number presumed 35%, as obligated by the State. Mr. Mannino noted that the New Hampshire retirement system had been set to have a limit, and he asked if the New Hampshire School Board Association was planning on challenging that failure. Chairman Bragdon said he did not expect that would happen until the failure occurred. Superintendent Suprenant said the retirement system had about \$4 million, and he discussed details on what was held and what the current rate of return on investment was.

Ms. Halstead asked if the budget were based on new hires. Superintendent Suprenant demurred, saying it was based only on contractual obligations, with new hire considerations being taken up on the next page.

Superintendent Suprenant continued his presentation, describing details pertaining to other items on page 1, noting that it included new equipment pertaining to the science curriculum. Superintendent Suprenant noted the strong desire to get something done with respect to improving technology, including servers, upgrades, and replacement of about 100 computers. He noted that the School District had about 1,000 computers, with 40% of them being six years old or older. Mr. Dargie noted that the Technology Committee was working on a new Tech Plan, adding that the district was not following the previous plan and was way behind with respect to updating/replacement of computers, which called for replacing computers every four or five years, meaning about 200 to 250 computers each year.

Superintendent Suprenant said Business Administrator Chambers had done an excellent job of putting the electricity and natural gas contracts out to bid, with an expectation of \$115,000 in savings for next year. Superintendent Suprenant noted that the total increase was just under \$1.3 million.

Superintendent Suprenant reviewed the revenue items, again providing details about the different accounts, and noting that the expected total revenue was a loss of just over \$834,000, so that the total increase would have just over \$2.1 million, for a 9.4% increase in the tax rate. Chairman Bragdon noted that this was the Superintendent's proposed budget, saying these figures would come under the School Board's control over the next few months, with some changes anticipated. Members of the Board

discussed the State COLA situation; Superintendent Suprenant noted that the final effect might not be known until June.

Superintendent Suprenant noted that the Board would note significant swings between the Jacques budget and the Heron Pond budget, saying the Jacques budget had now been separated out fully, but they still should add up roughly to what they had been in the past.

Superintendent Suprenant then reviewed the new positions, saying they had prioritized, noting that were two students needing 1-to-1 associates, going from part time to full time as the students moved from Kindergarten to First Grade. He noted that the Milford School District had fewer tech support people than other similarly sized districts. He said there was value to all of the recommendations, all of which could be justified, noting that there were waiting lists for some classes at the High School because of a need for more instructors, so he could not justify asking for more technical support people at this time. He noted that the principals and their directors would present justification for these new positions at the Saturday meeting. Superintendent Suprenant then discussed the issue of needing to meet certification requirements with respect to different classes, saying the 19:1 ratio for class size would actually be 25:1 to 27:1 for some classes, with others being as low as 15:1, depending on where the students were assigned and the teacher certifications. He said the numbers were fairly inflexible, saying they might have to drop a program. Mr. Dargie noted that an associated issue was that teachers could not be taken out a teaching team; the whole team would have to be taken out; Superintendent Suprenant concurred. Ms. Halstead asked about class size requirements; Chairman Bragdon explained that the School Board had adopted class size guidelines for the different grades.

Mr. Willette asked for and obtained confirmation that these numbers just pertained to teachers and did not include classroom aides.

Mr. Mannino asked if any of the new positions were associated with people who had been added as part-time in the past year; Superintendent Suprenant answered in the negative. Mr. Mannino asked if the School Board could expect to see increases in aids in the future as Kindergarten aids followed their SPED students into the regular school system—and then asked how the School Board could address this in the future. Superintendent Suprenant said he thought it was not a Kindergarten issue, saying these same students would have needed full-time aids if they had not attended Kindergarten. He noted there were 36 or more full-time aids in Special Education, if not more—adding that there was little control if the team decided that an associate was needed. Mr. Dargie said it was really geared on the IEP for the individual students; he then expressed a belief that it was better to have one fulltime aid then two part-time aides, because of the bonding that occurred between the student and the aide.

Business Administrator Chambers reviewed the budget figures on Page 10, providing explanatory details on various increases and decreases.

Business Administrator Chambers discussed the tax impact analysis figures on Page 11, noting that the left-hand column showed figures for this year and the right-hand column showed figures for the proposed operating budget.

Chairman Bragdon said he expected the School Board would provide a desired number at the next meeting, two weeks from now.

## **6. Old Business**

### **a. Default Budget Policy Review**

Chairman Bragdon referenced the previous memorandum from Superintendent Suprenant and a letter from Atty. W<sup>m</sup> Drescher. Addressing the latter, he said Atty. Drescher's concern was that the School Board, by adopting a policy, was removing itself from the determination of a default budget. He said he was not sure he agreed with that, as the Board could change a policy, but the intent of the policy was to provide guidance for the Superintendent. He referenced Page 5 of Atty. Drescher's memo, asking what kind of legally binding contracts would not be in writing. Superintendent Suprenant noted that staff members were provided with letters of assurance that their positions would be available in the fall, either on April 1<sup>st</sup> or prior to the end of the academic year. Chairman Bragdon expressed a belief that the latter were not binding. Mr. Dargie concurred, saying he also disagreed with what Atty. Drescher had said, since the Board could change its policy at any time.

Chairman Bragdon referenced Superintendent Suprenant's memorandum pertaining to possible obligation with respect to a position reduced from the budget, saying his take was that the obligation was to provide a number that was the same as before but with legal additions and subtractions. If a position were to be removed from the operating budget, he argued, it should not be expected to continue in the default budget. With respect to the concern about collective bargaining agreements, he continued, he thought that would apply only if the default budget came into play for a number of years in a row.

Mr. Dargie said his basic issue was the intent of the default budget, which was to be concerned with one-time expenditure. He expressed a belief that the intent was to identify the same money as last year, with one-time expenditures, such as the Kindergarten furniture, removed. He then clarified that he felt removed positions should be retained, as they were not one-time expenditures. He then expressed a belief that the \$400,000 removed by decreasing staff positions last year should have been retained in the default budget in order to give the voters an alternative, reiterating that the definition of "one-time" was key.

Ms. Halstead expressed a belief that the default budget should be a bare minimum.

Mr. Dargie expressed concern about the need for continuing expense for maintenance/upgrading, saying he felt the curriculum cycle should be retained as an expenditure category and not split off equipment costs, noting that this might mean new equipment one year, replacement equipment another; he expressed a belief that the curriculum expenditure should be the same each year, perhaps with a cap of 125% of the previous three-year cycle because of occasional variation. He said the same philosophy should be used with replacement equipment costs, but there could be one-time expenditures such as for a new backup generator for the High School should not be included, but regular curriculum costs should be.

Chairman Bragdon said he would redo the current philosophy document in the approach of guidance for the Superintendent.

Mr. Dargie suggested polling to get a sense of the board about his views on the one-time expenditures. Chairman Bragdon said the issue was whether members of the Board felt that reductions in the proposed budget should be considered one-time or non-recurring expenses, and thus should be excluded from the default budget. He then asked for a showing of hands from those who felt that reductions from the proposed budget should also come out of the default budget; Mr. Willette and Mr. Mannino and Mr. Bragdon raised their hands. Chairman Bragdon then asked for those who felt that such reductions should not be taken out of the default budget; Mr. Dargie raised his hand. Ms. Halstead abstained.

Mr. Dargie expressed a belief that, if the Board were going that way, the default budget should be what came out of the Deliberative Session. Chairman Bragdon said he would redo the document for the next meeting, saying there could be some further discussion about recurring expenses and related ideas.

Superintendent Suprenant referenced his memorandum from Business Administrator Chambers and himself, saying they would appreciate some standardization. He said they thought the word "obligation" was the most open to interpretation, saying it was before the district to provide service at a certain level, noting that the cost of providing heat might swing dramatically from one year to the next, to provide the same standard of service (68 degrees)—adding that he felt the same was true of staffing, saying a reduction of staffing for budgetary purposes was not in the spirit of default, but that it would be more appropriate if the Board set a standard of class size and then staffing would be reduced or increased based on enrollments. Mr. Dargie expressed disagreement about the heating oil example, saying the price could change a great deal. He said a lot of things would fluctuate, but there was a little uncertainty in such things as

health benefits, such as the expectation on the part of unaffiliated personnel that they would be able to have the same health insurance the next year. Mr. Dargie said the law pertained only to those things that were legally required.

Chairman Bragdon declared a break at 8:55 p.m. for the purposes of changing the television tape, calling the meeting back to order at 9:05 p.m.

**b. Policy Proposals**

**(1) Policy #3515 Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy (2nd Reading)**

Chairman Bragdon addressed Policy #3515; Mr. Willette moved to approve Policy #3515 for its second reading; Mr. Dargie seconded the motion. Chairman Bragdon noted that the opening paragraph perhaps could be taken out, as it did not pertain to home-schooled students or private-school students, saying this was geared for students enrolled in the Milford School District. Superintendent Suprenant said the current statute referenced those other students; he suggested that a reference to the RSA could be added. Chairman Bragdon noted an inconsistency in parallel structure; he then suggested that clarification should be made with respect to alternative learning plans. Superintendent Suprenant said it was actually pretty open. Chairman Bragdon noted that there was no definition of what “good cause” for absenteeism was. Mr. Dargie said the Policy Committee had purposely left this vague, leaving it for the Superintendent’s call.

Mr. Bragdon moved to strike the second sentence in the first paragraph. Mr. Mannino seconded the motion. **Vote:** No further discussion being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on this amendment motion. All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0). Chairman Bragdon ruled that this was a nonsubstantive change.

**Vote:** Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the original motion, to approve Policy #3515 (now amended) for its second reading. Mr. Dargie, Mr. Mannino, Mr. Willette, and Mr. Bragdon voted in favor; Ms. Halstead voted in opposition. Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried (4–1).

**(2) Policy #5009 Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention–Bullying (2nd Reading)**

Superintendent Suprenant said there had been no changes.

Chairman Bragdon noted that the word “perceived” had caused some concern. Ms. Halstead said she felt the wording was very vague. Superintendent Suprenant noted that the statute had 14 statements that were required to be in the policy, including this definition.

Mr. Bragdon expressed continuing concern about the word “perceived,” expressing a desire to see the word “intentional” added, to define *bullying* as “a single intentional incident or a pattern of intentional incidents”. Superintendent Suprenant suggested adding “directed” instead; Chairman Bragdon expressed agreement. Ms. Halstead said these definitions were misused or misinterpreted all the time, saying she did not know how one get around a bad definition. Chairman Bragdon suggested the Board needed more time to think about this.

Mr. Bragdon expressed discomfit with the statement about the statement in Section 2 that the Board was committed to providing all pupils with a safe environment, saying there was nothing in the statute saying the School District had to do this, and he expressed concern about a possible legal bind. Superintendent Suprenant suggested “the Board ensures” as a goal rather than “guaranteeing,”

Mr. Bragdon referenced item 1, saying it implied the school buses were school property, but they were not, and school bus drivers were not staff. He expressed a belief that the word “including” should be removed.

Mr. Bragdon referenced Item 2, saying his reading of the passage was that it addressed bullying that occurred off school property, saying he did not know that the School District had the ability to address that and to provide discipline with such an issue. Superintendent Suprenant said the rule of thumb was that bullying that occurred off school grounds and migrated to school grounds (creating an effect on a child’s educational opportunities) meant that the school had a responsibility to address it.

Mr. Mannino expressed concern about matters of this nature occurring in other schools. Superintendent Suprenant said they would have to be reported. Mr. Mannino argued that the discipline would not be made known because of rules of privacy.

Mr. Bragdon expressed concern about what legal authority the School District had to apply discipline with respect to things that occurred off school grounds, wondering if legal counsel should be looked for, and saying he was concerned about the broadness of the policy wording.

Mr. Mannino said his biggest concern was the enforcement of the policy, saying the definitions were too broad and he did not know how the School District could reasonably enforce such things as Facebook assaults that occurred on a Friday evening. Mr. Mannino question how the School District could make the parents live up to their end of the bargain, saying it was up to the parent to take care of these things, but that this policy statement said the parents could enforce the School District to enforce it, with no resources being provided to accomplish that. Mr. Bragdon described a hypothetical situation of a student sending a message to



another student at night but the receiving student not seeing it until in school the next day. Superintendent Suprenant said much of this was situational, saying this was where the administrators would have to wrestle with the problems.

Ms. Halstead expressed concern about students causing emotional distress, referring to an incident reported by a visitor at the previous meeting, in which that speaker had thought bullying was occurring but both students had said they were just fooling around.

Chairman Bragdon said he was not prepared this evening to vote for a second reading for this policy. He suggested that it be placed on the next agenda, and perhaps it could be moved closer to approval, based on conversations Superintendent Suprenant would have. Superintendent Suprenant said he had not had problems with the previous policy, but the School District was required to incorporate these 14 statements.

Mr. Willette suggested that members be asked to come in with proposed changes or ideas on improving the policy at the next meeting. Superintendent Suprenant suggested such inputs should be sent prior to the Policy Committee's meeting this Thursday. He said due diligence would have to be applied, rather than just ignoring the situations. He acknowledged that this would be very time consuming for the administrators.

Mr. Bragdon referenced Page 3, reiterating that school bus drivers were not staff, so "including" should not be there. He also noted an improper use of "will" where "shall" should be used.

Mr. Mannino said his suggestion was to create a policy that placed some of the responsibility on the parents, saying an investigation by the principal could determine if the parents were instrumental, focusing attention on that area. Chairman Bragdon reiterated his desire to get something from the Board's Legal Counsel or the New Hampshire School Board Association.

**(3) Policy #2315 Student Transportation Management (1st Reading)**

Mr. Willette moved that the Board approve Policy #2315 for its first reading; Mr. Dargie seconded the motion

Mr. Bragdon expressed confusion about the last sentence in the new Section 3, saying the videos could only be reviewed by the following persons—saying it seemed to say that parents could listen to the video without seeing it. Mr. Dargie explained that the laws said parents had the right without exception to listen, but the Superintendent might have reason to deny viewing of the recording.

Mr. Mannino said he disagreed, saying he did not see in the statute where it prohibited the parents of the accused child from viewing the video. He noted that there might be incidents, such as a child being tripped while on a school bus, in which there was no audio. He added, however, that he could see the value of discretion, saying he did not intend to vote against the policy.

While Superintendent Suprenant looked for the policy statement, Mr. Bragdon referenced another section, saying he was confused as to why the Board forbid something from happening without the Superintendent's permission, saying it was redundant to the preceding statement. Superintendent Suprenant then read aloud from the statute. Chairman Bragdon said he was willing to vote for a first reading, but he would want to discuss it later, saying he felt parents of students should be allowed to view the recording as well as hear them. He expressed a desire for the Policy Committee to have a good discussion about this, saying he would be inclined to support the rights of parents to view the video. Mr. Dargie said there had been a long discussion at the Committee level, noting that there might be a potential violation of rights of another student in the video, which was why it was being left to the discretion of the Superintendent. He said the expectation was that parents would be allowed to view the recordings in most cases.

Chairman Bragdon asked how the School District would determine that parents providing transportation had a valid registration. Business Administrator Chambers said the School District was requiring proof of registration when private cars were used. Mr. Dargie asked what would happen if the parents lived in Massachusetts. Mr. Bragdon suggested combining the two sentences and taking out the "New Hampshire" specification.

**Vote:** All members voted in favor for a first reading, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).

## **7. Housekeeping Items**

### **a. Approval of Minutes**

Chairman Bragdon addressed the 10-18-10 meeting minutes. Mr. Dargie requested the following changes be noted:

- Ms. Halstead referenced page 4, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, saying interpreter was identified by name but she believed the name given was that of the person for whom the interpreter was talking—adding that the name was spelled in two different ways.
- Ms. Halstead referenced page 5, 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, last sentence. She said the statement was unclear, saying the statement should read that Superintendent Suprenant said the alleged perpetrator would have the opportunity to provide a written statement for the file.

- Ms. Halstead referenced the next paragraph, line 6, saying there was an "of if" phrase that should be "or if."
- Ms. Halstead referenced page 7, noting that the vote was given as 5-0 but should be 4-0.

Chairman Bragdon suggested having the recorder make the changes as noted and getting a new copy for the next meeting.

- b. Approval of Manifests** Chairman Bragdon addressed the manifests awaiting approval, listed as including Vouchers Nos. 12, 1064, 1065, 1066, 1067, 1069, 1070, 1071, 1072, 1075, 1076, 1077, 1078, 1079, 1080, and 1081. Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the manifests as listed; Ms. Halstead seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).
- c. Approval of Treasurer's Report** Chairman Bragdon addressed the Treasurer's Report for August 2010. Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the Treasurer's Reports as listed; Ms. Halstead seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5-0).
- d. Approval of Treasurer's Report** Chairman Bragdon addressed the Treasurer's Report for September 2010. Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the Treasurer's Reports as listed; Ms. Halstead 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 noted that there were no members of the public remaining at this time, and he went on to the next item.
- 9. Non-Public Session** Superintendent Suprenant stated that ho nonpublic session was necessary this evening.
- 10. Adjournment**

Chairman Bragdon declared this meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

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Chairman of the School Board

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Date of Signing