

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
MELROSE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
February 23, 2010**

Public Forum

At 6:30pm Ms. Driscoll welcomed and invited the public to come forward and offer comments on our new, tentative agenda. It is our intent to utilize a new format in order to allow a more streamlined process, more input from the community, and adequate time for discussion on in-depth issues.

Ms. Maryan Hollis of Melrose St. commented that she is happy to see that the Committee is making an attempt to conduct more streamlined meetings in a more efficient manner. She also stated that for further clarity she would like to see Subcommittee Chairs take the podium to conduct their respective meetings or reports, invite the Superintendent to be seated in the horseshoe, and that she supports the return to the former Subcommittee meeting schedule on opposite Tuesday nights to ensure that the resultant School Committee agenda for that month be final and accurate.

Mr. Gerry Mroz of Mt. Vernon St. commented on improving Committee structure as opposed to meeting structure; expressed need to report on and discuss academic issues and relevant information rather than generic reports to the public and home audience; Subcommittees should be made up of three members and should illustrate the decisionmaking process to the public rather than reporting out end results; Powerpoint and verbal presentations should be replaced by timely online information to allow discussion at Committee meetings; Student Representative, Superintendent and Subcommittee reports should not necessarily be agenda items; Consent Agenda with relevant backup materials is an effective time-saver.

(Mayor Dolan arrived @ 6:50pm)

Mr. Campbell Kaynor of Cargill St. commented on need for a more democratic meeting structure involving the entire school community and suggests changing structure to allow more public input in the process, full and timely access to backup materials, a more flexible approach to agenda when conditions warrant it, and involving the public as participants, not as an audience.

Ms. Constance Castro of Harding Rd. commented that the new trial meeting format allows better public understanding and input, and she welcomes the changes.

(Ms. Casatelli arrived at 7pm)

Mr. LaRock commented that the Committee has made great efforts to benefit the district and inform the public, the revised agenda is a great start in improving public engagement and more in-depth discussions of district issues, and he agreed that it would be beneficial for meeting back-up materials and documents to be posted online to allow sufficient public review.

Mr. Gerry Mroz stated importance of establishing a new and open meeting format and issue development to avoid public skepticism. Mr. Campbell Kaynor noted that we need to improve our outreach as many people are hesitant to come forward publicly with their comments, and that constructive dialogue and more transparency would be beneficial for both the Committee and the public.

Ms. Driscoll thanked everyone who came forward and offered their comments.

On this date at 7:12pm, Ms. Driscoll called to order a meeting of the Melrose School Committee in the Aldermanic Chamber of Melrose City Hall with the following members present: Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkoumelis, Mr. LaRock, Mr. Constantine, Mayor Dolan and Ms. Driscoll.

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

Mayor Dolan moved to adjourn to Executive Session in order to discuss strategy in preparation for collective bargaining, and then reconvene in Public Session, Ms. Thorp seconded. On a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Public Session adjourned at 7:14pm

Public Session reconvened at 7:45pm.

(Mayor Dolan left the meeting at 7:45pm)

Ms. Driscoll thanked Ms. Kourkoumelis for proposing tonight's public forum for suggesting that we pilot a dialogue session prior to our next meetings beginning at 6:15. Ms. Driscoll provided Committee members with a copy of Mass. Association of School Committees' "School Committee Roles and Governance" booklets and indicated that there will be a link on our website so the community can see it.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Kourkoumelis seconded and with six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkoumelis, Mr. LaRock, Mr. Constantine, and Ms. Driscoll), none (0) in the negative, and one (1) absent (Mayor Dolan), it was

VOTED: To open the Public Comment period

Public Comment Period #1

(Mayor Dolan returned at 7:56pm)

Mr. Gerry Mroz commented that Committee goals seem not to focus on educational issues nor be a community forum or opportunity to view back-up materials for a public comment period regarding

the upcoming report on the Strategic Plan. Mr. James Thompson noted that the district is becoming more diverse and we need new programs and outreach to involve new residents in the community and our schools. (Mayor Dolan noted that the Human Rights Commission in his office is making efforts to reach out and hire more diverse employees who represent the population along with other efforts to make new people feel welcome, and Ms. Kourkouvelis noted that she has conversed with other new families and suggests that we do more to recognize newcomers to make these families comfortable in the district and the community.) Ms. Maryan Hollis commented on the confusion resulting from revised agendas, questioned the status of and transparency in the accreditation process, and the lack of reporting on the troubled population in our schools.

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

VOTED: To close Public Participation at 8:25pm

Report of the Student Representatives

Student Representatives Leanne Hogan and Joe LiCausi reported as follows: Congratulations and Good Luck to - Girls Basketball and Boys Hockey for making the tournament; Wrestling Captain Johnny Upton for winning the 171 lb. weight class at sectionals, Gymnastics team for their performance at sectionals, and all other Winter Sports teams for a great season; at today's Senior Activity Day class meeting, seniors discussed graduation requirements, senior week, and internships, while underclassmen viewed a PowerPoint presentation and voted on which motto best represents the MHS mission statement; the last 2-hour delay is this Thursday to allow the NEASC standard reports to be in final draft form; tonight is SADD dodge ball tournament; 8th Grade Curriculum Night scheduled for March 4 from 6:30-8pm at the Resource Center – ConnectEd phone reminder will be send next week and parents are asked to review online the placement criteria and program of studies.

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

VOTED: To change the order of the day to hear the Summer Program Update

Report Out of Subcommittees

▪ Finance and Facilities – Chris Casatelli

Summer Program Update - Program Director Dr. Heather Josephson reported on a new “mind and body” summer program – Camp K.I.D.S. (Kinesthetic and Interesting Days of Summer) - focusing on physically challenging and mentally interesting activities for children, including swimming, outdoor play, sports, cooking, arts and crafts, and a weekly cultural exchange theme showcasing different countries and cultures. The registration period is from March 1 – April 2, and flexible scheduling options include half-day, full-day, extended day, and 2-day-per-week programs. Information will go out this week via a ConnectEd message, and will also be posted on the melroseschools website and be available at all elementary school offices. Jobs and positions in support of this program will be posted as well.

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

VOTED: To approve new Summer Program as presented

FY2011 Budget Development – Mayor Dolan commented on the difficulty and frustration in defining a revenue picture for 2011 specifically in this challenging economy, within an election year on the state level, and working with the budget figures released to cities and towns thus far. We should have within five weeks the results of a joint Senate and House local aid resolution which will hopefully allow us to adequately plan. Ms. Casatelli noted that per our budget timeline the Committee will be presented with next year’s budget on March 9th and has three consecutive budget meetings scheduled for next month on March 16, March 23 and March 30.

Ms. Casatelli noted that the budget timeline be posted online for public review. Mr. LaRock repeated the need for timely delivery of budget materials for Committee review.

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

VOTED: To approve FY2011 budget timeline as presented

Educational Programs and Personnel – Don Constantine

Library Media Specialist Highlights – Library Media Specialist Ms. Ellen Coghlan presented an overview of services provided at the Elementary level to promote information fluency and 21st century skills in order for our students to excel.

(Ms. Thorp left the meeting at 9:14pm)

(Ms. Thorp returned at 9:15pm)

English Language Learning Highlights – ELL Coordinator Ms. Carla McCoy presented an overview of the ELL program entitled “Celebrating Success and Diversity.”

(Ms. Driscoll left the meeting at 9:50pm)

(Ms. Driscoll returned at 9:52pm)

ECC, K and Grade 1 Registration Update - Mr. Casey reported that we continue to work to place all students and that parents will be advised of placement results by the end of March. At present, we have 53 registrations for the ECC, 77 for pre-K, and 91 multi-age, for a total of 221 tuition-based students. Kindergarten registration is 228 students for full-day, and 12 for half-day. Registration online proved to be the most popular option as opposed to paper. Further breakdown by class and school will be forthcoming. The process worked well and we have good information to utilize to place our students.

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

VOTED: To return to the order of the day to hear the Superintendent’s Report

Announcements – Superintendent of Schools

AASA Conference Update – The Superintendent reported on this conference where Education Secretary Arne Duncan summarized that the challenge of all school districts is to stay the course

and educate our way out to a better economy by holding onto the “4 C’s” – courage, collaboration, capacity and commitment. We need to focus on and change if necessary our school culture, value and support innovation, embrace technology which is already second nature to students, and acknowledge different generations and their attitudes. We need to continue to look at the *business* of education as a vital and dynamic challenge of which we are all a part.

Governor Patrick’s Green Initiative – Mayor Dolan reported on many of the City’s “green” initiatives which make us eligible for funding, and most importantly that we have been awarded through the Governor’s clean energy program \$150,000 in federal stimulus money to place additional solar panels on the roof of the Middle School. The Governor visited the Middle School last week to promote his energy efficiency program.

Announcements – School Committee Chair

Trivia Bee Invitation – Ms. Driscoll reported on this annual event to be held this year on Saturday, March 27 at 7pm at Memorial Hall to benefit The Bridge: A School/Community Partnership, the organization that recruits and support school volunteers. There is a \$200 entry fee, and registrations to participate are due by March 19. Registration form is posted on the Melroseschools website.

Strategic Plan Update – Ms. Driscoll thanked all who participated in the focus group effort and noted that the Strategic Plan Steering Committee will present to the public on March 2 at 7pm at the Middle School the feedback we received from this focus group exercise and invite comments.

Consent Agenda

Mr. LaRock requested that the 2010 Committee Goals item be removed from this segment and placed under Second Vote Requirements.

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

VOTED: To approve School Committee Minutes of February 9, 2010, and for the second time, to approve the Cafeteria Report of January 2010, and January 2010 Budget Summary

Second Vote Requirements

None necessary since the 2010 Committee Goals were moved to the Policy and Planning Sub-Committee.

Policy and Planning – Kristin Thorp

MSC 2010 Goals - Ms. Thorp indicated a need for a second vote. Mr. LaRock remarked on his appreciation for the goals as written.

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

VOTED: To approve MSC 2010 Goals as presented

MSC 2010 Goals/Expanded Version with Action Items – Ms. Thorp further commented on action items the Committee will carry out in order to achieve goals as presented. She welcomes all input and will update the document as necessary. Committee members need to decide what actions they will participate in.

Public Comment Period #2

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

VOTED: To open tonight's second Public Comment Period

Mr. Gerry Mroz commented that lengthy Powerpoint reports should not be part of the agenda, and asked that the raw data from the Strategic Plan focus groups be made public. Ms. Maryan Hollis commented on the importance of the public comment segment in this new format and appreciates the Committee consistently directing the public to the website to access pertinent information, and looks forward to member follow-up and answers during open discussions.

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and on a roll call vote it was

VOTED: To adjourn to Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation and not reconvene in open session

The meeting adjourned at 10:58pm.