

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING

Monday, December 16, 2013

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 7:07 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 7:07 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:

Mayor Holaday read the Newburyport School District Mission Statement.

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 Audrey McCarthy it was

VOTED: To approve receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:

\$9,209.94

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.

\$332,516.58

Motion Passed Unanimously

Minutes:

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee Meeting minutes of Monday, November 18, 2013.

Motion Passed Unanimously

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, December 2, 2013.

Motion Passed Unanimously

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Alex Bradley, Past NHS Student Representative

CONCERN: He wished to convey to the

Committee his thanks for the excellent education he received at NHS, and for the years as Student Representative to the School Committee, which prepared him very well for dealing with a college budget.

Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall DR.

CONCERN: He request a 5 to 10 minutes spot on a future School

Committee agenda for a presentation to the Committee by the School Council. He also wanted people to know that there is zero money allotted for student electronic devices at the new Bresnahan School.

NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:

NHS Student Representative Julia Bradley reported on the following:

- ⤴ NHS is selling singing grams
- ⤴ The Junior Class is selling candy grams
- ⤴ both of these will be delivered this Friday
- ⤴ Last Thursday was the Student Day of Poetry, nationally/internationally. Recognized poets came to NHS and held workshops. It was an awesome time.
- ⤴ Poems for Pettengill – Mrs. Szabo and the creating writing class are writing/selling unique poems for special occasions – all donations will go to the Pettengill House

BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Ms. Sweeney introduced Nancy Lysik, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent for Finance & Human Resources, who updated the Committee on the FY14 budget:

- ⤴ The School Lunch Program is holding its own.
- ⤴ After a question from Ms. Sweeney concerning any new outside placements Superintendent Viccaro reported that there were none as yet, but one is being mediated.
- ⤴ 403B plan has been updated to include the new language that was adopted in the FY14-FY17 teachers contract as well as a new Interim Amendment for Heroes Earnings Assistant and Relief Tax Act.

Discussion:

Ms. Sweeney inquired why an amendment now? Ms. Lysik explained.

Ms. Sweeney asked how much participation was there at this point. Ms. Lysik said approximately 40%. She was asked to update the Committee at the next meeting.

Ms. Sweeney inquired regarding a public hearing. Mayor Holaday said this was typically held in the third week in April.

- ⤴ Pre-K Kindergarten tuition rates 2014-15

Brown School Principal Amy Sullivan reported that she reviewed past tuition history. They are starting registration early this year in anticipation of the opening of the new Bresnahan School, to determine room usage. A larger enrollment is anticipated.

Discussion:

Bruce Menin inquired as to what Ms. Sullivan anticipated in lieu of enrollment at the new Bresnahan, with cuts in funding – has she been in touch with Headstart? Answer – we are looking to do this early to see how many classrooms we will need for pre-school.

Cheryl Sweeney questioned classroom space. Principal Sullivan explained.

Cheryl Sweeney asked if we knew what other communities are charging. Answer – most are between \$3,500 to \$4,000.

Nick deKanter asked what was the recommendation. Principal Sullivan said she was looking to the Committee to make that recommendation. She stated that we were on the high side of tuition. The state has made it more lenient.

Superintendent Viccaro said her recommendation was to leave the tuition at \$3,500 mark – keep this as an affordable option for parents as possible.

Audrey McCarthy said we were struggling with payment options – are we still struggling? Ms. Sullivan said no, things have become much better.

Steve Cole had several questions:

1. 9 classrooms are being proposed next year – how many students would fit in those classrooms. Principal Sullivan said same, but we do not know how many until we do the enrollment. We hope it remains the same.
2. Is there room for Choice students. Ms. Sullivan said we do not have room for Choice.
3. Where would you anticipate more student would come from. Ms. Sullivan said Newburyport students who go to private schools. She said she feels the new school would be a selling point.
4. Classrooms are larger – how many students could you max out. Ms. Sullivan said she does not recommend a larger class size – she recommends keeping the class size small. Superintendent Viccaro said that once we have registration and know the figures we can have a better discussion.

5. 126 students is a 10% increase. If we have 140 registrations, can we accommodate them?

Principal Sullivan said at the expense of Pre-School.

Audrey McCarthy asked if we had mechanism for change of circumstance at mid-year. Principal Sullivan said she always reaches out to families in trouble.

Nick deKanter said he feels uncomfortable going to registration not knowing the marketing of competition.

Principal Sullivan asked if he wanted private and public school prices. Answer – yes.

Cheryl Sweeney suggested tabling this discussion at present. Registration is on the 7th and we do not have a meeting before then.

Dan Koen said our goal should be “free”; increasing tuition is not good. The Superintendents recommendation is to stay the same. He liked the idea to stay low.

Mayor Holaday asked if we do not set the rate tonight how this will affect the registration. Ms. Sullivan said she could explain this to the parents.

Audrey McCarthy said she agreed with Dan Koen – parents want information. The Superintendent made a recommendation – her preference would be to vote on this.

Mayor Holaday stated we should hold on tuition – keep it the same.

Motion:

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

VOTED: To keep the full day tuition rate the same at \$3,500.

Discussion:

Steve Cole said he felt it was not prudent to vote this in without figures from neighboring schools – we have a budget deficit at present, and problems collecting tuition. He felt a reasonable increase is in order.

Audrey McCarthy said to “move the question”.

Roll Call Vote:

Bruce Menin	- Yes
Steve Cole	- No
Cheryl Sweeney	- Yes
Mayor Holaday	- Yes
Nick deKanter	- No
Audrey McCarthy	- Yes
Dan Koen	- Yes

2 – No 5 – Yes

Motion Passed

CHARTWELL'S AGREEMENT:

Ms. Lysik, Exec. Asst. to the Supt. For Finance & Human Resources reviewed the agreement between the Newburyport Public Schools and the Compass Group USA, Inc. by and through its Chartwell's Food Services, dated April 13, 2013. She reviewed Amendment Number one dated November 18, 2013 between the Newburyport Public Schools and Compass Group USA, Inc. by and through its Chartwell's Division. Superintendent Viccaro said she and Ms. Lysik have both read through the agreement – made changes – Chartwell's has agreed.

Discussion:

Cheryl Sweeney asked for an explanation. Ms. Lysik explained that the problem was with years. Chartwell's thought this was a four year agreement – we thought two years. The agreement is for one more additional year and then we would have to vote for an additional year or go out to bid, plus a few other minor changes.

Dan Koen asked if employees are paid by Chartwell's or Newburyport. Answer – these are Newburyport employees, members of AFSCME. There is only one Chartwell's employee – the director – she is responsible for staff but reports to us.

Steve Cole asked if this was a one year agreement. Ms. Lysik said yes.

Dan Koen asked if there was a 60 day escape clause. Ms. Lysik said yes.

WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM:

Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik, Emily Russin, K-8 ELA Coordinator, and Liz Kinzly, K-8 STEM Coordinator made a presentation regarding the writing across the curriculum program, and passed around various student writing samples. Ms. Bik passed out High School writing samples.

Discussion:

Cheryl Sweeney inquired regarding the following:

- ⤴ If all teachers are working on the same standards, and what training is involved. Ms. Russin explained.
- ⤴ What is the average writer workshop in a week. Ms. Russin explained.
- ⤴ What are we expecting from a Kindergarten student. Ms. Russin explained.
- ⤴ She stated that writers workshops lead to student engagement.
- ⤴ Is it fifth graders who write their own books. Answer - 6th graders

SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2014-2015; 2015-2016:

Superintendent Viccaro presented a draft of a two year calendar scenario. 2014-2015 has only one draft scenario. School year 2015-2016, has two drafts due to Labor Day falling on Sept. 7, 2015. Superintendent Viccaro stated she has sent the draft calendars out to teachers to get their input. She has included all of the professional development days, as she feels they are most important.

Discussion:

Cheryl Sweeney asked Ms. Bik to provide the Committee with some information. Ms. Bik said she has laid out plans for this year; she would like a little more time to provide other information. She spoke of some focus areas.

Superintendent Viccaro said she is looking for feedback of draft calendars.

Steve Cole asked what she has asked teachers for. Teachers are in favor of a post-labor day start.

Audrey McCarthy said she has reviewed 11 schools and explained her findings. She remains concerned re: our choppy education.

Dan Koen asked if April vacation is an option if we have a lot of snow days. Superintendent Viccaro said this is very difficult.

Bruce Menin said he likes to think outside of the box – he would like to use half days to run seminars for students, etc.

Nick deKanter said he sees some great opportunities there.

Bruce Menin said corporations are paying employees to go out into the communities.

Superintendent Viccaro asked the Committee to review the calendars and give her feedback.

CREST COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT:

Steve Cole distributed the letter expressing his interest in being re-appointed to the CREST Board of Directors as Newburyport's representative. His current appointment is due to end on December 31st.

DISCUSSION:

Mayor Holaday inquired if anything has changed on the CREST Collaborative (formerly GLEC), other than the name. Mr. Cole said no.

Motions:

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

VOTED: To approve the CREST Collaborative Agreement (formally GLEC).

Motion Passed Unanimously

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

VOTED: To approve Steve Cole as our representative to the CREST Collaborative.

Motion Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Viccaro updated the Committee on the following:

- ⤴ School Committee e-mail accounts – Committee members will be put on the school e-mail accounts. With their present personal e-mail accounts, if subpoenaed they could open up your entire e-mail account. The process will be outlined for them.
- ⤴ Superintendent's Advisory Committee – The Superintendent will appoint Committee members, students, staff, etc. If interested please let her know.
- ⤴ School Committee Retreat – Committee members were asked if they have agenda items they would like on the Retreat agenda to let the Superintendent know.
- ⤴ Recognizing Dan Koen – Superintendent Viccaro said “Dan Koen has served on the School Committee with honor and distinction and has been extremely helpful to her. It has been a pleasure working with him.” He will be honored with a piece of art in his name to be placed in one of the schools.

Cheryl Sweeney commented on the positive relationship that Dan Koen has had with the School Committee.

Mayor Holaday stated that we will not be losing Dan Koen as he will be staying on the Building Committee and the Tech Committee.

Dan Koen commented as to how much he has enjoyed being on the School Committee.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Communications:

Nick deKanter reported that they met this afternoon. They had a spirited discussion and tabled their agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Steve Cole it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 9:32 PM.

Motion Passed Unanimously