

MARLBOROUGH, MA 01752

Call to Order

February 8, 2011

Chairman Stevens called the Public Hearing of the Marlborough School Committee to order at 7:02 p.m. at the District Education Center, 17 Washington Street, Marlborough, MA. Members present included Mrs. Bodin-Hettinger, Ms. Dwyer, Mrs. Hardy, Dr. Hediger and Mrs. Hennessy. Ms. Robey was absent.

Assistant Superintendent Delaney, Assistant Superintendent Jolicoeur, Superintendent Pope and Clerk Judd were also in attendance.

Chairman Stevens stated that this meeting is being recorded by the local cable television station, Channel 10.

Chairman Stevens said the purpose of this public hearing is to get public input on the proposed grade reconfiguration. She said additional public comment will be taken during the Public Comment section of the School Committee's meetings of February 22, 2011 and March 8, 2011. The School Committee will vote on the reconfiguration plan at its meeting of March 8, 2011.

Dr. Pope thanked the parents who attended last night's meeting and tonight's public hearing. He outlined the proposed changes for next year: K-4; 5-8; and 9-12.

Why now? Response – student achievement; it will help eliminate important transitions at critical stages of their education. It will allow the opportunity to create a true Middle School. Also, it will provide more opportunities. Dr. Pope outlined the areas where AYP has not been met.

Chairman Stevens opened the public hearing to those speaking in favor:

Four communications in favor were read into the records.

Brenda Sibole believes Dr. Pope has a clear vision of where our school is now and where it needs to be in the future. Ms. Sibole agrees that a more traditional elementary school, middle school and high school are in the best interest for the children for academic, social and emotional purposes.

Roberta King and her husband are lifelong residents of Marlborough, and they have had first-hand experience of the benefits of this type of configuration such as the freedom to learn in an age appropriate atmosphere, attending school with siblings of close age, and given the time to mature naturally. She is a firm believer of preserving our children's innocence as long as possible. This vote will preserve our children's' innocence, and bring focus back on education and strengthen our families.

Karolyn Gowaski is excited about Dr. Pope's ideas on what he feels will make Marlborough's schools better. She said the proposed changes will overall be good for the students and the city as well.

Christine Sweeney and her husband are excited about Dr. Pope's ideas on what he feels will make the schools better, and they agree with the proposed changes.

Jennifer Hunt, 110 Crosby Rd., strongly supports Dr. Pope's vision for the schools and the City of Marlborough.

Malissa Labarre, 115 Dean Rd., is impressed with Dr. Pope's presentation and response he has received. She said it is positive to transition the 4th graders and 8th graders back. It would be a disservice to not transition this coming September.

Monique Duross, 261 DeSimone Drive, spoke in favor of the reconfiguration. She said if we want the district to succeed we have to approve this.

Steven Zagzoug, 12 Ellis Ave., said it was an excellent selection for Superintendent. He supports the reconfiguration; it will benefit all the schools.

Pam Vanbuskirk, 11 Moffa Lane, spoke in favor of Dr. Pope's proposal. She said it is time for the change.

Deb McCarthy, 600 Stevens St., spoke in favor of the realignment plan. She said parents have been looking for this for a long time.

Shondra Knollenberg, 26 Franklin St., said this is a long time coming.

Todd DeCruz, 53 Elm Heights Terrace, said he is glad to see Dr. Pope is taking the initiative to improve the school system. He hopes the School Committee gives Dr. Pope the authority to do what needs to be done.

Vickie Paquette, 14 Avalon Drive, is strongly in favor of Dr. Pope's proposal because she sees children growing up too fast. She said the change can't be done quickly enough.

Chairman Stevens closed this portion of the Public Hearing.

Chairman Stevens opened the public hearing to those speaking in opposition:

Steve Slocomb, 10 Baker Drive, said what needs to be concentrated on is the curriculum; not the location where people are being taught. His son was excited that he was going to be going to the High School to be involved in more activities and exposed to more courses.

Chairman Stevens closed this portion of the public hearing.

Chairman Stevens read a letter from Rose Marie Boniface, Retired Superintendent of Marlborough Public Schools, into the record. Mrs. Boniface defended the current grade configuration and outlined how it was established. She said everyone involved in the decision would have preferred to have a more traditional configuration, but enrollment and existing space did not allow such a plan. She concluded, if that is possible now, go for it, but please don't diminish what intelligent, committed, enormously experienced, hard-working and accountable people did previously.

Chairman Stevens said there will be another Parent Forum on February 15, 2011.

The Public Hearing was opened to questions. None

Chairman Stevens closed the public hearing at 7:27 p.m.

Jennifer Hardy, Secretary
Marlborough School Committee