

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
Tuesday, February 26, 2013**

**Newburyport High School  
Meeting Convened at 7:08 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:**

Mayor Donna Holaday called the meeting to order at 7:08 PM.  
Mayor Holaday called for a roll call, which found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:**

Not read this evening.

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

**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  
**\$13,579.50**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by Dan Koen and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$291,213.60**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**Minutes**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Meeting of Monday, February 4, 2013.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Superintendent Dr. Marc Kerble reported on the following:

- STEM Forum – Wednesday, March 13, 6:30-8:00 PM, Room 118 – This is an important time for the community
- Director of Pupil Services – Thursday, Feb. 28, meet & greet, and final interview – two candidates were selected for the final interviews – one withdrew due to financial reasons – the final candidate will be interviewed that evening.
- Director of Finance & Operations search update – the search has been extended for two more weeks – quite a few candidates applied for this and the Director of Pupil Services positions.
- Sports and other activities – there is a lot going on

### **NEW SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PRESENTATIONS:**

Mayor Holaday recognized members of the search committee.

Three different search firms presented to the School Committee their plans to assist in a search for a new superintendent for the Newburyport Public Schools. Representatives from the three firms gave their presentations followed by a question and answer period. The three firms are as follows:

#### **Future Management Systems:**

Dr. Bill Garr and Dr. Herbert Levine made their presentation and discussion followed:

#### **Discussion:**

**Mayor Holaday** inquired as to how many searches their firm has underway at the moment. Dr. Garr said three.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if Newburyport was late in starting their search. Dr. Garr said yes, we were late, but not too late in the process. Dr. Levine said we were on the border. They would need to do a lot of recruiting. The new superintendent may not be able to start on July 1.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked Dr. Garr and Dr. Levine to lead the Committee through the process. Dr. Garr said they would get the search committee together this week. The search takes approximately 4 months to complete. They need to sell Newburyport. The good thing is that there are not a lot of searches taking place now – most are winding down. Final candidates will do a day in district. An open interview will be conducted. The search committee will do site visits. Their firm will present candidate profiles to the search committee. Dr. Levine said their counterparts recommend candidates. He felt Newburyport would attract candidates.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked if they were feeling compromised by Newburyport's timeline. Dr. Garr said no.

**Dan Koen** asked

- At what point would they say was too late and we should go with an interim. Dr. Garr said the ideal time would have been to begin in August. A good candidate will want to give a 90 day notice to their school district. Dr. Levine said we would know as the process proceeds if the candidate pool was not sufficient and we should go with an interim.
- Do you have an interim pool. Dr. Garr said yes.
- Speak to where the data comes from. Dr. Garr said the disc is a measurement – it is done online. Dr. Levine said it only takes one person to be a match – they are optimistic and want to be honest with us. They will work very hard.

**Steve Cole** inquired regarding the graph – what were they contrasting. Dr. Garr explained.

**Megan Kinsey** (search committee member) asked if other search companies use these tools. Dr. Garr said no.

**John Elwell** (search committee member) asked

- To what extent does the search committee have access to candidate information. Dr. Garr said they give the search committee all the candidate information – it is done online.

- Do you select candidates who have been principals? Dr. Garr said seldom – maybe 3 or 4 times – never a middle school principal. Dr. Levine said oft times they have had principal experience in their background. Dr. Garr said several have had teaching experience.

**Mary Anne Clancy** (search committee member) asked

- If site visits were important. Do we sacrifice by not doing site visits? Dr. Garr said these give you a good sense of culture.
- Who puts schedules together? Dr. Garr said they are very careful to work with the search committee and school committee. Dr. Levine said this is your search – you are in charge.

**Megan Kinsey** asked how often do they find candidates from higher education. Dr. Garr said rarely and explained why not.

**Mayor Holaday** asked regarding assessment/scenarios – would they be interested in doing these. Dr. Garr said yes. He said they also do writing samples.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding the financial aspect/proposal – if we do not find a candidate within 6 months – is it no charge to begin again. Dr. Garr said other than expenses (ads, etc.) no charge – but they have never had to do this as they have always found good candidates.

Ms. Sweeney thanked Dr. Garr and Dr. Levine for their presentation.

### **New England School Development (NESDEC)**

Dr. Arthur Bettencourt and Dr. Carolyn Burke made their presentation to the Committee. Discussion followed.

#### **Discussion:**

**Mayor Holaday** inquired as to how many searches they are conducting at present and were we too late beginning our search. Dr. Bettencourt said we were not too late – they will, however, need to do an aggressive timeline.

**Bruce Menin** inquired regarding community needs assessment. Dr. Bettencourt said they will be listening – will do perhaps 6 focus groups. Dr. Burke explained the process of community needs assessment. Dr. Bettencourt said they will compile all data collected into approximately 15 to 20 pages and bring these to the School Committee.

**Mayor Holaday** asked how long will it take to do the process. Dr. Bettencourt said it all depends on what the School Committee wants and requires.

**Bruce Menin** asked if the amount of time will affect the quality of the search. Dr. Burke explained.

**Dan Koen** asked if the assessment would take the 40 days which was shown on their timeline. Dr. Burke said no, it can be done in approximately 2 weeks.

**Mayor Holaday** inquired regarding numbers in various districts.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding applicants/screening committee. Dr. Bettencourt explained the process. He said the search committee sees all applicants' applications.

**Megan Kinsey** inquired regarding applicants/profiles. Dr. Bettencourt explained.

**Mary Anne Clancy** inquired regarding the timeline, as to when they felt the selected candidate would be able to start. Dr. Bettencourt said the process should be done in May – the selected candidate usually gives a 90 day notice.

**Dan Koen** asked for an explanation regarding the community needs assessment – when they speak to a parent, is the parent coached by them at all. Dr. Burke said no, most parents know what they want to ask. They do, however, have a prompt that they use sometimes.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if we do not like the candidates, what happens. Dr. Bettencourt said it states in the warranty that there is no addition fee, just expenses.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if they had a pool of interims. Dr. Bettencourt said yes.  
**Steve Cole** inquired regarding the differences between the types of searches. Dr. Bettencourt explained.

Ms. Sweeney thanked Dr. Bettencourt and Dr. Burke for their presentation.

**MA ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES:**

Mike Gilbert made his presentation to the Committee. Discussion followed.

**Discussion:**

**Mayor Holaday** inquired regarding recruitment. Mr. Gilbert said a number of things went into this. They work with people in the field. They reach out to counterparts around the country. They put together a marketing brochure for the Committee and send this out to every Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent in Massachusetts. They also send this to school boards and administrators around the country. They advertise. He stated they are very careful not to steal Superintendents that they have placed within the last two years. They do extensive outreach.

**Nick deKanter** inquired as to what percentage of candidates come from advertising. Mr. Gilbert explained – much of advertising nowadays is web based and it is free.

**Mayor Holaday** inquired as to how many searches were they doing currently. Mr. Gilbert explained they are doing 4 or 5 – he is not currently involved in a search. All of the searches the company is doing are winding down.

**Dan Koen** asked Mr. Gilbert to explain his statement that this was not a bad time to begin a search. Mr. Gilbert explained.

**Dan Koen** asked if Newburyport was being aggressive on July 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. He also asked regarding interims. Mr. Gilbert explained – he stated they maintain a pool of interims.

**Megan Kinsey** asked how do you get to know your candidates. Mr. Gilbert said they look at what the community wants. There is a paper process – they rate skills and qualities – they work with the search committee – site visits are done.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked if the search committee would have access to all applications, how would these be presented to the committee, what is a typical applicant. Mr. Gilbert explained.

**Steve Cole** asked if there are fewer qualified candidates now that apply. Mr. Gilbert said yes.

**Nick deKanter** inquired as to what was different now. Mr. Gilbert said there have been many more retirements. The entire state has turned over regarding Superintendent retirements. The days when a Superintendent stayed 15 to 20 years are long gone – they average stay now is 3 to 4 years.

Ms. Sweeney thanked Mr. Gilbert for his presentation.

A ten minute break took place at this time. The Committee resumed session at 9:28 PM.

Ms. Sweeney stated everyone was asked about fee structures. A discussion regarding fee structures took place.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Cathy Manning, Search Committee**      **CONCERN:**      She stated her choice NESDEC for a search firm, and explained why she made this selection.

**Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall DR.**      **CONCERN:**      He stated we have a problem – we are late in this process – don't rush in to this. Look for an experienced Superintendent – we need to dialogue with the community.

**John Elwell, Search Committee**                   **CONCERN:**    He stated this is a difficult situation. He recommends we do a search now. Of the three he prefers NESDEC – they were honest regarding the timeframe. He said Future Management was sincere in their presentation.

**Mary Anne Clancy, Search Committee**       **CONCERN:**    She stated we should move ahead now – we need stability – she stated she liked Future Management.

**Barry Connell, Search Committee**           **CONCERN:**    He said this is a tight market – we should move ahead now – he was not impressed by MA Assoc. of School Committees. Future Management is interested in driving the process – he felt they were more able to sift through the candidates – they were his choice.

### **Motion**

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

**VOTED:**            To suspend the rules to allow for dialogue to take place between the audience and the School Committee. Dialogue from the audience should, however, take place through the Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

**Dan Koen** said he felt the first two presenters were too flowery. He liked Mass Assoc. of School Committees. They were also more cost effective.

**Audrey McCarthy** stated she felt very strongly in favor of an interim Superintendent.

**Megan Kinsey** said we should aim high – if you don't get when you want – then go for an interim.

**Kathy Manning** commented regarding interims – the State is now very strict – districts have to have a failed search before they can have an interim in Massachusetts. She stated you do not get stability with an interim.

**Nick deKanter** said we need to be thoughtful – we are searching for very high standards – he is in favor of an interim Superintendent now. He felt we should ask Dr. Kerble to stay on for another year – he is very capable – knows our district, staff, etc.

**Bruce Menin** said that it is important that we have challenges in getting an interim. We should appoint an interim – do a search in the summer. This is our 6<sup>th</sup> Superintendent in 12 years. The average stay for a Superintendent is 3 to 4 years. He does not support MA Assoc. of School Committees. Future Management was comprehensive, but he would consider NESDEC. He wants an interim.

**Dr. Orlando** said we should not rush into getting an interim.

**Dr. Kerble** said that the product that comes out of NHS now is the best he has seen. Student achievement has gone up high. He loves Newburyport – we should focus on the spirit of the district. We have 5 months – post the position. He has dealt with all three firms. We should have a spirit of positiveness.

**Dr. Orlando** said we should look at the facts – foreign language, sciences. He said he has not bashed the district. This is a changed district.

**Steve Cole** said he liked what the first candidate presented – he liked what they were doing with data, facts, search pool and having one bite of the apple. He commented regarding NESDEC – he would go with the Strategic Plan if we had the money. Regarding MA Assoc. of School Committees – this is a good value – they build strong relationships with the school district, candidates – he would vote for them.

**Cheryl Sweeney** said she questioned the stability of an interim. She felt we can win either way. She has faith in our search committee and faith that Newburyport will attract good candidates.

**Mayor Holaday** said it is important for us to move forward – the worst case scenario is we wind up with an interim – we should work with the search firm. She stated she would like NESEC.

**Nick deKanter** said he fully supports voting for a search firm tonight.

**Audrey McCarthy** said we should go forward with looking for an interim on our own.

**Bruce Menin** wanted to know who will run the Schools when Dr. Kerble leaves.

**Cheryl Sweeney** commented regarding waivers – an interim must be out of the system for two years – we also need a failed search before we can appoint an interim.

**Motion**

Mayor Holaday put forth a motion to recommend NESDEC as our search firm, but a second to the motion was not forthcoming.

**Discussion**

**Cheryl Sweeney** said there were two separate questions on the table.

**Nick deKanter** said the questions are that we should go for a search firm now or an interim. What search firm should we choose.

**Motion**

Dan Koen put forth a motion that they should have a roll call vote now naming the search firm they each preferred and then going forward with votes regarding search firms. A second to the motion was not forthcoming.

**Motion**

On a motion by Nick deKanter and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

**VOTED:** To proceed to appoint an interim Superintendent as soon as possible.

3 – Yes

4 – No

**Motion did not pass**

A straw vote was recommended that each member of the Committee state their choice of search firm.

**Straw Vote**

- Bruce Menin** - NESDEC
- Steve Cole** - MA Assoc of School Com.
- Cheryl Sweeney** - NESDEC
- Mayor Holaday** - NESDEC
- Nick deKanter** - Future Management
- Audrey McCarthy** - NESDEC
- Dan Koen** - MA Assoc of School Com.

**Results:**

- New England School Development Council** - 4 straw votes
- MA Assoc. of School Committees** - 2 straw votes
- Future Management Systems** - 1 straw vote

**Motion:**

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

**VOTED:** To hire New England School Development Council (NESDEC) as our search firm.

**Discussion:**

**Bruce Menin** stated if search fails we will begin again immediately. What tier do we want?

**Steve Cole** explained the three tiers.

**Nick deKanter** said the Strategic Plan would give direction for the new Superintendent.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding Chapter 70 funds – she asked Dr. Kerble if they were encumbered.

**Dr. Kerble** said these funds were going for foreign language – he explained further.

**Motion:**

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

**VOTED:** To amend the motion to read:  
To hire New England School Development Council (NESDEC) as our search  
Firm with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Mayor Holaday** called the question. A vote was then taken

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole voted NO**

**ADJOURNMENT:**

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

**VOTED:** To adjourn the meeting at 11:02 PM.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**