

**Middletown Springs School District**  
**Board of School Directors (Regular/Re-organizational) Meeting**

Date: March 19, 2009

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Place: Middletown Springs Elementary School

**Official Minutes**

Present: Kimberly Mathewson, Steven Letendre, Jim Gilmour, Clarence Haynes, and Jodi Comeau. Also present: Aaron Boynton (MSES Principal), Louis Milazzo (RSWSU Business Manager), Susan Rosso (Board Recording Secretary), Select Board members Fred Bradley, Carl Haynes, Chris Larson, and David Munyak, Mike LaBate (School Custodian), Sara Brzezinski (Grade 4 Teacher), and community members.

**AGENDA**

1. Call to Order (Principal)  
Aaron Boynton called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. Reorganize Board (Once Chair is elected, Chair may take over the meeting)
  - a. Election of Board Officers (new or re-elected members must be sworn in prior to meeting)  
Clarence Haynes nominated Kimberly Mathewson for Chair, Jim Gilmour seconded the nomination; the motion carried. Clarence Haynes nominated Jim Gilmour for Vice Chair, Kimberly Mathewson seconded the motion. Steven Letendre stated that he is unable to serve as Clerk. Jim Gilmour withdrew his name from nomination as Vice-Chair. Jim Gilmour nominated Steven Letendre for the position of Vice Chair, Kimberly seconded, the motion carried. Kimberly Mathewson nominated Jim Gilmour for Clerk, Steven Letendre seconded; the motion carried.
  - b. Set/Re-affirm Schedule for Regular Monthly Meetings  
Meeting times were reaffirmed for the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m., by consensus.
  - c. Appointment of RSWSU Board Representatives  
Three representatives are needed to represent MSD at RSWSU Board meetings. Clarence Haynes moved that Kimberly Mathewson, Jim Gilmour, and Jodi Comeau be appointed representatives, with Clarence Haynes and Steven Letendre to serve as alternates. Steven Letendre seconded; the motion carried.
    - i. Appointment of RSWSU Committee Representatives  
MSD representatives are needed for the Finance Committee, the Systems Committee, and the Human Resources Committee. Clarence Haynes moved to appoint Jim Gilmour to the Finance Committee, Kimberly Mathewson to the Systems Committee, and Jodi Comeau to the Human Resources Committee. Kimberly Mathewson seconded; the motion carried.
  - d. Appointment of School District Treasurer (if none appointed, defaults to Town Treasurer per statute)  
Jim Gilmour moved that Marilyn Parker be appointed as School Treasurer, Kimberly seconded; the motion carried.
  - e. Appoint Newspaper(s) of Record  
Clarence Haynes moved that the "Lakes Region Free Press" be designated as the newspaper of record, Jim Gilmour seconded; the motion carried.
  - f. Appoint Truant Officer (if none appointed, defaults to local law enforcement per statute)  
Kimberly Mathewson moved that Clarence Haynes be appointed Truant Officer, Jodi Comeau seconded, the motion carried.
  - g. Re-affirm Roberts Rules of Order (as required per statute)  
Clarence Haynes moved that the Board operate under Roberts Rules of Order for Small Boards, Jim Gilmour seconded; the motion carried.
3. Consent Agenda: (Action)
  - a. Approval of Minutes:

- i. Unofficial minutes of February 5 (Emergency), February 19 (Regular), February 27 (Special), March 1 (Special)

Clarence Haynes moved to table approval of these minutes until the next meeting. Steven Letendre seconded; the motion carried.

- b. Report of Superintendent  
No report this month.

- c. Report of Principal (Written)  
Steven Letendre asked about the existence of timelines and milestones in the Action Plan. Mr. Boynton stated that there are measurable goals in the Action Plan. Living History was briefly discussed and this year's approach complimented by the Board.

- d. Report of the Business Manager (Written)  
Discussion ensued about the interest rate on the water loan and whether it was more prudent to pay off the loan using the building fund or pay it off over time.

Steven Letendre moved to accept the written reports of the Principal and Business Manager, Jim Gilmour seconded; the motion carried.

- i. Approval of Warrants:

- 1. Warrant #44, in the amount of \$100,288.11, dated 2/13/09.
- 2. Warrant #45, in the amount of \$51,062.76, dated 2/27/09.

Clarence Haynes moved to approve Warrant #44 in the amount of \$100,288.11, dated 2/13/09, and Warrant #45 in the amount of \$51,062.76, dated 2/27/09. Kimberly Mathewson seconded; the motion carried.

- ii. Financial Report  
No report this month.

4. General Public Comments (Listen and Defer Action to Future Meeting)

- a. Seeking public input on budget

Community members expressed their budget concerns. The prebate issue was examined by one community member, who noted that the higher the budget, the more taxes you pay, regardless of the prebate. He commented that our HIP is higher than many other Vermont school districts. HIP is the percentage of income you pay for school property taxes. A percentage of 1.8 is the base level for school taxes in Vermont. Louis Milazzo stated that the only way a district could get close to 1.8 percent is if it borders another state (NH, NY) and tuitions its students there. Discussion ensued about Middletown Springs having a high percentage of free/reduced eligible students and students with special needs, as well as a small school population; all factors which need to be taken into consideration. The community members would have liked to have more details about how the \$75,000 maintenance fund would be used. The Board agreed that they could have provided more details and plans to do so at the next informational meeting before the second budget vote. There was also concern about the percentage of increase in secondary special education costs. Louis Milazzo explained in many cases the perceived increase was not actually an increase in costs but rather the result of recoding budget lines and combining middle level and high school level budgets. Clarence Haynes spoke about the Board's ability to cut costs only at the elementary level, not at the secondary level, over which the Board has no control. Clarence Haynes also noted that the CLA has dropped below 100%, down to 85%, which increases the tax rate. The community members suggested that the Board sharpen their pencils while also looking for other possible sources of income, such as charging community members for usage of the school building. The Board expressed their appreciation to the community members for coming and providing their input.

- b. Other public input

MSES Custodian Mike LaBate addressed the Board, stating that when he was hired, he promised the existing School Board that to the best of his ability he would keep the building addition looking new. He stated that he is trying, but since the MPR is being used for "outdoor" sports such as softball, soccer, etc., it is becoming very difficult. He is concerned that there will be damage/breakage to school property. He acknowledges that the building should be used by the community but that it also needs to be taken care of. The Board thanked Mr. LaBate for his comments and stated that the proposed formation of a Building Use Committee will help to address the issue of proper building usage. Discussion ensued about the purchase of a cage to divide the MPR, kitchen, and bathrooms from the rest of the building with little or no installation work. The Board wishes to extend their appreciation to Mr. LaBate for his efforts in maintaining the building in good order while supporting community use.

5. Old Business: (Possible Action)

a. FY08 Audit Findings

The Board inquired as to whether there were any issues that would result in the school being out of compliance. Louis Milazzo replied that there were not. The audit findings were tabled until the April meeting, by consensus.

b. Select Board—conclude land transfer (possible action):

The School Board extended their appreciation to the Select Board for coming to the School Board Meeting. The Board is in receipt of the letter and deed from Mr. Vreeland, the Select Board's attorney, regarding the land transfer. The School Board sent the deed to their attorney, Tracey Oakman, who had questions about how the deed was prepared. The Select Board explained that they are drawing a perimeter that gives any land within the boundary to the school, whether or not the town or the school currently owns the land. A quit claim deed says that whatever the town owns is transferred to the school. Discussion ensued about the road that runs along the school property. It was explained that the School Board wants the land but not the roadway and that the School Board is seeking a warranty deed, not a quit claim deed. Clarence Haynes suggested that we allow the attorneys to work out an agreement. Clarence Haynes moved that the School Board authorize a Select Board representative to meet with Tracey Oakman to work out the "bugs" in the process, Jim Gilmour seconded the motion; the motion carried. The Select Board agreed by consensus to have Selectman Chris Larson contacts the lawyer(s).

c. Select Board coordination of re-vote dates etc. (possible action)

The Select Board is meeting next Thursday to prepare a revised budget for a revote and is willing to coordinate dates with the School Board. The following dates were discussed: Informational meeting on Tuesday, April 28 and voting on Wednesday, April 29. The Select Board agreed to these dates. Clarence Haynes moved that the School Board adopt April 28 and April 29 as Meeting and Voting dates, Jim Gilmour seconded; the motion carried.

6. Policies (for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading)

a. Policy on Policy

b. Security

c. Community Use of School Facilities

Unfortunately, since the school budget was defeated, creating a new budget must take precedence over the policies. However, Jim Gilmour is in the process of investigating the development of a Building Use Committee; its structure and membership, and will continue to move forward with this. Policies will be tabled until the April meeting, by consensus.

7. New Business (Receive Information and possible action)

a. Approve Substitute List

Steven Letendre moved to accept the Kelly Substitute list, Kimberly Mathewson seconded; the motion carried.

b. Budget revision

Kimberly Mathewson suggested that we use part of the Tuition Fund to reduce the budget and pay for prior tuition bill-backs only. Steven Letendre suggested that we decrease the fuel oil budget to \$3.50 per gallon. Discussion ensued about possible savings in secondary special education. Louis Milazzo will investigate these figures. Clarence Haynes reiterated the importance of having a strong voice of representation from MSD at IEP meetings for our secondary students. Steven Letendre suggested that we move some money from the Maintenance Fund back into the budget to reduce taxes.

So far, reductions are: \$4,000 from the fuel budget line and \$47,000 from the tuition fund line. Clarence Haynes agrees that the Board needs to look at the surplus in the budget; however, if we cut too much, we will only need to raise taxes that much more the following year. Regarding the Maintenance Fund, we know we have to spend \$16,000 for the water system project, a leak in the roof over the Grade 5/6 classroom, an eroding concrete half-wall near the Pre-K classroom, and old, decaying windows are all immediate maintenance needs. Because of the tough economic times, the Board will need to concentrate only on the projects that must be done in the next twelve months and ask for only that amount for the Maintenance Fund. Mr. Boynton said that we can get some estimates fairly quickly on the roof/chimney. Steven Letendre suggested that he and Mr. Boynton meet with Custodian Mike LaBate on Monday to prioritize the building repairs. Jim Gilmour and Steven Letendre asked about federal stimulus funds and whether our school would be able to access these. Louis Milazzo said that he believed that there would be funds available for special education and construction costs in 2010, but warned that the school district cannot legally reduce its local special education spending as a result of receiving stimulus funds. As a source of possible income, Kimberly Mathewson suggested that we make overtures to Ira for their students to attend MSES; however, the town of Ira cannot make decisions regarding this, only the parents. Kimberly recommended that the Board meet again next week and that Aaron Boynton and Louis Milazzo bring the Board numbers for budget cuts. Clarence Haynes would like to have a printout from Louis Milazzo that

addresses the surplus: where it came from and how much can be cut and/or moved. The Board wants to cut \$100,000 out of the budget, which will be a very difficult task. Kimberly Mathewson suggested that the Board distribute another informational sheet to community members, this time in "The Magnet," perhaps with a pie chart to clearly illustrate where the money is being spent. The Board will meet again Wednesday, March 25 at 7:00 p.m. (Special Meeting) to arrive at a figure to present to the town for a vote. It was discussed that perhaps an additional meeting prior to the Informational Meeting would be helpful so that taxpayers have the opportunity to express their concerns.

- c. Kimberly Mathewson asked for the terms (in years) of the current School Board members in order to convey this information to the VSBA. Information was shared to be forwarded to VSBA.
  - d. The 09-10 calendar was brought to the Board by Mr. Boynton for approval. Clarence Haynes moved to adopt the 2009-2010 school calendar, Jim Gilmour seconded; motion carried.
  - e. Mr. Boynton has had a family contact him and visits the school, interested in sending their child to MSES as a tuition student. He is seeking clarification on whether the tuition should be prorated since our Kindergarten program is less than a full day. Clarence Haynes stated that the family should be billed on a prorated basis and the board agreed by consensus.
8. Master Facilities Planning (Discussion, possible action)  
This topic was covered during the budget discussion.
  9. Personnel and Contracts (Action)
    - a. New Hires – Bob Bruttomesso as Odyssey of the Mind Coach
    - b. Terminations/Resignations - None
    - c. Transfers – None
    - d. Leave of Absences -- None

Steven Letendre moved to approve Bob Brutomesso's hiring as Odyssey of the Mind Coach, Kimberly Mathewson seconded; the motion carried.

Kimberly Mathewson asked that Mr. Boynton let the Board know promptly when he has evaluated all staff members and if he is recommending them for re-hire. Mr. Boynton would like to have the opportunity to advise the staff personally, in advance, if they will need to be RIF'd due to the school budget failing to pass.

10. Anticipated Executive Session **1 V.S.A. § 313 (1-9)(b)** (if warranted)  
Kimberly Mathewson moved the Board into Executive Session for the discussion of personnel and contract negotiation issues at 10:40 p.m. Clarence Haynes Seconded. Clarence Haynes Moved that the board move out of executive session at 11:15 PM. Steve Latender seconded. No action taken.
11. Other Lawful Business (Information Gathering Only)
12. Set Next Meeting  
Wednesday, March 25, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. (Special)
13. Steve moved that the meeting be adjourned at 11:16PM, Clarence Haynes Seconded.