

MILFORD SCHOOL BOARD
MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 17, 2018, MEETING
MILFORD HIGH SCHOOL, LECTURE HALL #182

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6 **1. Call to Order**
7

8 Board Chair Ron Carvell called the meeting to order in Lecture Hall #182 at the Milford
9 High School at 7:00 p.m. Board members present were, Mr. Kevin Drew, Vice Chair,
10 Mr. Len Mannino and Ms. Jennifer Siegrist. Also in attendance was Dr. Jessica Huizenga,
11 Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Jane Fortson, Business Administrator.
12

13 Board Member Bob Willette was excused.
14

15 **2. Board Member Comments**
16

17 There was none.
18

19 **3. Public Comments**
20

21 There was none.
22

23 **4. Reports and Presentations**
24

25 **a. Superintendents Report**
26

27 Superintendent Huizenga commented that she attended a holiday party in the Life Skills
28 class at the high school and had a wonderful time.
29

30 Superintendent Huizenga thanked all of the members from the bargaining team from the
31 Milford Teachers Association and the MEPA units, noting everyone had worked very hard on
32 the negotiations.
33

34 Superintendent Huizenga stated that the second Strategic Planning Committee meeting was
35 held on December 12th and approximately 50 members of the community attended. She said
36 they reviewed the key landscape shifts which were currently happening in society, such as
37 student engagement, the pace of change, high touch opportunities, the economy, empathy,
38 media, literacy and service. Superintendent Huizenga said they also engaged in a group
39 discussion of what they felt were the key intrapersonal/interpersonal and cognitive
40 competencies that students needed to be successful in their college career and life upon
41 graduation from the Milford School District.
42

43 Superintendent Huizenga commented on the top competencies of the Portrait of a Graduate
44 design team were critical thinking & problem solving, resilience, flexibility & adaptability,
45 personal responsibility and empathy. She said they concluded the meeting by exploring what
46 a visual representation or design would look like which would exemplify the values of the
47 community. She further said the next meeting was scheduled for January 15, 2019.
48

49 Superintendent Huizenga said she would continue visiting the classrooms in the district in
50 January. She pointed out she would observe instruction with the building principals every
51 week.

52
53 Superintendent Huizenga commented that another activity she would take on in January was
54 to shadow a middle school student for an entire day. She said she would be shadowing an
55 eighth-grader whose name was Madeline Bergen, on Friday, January 11, 2019. She also said
56 she would be shadowing a student at the high school in January and there would be more
57 information forthcoming regarding that.

58
59 Superintendent Huizenga stated there was an outline of a professional development plan for
60 all staff which covered the next 18 months. She further stated it would be ready to be
61 implemented in March.

62
63 Superintendent Huizenga said the ELA Curriculum Review team had their second meeting and
64 reviewed the district's data. She stated the team was made up of educators, both general and
65 special education from grades K through 12.

66
67 Superintendent Huizenga expressed her congratulations to the Alvirne/Milford hockey team for
68 a strong start to their season. She also expressed her congratulations to the ladies Spartan's
69 basketball team for their win over Timberlane.

70
71 Superintendent Huizenga commented that the United Soccer Coaches Association had
72 chosen Mr. Russ Matthews, coach of the Spartan's girl's soccer team, as the 2018 Large
73 Division I and II Soccer Coach of the Year.

74
75 Superintendent Huizenga commented the grade 5 students would be participating in the
76 Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee. She further said the resulting winners would go on to
77 compete at the state's championship in Concord.

78
79 Superintendent Huizenga shared that the guidance counselor at the Jacques Memorial
80 Elementary School was teaching a specials class that was focused on social and emotional
81 skills development. She also shared that the students at the Heron Pond Elementary School
82 were covering topics such as conflict resolution, self-regulation, developing peer relationships,
83 making safe & healthy word choices and most recently, the focus was on using kind words and
84 showing empathy.

85
86 Mr. Carvell asked if there would be an opportunity in the future for a student to shadow
87 Superintendent Huizenga for a day. Superintendent Huizenga replied there would and said
88 she looked forward to it.

89
90

91 **5. New Business**

92

93 **a. Budget Advisory Committee Comments and Recommendations**

94

95 Mr. Carvell pointed out that there were no members of the Budget Committee present but the
96 topic would be placed on the next meeting agenda.

97

98 **b. MTA Contract Update**

99

100 Mr. Carvell commented that the Board members did have an opportunity to review the
101 tentative agreement for the Milford Teachers Association.

102

103 Mr. Mannino made a motion to approve the Milford Teachers Association contract as
104 proposed. Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

105

106 **Discussion:**

107

108 Mr. Drew commented that Mr. Willette was not present at the meeting and it would have been
109 better to have five votes rather than four votes. Mr. Carvell replied he felt the Board could vote
110 on the contracts at the present meeting and then re-vote on them again at the next meeting
111 when Mr. Willette would be in attendance.

112

113 **VOTE: 4-0**

114 **MOTION CARRIED**

115

116 **c. MEPA Contract Update**

117

118 Mr. Carvell stated that the Board also had the opportunity to review the MEPA contract. He
119 said, again, the Board would re-visit the vote at the next meeting.

120

121 Mr. Mannino made a motion to approve the tentative agreement of the MEPA contract, as
122 proposed. Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

123

124 **VOTE: 4-0**

125 **MOTION CARRIED**

126

127 **d. Superintendent's Contract Update**

128

129 Mr. Carvell stated that Superintendent Huizenga's contract had not yet been finalized and it
130 would be revisited in January.

131

132 **e. Approval of Infrastructure Project Completion Information**

133 (Exhibit is attached to meeting agenda)

134

135 Mr. Carvell indicated that the Board needed to sign off on the return of the money. He said it
136 was money which they had the previous year for cameras and security systems which totaled

137 \$153,007.63. Mr. Carvell asked if the money that came back from the grant was revenue from
138 the previous year. Ms. Fortson replied that was correct.

139

140 **6. Old Business**

141

142 **a. 2019 – 2020 Budget Work Session**

143

144 Mr. Carvell stated there had been many changes to the proposed budget over the previous
145 month.

146

147 Superintendent Huizenga clarified the district currently had 1,662 Chromebooks and 216
148 Chromebox's which were in located in labs. She said there was \$44,000 in the proposed
149 budget to purchase 195 replacement Chromebooks because they were coming off warranty.
150 She noted the replacement cost was cheaper than the repair cost. She further noted they had
151 approximately 175 Chromebooks which were over five years old and Google guaranteed
152 support for only five years.

153

154 Superintendent Huizenga also clarified that they were not putting more administration in the
155 school district in lieu of classroom staff and teachers. She said they were actually reducing the
156 number of administrative positions and increasing the number of staff who were interacting
157 with students.

158

159 Superintendent Huizenga said the district was adding multiple positions which would have
160 direct contact with kids, i.e. reading specialists, social workers, special educators and speech
161 pathologists. She also said the district was reducing administration, i.e. an Assistant Principal
162 at the high school, a Director of Academic Studies and a Title I Director. Superintendent
163 Huizenga said they would also hire department heads who would teach as well as provide
164 department leadership at the high school. She said they were also lowering the class sizes at
165 the elementary and middle schools as well as providing students with certified teachers who
166 would teach the core classes.

167

168 Superintendent Huizenga stated that there was a misconception that the district was going to
169 cut \$500,000 dollars out of special education. She further stated the reduction in the budget
170 book indicated \$433,500, but that did not take into account the addition of the two special
171 education coordinators as well as other additions of special educators. She stated the actual
172 reduction to special education was \$159,000.

173

174 Superintendent Huizenga said there were large increases in supplies and materials which was
175 due to the curriculum review cycle.

176

177 Superintendent Huizenga commented the total amount of cuts to the teaching staff was
178 approximately three FTE's, a total of four individuals because two were part-time.

179 Superintendent Huizenga said the district had cut a total of eight people in 2013 – 2014, in
180 2014 – 2015, the district cut four teaching positions, in 2015 – 2016, the district cut five
181 teaching positions with two being recalled. She further said in 2016 – 2017, the district cut five
182 teaching positions and in 2017 – 2018, the district cut three teaching positions as well as a
183 program associate. Superintendent Huizenga noted that the majority of cuts were coming from
184 paraprofessionals and instructional assistants.

185
186 Superintendent Huizenga pointed out that there was a misconception that they were going to
187 have more Chromebooks than kids and that was not the case.

188
189 Ms. Jamie Morgan, 188 Annand Drive, addressed the Board and stated she thought there
190 were a lot more than 175 Chromebooks in the district that were out of warranty.
191 Superintendent Huizenga clarified the previously noted 175 Chromebooks were over five years
192 old and were out of Google Support and not the warranty.

193
194 Mr. Mannino asked if the figures the Board received came from the Director of Information
195 Technology. Mr. Carvell replied they did.

196
197 Mr. Carvell said the 2019 - 2020 proposed operating budget, was \$42,084,551, which was
198 \$64,880 over the current years' budget.

199
200 Mr. Carvell asked if there were any Board members who had questions or comments on the
201 proposed operating budget amount of \$42,084,551. There was none.

202
203 Mr. Mannino made a motion to approve the proposed 2019 – 2020 operating budget of
204 \$42,084,551. Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

205
206 Ms. Siegrist commented she felt the budget was presented very clearly and with a lot of
207 thought and care. She further commented she would support Superintendent Huizenga's
208 proposed budget, but said if the default budget was higher then she would only vote for it' not
209 as a vote of no confidence, but only as a vote because of the \$15 million in deferred repairs
210 which they had throughout the district. Ms. Siegrist stated that the tax rate had gone up 58%
211 in the past decade and it was very difficult for some people in the community.

212
213 Ms. Fortson commented that after the Board listened to the taxpayers, the budget was
214 increased by \$163,243.

215

216 **VOTE: 4-0**
217 **MOTION CARRIED**

218
219

220 **b. 2019 – 2020 Default Budget**

221
222 Mr. Carvell said the proposed operating budget was \$42,084,551 which brought the default
223 budget to \$41,900,371, which was \$184,180 less than the proposed budget.

224
225 Superintendent Huizenga asked what would happen if the default budget passed over the
226 proposed budget. Mr. Carvell replied if the proposed budget failed, then they would have to
227 use the default budget. He further replied the budget from that point on would be \$41,900,371
228 (\$184,180 less than the proposed budget) which meant they would have to make additional
229 cuts because the district could not spend more than budget. He pointed out that 80% of the
230 budget consisted of salaries and benefits.

231
232 **c. Proposed 2019 – 2020 Warrant Articles**

233
234 Mr. Carvell stated the Board had copies of the proposed Warrant Articles. He said there was
235 no rush to vote on them and would prefer to wait until the next School Board meeting. He
236 further said the Warrant Articles, in draft form, would be available on the website.

237
238 **7. Housekeeping Items**

239
240 a. Approval of the Manifests:

241
242 Mr. Carvell stated that the approval of the manifests would be moved to the next meeting, as
243 Mr. Willette was not present.

244
245 **VOTE: 4-0**
246 **MOTION CARRIED**

247
248 b. Approval of Minutes, November 19, 2018

249
250 Mr. Mannino made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 19, 2018, meeting.
251 Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

252
253 **VOTE: 4-0**
254 **MOTION CARRIED**

255
256 c. Approval of Minutes, December 3, 2018

257
258 Mr. Mannino made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 3, 2018, meeting.
259 Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

260
261 **VOTE: 4-0**
262 **MOTION CARRIED**

264 **8. Public Comments**

265
266 Mr. Steve Vetack, 5 Georgetown Drive, asked the Board to review the situation surrounding
267 the Chromebooks. Mr. Carvell replied the Board would do review it.

268
269 Mr. Vetack asked if any of the money (\$44,000) in the proposed budget earmarked for the
270 Chromebook issues would be used to improve the network, pointing out that lately, he had
271 noticed some connectivity issues. Superintendent Huizenga replied the \$44,000 was not
272 earmarked for that purpose.

273
274 Mr. Vetack asked if there would be any discussion about improving the network in the future as
275 they put more Chromebooks online. Superintendent Huizenga replied she agreed that the
276 network needed to be looked at.

277
278 Mr. Vetack commented that he felt it might have been somewhat disingenuous of anyone to
279 say the tax rate had risen by 58% over the past ten years because it did not account for salary
280 increases. He suggested the number be presented in a way that was more accurate and
281 current to what they were doing.

282
283 Mr. Vetack asked the Board if they knew how many actual taxpayers there were in Milford. Mr.
284 Carvell replied the Town Clerk would have that number.

285
286 Ms. Fortson commented the increase in the proposed budget was .15% over the current
287 operating budget and she felt that was very good. Superintendent Huizenga added that the
288 .15% was prior to the Warrant Articles, which included both collective bargaining agreements.

289
290 Ms. Siegrist said she was aware that the 58% she referred to was a big and scary number but
291 there were some people in the Town of Milford who could not afford to pay their current
292 property taxes. She said a huge portion of the increase had been pushed down from the state
293 and most of the decisions the town and the school made only moved the needle ever so
294 gently. Ms. Siegrist further said the district was losing money on the employee pension
295 retirement fund, which made up over \$883,000 in the current budget. She said the recent
296 election voted in different representatives who would make sure the state took some portion of
297 that fee off their shoulders which would allow them to give excellent teachers the proper salary
298 increases.

299
300 Mr. Angel Piedra, 147 Richfield Drive, addressed the Board and stated that he was also a
301 Spanish teacher at Milford High School. He said he felt it always came down to cutting
302 teachers to alleviate the taxpayer's bill. He further said to him, it was just exhausting. He
303 commented that he was in favor of lower property taxes but he did not agree with picking on
304 the teacher's salaries and benefits every two years. He asked if the School Board had ever

305 met with the Board of Selectmen to discuss how they could solve the problem together.
306 Mr. Carvell replied the School Board was in constant communications with the Board of
307 Selectmen regarding taxes and other issues but clarified they did not cut teachers in order to
308 lower taxes. He further replied the budget was cut due to funding issues and further, was
309 based on enrollment.

310
311 Mr. Carvell commented the Board looked at every position and took it very seriously. He said
312 they had to move many pieces around in an attempt to make it work. He also said the driving
313 factor of the cuts were the enrollment numbers.

314
315 Mr. Steve Opre, a resident, addressed the Board and stated that he loved the Milford School
316 District. He said he felt the benefits received were more important than the cost.

317
318 Ms. Siegrist commented that even if the town and the School Board cut their budgets to the
319 bone it would not save the taxpayers any noticeable amount of money. She further
320 commented the state gave them \$3,600 per student, and it cost an average of \$15,500 to
321 educate a student with the taxpayers picking up the rest. Ms. Siegrist said it was a problem
322 that was happening all over the state.

323
324 Ms. Jamie Morgan, 188 Annand Drive, addressed the Board and clarified the district paid
325 approximately \$2,300 annually for the Neverware equipment.

326
327 Ms. Morgan asked why there was a member of the Budget Committee who was telling them
328 they were unethical. Mr. Carvell replied he could not answer the question and Ms. Morgan
329 should address her question to the Budget Committee.

330
331 **9. Non-Public Session**

332
333 Mr. Mannino made a motion to go into non-public session under RSA 91-A:2 I (a) Strategy or
334 negotiations with respect to collective bargaining, and/or RSA 91-A:3 II (a) Personnel.

335 Mr. Drew seconded the motion.

336
337 **VOTE: 4 – 0**
338 **MOTION CARRIED**

339
340 ??? made a motion to come out of non-public session. ??? seconded the motion.

341
342 **VOTE: 4 – 0**
343 **MOTION CARRIED**

344
345

346 **10. Adjournment**

347

348 ??? made a motion to adjourn the meeting. ??? seconded the motion.

349

350 **VOTE: 4 – 0**

351 **MOTION CARRIED**

352

353 The meeting was declared adjourned at ??? p.m.

354

355

356

357

358

359 _____
School Board Chair

_____ Date of Approval

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367 Recording Secretary: Trish Gedziun