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**MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD Minutes
(SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT No. 40)
November 15, 2010**

1. **Call to Order**

Chairman Bragdon called this meeting of the Milford School Board to order at 7:07 p.m. on Monday, November 15, 2010, in Lecture Hall #182 at the Milford High School. 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.

Mr. Willette suggested that the School Board consider making Election Day a non-school day next year when planning the calendar, noting that there had been numerous distractions because of ongoing school activities.

No other comments being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon 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 reminded the Board and the viewing audience that the High School Theatre Class would be producing Leading Ladies, beginning with evening shows this Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, followed by a matinee on Sunday.

Superintendent Suprenant reported that the Middle School would hold its 12th annual Turkey Trot on Tuesday, during the school day, He explained that students who were willing to run one mile would have an opportunity for a free turkey—with the entry fee being one canned-good item, which then would go to area needy. He reported that Principal DeMarco had told him that well over 100 students would enter the race.

Superintendent Suprenant reported that the High School Student Services Department would hold its annual Financial; Aid night for parents next Thursday, December 2nd, in this meeting room (Lecture Hall #182), starting

at 7:00 p.m. He said this would be a great opportunity for parents to learn more about financial-aid packages for potential college students.

Superintendent Suprenant concluded by noting that the first quarter of the school year had been completed, adding that Middle School Parent Conferences would be held on Monday and Tuesday of next week.

- b. Update on Jacques Memorial Building Project** Business Administrator Chambers said a temporary Certificate of Occupancy had been received this past Friday, saying the contractor would be coming back for a few minor things, but the School District had started moving things in over the weekend.

5. New Business

- a. LEIP Proposal** Superintendent Suprenant reported that what was expected to be the last LEIP (Local Education Improvement Plan) meeting had been held and co-chairs Steve Erdody & Lori Pitsas were present tonight to present their conclusions.

Ms. Lori Pitsas stated that the School Board said put out a call for volunteers in August of 2009, saying there had been about 27 members of the committee, with several of them being present this evening (including Ms. Halstead, Ms. Chambers, and Superintendent Suprenant). She said the members represented a variety of the community residents, saying at the beginning they had discussed the process and had broken up into subgroups, which each worked on outcome statements. She said the statements pertained to three different areas: Improvement Goals and Strategies, Civic and Community Engagement, and Use of Resources. She said many community residents had taken advantage of the survey outreach, with 1800 returning the surveys.

Mr. Steve Erdody reviewed major points of the resulting plan of things the committee felt would best serve the community. He said the committee members wanted to meet again on a yearly basis to make sure this would be a living document.

Mr. Dargie noted that one of the main topics of the previous study had been communication, and he asked why this had been changed. Ms. Pitsas said that continued to be a part of the on-going plan, but the data had been organized differently. Ms. Halstead said she felt the communication was not just done by the school but also by the parent, as a two-way interaction, and it had been difficult to integrate all the various communication paths.

Chairman Bragdon said he saw this as a new way of approaching things, saying he liked what he saw as expansion of what the School District was already doing—adding that he liked the layout of the plan.

Mr. Dargie asked if there were any particular area that the committee felt was most in need of innovation. Mr. Erdody answered that technology was far and away the most important one.

Chairman Bragdon said the Board was being asked to adopt the report and to use these goals for the next five years to develop the goals on which the School District and the Superintendent would be evaluated. He said final approval would probably occur at the next meeting. Superintendent Suprenant noted that this plan would be an important part in developing the annual School District goals. He said it was not a prescriptive document but contained specific strategies that Administration would use to get to those outcome statements—noting that the committee had not touched the mission statement or belief statements, but had spent a lot of time discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the District. He noted that of the 1800 people who had responded, many of them had been parents. Mr. Erdody said there had been 209 parents, 87 community members, 190 faculty, and 1300 student responses.

Mr. Dargie asked if there had been anything that was felt to be controversial. Mr. Erdody said there were times that they could not quite get the results from the survey, citing as an example that there had been a fairly low affirmative answer to the question of whether the surveyor felt there was someone in the school building he/she could go talk to, but they had decided it was not a huge issue. Ms. Halstead said there were incidents such as students saying they were well prepared for after-school employment and business groups saying they were not prepared.

Chairman Bragdon expressed appreciation for the effort that had been expended, saying he saw that it had been a lot of work.

- b. Schedule date for Bond/Budget Hearings** Chairman Bragdon said he thought the date had been set at the beginning of the year. He said it was usually done on the Tuesday following Martin Luther King Day, which would be January 18th. He noted that this was already listed in the yellow-covered budget book, and he ruled that the date would be January 18th.

6. Old Business

- a. 2011-2012 Proposed Budget** Chairman Bragdon noted that the Superintendent had presented the Administration's budget at the last meeting, and the Board had then met with the principals on Saturday to discuss details. He then opened the floor to members of the Board or others.

Superintendent Suprenant said it would be appropriate first for Business Administrator Chambers to update the Board on new figures. Ms. Chambers distributed two handouts, including a 2010/11 financial forecast, saying it was a more refined projection. She noted that the \$320,000

projection in the yellow book should be \$349,000, adding that the estimated surplus after tax commitment would be \$170,548.

Business Administrator Chambers then referenced the revised tax impact analysis projections, noting corrections that had been handwritten on the handout. She said the property tax rate had been 2.12% last year and she thought it had been 13.73% the year before.

Chairman Bragdon said the Governor had told him in the preceding week that Milford should not count on getting any more this year than it got last year. He suggested waiting to see if a letter to that effect arrived.

Mr. Dargie suggested that the School Board ought to be more conservative, saying that cuts could be added back in if money became available. He noted that the Board had a prioritized list of spending, saying he would rather hone in on where the budget ought to be. Chairman Bragdon concurred and asked if the Board were comfortable with that conservative approach and the assumption that Milford would get no more in State aid this year than it did last year. The consensus of the Board was in favor.

Chairman Bragdon said that meant the District would be going back to more than a 9% increase in the tax rate, although this would be reduced by the increased fund balance. Ms. Halstead suggested that the tax rate had not been flat, because of increased building; Mr. Dargie suggested this would be minimal, saying there had hardly been any new construction because of the economic situation.

Mr. Dargie said the economic recession was not really over. He said there had been essentially a zero increase in the tax rate due to the schools last year, so he would be comfortable with a tax rate increase somewhere in the area of 5%, using a conservative view on the income from the State. Chairman Bragdon said he felt the Board should look at the spending side rather than the tax side. He suggested Mr. Dargie's stated goal could be obtained by cutting the roughly \$1,300,000 increase in half, reducing the 9.7% increase to a 4.8% increase, which he estimated would amount to a \$600,000 to \$700,000 decrease in the proposed budget. Business Administrator Chambers cautioned against making projections on the revenue side. Chairman Bragdon then said he would like to see no more than a 1% increase in the budget, which would require a \$1,000,000 reduction from what had been proposed—adding, however, that the School Board would look at it again after Administration came back with a new list. Superintendent Suprenant said he would be concerned if he were given a number with the thought that it could be reduced further at a later date, saying he would be most comfortable at this time working with the bottom-line number.

Mr. Dargie said he would like Administration to come back with one consolidated priority list, rather than different lists for each school, as had

been done last year. Superintendent Suprenant asked if the Board would like options. Mr. Dargie said some options would be okay; Chairman Bragdon said he thought that a lot had been squeezed out already, so there would be less of an option this time.

Mr. Dargie asked about health costs, Business Administrator Chambers discussed the change, about \$200,000. Mr. Mannino asked if he understood correctly that Administration wanted a final figure now. Mr. Willette said he understood that two new co-curricular positrons had been added this year, and he felt that was an area in which costs could be eliminated.

Chairman Bragdon moved that the School Board direct the Superintendent to come back with a total spending package of \$35,800,000, which was basically a \$1,000,000 reduction from the presentation budget but about a \$300,000 increase over the current budget. Mr. Willette seconded the motion.

Chairman Bragdon asked for discussion, noting that the Superintendent would come back with a prioritized list of things being taken out of his proposed budget to match this new bottom line, with the items causing the least amount of pain being at the top of the list—adding that there might be different options, but all accomplishing the same bottom line.. Business Administrator Chambers said last year both the expense and revenue side had been worked on to accomplish that number. Chairman Bragdon said he was looking at the spending side at this point, but he would be open to some other changes. Superintendent Suprenant asked for clarification, saying he was hearing two things: a 1% increase in the operating budget, which would be about \$354,000, but a \$1,000,000 reduction to the presentation, which would be about \$286,000. Chairman Bragdon said the actual parameter he was proposing was a bottom line figure of \$35,800,000. Nothing else being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the motion. Mr. Mannino, Ms. Halstead, Mr. Willette, and Mr. Bragdon voted in favor; Mr. Dargie voted in opposition. Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried (4–1).

Business Administrator Chambers asked if the Board were going to discuss warrant articles this year, saying the balance would be affected if the High School renovation money went away. Chairman Bragdon said the Board would discuss that in a nonpublic environment.

b. Default Budget Policy Review Chairman Bragdon said he had not been able to work on this, and he was supposed to have brought something back for the Board to review, so he would postpone this item to the next meeting.

c. Policy Proposals

Chairman Bragdon suggested discussing Policy #5055 first.

(2) Policy # 5055 Guidelines on Non-Resident Students (1st Reading)

Superintendent Suprenant noted that a new handout had been provided pertaining to this policy. He outlined the background, saying new legislation cleared up who would be responsible for paying tuition costs if special education costs became necessary for a non-residential student, which would be the district in which the student resided—adding that there had not been a lot of discussion at the Legislative committee meeting about this, as it was good legislation and would serve all districts well.

Mr. Willette moved to accept Policy #5055 for a first reading; Mr. Dargie seconded the motion. Ms. Halstead asked about the waiver consideration in Item #7; Chairman Bragdon said a waiver applied to a full or partial waiver, so the text was redundant. Mr. Willette asked if “senior” should be changed to “12th Grade.” Mr. Dargie noted that some 11-th Grade students could be seniors. Chairman Bragdon recommended leaving it as it was. **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 8:01 p.m. for the purpose of changing the recording tape, and he called the meeting back to order at 8:10 p.m.

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

Superintendent Suprenant said the committee had made some changes, based on the School Board’s comments. He then noted that the Board had recommended other changes, saying he had checked with the NHSBA (New Hampshire School Board Association), noting that the language in the proposed policy was straight from the law and the NHSBA had strongly recommended that the School District not change it. Under the prohibition statement, he noted, the Board had requested deletion of school buses as school property, and that correction had been made. He noted that an example had been provided of something occurring off school property, saying he had also sent members of the Board copies of some relevant court cases. He reviewed other small changes, including grammatical changes, but noted there had been some relatively significant changes on page 5, saying there had been lengthy conversations with administrators. He noted that administrators would first ask for evidence of bullying, but questions had arisen as to whether the evidence might not be available (such as a cell phone having been stolen). He said State law said the administrator would have the right to ask the accused bullier if he/she had the evidence. He said School District personnel would never search in lockers or bags unless they had the permission of the student—or, if the student refused, permission of the parents, adding that the only time School District personnel would do that would be if there were a danger to

someone else. He said the administrators did not see much of a problem with this approach, and thought it was workable, saying they had protocols to ensure the safety of all.

Superintendent Suprenant said all of #8 had been deleted, except that the last sentence had been added to the next-following paragraph.

Mr. Mannino expressed thanks to the administration for its work and research, saying he thought most of his concerns had been answered to his satisfaction, but he still had issues with the underlying law, saying he felt it gave a lot of authority to local government. Chairman Bragdon asked if the District's ability to deal with things occurring off campus were limited to things affecting the school. Superintendent Suprenant said the administrators could not envision situations in which they would go off school grounds to investigate things, but they were required by law to investigate if an off-school incident migrated into the school and had an impact on a child's ability to get an education. He said the District would contact police if something got to the level of assaults elsewhere. Mr. Mannino said that was reassuring—but the law provided that authority.

Ms. Halstead questioned how good policy could be made from a bad law—saying Administration could do what it needed to do but she could not support the law. Mr. Willette said he thought the Board's comments had been covered, saying the policy was driven by the law and there was not much leeway. Mr. Dargie moved to approve Policy #5009 for a second reading; Mr. Willette seconded the motion. Mr. Mannino expressed thanks to the policy committee for its hard work. Mr. Dargie said all of the Board members' comments had been well noted, being looked at individually and researched. Ms. Halstead concurred, saying her issues with the underlying law were not a comment on the committee's work. Superintendent Suprenant said it was important that the policy be established, as administration was being challenged to enforce the law, which the current policy did not do. No other comments being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the motion. **Vote:** Chairman Bragdon called for a vote on the motion. 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).

7. Housekeeping Items

- a. Approval of 10-18-10 Minutes** Chairman Bragdon addressed the 10-18-10 meeting minutes. Ms. Halstead confirmed that the name changes she had requested had been accomplished. Mr. Dargie then moved that the Board approve the 10-18-10 minutes as submitted; Ms. Halstead seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor except for Mr. Bragdon, who abstained because he had not been at that meeting, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried (4–0–1).

- c. Approval of 11-10-10 Public Hearing Minutes** Chairman Bragdon addressed the 11-10-10 meeting minutes for the Public Hearing Relative to RSA 570-A:2, *Video and Audio Recording on School Buses*. Mr. Dargie requested that “cans” be changed to “can” in the first line of Section. No other changes being brought forward, Mr. Bragdon then moved that the Board approve the minutes as amended; Mr. Mannino seconded the motion. **Vote:** All members voted in favor, and Chairman Bragdon declared the motion to have carried unanimously (5–0).
- b. Approval of 11-10-10 Meeting Minutes** Chairman Bragdon addressed the 11-10-10 regular meeting minutes.
- Mr. Dargie referenced 4, noting that the word “aide” and “aides” had been misspelled, with the “e” having been omitted in three places.
 - Ms. Halstead referenced page 1, item #4, saying her name had been repeated.
 - Ms. Halstead referenced Page 2, saying the local businesses were manning their own booths; Mr. Dargie demurred, saying there were additional booths manned by students. Assistant Superintendent Johnson said it should say “supported” or “sponsored.” Chairman Bragdon said he saw no need to change anything.
 - Ms. Halstead referenced page 2, 4th paragraph, saying the text said the budget meeting would start at 8:00 p.m. but should have said 8:00 a.m.
- No other change requests being brought forward, Mr. Dargie moved that the Board approve the minutes as amended; 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 Manifests** Chairman Bragdon addressed the manifests awaiting approval, listed as including Vouchers Nos. 13, 1082, 1083, 1084, 1085, 1086, 1087, 1088, 1089, 1090, and 1091. 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).
- 8. Public Comment** Chairman Bragdon asked if there were any closing comments from members of the audience.
- Mrs. Robert Willette, 218 Ball Hill Road, Milford, said she would like to address the problems that had occurred at Election day with the open school. She said she had worked on the election desk, and elderly people had complained so much about the parking situation that they might not come back. She said she would like to see transportation provided, but she would prefer to have the school closed on voting day. She said it was very disturbing not being able to get the people’s names when loud school announcements were being made. She then complimented the Heron Pond and Jacques schools for having had several special sessions on Veterans’ Day, saying she would encourage this practice to continue. She then asked if anything of that nature had gone on in SAGE or Middle School or High School. Superintendent Suprenant stated that he did not have an answer *per se* but would research it and get back to her—adding

that generally the Middle School and High School handled those things with class discussions, predominately in Social Studies and History classes.

Mrs. Willette expressed a belief that the children needed to know about these things, so that they would show respect, protesting that there did not seem to be any patriotism any more—citing examples of having seen children talking in parades or when someone was speaking on the oval, not taking their hats off, or not standing up when the flag went by. She referenced scripture injunction to pass these things down through generations.

Ms. Halstead asked what Mrs. Willette's preference would be with respect to the schools on Election Day; Mrs. Willette said her preference would be for the schools to be closed on Election Day. She then spoke of things she had observed while standing outside the school with respect to Girls' Track team members running around the building in the driveway, so that cars had to stop and weave in and out, as well as the children weaving in and out of the voters coming and going. She said the children had shown a lack of respect.

No other comments being brought forward, Chairman Bragdon continued to the next agenda item.

9. Non-Public Session

Superintendent Suprenant confirmed that there was a need to go into nonpublic session to discuss possible land acquisition. Chairman Bragdon moved to go into non-public session under the provisions of NH RSA 91-A:3 II (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:** Ms. Halstead and Messrs. 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 **8:45** p.m., and all members of the public left the room at that time.

The board discussed a real estate acquisition issue in nonpublic session but took no action.

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 9:09 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 9:10 p.m.

Chairman of the School Board

Date of Signing