

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
MELROSE SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
January 12, 2010**

A meeting of the Melrose School Committee was held this date in the Aldermanic Chamber of Melrose City Hall with the following members present: Ms. Thorp, Ms. Driscoll, Ms. Kourkoumelis, Mr. Constantine, Mayor Dolan, Mr. LaRock and Ms. Casatelli.

Also in attendance were Superintendent Joe Casey and Business Manager Greg Zammuto.

Mr. Casey called the meeting to order at 7pm.

**Election of Melrose School Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman**

The Superintendent opened nominations for School Committee Chair and Vice Chair.

Ms. Casatelli nominated Ms. Driscoll as 2010 School Committee Chair, Ms. Thorp seconded.

Ms. Kourkoumelis commented that she did not place a formal first vote in December as she was not sworn in yet, and because she felt the nomination process was not conducted in a transparent manner.

On a roll call vote with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Mr. LaRock, Mr. Constantine, Mayor Dolan and Ms. Casatelli), and one (1) "present" (Ms. Kourkoumelis), Ms. Driscoll was elected 2010 School Committee Chair.

Mr. Constantine nominated Ms. Thorp as 2010 School Committee Vice-Chair, Ms. Casatelli seconded. On a roll call vote with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Mr. LaRock, Mr. Constantine, Mayor Dolan and Ms. Driscoll), and one (1) "present" (Ms. Kourkoumelis), Ms. Thorp was elected 2010 School Committee Vice-Chair.

Ms. Driscoll thanked everyone and welcomed Mr. LaRock and Ms. Kourkoumelis, and noted that it is a privilege for us to honorably and effectively execute the roles and responsibilities of the School Committee.

Ms. Driscoll announced new Subcommittee Chairs and Vice-Chairs as follows: Policy & Planning, Ms. Thorp and Mayor Dolan; Finance & Facilities, Ms. Casatelli and Ms. Kourkoumelis; and Educational Programs & Personnel, Mr. Constantine and Mr. LaRock.

**Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Thorp moved, Mr. Constantine seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve School Committee Minutes of December 15, 2009

**Public Participation**

Mayor Dolan moved, Mr. Constantine seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To open Public Participation

Gerry Mroz of Mt. Vernon St. commented that present Subcommittee format does not allow education issues to be discussed in an open and thorough manner, certain Executive Session issues should be discussed publicly and reporting format and content should be more extensive, and we need to make more progress on our Gifted program as others districts have done.

Ms. Casatelli moved, Ms. Thorp seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To close Public Participation

Ms. Driscoll noted that it is the duty and mission of this Committee to follow the letter and the spirit of the law at all times.

### **Report of the Student Representatives**

Student Representatives Leeanne Hogan and Joe LiCausi reported as follows: AP test fees (\$86 per test) due January 26 – make checks payable to MHS; Seniors accepted to college should advise Mrs. Seeley or Ms. O'Connor; Mock Trials start tomorrow at Malden Catholic and have four competitions from mid-January through early February; mugs on sale at Girls Basketball game; MHS midterms start next week – exam days will be full days; January 19 is a professional day – MHS staff working on NEASC Committee and Content Area curriculum; Curriculum Night and Open House for 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents at MHS recreation center on March 4 from 6:30-8:30pm.

### **Announcements – Superintendent of Schools**

*K and Grade 1 Registration* – The Superintendent commented that our elementary school tours conducted this fall were well attended. Based on parent requests, we have drawn up an aggressive schedule with an Information Night tentatively scheduled at the Middle School on Wednesday, January 20 at 7pm, and Open Houses scheduled for the week of January 25, with meeting information to be posted on MMTV, melroseschools website, central office, and in the newspaper. As we strive to improve for parents and the district our process of collecting student information for registration, we will report back on an online registration process that we are now finalizing.

*School Committee Workshop/ Saturday, January 16* – Ms. Driscoll reported on tentative agenda and background of this upcoming workshop being held in the Superintendent's conference room from 8am-12pm which is planned as a professional development opportunity for School Committee members to get to know and work with each other better, learn how other districts conduct School Committee meetings, and discuss if and how we should change our meeting format to support improved student achievement. This Saturday morning meeting will be facilitated by a representative from MASC and is intended to provide a casual atmosphere and opportunity for a quality presentation and discussion. This is not a public meeting, but is open to the public. At the suggestion of Ms. Kourkoumelis and Mr. LaRock, Ms. Driscoll will repost the agenda with a Public Participation segment included.

*Strategic Plan Update* - Mr. Casey reported that the timeline and process in completing the Strategic Plan is being adhered to. Goals of data collection, internal review, and establishment of

a steering committee have been completed while work with focus groups and interviewing is in process.

### **Educational Programs and Personnel – Donald Constantine**

*SPED Update presented by PAC* – SPED Parent Advisory Council members Karen Burtnett, Cathy Gulino and Alaine Breen, and PPS Director Patty White-Lambright, presented the results of this opportunity to work together with the public to produce a November 2009 membership survey. The Council's family outreach efforts have produced a database directory of families, a website, and monthly workshops scheduled for the entire school year. Member surveys results were reported including successes (ECC, home services, co-teaching, Middle and Roosevelt Schools, and administrative staffing); concerns (increased acceptance and awareness of social skills programming, general education teacher expertise, and forward thinking in regard to programming and capacity building); and recommendations (funding for professional development, expansion of in-house programming for capacity building, social skills and diversity awareness, continued support for home services, and increased availability of inclusion consultants for teaching initiatives, coaching, etc.) Also scheduled is an Annual SPED Parents Night Workshop on Wednesday, January 27 at 7pm in the MHS Resource Center.

*Personnel Report* – Mr. Casey presented report dated today noting seven available positions due to retirements or resignations have now been filled, with one SPED secretarial position remaining open.

*Superintendent's Goals Update* – Mr. Casey reported on the status of the Strategic Plan in his previous report, and outlined actions and "in process" status of his remaining goals of finalizing a systematized communication plan, finalize comprehensive plan to identify/recruit/hire/develop/retain high quality staff, implement K-8 Meeting the Needs of All Learners program, and develop plan to infuse curriculum of Melrose Public Schools with technology.

*(Mayor Dolan left the meeting at 8:43pm)*  
*(Mayor Dolan returned at 8:45pm)*

### **Finance and Facilities – Christine Casatelli**

*Race to the Top and Funding* – The Superintendent stated his support for Melrose to compete for a portion of up to \$250 million available to Massachusetts in federal grant funds which we would utilize to further enhance our Gifted and Talented, and other student programs. Deadline to the DOE for local district participation is tomorrow, January 13, with a deadline of January 19 for state participation. The Superintendent and the Melrose Education Association have already signed off on this grant application.

Mayor Dolan moved, Ms. Thorp seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: That the Melrose Public Schools in partnership with the Superintendent, the School Committee, and the Melrose Education Association approve memorandum of understanding for Race to the Top

*Monthly Maintenance Report* – Business Manager Greg Zammuto presented December 2009 report, noting that out of 107 completed work orders, 104 were done in-house.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Kourkouvelis seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept December 2009 Maintenance Report

Ms. Kourkouvelis suggested that it would be beneficial to the community to post this report on the melroseschools website.

*Monthly Budget Summary* – Business Manager Greg Zammuto presented December 2009 budget summary.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Driscoll seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To accept December 2009 Budget Summary

*Online Payment Center* – Mr. Zammuto reported that we have received much positive feedback on this program that went live the first week in January and allows parents to pay online for various school expenses through a bank account or credit card. Our vendor continues to work to make the program more user friendly, and we have seen increased participation since its inception.

### **Policy and Planning – Kristin Thorp**

*2009 School Committee Self Evaluation* – Ms. Thorp presented self-evaluation results based on Committee members' responses to categories of governance, committee/superintendent relations, operations, member relations, strategic planning and fiscal management, community relations, conduct of meetings, and completion of goals, each of which averaged a "strongly agree" or "agree" in the Committee reaching these goals. Various comments included need for further review and improvement in finalizing Strategic Plan, public understanding of budget process, PR/Communication plan, and meeting schedule and structure. Self-evaluation is posted online.

*2010 School Committee Goals* – Ms. Thorp presented proposed goals for this year as follows: evaluate meeting frequency and structure, increase professional development, and continue Communication Plan. Ms. Thorp also asked that any other suggested goals offered by the Committee and the public be sent to her by January 17 for discussion at our January 26 meeting, with final goals being voted on at our meeting of February 9.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:35pm.