

**Milan School Board Meeting  
Milan Village School Library  
Tuesday, June 6, 2006**

**Members Present:** Andrew Mullins, Patricia Shute, Jacqueline Quintal

**Also Present:** David Backler, Principal; Pauline Plourde, Business Administrator; Steven Gordon, Co-Director of Special Service; Barbara Young-Hoffman, Associate School Psychologist-NCES; DeAnn Murphy, Recording Secretary

**Public Present:** Nancy Bisson, Amy Cornish, Dennis Cornish, Karen Couture, Wayne Couture, Claudia Daniels, Lee Dube, Melinda Enman, Steve Enman, Julie Evans, Kevin Evans, Mike Fortier, Mike Giroux, Julie Glover, Julie Hallee, Dave Hickey, Kim Hockmeyer, Paula Labrecque, Dick Lamontagne, Mariann Latarte, Lisa Morse, Cindy Mortenson, Robert Mortenson, Gisele Ouellette, Laura Ouellette, Karen Parker, Karen Patry, Mitzi Riley, Joel Sanford, Rich Sarette, Sarah Sarette, Gail Scott, Lucille St. Onge-Hickey, Dave Woodward, Karen Wheeler, Jim Wheeler

**I.** The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair, Andrew Mullins

**II. Approval of May 2, 2006 and May 15, 2006 Minutes:**

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to approve the minutes of May 2, 2006 and May 15, 2006 meeting as presented

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** all in favor, motion passed

A question was asked by Julie Evans if the minutes of May 2, 2006 are considered complete according to state regulation. Andrew Mullins responded that said meeting was posted and he checked with a lawyer and the minutes are accurate and complete. Pauline Plourde asked if the SAU office could get a copy of the postings and agendas for the May 2 and May 15, 2006 meetings for the SAU files as they never received. Julie Evans asked if she could read the minutes of May 2, 2006. Andrew Mullins read the minutes of May 2, 2006 and May 15, 2006 to the public. He said that both of those meetings were posted in two public places which were the post office and the West Milan Store. Pauline Plourde explained that it was not the same protocol that the Board has used since she has been there. She explained that agendas are set by SAU office and the SAU office is made aware of and attends board meetings. Andrew Mullins said it was not necessary to notify the SAU about these meetings. Pauline Plourde explained that their policy does say that the board works in conjunction with the superintendent to set agendas. Andrew Mullins said they did not need the SAU office there. Andrew Mullins spoke to an attorney at NHSBA, read the meeting minutes and postings and he said they were legal. It is policy. Andrew Mullins read policy BEA. Pauline Plourde pointed out that all meetings are posted on the SAU web site and people look at that area frequently to get meeting dates. Meetings are also posted as the school. The meetings in question were neither posted at the school or on the website. Pauline Plourde also asked why if the meeting on May 2, 2006 was about personnel issues than why was the principal not invited as he would be the one dealing with personnel. The superintendent should also been notified of personnel issues. Andrew

Mullins explained that it was a private meeting and the issues were not discussed with the SAU office or the principal. Andrew Mullins would like to meet with the superintendent. Andrew Mullins has called the SAU office and left messages for the superintendent and has not heard back from him. Julie Evans asked the Board why Policy BBA-R under School Board Powers and Duties regarding Statutory Authority, paragraph f which states the Board will hold meeting for transaction of business at least once in 2 months and shall require the attendance of the superintendent or designee. She asked if the Board could explain why that policy does not fit this situation. Andrew Mullins read the Board Policy BEC where it reads about non-public sessions and says the Superintendent or his/her designated representative may attend all non-public sessions except those which pertain to the Superintendent's employment, at the pleasure of the Board. Pauline Plourde explained that if they were following Policy BEC where the superintendent would not be invited to meetings that pertain to his employment would not fit in this situation as the superintendent's employment is discussed at an SAU meeting and not at Milan School District meeting. Andrew Mullins said that the lawyer he spoke to said that the policy meant that inviting the superintendent to any meeting would be at the discretion of the board. Julie Evans asked why they would have two policies that cancel each other out as policy BBA-R says the superintendent's presence is required. Andrew Mullins reiterated that he ran the meeting by a lawyer from the NHSBA who are the people who generated these policies and he said that the board was in their right to hold a meeting without inviting the superintendent. A member of the public asked the board if they were in contact with the superintendent before the meeting to discuss the issues at hand. Andrew Mullins said they did not discuss this issue with him beforehand. The public member then went on to ask "why would the School Board be taking care of personnel issues without the knowledge of the superintendent if he is in fact is the one who takes care of the districts business." Andrew Mullins explained that the superintendent didn't need to be there. Pauline Plourde responded that the Board could have informed the SAU office before the meeting so they could have posted it on the website. Julie Evans asked why the Board did not post it on the schools bulletin board as that is the first place most people look for upcoming meetings. Andrew Mullins said he did not think about posting it there and it was posted in two places so the meeting was legal. Pauline Plourde asked if the Principal received a copy of the posting and Andrew Mullins responded that he did not. Pauline Plourde went on to explain that the boards protocol has always been that the agenda get posted at the school and that this is the first time the Board did not involve the office since Pauline has been employed there. Andrew Mullins said it isn't the first time the board has had a meeting without involving the SAU office. Pauline Plourde said she was not aware of any other meeting where they did this. Andrew Mullins said that they have gathered at least one or two times before without involving the superintendent's office. A public member asked if they could give the other meeting dates where this happened. A member of the public asked why they were discussing personnel issues without following a chain of command. She went on to say if an employee had a problem they should first go to the principal, otherwise what are the taxpayers paying him for if not to administer the school. Andrew Mullins explained that there are extenuating circumstances where certain people would not be invited to a meeting. A public member quoted RSA 91-A:3 in regards to meeting minutes where it says non-public minutes of all such meetings should include names of members, persons appearing before the body or agencies and a brief description of what was discussed. He then went on to say that the minutes are not complete according to this RSA. Andrew Mullins again reiterated that he spoke to a lawyer who said the minutes were legal. Pauline Plourde did explain that the RSA does state that if they were in

public session before they went into non-public session, the minutes should include all those present at the meeting. Andrew Mullins responded that the lawyer told him it was legal minutes. Andrew Mullins went on to say that he does not understand why this got blown way out of proportion and why the superintendent would not return his calls. He has only got certified letters in the mail and has not yet been able to meet with the superintendent to discuss this matter. He went on to say that the newspaper has said these meeting were illegal because they were not posted properly and that was not fact. He has always been trusted to post meeting and has gotten posting since this meeting and cannot understand why he would get postings if they thought he did not know how to post a meeting. Pauline Plourde explained that nobody said that he did not know how to post a meeting. Mr. Mullins responded that they are saying he didn't. Pauline Plourde said that she never went into the West Milan Store to see if the meeting was posted beforehand because she was not aware a meeting was going to occur. Julie Glover responded that the way the board went about this meeting seemed sneaky because it was done outside of common practice. She also wondered why the principal was not aware if the meeting happened in his building. He should be aware of all things happening in his building. Nancy Bisson brought up that she had just attended a board training workshop that was put on by the NHSBA and they stressed that a board should not meet without a superintendent's knowledge. Julie Glover responded that by not inviting the superintendent or his designee you are only setting yourself up for trouble as they know the laws and the board takes advice from them. A member of the public brought up the incident of the illegal mailings and now this meeting makes it look like they are being sneaky. Patricia Shute responded that she looks to her Chair to do his job and she does not question how he does his job nor does she check up on him. Patricia Shute trusts that Andrew Mullins posted the meetings the way he was supposed to post the meeting. A public member reiterated that after the first time the board met illegally they should have taken extra precautions by inviting the superintendent so that they would not again do things illegally. She went on to say that hopefully the board learned their lesson this time. Andrew Mullins responded that there are circumstances where the administration cannot be involved and if the public didn't trust him then why did they elect him. Andrew Mullins went on to say that the one person who accused him of doing something illegal isn't even here tonight and has refused to answer his phone calls. It has been three weeks since he tried to speak to superintendent without results. Pauline Plourde cautioned the board that they do hire a superintendent and they do need superintendent's services according to RSA 194C-2. She spoke to Paul Bousquet, the incoming superintendent, about this issue and he said that in issues dealing with personnel if you do go through the proper chain of command you do put yourselves in danger of violating the due process right. Andrew Mullins asked how Pauline Plourde knows that this meeting wasn't involving the due process right. Pauline responded that if it were due process they would have to have some outcome of that meeting because a due process means that they went through the chain of command with the building administrator and then if they were not happy with that outcome they would go through the superintendent and if they were still not happy with the outcome, the board becomes sort of a jury that makes the decision of agreeing with the personnel member or the administration. That decision is done in public with a specific outcome. If the personnel member is still not happy then they would go to the State Board. Andrew Mullins responded that Pauline made a point about communication between the board and superintendent. He went on to say how do you communicate with a person that is refusing to return your phone calls. Pauline Plourde responded that prior to the meetings in question; the superintendent has always been available to the Milan School Board. Andrew Mullins agreed

that he was available in the past. A public member asked if the Board has to go through the same procedures they always go through or if they can do things differently sometimes. Pauline Plourde read the duties of school boards under Ed rules to public. Andrew Mullins read the certified letters that were sent to him by the superintendent to the public. Patricia Shute recited a conversation she had with the superintendent on May 11th where he asked her if she had attended a meeting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. She responded she had. He then asked if there were other board members present. She said they were. He then asked if there was anything else she would want to share with him. She said that it was a requested non-public session. She said she had not seen the meeting posted at the school. She explained to the public that she never looked at the post office or at the West Milan store. At the meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup>, Patricia Shute told her fellow board members about this conversation. She went on to say that when she went into the SAU office on May 18<sup>th</sup> to sign the vouchers and she requested to speak to the Superintendent at that time. She met with the superintendent, with a witness present, and tried to explain to him that she trusted her School Board Chair to properly post a meeting and notify the people who needed to be notified. She was told by the superintendent that that was where she made her mistake, and that neither she nor her fellow school board members had any credibility with him, and he demanded that they resign as a school board. He went on to say that he would not recognize her as the SAU Board Chair and if she called and asked for him to call her back, he would not do so, he would acknowledge her in public if they passed each other and that was the end of their conversation. Patricia Shute went on to say that she received a letter from the SAU 20 Vice Chair that they were going to call an SAU 20 Board meeting. Patricia Shute had just finished reading policies and had come across a policy on how an SAU 20 Board meeting could be called and found that a special meeting of the SAU Board could only be called by the Board Chair or a member Board. Patricia Shute said she then called the Vice Chair and asked him why he was calling the meeting and he told her that the Superintendent had asked him to call the meeting. She explained that they could not do that but she wanted a meeting held so she called a meeting on June 14<sup>th</sup> instead of the June 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. Steve Enman responded that he did not have a problem of whether a meeting was posted or not posted, but rather the problem he had was that the board is crazy to not involve the SAU office in their meetings because it is called accountability. When Steve Enman sat on the Board, he said they would never call a meeting without the principal or superintendent involved so the board would cover them so they would not have to call and attorney and rather let the superintendent's office who works for you do that. Andrew Mullins asked Steve Enman if he agreed that there are sometimes extenuating circumstances where the SAU or Principal should not be involved in a meeting. Steve Enman responded no, no matter what the circumstances are the SAU office needs to be involved. Mike Fortier responded that he thinks there is a breakdown in communication between the board and the superintendent's office. Andrew Mullins said that if he had gone to the lawyer and asked before the meeting if the meeting should have been held, the lawyer would have stated yes. Pauline Plourde responded that if this meeting was about personnel issues and they followed the chain of command, they obviously did not go to the superintendent because no teachers have been into the office to meet with the superintendent. Mike Fortier responded that without the superintendent here, he loses his credibility because he is not here to explain the allegations that he has accused the board of doing. Andrew Mullins responded that they are not trying to railroad anybody, the meeting was a request and the request met the criteria and they got information from the meeting. Julie Evans asked how this meeting was scheduled. Andrew Mullins said that this was scheduled at their last board meeting. Julie Evans asked if the board was aware that the superintendent was not able to

come to this meeting beforehand. Patricia Shute said she may have heard that he had travel plans and might not be able to attend. Sarah Sarette responded that last year when she was principal the staff at Milan Village School had requested a board meeting that happened and she, as principal, was not invited by board or the superintendent of schools to that meeting. A member of the public responded that he could not see any circumstances that would allow the chain of command to be circumvented. The discussion was closed.

### **III. Guest Presenter – Student Support Center**

Barbara Young-Hoffman, Associate School Psychologist from NCES, presented the Student Support Center concept to the Board. This center is patterned after similar services in Whitefield and Lancaster. This supportive program is not designed to handle disciplinary problems. Rather, it is a resource to any student who needs some time to discuss an issue with staff; an issue that might be interfering with the student's ability to fully participate in the regular class. Times spent in the Center may vary from a few minutes to an hour in the regular class. Andrew Mullins asked if there is a need for a staff person to be in the room at all times. Barbara Young-Hoffman responded that in other programs the staff member is flexible and can be used in other classrooms and will be able to track behaviors. Jacqueline Quintal asked how the teachers in the similar programs respond when a child leaves the room, "is it disruptive to the classroom?" Barbara Young-Hoffman said that the teachers and the students are explained in the early stages on how to use the room. The whole idea is to get them back to the classroom when they are calm and able to work on things and not when they are agitated. If the student has nothing to work on they would go back to their classroom. Patricia Shute asked why the Board was just hearing this concept at the end of the school year and is it too late. Steve Gordon said there is plenty of time in the summer to get the program up and running, train paraprofessional, etc. David Backler has set up a workshop with Eric Mann, Behavior Specialist, to come in August and teach about de-escalation techniques. Jacqueline Quintal asked, given the size of the school and amount of students, would there be a staff member in the room at times doing nothing. She also asked if there was any paraprofessional in the school that would be able to do the job. David Backler responded that the paraprofessionals are strapped for time and would not be able to do this job. Steve Gordon explained that the program would call for a regular education paraprofessional so not to be pigeon holed into special education. They will also be teaching coping skills and will be available to aide the teachers. This position would have to be available to be in the center at all times. In similar programs the person is in the support center all day. The person hired will have to be well trained. The Board requested that the Principal, School Psychologist and the Co-Director of Special Services need to develop proposed goals, objectives, policies and procedures. The program would also need to be evaluated in November or December. The Board will revisit the Student Support Center program at the next board meeting.

### **IV. Written Communication:**

Rick Sarette asked a letter from him to the Board be read. Andrew Mullins read the letter. The letter was about discipline and bullying. Rick Sarette responded that it seems like what he is saying isn't taken seriously. David Backler, Patrick Low, and the Board will meet to look at the policy on harassment and decide on procedures. Mike Fortier

asked if transportation can be part of that policy if there is a specific way bullying will be dealt with.

A letter from Karen Wheeler, parent was read regarding support of David Backler's principal ship.

The Storage Barn Door bid information was taken under consideration by the Board.

The Board was presented a memo regarding the Federal IDEA and Preschool Entitlement Consolidated Agreement.

**Motion** by Jacqueline Quintal to accept all IDEA/Preschool entitlement funds for the 2006-2007 school year and SAU 20 will serve as the administrative agency for the consolidated application for the IDEA and Preschool funds.

**Seconded** by Patricia Shute

**Vote:** all in favor, motion passed

**V. Public Comments:**

Julie Evans asked if the Board about their policy regarding meeting times and asked if they would consider keeping meetings as accessible as they possibly could taking into consideration that parents work and may not be able to make a 3:00 p.m. meeting.

**VI. Principals report:** David Backler gave his report to the board for their review.

**VII. Financial/Year Ending Fund Balance:** Pauline Plourde reported a fund balance of over \$125,000 to help reduce the tax rate. The transfers will be brought at the next meeting.

**Café Services Food Service Contract and Pricing:** The prices have increased \$0.10 for breakfast from prior year. The Management figure has not increased over prior year. With food cost increasing they needed to increase the cost in order to continue and be comparable with the region.

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to accept the proposed changes for prices for meals a presented for the 2006-2007 school year.

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** all in favor, motion passed

**Transportation Contract:** CPI increase of 3.5% in costs. Mike Fortier and the Board discussed the videos on the bus and digital video equipment. The Board would like a representative to come and talk to them regarding videos on buses.

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to accept the contract with ForEast Transportation for the 2006-2007 school year in the amount of \$85,237 as presented.

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** all in favor, motion passed

The Board will need to set up a date with the incoming superintendent, Paul Bousquet, to go over bullying issues.

**VIII. Next Regular Meeting**

The Board will meet on June 20, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. to continue with this meeting and discuss the Student Support Center. The next regular session board meeting will be July 5, 2006 at 6:30 p.m.

Paula Labrecque requested that in order for the complete staff to be supported by their school board, she would like to see them be more available and have some connection with all the staff. Paula Labrecque went on to say that last year's meeting that happened with the Board and staff was not called by the staff but rather by the school board because of a morale issue.

**IX. Non-Public Session:**

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to enter into non public session under RSA 91-A:311 C.and E at 10:00 p.m.

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** roll call vote was taken, Patricia Shute-yes, Jacqueline Quintal-yes, Andrew Mullins-yes; all in favor.

Special education student issues were discussed

A litigation matter was discussed

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to come out of non public session at 10:25 p.m.

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** roll call vote was taken, Patricia Shute-yes, Jacqueline Quintal-yes, Andrew Mullins-yes; all in favor.

**Motion** by Patricia Shute to adjourn meeting at 10:26 p.m.

**Seconded** by Jacqueline Quintal

**Vote:** all in favor, motion passed