

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, June 15, 2015

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 6:35 PM**

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

**Present: Nick deKanter, Steve Cole (arrived late at 6:45) Cheryl Sweeney,
Mayor Donna Holaday, Jay Iannini, Audrey McCarthy, Bruce Menin**

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Chairman Donna Holaday called the meeting to order at 6:35 PM. Roll call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

There was no Public Comment at this time.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants

Motion:

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

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

\$88,739.84

Motion Passed

Steve Cole absent for vote

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

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

\$190,598.19

Motion Passed

Steve Cole absent for vote

NTA RETIREES - RECOGNITION:

Superintendent Susan Viccaro recognized six teachers who will be retiring, four of which were in attendance. They were Carol Snow, Susie Galvin, Cheryl Remley, Kim Salathe, Bob Clarke and Gail Ramsay. Dr. Barbara Dee, Director of Pupil Services, also is retiring. The Committee appreciated the time of service of all.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES

Superintendent Viccaro introduced the new director of Pupil Services, Christina Gentile, to the School Committee. Mrs. Gentile has been in our system as the SPED Team Coordinator for Molin and Middle Schools for the last few years, and comes to us with a background in special education having worked with the DESE, Reading Public Schools, and holds a law degree.

CURRICULUM UPDATE:

Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik updated the Committee on Curriculum Initiatives implemented this year. They included the following:

- **Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) - Strategy for Writing**

Students in grades 4 & 5 this year became more independent writers. The teachers received professional development in SRSD and implemented the curriculum. Next year we will expand to grade 3 students.

for this. Next year this will be developed for grade 3; Grade four and five this year.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired as to what was the teacher feedback on this.

Asst. Supt. Bik - very good

Nick deKanter asked, "what were the metrics that have to be in place to measure this program?"

Mrs. Bik - They are using student writing pieces to see what kind of progress students are making.

- **Word Study Program**

This is a research based curriculum - speech to print model.

Bruce Menin inquired as to the challenges of the program.

Asst. Supt. Bik - Was this developmentally appropriate - hold off for a month to see if students recognize letter sounds.

Mayor Holaday inquired regarding the speech language teachers - what were their comments?

Asst. Supt. Bik - very good

Cheryl Sweeney asked how much time is devoted daily to this.

Asst. Supt. Bik - How much time devoted to this depends on the lesson plans during the 1½ hours allotted daily to Literacy.

- **Science - Standards**

In Massachusetts the standards are still in draft format, and should be approved by this fall.

Middle School teachers have made great progress; the Pearson Interactive Science series has been purchased.

Bruce Menin asked if teachers use textbooks/electronics.

Asst. Supt. Bik - Yes, both. There is a summer class - Science Initiatives - pre K-5 and 20 teachers have registered so far.

Cheryl Sweeney asked what happens to teachers who do not take the class.

Asst. Supt. Bik - These teachers will collaborate with their peers.

- **Bresnahan - STEM**

This year's Science Fair took a different approach and was well received. There is a video on our website to view.

- **Drifters Program**

New drifters were launched this spring and are already collecting good data.

Bruce Menin inquired if over the years that we have had this program, are they collecting the same type of data.

Ms. Bik explained

- **Seismograph**

Monitoring data, and there was a jump day where all of the students and staff jumped to create an earthquake effect.

Steve Cole inquired regarding the Robotics program.

Asst. Supt. Bik – The Middle School is thriving. The High School is doing well. Their trip to Newfoundland was a comedy of errors. The airline lost their robot; it was returned to them a day late, so they missed the first competition, then it broke down. But all in all they had a good time and gained knowledge and experience for other very helpful competitors from the college level.

- **Math - Eureka Math/Engage New York - implementation K-8**

Professional development was developed around this. Four to five school districts came

to Newburyport to visit classrooms to research this - North Reading, Durham, NH, Triton and Salem. Classroom teachers were debriefed June 4 - not all teachers were able to complete all of the units. Teachers were excited and gave positive feedback. There will be a 2 day workshop with Dr. Chen in attendance.

Bruce Menin inquired re: Math Parents Night, what was the feedback.

Asst. Supt. Bik - They were grateful and said how important it was to experience the math program; all positive feedback - parents are communicating more.

Jay Iannini said this was good to hear.

- **High School Advisor/Advisee Program**

This is a nice collaboration. Over the summer they will continue to build the program – freshman experience. Next year it will be a full year program.

- **Language Based Classroom**

Six students participated

- **Summer Reading Program**

Around grade level - theme aligned with advisor/advisee program

- **AP Class**

Next year there will be an AP Chemistry class - 20 students have registered

Steve Cole inquired regarding the Summer Reading program - are books available - he suggested speaking to the Library to make the books available. Ms. Bik said that she has collaborated with the Library about this.

HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE:

Superintendent Viccaro said that they are watching this closely. Right now they are crunching numbers. The first block is a concern that students might miss some classes.

Cheryl Sweeney questioned the time in the schedule.

Steve Cole asked if this would be brought up for a vote at some time. He is concerned regarding a change in the schedule.

Bruce Menin spoke regarding a change in the schedule, the advisor/advisee program. He has a child who is doing well.

Mayor Holaday spoke regarding the difficulty in bringing in higher ed people.

UPGRADING OF MUNIS SOFTWARE:

Nancy Lysik spoke regarding the Munis financial software. We have the same program as the city, but a different version. An upgrade has been done and is working fine.

Mayor Holaday stated we share a license. Ms. Lysik said the difficulty is that the school department is web-based and the city is in house. The school's program works really well.

Mayor Holaday spoke regarding the budget report.

Jay Iannini asked is there any downside to shifting to this. Ms. Lysik responded.

FY16 BUDGET UPDATE:

Superintendent Viccaro outlined and explained the FY16 budget update to the Committee.

Mayor Holaday stated there will be a special meeting regarding the budget and possible cuts across departments.

POLICIES REVIEW:

Nick deKanter stated that the Policy subcommittee reviewed five policies. One still needs additional wording. The Superintendent will forward four of these to the Committee for review.

VOTE TO APPROVE LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR ACCESS TO FIELD WORK AT NOCK/MOLIN:

Mayor Holaday explained the license agreement to the Committee.

Nick deKanter asked, to whom are we granting the license. Mayor Holaday said to the city.

Bruce Menin inquired, is this a short term need for access.

Jay Iannini asked if the Council approved this. Mayor Holaday explained.

Motion:

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

VOTED: To approve the license agreement for access to the Nock/Molin School.

Discussion:

Bruce Menin asked if we will have permanent easement. Mayor Holaday explained.

Jay Iannini said we will need some type of representation so that we will feel comfortable.

Steve Cole asked for an explanation on the map.

Amendment: Bruce Menin and Audrey McCarthy agreed to an amendment to the motion to read as follows:

Motion:

To approve the license agreement for access to the Nock/Molin school for the purpose of constructing a baseball field.

Motion Passed Unanimously

Nick deKanter stated the Committee needs time sensitive material sooner.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Viccaro reported on the following:

- **Tower gardens** - Donation of six - two at the High School; two at the Bresnahan and two at the Nock/Molin School. These are hydroponic plants and will be incorporated into the science program.
Bruce Menin said he was really encouraged by this.
- **Freedom Shrine** – The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport had donated a Freedom Shrine to the Nock Middle School and it had been taken down during the reconstruction. We have once again put them back up in the hallway near the cafeteria and will have a rededication ceremony on June 18. All are welcome to attend.
- **2015 Yearbook** - She passed out an NHS 2015 Yearbook for the Committee to peruse and spoke about its high quality.
- **Nock Chorus** - won gold medal at a recent competition.
- **Calendar** - she asked each Committee member to place their vacation schedule on the calendar that is circulating for planning purposes.

Mayor Holaday spoke regarding a news article dealing with drug use with all communities. There will be a meeting at City Hall on July 6.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Finance

Steve Cole reported they met on June 11. They discussed the budget process, school improvement plans, MUNIS.

Policy

Nick deKanter said there will be a meeting Saturday.

Curriculum

There will be a meeting tomorrow.

Superintendent's Evaluation

Cheryl Sweeney said they are awaiting the Superintendent's progress report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion

On a motion by Mayor Holaday and seconded by Audrey McCarthy it was

VOTED: To adjourn the Business Meeting at 8:40, and enter into Executive Session for the purpose of Administrative Contracts. We will not be returning to Open Session

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Mr. Cole: Yes

Mr. deKanter: Yes

Ms. Sweeney: Yes

Mayor Holaday: Yes

Mr. Menin: Yes

Mrs. McCarthy: Yes

Mr. Iannini: Yes

Motion Passed Unanimously