

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
MELROSE SCHOOL COMMITTEE
August 10, 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. Driscoll, Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Kourkouvelis, Mr. LaRock, Mr. Constantine and Mayor Dolan.

Also in attendance was Superintendent Joe Casey.

Ms. Driscoll called the meeting to order at 7pm and led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Ms. Driscoll noted that in accordance with the new Open Meeting Law, this meeting is being tape recorded. Also noted for consideration was agenda item "Superintendent's Evaluation Process" to be added to the Educational Programs and Personnel Subcommittee report tonight.

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

VOTED: To amend the Subcommittee agenda and add "Superintendent's Evaluation Process" to the Educational Programs and Personnel report

Ms. Driscoll also noted that the Aldermanic Chamber has been reserved for voting on September 14, and the Committee needs to determine date and location of our first meeting in September. Ms. Driscoll suggested meeting at 7pm in the Chamber on Tuesday, September 7 or Monday, September 13, or possibly at one of our school buildings on September 14. Date will be determined at our next meeting on August 24.

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

VOTED: To open the Public Comment period

Public Comment #1

Ted Kenney of Main St. commented that the Committee should act on the Strategic Plan or schedule a special meeting to make progress as tabled motions are counterproductive; expects transparency about procedure to place items on an agenda; the community needs to clearly see how the Committee conducts the people's business; Committee needs to foster the respect of the community and parents. Maryann Hollis of Melrose St. commented that tonight's agenda contains too many items for one meeting and that special meetings, i.e., the superintendent's evaluation, should be scheduled; her comparison of original and tonight's Strategic Plan action items shows inconsistencies with no explanation of how and when changes were made; does not endorse hiring a Math Coach or Webmaster as suggested in the Plan; and questioned tonight's Superintendent evaluation instrument in comparison to what Mr. Constantine outlined at our last meeting.

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

VOTED: To close Public Participation

Announcements – Superintendent of Schools

Start of School Update – Mr. Casey outlined back to school information as follows: Grades 1-9 return to school on Tuesday, August 31 with starting times of 8:15am for Grades 1-5, 7:40am for Grades 6-8, and 7:45am for Grades 9-12. For Kindergarten students, Kindergarten screenings by appointment only on August 31 and September 1, with first day of class for all Kindergarteners on September 2. Full-day K begins at 8:15am and Half-day K begins at 8:30am. Programs for the ECC at the Franklin School begin the week of September 6. The Education Stations after-school enrichment program begins August 31 for Grades 1-5, and September 7 for Kindergarten. All schools and programs will be closed on Friday, September 3 and Monday, September 6 in observance of Labor Day. Visit the melroseschools website for further information.

Announcements – School Committee Chair

No new announcements

Consent Agenda

School Committee Minutes of July 27, 2010 –

Mr. Constantine asked that the Minutes be removed from the consent agenda.

Personnel Report of August 9, 2010 - Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Personnel Report

Ms. Thorp moved, Ms. Casatelli seconded to approve School Committee Minutes of July 27, 2010. Mr. Constantine noted correction required within “Newsweek Report on MHS” on page 2. With seven votes in the affirmative, the School Committee Minutes of July 27, 2010 were unanimously approved, with change.

Subcommittees

Educational Programs and Personnel – Donald Constantine

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

VOTED: To change the order of the day to discuss the Superintendent’s Evaluation

Educational Programs and Personnel Subcommittee Chair Donald Constantine presented *Guidelines for Conducting the Superintendent’s 2009-2010 Annual Performance Evaluation (Attachment #1)* noting changes to this year’s process, and overview of core competencies and goals to be evaluated.

Ms. Casatelli moved, Ms. Thorp seconded to accept new procedures to conduct the Superintendent’s annual performance evaluation.

Ms. Kourkoumelis commented that contrary to Legal Counsel’s opinion that we refrain from using and submitting written notes when individually commenting on the Superintendent’s performance,

Ms. Kourkouvelis believes this action gives the perception that the Committee is circumventing the public records process and that, in general, members would most likely require written notes for reference in order to proceed with this serious exercise. Ms. Kourkouvelis stated that she will submit her written notes at the end of the meeting (*Attachment #2*). Mr. Constantine noted that Legal Counsel's comments were meant to ensure that we adhere to the privacy clause in the Superintendent's contract.

Mr. LaRock commented that it is his opinion that Mr. Constantine stated the legal issue clearly, and reiterated his support for the process outlined in Counsel's memorandum (*Attachment #3*), including Counsel's advice not to bring written notes.

With seven votes in the affirmative, the motion to accept new procedures to conduct the Superintendent's annual performance evaluation, passed unanimously.

Superintendent's Evaluation – Mr. Constantine reported that in compliance with the 2009 amendments to the Open Meeting Law, and in adherence to the Superintendent's employment contract, the Committee's Legal Counsel has recommended that we deliberate over the Superintendent's evaluation in a public meeting and each member submit commendations, recommendations and numerical ratings of Mr. Casey's performance. The recording secretary will present a draft evaluation report for Committee review and approval in order to vote on a motion to approve the final evaluation document at our next meeting. The Committee will not convene in Executive Session. The Superintendent's Evaluation was conducted with numerical and narrative comments noted.

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

VOTED: To change the order of the day to hear the report on the Girls Freshmen Volleyball pilot program

Pilot Program/ Girls Freshmen Volleyball – Athletics Director Pat Ruggiero presented overview of the popularity and successes of this parent-funded program initiated last year and asked for permission to extend the program for one year. .

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

VOTED: To approve extending the Girls Volleyball program

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

VOTED: To return to the order of the day

Finance and Facilities – Chris Casatelli

Monthly Budget Summary – Mr. Casey presented July 2010 budget report.

Ms. Driscoll moved, Ms. Thorp seconded to approve the July 2010 budget report.

Ms. Kourkouvelis commented that the budget process is fundamentally flawed and needs to be changed, and also referenced a letter (*Attachment "A"*) from B.U. Academy Physics instructor and

Melrose parent Gary Garber regarding possible district purchase of FOSS science kits. Mr. LaRock noted he is in favor of the proposal to purchase the kits, but agreed with Ms. Kourkouvelis that more consideration and discussion is necessary before we proceed.

With six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Driscoll, Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Mr. LaRock, Mayor Dolan and Mr. Constantine), and one (1) in the negative (Ms. Kourkouvelis), it was

VOTED: To accept July 2010 budget report

Policy and Planning – Kristin Thorp

Field Trip Policy –

Ms. Thorp noted that before us for consideration are three individual, revised Field Trip Policy documents for consideration.

Mr. Constantine moved, Ms. Driscoll seconded to adopt revised draft Field Trip policy dated 8/10/10 submitted by Ms. Thorp.

Ms. Kourkouvelis stated that she proposed an alternative version of the field trip policy as she feels other versions submitted are not comprehensive enough and do not fully protect our children. Mr. Constantine noted that he chose Ms. Thorp's document because it addresses inefficiencies in our previous policy, but if Ms. Kourkouvelis feels the Committee is not addressing issues of liability, Mr. Constantine suggests our Legal Counsel review it instead of individual Committee members drafting their own versions. Mr. LaRock favors incorporating various themes from Ms. Kourkouvelis's document without adopting the language verbatim. Ms. Driscoll offered that she would like more time to evaluate the document.

Mr. LaRock moved, Ms. Kourkouvelis seconded to incorporate the themes presented in Ms. Kourkouvelis's proposed draft field trip policy into the Administration's field trip procedures.

With one (1) vote in the affirmative (Mr. LaRock), five (5) in the negative (Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Driscoll, Mayor Dolan and Mr. Constantine), and one (1) "Present" (Ms. Kourkouvelis), the motion failed.

With six (6) votes in the affirmative (Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Driscoll, Mayor Dolan, Mr. LaRock and Mr. Constantine). None (0) in the negative, and one (1) "Present" (Ms. Kourkouvelis), the motion to adopt revised draft Field Trip policy dated 8/10/10 submitted by Ms. Thorp, passed.

Strategic Plan and Action Items Tabled Motion -

In response to the vote of July 27, 2010 to table the original Strategic Plan and Action Items, Ms. Thorp presented the Superintendent's revised documents for Committee review which incorporate Committee feedback.

Ms. Driscoll moved, Mr. Constantine seconded to approve Strategic Plan with Action Items as presented tonight.

Ms. Casatelli and Ms. Driscoll commented that we should take the first step and move forward with the action plans. Mr. LaRock added that he would also like to see action plans tailored differently for different schools. Mr. Casey noted that approval of the Strategic and Action plans tonight would allow the district to move forward.

With six (6) votes in the affirmative Ms. Thorp, Ms. Casatelli, Ms. Driscoll, Mayor Dolan, Mr. LaRock and Mr. Constantine), and one (1) in the negative (Ms. Kourkoumelis, the Strategic Plan with Action Items as presented tonight were approved.

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

VOTED: To open the Public Comment period

Public Comment Period #2

Ted Kenney of Main St. commented on tonight's evaluation process and credited the Superintendent for doing a good job and working well with all factions of the community; repeated need for budget process and funding be more open for the public to see and understand; public also needs to be informed about procedure of putting items on the agenda; expects that Committee meetings will be publicized in local paper and electronic media, and that Committee will publicly list what they think they achieved or didn't achieve.

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

VOTED: To close the Public Comment period

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

VOTED: To adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:10pm.