

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

BUSINESS MEETING

Monday, May 4, 2015

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 6:38 PM**

**Room 118
Cheryl Sweeney Presided**

Present: Nick deKanter, Steve Cole, Cheryl Sweeney, Audrey McCarthy,
Bruce Menin

Absent: Mayor Donna Holaday

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM. A roll call was taken and found one member absent - Mayor Holaday.

MOMENT OF SILENCE:

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney called for a moment of silence for the immediate relative of Mayor Donna Holaday who had passed away recently.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Vice-Chairman Cheryl Sweeney asked those present to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Frank Rooney, 3 Wm. Hall DR. **CONCERN:** He stated that he had read an article in a newspaper recently about an anti-Semitism incident that had happened at NHS. He asked what the committee thought about that. Superintendent Susan Viccaro stated that while she was upset about the incident and did not condone it, she felt it had been blown way out of proportion. Bruce Menin commented that he had experienced some anti-Semitism in the past and felt it was done out of ignorance.

Allison Valentine, Hart Road **CONCERN:** She stated she was concerned regarding the budget cut in music - 20% staff 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.
\$111,519.35

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday 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.
\$226,122.49

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

Minutes:

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee, Public Hearing

minutes of Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee, Business Meeting minutes of Tuesday, April 28, 2015.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

NHS REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:

Representative not present at this time.

FY16 BUDGET DISCUSSION AND VOTE:

Cheryl Sweeney commented that Committee members were asked to come to the meeting planning to discuss the FY16 budget and suggestions made by community members at the Public Hearing on May 4. Superintendent Viccaro stated the leadership team met on Wednesday and were able to manage to add back one teacher at the Bresnahan by eliminating two aides.

Discussion

Bruce Menin inquired what position was added back at the Bresnahan School. Answer - third grade teacher. The class size will now be 20-21 and it would have been 24 without the added teacher.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired

- As to why not first grade. Answer - drop in enrollment.
- What size first grade. Answer - 21-22 (that includes new enrollees).
- She stated the needs of students as a whole is important.

Nick deKanter asked what was the trade-off? Answer - 2 teacher assistants.

Bruce Menin stated that the Committee has taken a great deal of criticism regarding the budget process. He asked the Superintendent how this has played for her.

Superintendent Viccaro stated that she has been working closely with the Leadership team to move the school forward so that things that have been lost can be gradually added back in. It has been extremely frustrating to put together a budget and then not have it funded.

Bruce Menin inquired

- If a 4% budget meets our goals. Answer - No, it does not.
- Will that have a negative impact on students?

Superintendent Viccaro Yes it will, a 4% budget is a level funded budget - it does not move us forward.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired regarding the music program. Are we still receiving .1 for outside source?

Superintendent Viccaro I don't know. More students are participating in the Middle School music program.

Bruce Menin inquired from NHS Principal Parent if additional funds were available what would he add back.

Principal Parent said .2 English position, .1 English positions, Virtual High School

Nick deKanter inquired from Principal Parent regarding cuts to stipends. Principal Parent said to meet the budget requirements he had to cut some positions.

Cheryl Sweeney stated the Committee must vote this evening. The budget is due May 15 and our budget needs to get to the Mayor 10 days before that.

Nick deKanter said this year stood out for thoughtfulness and reality in school improvement plans - shaving things kind of made it work. We cannot continue to support a budget that does not support our schools. We cannot support a budget that falls short.

Audrey McCarthy asked what is the budget 6.78%?

Steve Cole stated we could also vote down 4%.

Superintendent Viccaro stated the schools are underfunded. There is a lot of work to be done.

Cheryl Sweeney asked the Superintendent if cuts were made before now.

Superintendent Viccaro stated that they have been through five iterations of the budget. We put everything up and then began to carefully select things to put together a three year plan.

Cheryl Sweeney spoke of the iterations of the budget. She stated that 4% is a step backwards. She will convene the Finance Sub-Committee to look at the budget again.

Nick deKanter spoke of things they have put off to reach this budget.

Cheryl Sweeney read several items which were cut.

Superintendent Viccaro read several items which were cut.

Angela Bik spoke of resources cut at every building at every level.

Cheryl Sweeney asked Ms. Bik to talk a little bit regarding how she tried to save bits and pieces of things. Ms. Bik spoke to this - "minimize the damage" - these were painful decisions.

Cheryl Sweeney asked what impact the tech integrator had.

Superintendent Viccaro said significant impact.

Angela Bik said we have lost one already and the other is looking.

Cheryl Sweeney said they were tasked to recruit and retain and we are not retaining. What does this mean for the future?

Bruce Menin said he could not support a 4% budget. We did hear from the community - it was encouraging to hear the passion of the School Committee members and the City Council members. He is glad they will vote on the original budget. That is the budget that most aligns with his thoughts.

Motion

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

VOTED: To accept the FY16 budget of \$29,673,370.00 - \$22,251,621.00 - Salaries;
\$7,421,749.00 - Expenses.

Roll Call Vote:

Audrey McCarthy - Yes
Bruce Menin - Yes
Cheryl Sweeney - Yes
Steve Cole - Yes
Nick deKanter - Yes
Mayor Holaday - Absent for Vote

5 Yes

Motion Passed

Cheryl Sweeney stated that she felt they were doing the right thing.

BRESNAHAN SCHOOL PROPERTY & DOG ISSUES:

Bresnahan Principals spoke of the issue of feces being left behind by dogs that are brought on to school property. Students are stepping in the feces and tracking into the school which is carpeted. This is creating a health issue and a mess. There are a lot of dogs being brought to school and some children are frightened by them - this is becoming problematic.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired if the dogs were leashed. Answer yes

There is less green space right now. Superintendent Viccaro said this has an impact on the custodians.

Steve Cole said he felt this should be brought to the attention of the Board of Health.

Nick deKanter said a No Dogs Allowed policy becomes an issue and a matter of enforcement.

Audrey McCarthy said the Committee should address the issue and not send the Bresnahan Principal somewhere else.

Cheryl Sweeney said they should have the Superintendent contact the Board of Health.

Bruce Menin inquired if this issue has been communicated to parents.

Principal Davis – Yes, this is not just a parent issue because dogs are walked there on weekends and evenings as well by the community.

Bruce Menin said we should start with parents.

Cheryl Sweeney said they will wait to hear from the Superintendent.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Viccaro reported on the following:

- Director of Pupil Services Search - she has asked Angela Bik to chair the search committee. 35 applications have been received.
- Strategic Planning - because of timing in May - MCAS testing - time needs to be changed.

Cheryl Sweeney said it is critical to have teacher involvement - do in Fall.

Superintendent Viccaro said she will call Dr. Cook tomorrow - see what he has to say.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joint Ed - **Cheryl Sweeney** reported they had a lively discussion re: budget - the three City Council members that were here supported the Superintendent's budget.

Bruce Menin said he was impressed that we have a City Council that is likely to find more funds.

Policy - **Nick deKanter** - the Superintendent is checking on an issue with a policy - it will be put on the agenda for the next meeting.

Cheryl Sweeney said on the agenda for the next meeting will be a report from the Brown School.

Bruce Menin said they are meeting next Tuesday - will go over recommendations.

Cheryl Sweeney said the deadline for Mike Luekens seat was today. Interested candidates will meet with the City Council Monday for interviews and a vote will be taken.

Bruce Menin commented on a draft rubric for the Superintendent evaluation.

Cheryl Sweeney asked what the deadline for this was and asked the Superintendent how she was doing on her part. Answer - soon.

Bruce Menin asked for feedback on this no later than Thursday.

NEF - Art Currier award by NEF – Wednesday, May 20, evening

Steve Cole said there were two students in finals for the Mass State Science Fair - Lauren Healey and Mark Lundergan - 3rd place finishes

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Business Meeting at 8:04 PM

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote