

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, July 11, 2011**

**Newburyport High School  
Meeting Convened at 7:05 PM**

**Room 118  
Bruce Menin Presided**

**Present:** Steve Cole , Cheryl Sweeney, Bruce Menin, Stephanie Weaver, Nick deKanter, Dan Koen  
**Absent:** Mayor Donna Holaday

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Vice-Chairman Bruce Menin called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM. A Roll Call of members showed one member absent, Mayor Donna Holaday. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:**

Bruce Menin read the Newburyport School Committee Mission Statement.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motions**

**Warrants:**

On a motion by Cheryl Sweeney and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$264,778.55**

On a motion by Cheryl Sweeney and seconded by Stephanie Weaver it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$4,765.00**

**Motion Passed**

On a motion by Cheryl Sweeney and seconded by Stephanie Weaver it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$191.829.46**

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

**Minutes**

On a motion by Stephanie Weaver and seconded by Cheryl Sweeney it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the Newburyport School Committee meeting minutes of Monday, June 20, 2011.

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

Superintendent Dr. Marc Kerble stated he was very proud to be evaluated publically, and thanked the committee and all those who contributed.

## **DISCUSSION: PURPOSE & OUTCOMES OF SUBCOMMITTEES**

Superintendent Dr. Kerble stated that each of us understands this differently – what is its purpose?

### **COMMUNICATION SUB-COMMITTEE:**

**Stephanie Weaver** stated she has served on this committee and has served as chairman to same. They first met to establish messaging and content. They met with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent. Things got very complicated and the committee took on too much. They met once a month, sometimes twice. They published and distributed newsletters. Earlier on they did key communicators.

**Nick deKanter** stated it's important to look forward; why do we need this committee. We are at a point in our history where people can access information faster and easier. It's much more important to have clear, concise information for our stakeholders to engage the community, more, now than ever. In the past we were looked on as a pseudo-public relations agency.

**Steve Cole** stated in '04 he was part of this sub-committee. They did newsletters. In '05 and '06 they did a more complex newsletter. We need to provide information as to what is happening now, yesterday and tomorrow. We need to get feedback from the public as people need to know how important they are. We need to make this area a critical leader. People need to see progress – we need to capture that and package things up.

**Dan Koen** stated the communications committee in its primary goal is to get more stakeholders to these meetings. There are a lot of things going on. A lack of attendance at our meetings is a symptom. People show up when there is a problem – we need to get information to and from the community.

**Cheryl Sweeney** stated it's a communication connection – we need to move forward. This goes beyond having people at meetings. This needs discussion.

**Bruce Menin** stated we have done some wonderful things in terms of communication. This is an important part of communication.

**Stephanie Weaver** said we need to put something back in place. This requires vigilance. We need to start off small and get it back in gear.

**Bruce Menin** said he will ask the Mayor to appoint a communications sub-committee, and asked Committee members to let the Mayor know if they are interested in serving on this committee.

**Superintendent Dr. Kerble** stated we are a School Committee of the future. People want information as to what is important. People like different means of communication and we need to be consistent. He agreed with Ms. Weaver – keep it simple but do it.

### **Motion**

On a motion by Nick deKanter and seconded by Stephanie Weaver it was

**VOTED:** To ask the Mayor to appoint a Communication Sub-Committee.

### **Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

### **FINANCE SUB-COMMITTEE:**

**Bruce Menin** said this committee was a really good opportunity to get a good sense of where we were going. The Assistant Superintendent provided important information, which was then provided to the School Committee.

**Cheryl Sweeney** stated this gave her a constant good handle as to where we stood in areas of financial status – where we were and where we wanted to go. She asked questions, was given information and felt comfortable being able to talk about it.

**Stephanie Weaver** stated she thought from a checking-in point of view it was necessary. Good reporting has been done, but this committee is important.

**Nick deKanter** stated he appreciates what has happened in the past. He would like to see this be part of a mayoral committee to take a broader look – looking more at financial planning for the future. This is not a school issue alone – it needs to be a city-wide effort.

**Steve Cole** stated it is important to look at trends of the last few years. We need to show citizens what is happening in terms of funds. He is in favor of examining data trends, revenues, and expenses. It is important to show citizens where the dollars are going to go.

**Assistant Superintendent Deirdre Farrell** stated we are talking about two different things – day-to-day operation of schools and long-term financial planning. These meetings were very important for her to report out to the Committee.

### **Motion**

On a motion by Nick deKanter and seconded by Stephanie Weaver it was

**VOTED:** To table the issue of a Finance Sub-Committee.

### **Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

### **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Brenda Reffet, 3 Doe Run DR.** **CONCERN:** She stated this is part of the reason why people don't come – they are long. There is no need to spend money on professional marketing – engage the community in how things affect them – what will benefit them to be engaged. People watch this at home. Use the website more effectively. Use the newspaper. Give specific details. Get material out consistently and keep it up to date. Use kids to update the website. In terms of finance, people need information. Break things down and provide transparency.

**Dr. Ralph Orlando, 5 Wm. Hall Dr.** **CONCERN:** Financing issues are tied to the communication piece. Take a real hard look at your communications; go out to people to find out how you are doing. You need community advisory committees. There are a lot of good things, but a lot of things need improving.

**Brenda Reffet** **CONCERN:** You need a suggestion spot on the website. Go to PTO meetings to garner support.

### **AUGUST 1 – SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT PLANNING:**

Superintendent Dr. Kerble stated he appreciated all the comments that Committee members sent Cathy Manning. Last summer we spent a lot of time going through the “Effective School Committee” book. We need to review this/look at how things went this year and the outcomes. He asked to be allowed to structure the meeting.

### **Discussion:**

**Stephanie Weaver** suggested addressing starting earlier; prepare a timeline for us as to when we start, etc.

**Nick deKanter** stated they should let the Superintendent manage the meeting for them. Pick topics of the most importance.

**Cheryl Sweeney** stated this is a great exercise for all of us. She agreed to let the Superintendent manage the meeting and address the structure of our formal meetings.

**Steve Cole** stated they need discussion about Strategic Planning, where we stand, student centered items and student achievement.

**Dan Koen** commented on last year's retreat – the norms of interaction. He commented on the abandonment of sub-committee meetings and stated he embraced the ad hoc committees.

**Bruce Menin** stated the keynote of this event should be the state of schools – how all this ties together – the future “what does it look like” – where are we.

**Stephanie Weaver** said she would like to hear what worked and what didn't.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR 2011-1012:**

Bruce Menin reviewed the calendar with the Committee. He stated Mayor Holaday has asked that we schedule meetings on Tuesday's after school vacation weeks so as not to interfere with the City Council meeting dates/times.

**Motion**

On a motion by Nick deKanter and seconded Stephanie Weaver it was

**VOTED:** To approve the School Committee meeting calendar as proposed.

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

**MSBA UPDATES:**

Assistant Superintendent Farrell reviewed the "Request for Services – OPM Selection Process" report and tentative schedule of the selection process.

Superintendent Dr. Kerble acknowledged Assistant Superintendent Farrell and Steve Bergholm for all their efforts.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION PROCESS:**

Bruce Menin stated that they have used a variety of formats in the past for this procedure.

Superintendent Kerble recommended the Committee allow Bruce Menin to come up with a format for this.

**Discussion:**

**Nick deKanter** suggested each Committee member respond to a format – much like the Superintendent's evaluation – also a survey which we published for the community to respond to us – it needs to be short – focused on our goals – let everybody give us comments as they choose to.

**Bruce Menin** stated he and the Superintendent will produce a format.

**Nick deKanter** asked if they could have it before the next meeting.

**Bruce Menin** said he will produce a draft and then update it at the retreat.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Brenda Reffet** **CONCERN:** She inquired where the School Committee meeting schedule will be posted.

**Dr. Ralph Orlando** **CONCERN:** If you want people to come you need to let them know what is going on.

**ADJOURNMENT/EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**Motion**

On a motion by Steve Cole and seconded by Dan Koen it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations at 8:52 PM.

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**