

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, February 28, 2012**

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 7:10 PM**

**Room 118
Mayor Donna Holaday/Cheryl Sweeney Presided**

Present: Bruce Menin, Steve Cole, Cheryl Sweeney, Mayor Donna Holaday, Nick deKanter, Audrey McCarthy, Dan Koen

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Mayor Donna Holaday called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM. A roll call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:

Mayor Holaday read the Newburyport School Committee Mission Statement.

At this point Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney assumed chairmanship of the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall DR. **CONCERN:** He commented on the drug abuse situation at the High School. He challenged the Committee to “get the facts” – it’s not about punishment – it’s about rehabilitation – we need to do something – review critical issues.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Motions

Warrants:

On a motion by Dan Koen and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:
\$8,018.61

Motion Passed Unanimously

On a motion by Dan Koen and seconded by Bruce Menin it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:
\$413,636.63

Motion Passed Unanimously

Minutes

On a motion by Mayor Holaday and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the Newburyport School Meeting minutes of Monday, February 6, 2012.

Motion Passed Unanimously

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS:

Background Information:

Principals submitted a 2-year School Improvement Plan developed after months of meetings with their individual School Councils in 2009-10. Last year, principals were asked to report out on the progress of the School Improvement Plan Year 1 to date, and also what was still needed to be accomplished. Principals

tonight reported out on the progress of the School Improvement Plan Year 2 to date, and also what was still needed to be accomplished. Superintendent Dr. Marc Kerble asked the principals of the Brown School, Bresnahan School and the Molin School to come forward and present their School Improvement Plan Updates to the Committee:

Brown School – Principal Amy Sullivan:

Principal Sullivan presented and explained the Brown School “School Improvement Plan Update”.

Discussion:

Dan Koen thanked Principal Sullivan for a very thorough presentation. He inquired as to how she would plan a lockdown at Brown, and why CPI training. Principal Sullivan said she had a very well trained staff that are very cognizant of the fact that they are dealing with small children. She explained how they deal with training the children and stated it is mostly a de-escalation situation.

Bruce Menin inquired regarding Literacy and professional development. Principal Sullivan explained.

Mayor Holaday commented that the improved DIBELS scores were impressive, and inquired as to what influenced that. Principal Sullivan explained commenting on the pacing guide.

Molin School - Principal Lorene Marx:

Principal Marx presented and explained the Molin School “School Improvement Plan Update”.

Discussion:

Nick deKanter commented on the improved parental involvement and stated it was very exciting to see how Principal Marx was developing this.

Mayor Holaday inquired regarding the Lucy Calkins Reading Program. Principal Marx explained why this program was again being used and how successful it could be.

Mayor Holaday asked Principal Marx to explain how teacher proceed, in grade 4, with no text for Social Studies. Principal Marx, and Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik explained.

Bresnahan School – Principal Kristina Davis:

Principal Davis presented and explained the Bresnahan School “School Improvement Plan Update”.

Superintendent Kerble thanked the principals and the school councils for the comprehensive reports.

Youth Risk Behavior Discussion:

Dr. Kerble spoke regarding safety education. He stated that we have great kids – great kids make great decisions – great kids also make bad decisions – making bad decisions does not make them not great kids. Parents need to have discussions with their children; kids need to take responsibility, parents need to take responsibility. On March 22 there will be a public forum where the results of the youth survey will be revealed.

Background Information:

All year long, there has been an increase in students involved in risky behaviors. Dr. Kerble has invited NHS Principal Mike Parent and NYS Director Andi Egmont to update the Committee on what is being done concerning youth risk behaviors of the Newburyport students, how this is being addressed, and how can the community be involved.

Andi Egmont stated there is a lot of talk in the community regarding marijuana. This is not a new topic. They have had several community meetings, but few people show up. When she attended the National Com. Of Anti Drug Coalition and spoke about Newburyport’s resources, people were amazed at the resources we have in this community. This is a community issue. We are fortunate to have a principal who acknowledges this issue. It is a shifting culture. We have adopted a culture of looking at the whole child. The issue is so much bigger than how many kids are getting expelled. We are also fortunate to have people who are talking about this.

Principal Parent said this has been a trying year. Marijuana is not the only problem; there are also drugs and alcohol problems. The High School has dealt with every issue that has come forth this year head on, and they will continue to do so. They are more aware of what kids are doing. This needs to be a partnership and not just a school issue.

Andi Egmont said the data is a tool. They need to have teens at conversations. We are going to organize teen focus groups.

Principal Parent said it is important to allow students to talk openly – to have open and honest conversations.

Discussion:

Steve Cole stated that as of January, 2009 citizens voted. He discussed school policy. He discussed his letter which he had published in the Daily News, which he stated he is going to update and submit it for publication again. He quoted parts of the letter, which were appropriate to the situation as it stands today. He called attention to the Clippers Compass and the memorandum of understanding. Are things happening that are called for in this memorandum of understanding. There needs to be more clear action that is visible to people. This needs to be updated.

Mayor Holaday discussed this situation. She asked what do we do for first time offenders. Ms. Egmont explained.

Dr. Kerble stated he appreciated Mr. Cole's passion. Ms. Egmont and Principal Parent are here as they care what is going on in their school.

Audrey McCarthy stated the kids they are working with are reaping the benefits. She thinks we can do more with connections. Let's find a way to invite more kids to become involved. Kids not only hurt themselves, and their families, but they also hurt the whole student body.

Andi Egmont spoke regarding the new curriculum. There is a flyer going out this week. Some of the statistics from the survey are that 66% of the student body thought most students were smoking pot, while 33% responded that they were actually smoking pot. We need to acknowledge and change the perception of people that the majority of students are not smoking pot. She spoke of retreats.

Bruce Menin said that it isn't that we have these problems, but what we are doing about the problem. There are a number of ways we can address the problem. He spoke of zero tolerance. He wants to speak about different ideas. Let us look at all the options, and rethink what our options are.

Nick deKanter said we are making progress, but we have a long way to go. He spoke of site-based high school policy and talked of perception.

Principal Parent said we cannot start in grade 9, this needs to be a K-12 program. It cannot be solved by a high school principal or the Beacon Coalition. This needs to start with parents. The community needs to embrace this and act.

Mayor Holaday said this has been great conversation, but she felt that this is not the forum to address this. There is work to be done.

Cheryl Sweeney spoke of the upcoming community forum at City Hall Auditorium on Thursday, March 22 at 6:30 PM.

(Bruce Menin left the meeting at 9:03 PM)

SCHOOL CHOICE 2012-2013:

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney gave the background information regarding School Choice.

Background Information:

Each year the School Committee votes on whether or not the Newburyport Public Schools will participate in the state's School Choice program for the upcoming school year. Once the School Committee approves the School Choice Program, the administration determines seat availability at the various grade levels and recommends opening grades. If there are more applicants than seats available at a particular grade level, a lottery will be held.

Motion:

On a motion by Mayor Holaday and seconded by Dan Koen it was

VOTED: To participate in school choice for 2012-2013, with opening up Grade 9 immediately for application, due to the timing of private schools.

Motion Passed

Bruce Menin absent for vote

MSBA UPDATE:**Discussion:**

Steve Cole inquired as to what was the current chain of command. Dan Koen said to the building committee and the mayor.

Steve Cole said there has been discussion regarding sandy soil at the Bresnahan site, would it hold a three story building. Mayor Holaday said this has been addressed. All tests have been done and it is a safe site.

Mayor Holaday said plans have been completed for the Bresnahan project and submitted to MSBA – cost estimates have been reviewed – will be voted on March 28 by MSBA. The Nock/Molin architects are working diligently – will have a report by mid-May. There will be a follow-up meeting with the Bresnahan neighbors. The question for the vote will be before the City Council by mid-March. We should have numbers soon for the senior community center.

BUDGET F13 UPDATE:

Dr. Kerble stated 4 of 5 principals have met with Central Office to present their budgets. We are looking at a draft of our expenses, revenues – we are concerned with not enough money to meet level needs of the school system. There will be a deficit to make up – some of the revenue we had last year is gone. He has met with principals and asked them for March 7 to prepare a report to reduce their budgets.

Dr. Kerble distributed an updated Budget Review and Presentation Meeting Schedule. He will send out format for budget presentations.

Discussion:

Cheryl Sweeney asked if budget presentations being involved with Port Media.

Nick deKanter suggested we change the title to “Budget Workshops”. He asked parents to join in with these discussions – he would like Port Media to participate.

Dr. Kerble discussed a memo he has sent to parents.

Cheryl Sweeney asked what is going out to the public. Dr. Kerble said he will check on this.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall Dr. **CONCERN:** He stated we still have a communication issue with the public. There has to be consequences (re: drug and alcohol). Take a look at the policy – if there are things that are valuable – make sure they occur. If things are invaluable – get them out of there.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**Join Education:**

Audrey McCarthy said the next meeting will be on March 5 at 5:30 PM.

Superintendent Goals:

Mayor Holaday said at a follow-up meeting they looked at the new rubric. Dr. Kerble must look through this list and give us specifics.

Policy:

Nick deKanter said they are looking at the School Committee Policy Manual. Next meeting is the second Friday in March.

Finance:

Steve Cole said they met on February 17 – Mayor Holaday attended and spoke of the need for foreign language and more electives and a strong policy with higher Ed.

They talked about:

- Upcoming tours – budget workshops – draft of budget review – city appropriations
- Areas of increases in costs in budget
- Three teachers retiring this year – buy backs

Next meeting – March 2 – 8:00 AM

Communications:

Nick deKanter said they met today and

- made progress on identifying the district website improvements.
- Discussed being visible as School Committee members at events
- Next meeting March 19 at 5:30 PM

Mr. DeKanter said tomorrow there is a boys' basketball game – vs. Watertown and Thursday there is a girls basketball game.

Education Business Coalition:

Nick deKanter said things are moving in the right direction.

NEF:

Cheryl Sweeney gave an update on their fundraising. Upcoming events are their Golf event and the Lighthouse auction.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion

On a motion by Mayor Holaday and seconded by Dan Koen it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 9:47 PM.

Motion Passed

Bruce Menin absent for vote