

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**REGULAR MEETING**

**Tuesday, September 3, 2013**

**Newburyport High School  
Meeting Convened at 7:06 PM**

**Room 118  
Cheryl Sweeney Presided**

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

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

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM. Ms. Sweeney called for a roll call, which found all members present except Mayor Holaday. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:**

Ms. Sweeney read the Newburyport School District Mission Statement.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motion**

**Minutes**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Meeting minutes of Monday, August 19, 2013.

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

**Bruce Menin** that at the August 19<sup>th</sup> meeting it was noted that the Nock/Molin project was coming in under budget.

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee meeting minutes of Monday, August 26, 2013.

**Motion Passed**

**Mayor Holaday absent for vote**

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Juliet Walker, 13 Eagle Street:**

**CONCERN:** She commented on the bus situation. The first two days of school were very challenging. Children and parents had to contend with late buses, buses delivering children to wrong schools, buses delivering children extremely late and at some locations to wrong sites.

**Tracey Neff, 71 Prospect Street:**

**CONCERN:** She commented on the bus situation. The School and Salter's have failed the children and parents.

**Sue Ellen Lamb, Prospect Street:**

**CONCERN:** She commented on the bus situation.

**Dr. Ralph Orlando, Wm. Hall Terr.:**

**CONCERN:** He said he was dismayed with the way things were handled tonight. There are limited topics on the agenda. He hoped a better effort would be put into topics for the agenda.

**Mariana Lynch, 5 Briggs Ave.:**                   **CONCERN:**    She would like to know how, as a parent, she could get more involved in the schools. She feels there is a lack of communication, and the Committee and District need to get more people involved.

**Gail Conway, 27 Marlboro Street:**           **CONCERN:**    She stated she was disappointed that Mayor Holaday was not here tonight to answer questions concerning the bus situation, and not out campaigning.

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney thanked people for their comments concerning the bus issue, and stated that there will be further conversation.

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

#### **Bus Situation**

Superintendent Susan Viccaro commented regarding the bus situation. She will be meeting with Salter Bus tomorrow. Next year the bus registration will be handled differently. It will be done earlier. Salter Bus has told her that ridership has increased by 96 students; some buses are overcrowded, and buses are not running on time. An additional bus will be added to reduce overcrowding. She will have further information by Thursday and parents will be notified.

#### **Discussion:**

**Dan Koen** inquired as to who we are relying on at Central Office, and how did this happen. Superintendent Viccaro said Mrs. Lysik handles the buses at Central Office.

**Bruce Menin** said that in the past this has been a budget issue. We are now paying a high premium. The situation has caught up to us and Salter this year. We owe the community an apology.

**Audrey McCarthy** said she has received many phone calls regarding this.

**Nick deKanter** said we dropped the ball on communication. This was unforgiveable. What was done differently this year?

**Steve Cole** said some drivers did not know what school they were going to.

**Bruce Menin** said he was grateful that the drivers at least kept the children in the Newburyport area, unlike last year. It is unforgiveable that drivers did not know their routes.

**Audrey McCarthy** said last year some children were brought to Salisbury by drivers.

**Dan Koen** said Salter Bus Company’s reputation has suffered by this. We are paying for a service and they are letting us down. They are probably in breach of contract.

#### **Opening of School:**

Superintendent Viccaro stated she visited every school building. Principals have told her that everything is going well. Buildings are going well.

#### **Discussion:**

**Angela Bik** said she was very excited by the positive energy exhibited by all students and faculty.

**Superintendent Viccaro** said opening day was very positive.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding construction at the Nock/Molin. Superintendent Viccaro said the intercom went in and out a few times, but problems were addressed immediately.

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S GOALS FOR THE DISTRICT 2013-2014:**

Superintendent Viccaro outlined and explained the following goals:

**Common Core:** We will get conversations going on curriculum. Angela Bik stated horizontal alignment is in good shape, we now need to address vertical alignment.

Superintendent Viccaro said that in her previous school district they formed curriculum teams – these were the glue that put things together.

**Building Project:** While Bresnahan is under construction, we need to meld the Brown/Bresnahan staffs. Nock/Molin is only on 2<sup>nd</sup> step – it will take time; a lot of effort is taking place.

**NEASC:** The evaluation at the High School has taken a significant amount of time – we will get recommendations, and we will then have to address these recommendations. This needs to stay on our radar.

**Education Evaluation:** Several of us will be attending training – calibration of evidence – what are the key factors. We need to make sure everyone is collecting the same type of evidence. We will be expanding our role to do even fair evaluations – this will take a great deal of time of administrators.

**Technology Assessment:** We need to consider bringing in people from outside to evaluate what we have, what type of devices students have outside of school available to them.

**Tech Integrators:** We have one full time and one part time person – not enough. She stated she did not know the history of this. In setting expectations with new schools we need to be consistent across the board.

**Dan Koen** inquired if the Superintendent was familiar with the procurement company that we have. Superintendent Viccaro said yes.

**Website:** Individual schools should all have websites – this should be a major communication devise. There is inconsistency from school to school – there are dead ends on some – this is a problem. We need to assess what we have, start there and improve.

**Nick deKanter** said we need to get an idea as to what management system schools are using – we need to have some consistency.

**Bruce Menin** said he was pleased that this is a goal with the Superintendent and that she has such a good knowledge. Communication is an issue – websites are a symbol, but they have not evolved – flexibility is the answer. He would be glad to follow the Superintendents suggestion to bring in outside people.

**Special Education:** This concern is being addressed – she has discussed this with Dr. Dee. This is a process and will take time. These are inherited problems and she stated she needs time to address these problems. There is a tremendous amount of talent we have at our disposal and we can develop programs to support children. She has a broad range in Special Education. She has been discussing this – under Dr. Dee’s leadership this can grow in a positive way.

**Audrey McCarthy** said this was discussed at the retreat. Parents have been patient. She suggested making Special Education a monthly agenda item. She would like to hear from the Director. She wants to show that we can be trusted.

**Bruce Menin** said these areas of focus are important. There is a strong desire in the community to hear about these issues – i.e. science, etc. New staff has been added but old names have gone out. Superintendent Viccaro said back to school letters have been the way to inform parents regarding this.

**Nick deKanter** said we need to have a much more focused conversation re: foreign language. We will have a two principal leadership program – what model is it going to be – this needs discussion.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired as to what happens to areas of focus – will these be the Superintendent’s goals. Superintendent Viccaro said she would like these to be District goals for the year – it is a reasonable list – communication runs through every single thing – all will be topics of conversation

throughout the year – also day to day running of the buildings. She has written a letter to the Commissioner regarding district determined measures – she has asked for a waiver for one year concerning all that we are going through at Newburyport.

**Cheryl Sweeney** addressed Common Core – community conversation and the organization of this – what should come first. Should presentation come first and then public conversation – what is the best way to go about this. Nick deKanter said perhaps a ten minute presentation and then a 2<sup>nd</sup> part of it – let it go into discussion. What is in it for students/community – question of focus – discussion first with School Committee then break down into groups? Bruce Menin said to make it a dialogue meeting. Superintendent Viccaro said this will help the community to understand Common Core.

**Nick deKanter** discussed Public Conversation at the next meeting – Chartwells – public conversation and meeting both.

**Cheryl Sweeney** brought up facilities fee – planning stage or what? Bruce Menin said we need input – he suggested waiting a bit and then address this.

**Cheryl Sweeney** said by the next meeting sub-committees will have met.

**Bruce Menin** asked for a personal privilege. He stated that over the past four weeks we have had conversation regarding naming of schools. People sometimes forget that we are parents to. He was surprised and personally had much admiration for Ms. McCarthy who was here last week when something major was happening in her life – but she was here.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

##### **Motion:**

On a motion by Steve Cole and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn the meeting at 8:36 PM.

**Motion Passed**