

Milan School District
Minutes of 2008-2009 Public Hearing
February 5, 2008

Present:

Milan School Board – Chairman Patricia Shute, Kevin Evans, Sandy Pouliot
Administration – Superintendent Paul Bousquet, Business Administrator Pauline Plourde,
Co-Director of Special Services Steve Gordon, MVS Principal David Backler
Public – Christy Langlois, Normand Frechette, Paulette Paquette, Randy Fortin, Mickey
Miller, Mike Fortier, Karen Wheeler, Daniel Bennett, Natalie Caron, Sonny Caron,
Jacqueline Quintal, Mary McLain, George Pozzuto, Eric Gagne,

I. Call to order

School Board Chairman Shute called the Public Hearing to order at 7:04 PM

Board members and Administration introduced themselves.

Shute turned the hearing over to the Business Administrator, Pauline Plourde.

Plourde presented a summary of budget:

General overview:

Full day kindergarten increase of \$23,748.

Full time nurse \$25,297.

Funding title I service 1 day \$13,224.

Teachers average 4.9 % increase to 185 days (up 2)

Non teaching personnel increase 5%

Out of district placement decrease 27.6%

Junior High School and High School Tuition decrease 3.2%

Fuel oil projected at \$3. gallon

Backler presented the rationale for full day kindergarten. He explained the research that supports full day kindergarten, and believes it will help students be prepared for 1st and 2nd grade by meeting academic and social needs.

Public asked what will happen to preschool program?

Backler stated Milan is planning on keeping preschool program, and have a grant contingent for full day kindergarten.

Public asked what's the value of the grant? Backler stated \$4500.

Jackie Quintal asked if Backler said that there is a staff member who would be a preschool teacher and if Milan has free staff floating around? She asked if anyone has looked at a full day kindergarten program? Backler explained there are staff members

who are qualified. Pouliot stated that she has worked in schools where there was full day kindergarten and it was successful.

Quintal explained that she took a trip to visit a full day kindergarten, since her concern had been that there would be a time of sleeping and babysitting, but that was not the case after the first couple of months. She stated that she was pleased to see that if we do go in that direction, that it would be worth it. She stated that she would like to see this as its own warrant article. She stated she would like the town to have the opportunity to vote on full day kindergarten independently.

Public asked if teachers perceive more difficulty in learning in students? Can they detect special needs earlier if there is a full day kindergarten? Backler responded that there would be more academic requirements and concerns would be more apparent earlier. He reiterated that the goal is to have students academic and social skills brought higher as early as possible.

Mike Fortier asked if the cost of the full day kindergarten is already in this budget? Board replied yes. Fortier stated that he would rather see it stay as the school package and not as a warrant article. He added that he would like it to say that the budget is decreasing and we are adding a full day kindergarten.

Quintal stated that the board is removing the opportunity for the public to vote on the idea of full day kindergarten. Fortier stated that we don't dispute first grade and what is part of the school.

Shute stated that the state will be mandating kindergarten as of the 2008-2009 school year, although they are not mandating full day, but this is our decision to expand the program to bring our students to reading at grade level.

Fortier mentioned parents may not choose to send their children to kindergarten since it isn't mandated.

Public commented that he went to kindergarten a long time ago and it was a full day program. He added that both of his children went to full day kindergarten and only saw benefits. He supports the need to bring educationally challenged students up to par and he also sees the need for providing for our gifted educationally children.

Public asked how many students would be enrolled in full day kindergarten? Backler stated that this year there are 18 students, but cannot predict for next year. He is anticipating 18-24 students. Backler added that they are looking at individual children so they are growing at their level – gifted or not. He added that students need to be creative problem solvers for the future.

Plourde discussed Title I one day supplement rationale. She explained that here is a decrease in federal entitlement grants. Title I is only for specific population only, and providing one day supplement, this would provide an opportunity to assist all students.

Backler interjected that it was another opportunity to assist every child.

Plourde explained the next initiative for full time nurse rationale for student health and wellness and opportunity to supplement health curriculum and assisting classroom teachers and to decrease liability.

Shute presented the history at the Milan school and that in past they had a full time nurse due to a specific child with a health issue. She stated that one cannot predict when an accident will occur, and if the nurse will be here. Currently Milan does not have anyone on staff designated for students well being other than the part time nurse. Others may be certified, but do not have primary care of students health. Shute stated that the state statute of 1 nurse for up to 250 students in a building. We have 125 students, plus our faculty and staff who would benefit with a full time nurse. She added that there is an initiative to look at childhood obesity and a full time nurse can help teach, monitor, and guide in how to keep our children safe. She added that there are students who are on 504 – at times it may be a broken bone that the nurse may monitor as well as monitoring special ed needs students.

Quintal stated she does not feel that we need a full time nurse from 8 to 3, since now we have a nurse who sits often waiting for something to happen. She added that maybe we could save a bit on the benefit end and save less hours. She asked if Shute was mentioning teaching, then you would need them to be certified?

Shute explained that certified teachers would teach, but a full time nurse can supplement and provide resource for teachers in their instruction.

Public stated that Shute mentioned that there are teachers here who are certified in CPR, etc. and have a separate primary function. He stated that he cannot believe that in a school this size that teachers wouldn't help.

Public asked if the decrease in the school liability risk was with a decrease in insurance premiums. Quintal stated that we are also covered under the state statute. Public asked how many days is the nurse here now? What are her hours? Backler stated Monday through Friday from 9:30 – 2:00.

Public asked where is the time coming for a nurse adding to the education – during the reading time? Backler stated there is an expectation of health and wellness in the curriculum and health is covered under guidance.

Public asked if there is an additional insurance cost? What is the insurance ratio compared to the town?

Plourde responded 20% for HMO and if they do not accept the plan they receive \$2500. in lieu of insurance.

Fortier stated that it is a lot to expect the staff to step in to handle emergencies. He stated he is assuming we haven't had any emergencies occur before the nurse has arrived. When Karen Cloutier was here for guidance/health, it was phenomenal what she was sending home with my children, and it would be wonderful if it could be brought back up to where it was or build it up. He stated that he understands concerns for tax increases and limited income.

Lisa Morse asked what would full time nurse hours be? Backler stated the same as normal teacher hours.

Quintal asked what incidents have occurred? Nat Caron responded that there are nose bleeds, scrapes, etc. Bousquet explained that Gorham high school and elementary shared a nurse and he remembers one day when a student went down and it was lucky the nurse was there, since it just takes one time.

Bousquet asked what's in the best interest of the kids? We want to make this place better? How do you bring a student to be at grade level by second grade? Full day kindergarten. How do you keep students safe? Full time nurse. We want to go ahead and increase the offerings to the kids.

Public asked is the full time nurse in the budget? Plourde stated yes, it is included.

Discussion on taking items out of budget. Fortier stated we have a school board who decides what is put in a warrant article. We have chosen them to decide what they include in the budget. Every year we can vote them out.

Public discussed history of voting and placing items on separate warrant articles and the budget was reduced and MVS was hit hard.

Plourde stated that everything will be clear in the budget and the Board tries to make everything transparent.

Article 3 Operating Budget of \$3,054,547. with an increase of \$38,305.

Plourde explained that the operating budget was built to hold the line and any increases needed to be justified including the new science curriculum. She explained that the salaries increase of \$50,666. which also includes full day nurse, one day supplement for Title I and full day kindergarten. She continued to present an overview of the operating budget as presented in the packet available to the public.

Plourde explained that a member of the SAU office staff has taken on the Medicaid reimbursement program, which saves us from using a third party and saves additional fees.

Plourde presented the Warrant Articles.

- 1 and 2 are yearly articles
- 3 General operating budget \$3,054,547
- 4 Tuition expendable trust fund \$25,000. to use surplus funds
Plourde stated the goal is to get to \$150,000. to cover any unforeseen tuition costs.
- 5 Technology CRF \$25,000. to use surplus funds
- 6 Roof Capital Reserve fund \$10,000. to use surplus funds
- 7 Underground storage tank \$10,000. to use of surplus funds. Plourde stated that the goal is to get to \$60,000. to cover the actual cost.
- 8 Food service \$38,700

Plourde presented a building update and explained the settlement with American manufacturing bonding company on 3/14/07 for \$300,426.25. She explained that a RFP for services was awarded to Dwight and Sons, and presented a summary of work to date: roof, insulation and air barrier, additional roof work, gutter added, fencing of playground, floor tiles in remaining 3 classrooms. She stated that Dwight and Sons will take care of any problems without additional costs. She stated that there is still money left over and are the Board is addressing well problem and intercom system. Fortier stated that he appreciates all of the work that folks went to get to \$300,000. although it is aggravating that you had to do that and we had an insurance policy that we still had to settle.

Quintal asked if she works on a warrant article, how long do I have? Plourde replied that she had until February 11th and she will need 25 signatures of registered voters of Milan. She suggested Quintal bring it to the town clerk.

Public stated that when he looks at what he pays for taxes in the state of NH there is a big chunk that goes to schools. He thanked the Board and stated we all need to get more active on the county level. He complimented the board on holding the line.

Bousquet stated that until something happens regarding property taxes which has to be at the state level and until then, it's pitting town against schools.

Mary McLain asked about enrollment. Plourde stated that from preschool to grade 6 there are 122 students. McLain asked what is our cost per student? Plourde stated the tuition costs are \$10,150. for the middle school, \$9,666. for the high school, and Dummer is charged \$9759. per student, which includes \$118.15 cents as a rental portion.

McLain stated that last year there was quite a debate regarding a student support center and what was the status this year. Backler explained that the student support center can be an enriching program and can work with kids who may need extra help. The support center works to create programs like AMC and adopt a salmon program as an enriching program. McLain stated that several folks have mentioned that whenever they go by, there is no one there.

Fortier stated that if that room prevents one child from not needing an out of district placement, then it has saved us \$75,000.

George Pozzuto asked if this room provides an area to do enrichment? Backler presented the example of how the room provides enrichment when one student is ahead in class, and rest of class needs review.

Randy Fortin asked how much time is designated to reading? Lisa Morse stated that it depends by grade level – straight reading K-2, third grade shifts to reading to learn – at least half the day. Fortin explained that his 7th grade child is at the Junior High and the school says the class is way behind at their reading level, but he didn't hear that about my 9th grade child. Morse stated that each group is different. Backler stated that there is Title I for more help in reading, full time nurse to deal with sick, student support center for one on one reading.

Quintal stated that you can look on-line at the NH Department of Education and see the results on NECAPs and Milan is not reaching the state level. The school is doing a lot of reading, but how reading is taught is not helping. Bousquet responded that each individual student is making progress. Backler discussed increases that we are making on NECAP results. Backler explained that there was a flat increase one year and then 6% increase the following year - we are going in the right direction. Pouliot explained that the state testing results are listed from 1 to 4, and there are 2s that are almost 3s, and with the extra help, we will have the time to enrich, and bring them to 3s.

Public asked is the preschool tuitioned? Quintal stated that it is grant funded. Plourde explained that at the beginning of this year, parents had to pay tuition and were reimbursed when a grant came through.

The Public Hearing adjourned at 8:35 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberly A. Hockmeyer
Recorder for the Board