

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING  
Monday, April 6, 2015**

**Newburyport High School  
Meeting Convened at 6:34 PM**

**Room 118  
Cheryl Sweeney Presided**

**Present: Nick deKanter, Steve Cole, Cheryl Sweeney, Mayor Donna Holaday,  
Michael Luekens, Audrey McCarthy, Bruce Menin**

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

Chairman Mayor Donna Holaday called the meeting to order at 6:34 PM. A roll call was taken finding all members present. All those present stood for for the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall Drive      **CONCERN:** He expressed his concern that the School Councils had not had the opportunity to review the budget before it was presented. He stated the High School needed more teachers, technology and computers.**

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Motions:**

**Warrants:**

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.  
**\$45,265.44**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.  
**\$240,560.17**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**Minutes:**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business Meeting minutes of Monday, March 16, 2015.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:**

Julia Bradley, NHS Student Representative reported on the following:

- Credit for Life Fair for Juniors is tomorrow

- Newburyport Says No to Prejudice Forum is tomorrow night at the Nock Library hosted by Newburyport's Commission for Diversity and Tolerance
- Junior Prom was on April 2
- NHS play "The Dining Room" will be on the 9th and 10th
- April 14th - NAHS induction ceremony
- April vacation starts on the 20th
- The No Talent, Talent Show will be on the 30th; split profits w/senior class
- Sports - baseball, softball - they have a busy few weeks
- March 31st National Honor Society induction ceremony

**Discussion:**

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired as to where the sports teams were practicing. Answer - Indoors

**USE OF FACILITIES REQUEST:**

Cheryl Sweeney explained that a request from parent Kim Spinney for Special Olympics to use the Fuller Field track for practices from April 12-June 7, on Sundays from 5:30-6:30 PM. The Lacrosse League has reserved the field from 1:00-5:00 PM for the season. The policy states that the use of facilities/fields be restricted to 1:00-5:00 PM on Sundays, unless the Committee approves otherwise. The Special Olympics group has been using this slot for the last several years.

**Motion:**

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Mayor Holaday it was

**VOTED:** To approve the use of the Fuller Field track for practices for Special Olympics from April 12-June 7, on Sundays from 5:30-6:30 PM.

**Discussion:**

**Steve Cole** inquired as to why the Lacrosse League has such exclusive use of that field at that time.

**Athletic Director Bob Clarke** explained that this is because of such large numbers of students and limited field space.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**FY16 BUDGET PRESENTATION:**

Superintendent Susan Viccaro, and Executive Assistant for Finance, Nancy Lysik presented the FY16 School Budget to the Committee. Superintendent Viccaro explained the budget in detail. She stated that the Leadership Team has been working on this for a number of months and that this budget presents what is needed to move us forward. She stated that over the last several years we have lost 80 positions; we need some new staffing. A PowerPoint presentation was made. Paper copies were available for the audience.

**Discussion:**

**Audrey McCarthy** inquired if +4% from the City is the final number. We were not able to level fund with 4% last year. She inquired regarding the adjustment counselor at the Middle School, and is concerned with the reduction in SPED at the Middle School. 4% is minimal - we cannot

even level fund. Losing Freshman Sports - kids at risk need sports. We will lose a number of kids. Does our policy state that freshman play?

**Athletic Director Bob Clarke** explained that we will still offer freshmen the opportunity to play - they can go out for varsity and junior varsity.

**Michael Luekens** inquired regarding class size at Bresnahan for FY16. The answer is 22 at grade 1; 24 at grade 3.

**Bruce Menin** asked, "Where do we stand now?" Answer 18 & 20 at grade 1; 19 - 20 at Grades 2, & 3.

**Bruce Menin** had several concerns:

- He is upset that at this late in the game we are hammering this out. We build fields, but freshmen cannot play.
- 2007 dug us a hole then - we are digging a hole again.
- How are we working with at risk students - he is concerned that a position is being cut.
- Is the budget being built on last year's budget?

**Superintendent Viccaro** explained.

**Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik** stated that some cuts that you see are additions to allow us to proceed. Some cuts are coming out of the 7.1% budget which the City cannot fund.

- Does this budget align with our goals?

**Superintendent Viccaro** said no, it does not.

- What sort of understanding is there that next year all of these aspirations will be funded?

**Superintendent Viccaro** said she is a realist and understands that we cannot do everything at once.

- This is a step backwards.

**Superintendent Viccaro** stated that we are moving forward in some areas, but unfortunately moving backward in some others.

- He stated he was deeply disappointed.

**Audrey McCarthy** said that we went to the taxpayers - sold them on window dressing. She stated she is not voting for this budget.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding;

- Contingency for lunch - had to borrow on what is our current contingency for school lunch.

**Nancy Lysik** explained \$40,000 - cut by \$10,000. SPED \$100,000 - last year \$150,000.

- She stated she would like to hear from NHS Principal Mike Parent regarding as to where he is on contingency SIPS.
- PE at elementary school - how many students. Answer K-3 - 2.4 teachers service 600 students; Molin/Nock - shared 800 students.
- We have teachers with caseloads of 400 students.
- She stated she is very concerned we are moving backward. The level of cuts is unacceptable. We are 3% apart - she is concerned about our school district.

**Superintendent Viccaro** asked NHS Principal Mike Parent to speak.

**Principal Parent** said he is reestablishing business, & marketing courses. He needed another counselor for internships. The scheduling process has been put on hold and cannot be done right now without knowing what his staffing is going to be. If he finds out, he can proceed. Students may have to be moved.

**Bruce Menin** asked, "What is the impact of the budget as proposed tonight?"

**Principal Parent** said Math position going from a .4 to .2 means a lot. He cannot run the schedule.

**Bruce Menin** said if this doesn't change, Principal Parent is looking at not offering things to students - classes - class size.

**Principal Parent** said yes, he needs hard final data to move forward.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked if AP Chemistry was in the budget.

**Principal Parent** said yes, he is adding some things in one column, but subtracting some in others.

**Nick deKanter** asked:

- For an explanation of the concept of hiring a teacher to build incrementally.
- Do we get quality when we hire part-time teachers?

**Superintendent Viccaro** said we have been very fortunate in the past to be able to hire good teachers.

- He expressed his disappointment and horror at cutting, limiting not just full time but things that we hold dear, we cannot support Chorus, we are cutting Freshmen sports (there will be many more bench sitters), we are shaving away so much the system is bleeding. There is nothing left but the bones.
- Since Prop 2 ½ have we passed an override, even once - NO.
- We need to find a way to get back to 7 %.

**Mayor Holaday** stated that we do not have additional revenue - a new MA administration came in. Additional revenue was \$2 million and the school is getting \$1 million. We are left with \$26,000.

**Nick deKanter** said he wanted to clarify - we are getting a fair shake from the City Council - we need to get our head out of the sand. The Mayor and City Councilors feel as frustrated as we do.

**Cheryl Sweeney** said we sold the Kelley School for \$750,000. Will that money come back to us?

**Mayor Holaday** said that the funds will be used to pay down debt - it is a shell game - won't happen for one year.

**Steve Cole** said this started in 2003 - transportation was cut by the state - revenues are down in a number of areas. We need to backfill these. We need a revenue task force.

**Bruce Menin** spoke of individual cuts and consequences. We need to generate dollars to support increases. The budget as he saw it tonight is not one he can support.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked for the total number of staff cuts.

**Superintendent Viccaro** said \$328,000 - actual dollar amount.

**Bruce Menin** asked if we will have fewer staff next year than we have this year. .

**Superintendent Viccaro** Answer No quoted 343.1 staff to 347, but we need to reconfigure differently - an overall increase of 3 FTE's.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired regarding professional development.

**Ms. Bik** said there will be significant cuts - district wide \$40,000; \$30,000 contracted services - they will try to recover that with grants.

**Audrey McCarthy** asked regarding professional development - days of calendar - will we need to cut.

**Asst. Supt. Bik** said no, we will have to approach the work differently - we will do the best we can.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**Roseanne Necessian, 466 Merrimac St. CONCERN:**

- Presentation of budget - would like a three year comparison.
- High level district stuff not broken out (SPED).
- Legal budget - concerned - are we going to court more frequently?
- City residents putting up more money - people don't get raises - trying to live within their own means.
- Transportation - out to bid - no late bus at High School.

**Megan Kinsey, 1 Griffin Ct. (City Councillor) CONCERN:** The budget is news to us - we have the ability to tax at 2½%. Mayor Holaday said we did go to 2½% - we covered with free cash, which is not a good practice. Ms. Kinsey said that maybe in the future we tax at 2½%.

**Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm Hall DR CONCERN:** He asked the Committee when they saw a copy of this budget as they looked surprised. They only have 4 to 6 weeks to act on it - this is the latest we have seen a budget - you have to look at what you spent last year, line item by line item. Now you are rushed. There was a task force in 2006. You need to begin this budget in October.

**Lisa Mead, Purchase St. CONCERN:**

- What is the difference between 7% and this budget? Answer \$700,000.
- Does this take us to the first step to bring us to a balanced education in the future?
- Get closer to 7% - tax at a full 2½% this year.
- Does this include ongoing maintenance at the Brown School - answer no.
- Kelley School money should go into a general fund.
- Last year we said the City needs an override.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked the Committee - "Where do we go from here? April 28 is the public hearing.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if it would be possible to get revenue spending to date. Answer Yes. There is a grant writer working 20 hours a week working on getting new grants.

**Bruce Menin** inquired regarding the tax rate. Mayor Holaday explained.

**Cheryl Sweeney** asked regarding strategy - where do we go?

**Bruce Menin** said he would like to see a budget he could vote for.

**Nick deKanter** said this is an issue that will need some research. Joint Ed Committee should get together.

**Cheryl Sweeney** said Fin Com should get together.

**Steve Cole** said there will be two workshop meetings in the next two weeks to map out strategies.

**POLICIES - FIRST READ:**

**Nick deKanter** explained policy adoption of the two new policies “Animals in School” and “Charging of School Lunch/Milk”. He asked the Committee to read the policies and forward questions, concerns to him.

**Steve Cole** asked if the dog has a special type of hypo-allergic - Answer yes. Charging of school lunch and/or milk - answer yes.

**Cheryl Sweeney** inquired if a first grader that was hungry with no money - would we feed them? Answer yes and then we would reach out to parent/guardian.

**Steve Cole** inquired regarding milk policy - second offense - change 3C to - after nominal amount exceeds \$15.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

Superintendent Viccaro reported on the following:

- Extended invitation to all- re: Strategic Planning - May 20-22
- Partnership in Higher Education
  - ❑ Salem State - dual credit
  - ❑ Four Courses - evenings here
  - ❑ Endicott - mock interviews - sending interns to us in Fall
  - ❑ Working with other institutions
- School Committee Retreat - Wednesday the 8th - topic, Superintendent evaluation
- Newburyport Says No to Prejudice - Molin Auditorium April 7

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion**

On a motion by Mayor Holaday and seconded by Steve Cole it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn the School Committee Business Meeting at 8:57 PM.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**