

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
BUSINESS MEETING**

Tuesday, January 20, 2015

Newburyport High School  
Meeting Convened at 7:14 PM

Room 118  
Mayor Donna Holaday/Cheryl Sweeney Presided

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

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:**

Mayor Holaday called the meeting to order at 7:14 PM. A roll call was taken. All were present. All stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vice-Chair Sweeney then presided over the meeting moving forward.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

There was no public comment at this time.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Minutes:**

On a motion by Michael Luekens and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business Meeting minutes of Monday, December 15, 2014.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Organizational Meeting minutes of Monday, January 5, 2015.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business Meeting minutes of Monday, January 5, 2015, as amended.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:**

Julia Bradley, NHS Student Representative reported on the following:

- The High School Theatre department, along with Nock and Molin students will be presenting *The Wizard of Oz*, Jan. 30, 31, & Feb. 1 at the Nock/Molin auditorium, complete with flying monkeys!
- Mid-Term Exams are happening this week at the High School.

### **SKATE PARK JURISIDICION:**

Vice-Chair Cheryl Sweeney introduced Andi Egmont, Director of Youth Services, to address the Committee on the Skate Park, located at the rear of the Nock/Molin school building.

### **Youth Services Director Egmont:**

I would like to introduce the idea about transferring the skate park to the Department of Parks in the City, under the direction of Lise Reid, Director. The skate park is 13 years old, and for the past 10 years has been overseen by the Newburyport Youth Services department. As a new Parks Dept. has been initiated in the City it makes sense to transfer the skate park to that department. Youth Services has hired skate guards and maintained a management/maintenance plan with the School Committee over the last 10 years. This management/maintenance plan would still exist under the direction of the Parks Dept. and the School Committee. The Friends of Newburyport Skate Park will continue to be involved. The skate park would take on a similar role as other City/school fields and parks. Ms. Egmont further spoke about the pros & cons on the use of skate guards. The Youth Services Dept. will continue to sponsor events and lessons at the skate park moving forward. Any questions?

### **Discussion:**

**Mayor Holaday** asked about the younger skaters if the skate guards are no longer on site.

**Ms. Egmont** responded that there is a rule as in all parks that children under the age of 10 must be accompanied by an adult. Older skaters look after the younger set anyway. All good kids and adults.

**Mrs. McCarthy** asked about having a gate.

**Ms. Egmont** responded that no City park has a locking gate and better if left open. Then kids will not scale the fence to gain access increasing the risk of injury. Signage with hours of operation should be posted and like any other park, the police should be called to enforce the rule. Current hours are dawn to dusk, excluding school hours.

**Mr. Menin** spoke about the neighbors' concerns and injuries to skaters.

**Ms. Egmont:** Ten years ago the skate guards were given a cell phone to call in case of emergency. Today everyone has cell phones to call for assistance. As for the neighbors, they have realized what the noise level and amount of folks present at the park, as well as the fact that the park is not conducive to night skating. No lights, and lots of shadows from the building. There is no other city/town who has a skate park that employs skate guards. It is play/ride at your own risk.

**Mr. Cole** thinks that the Committee should look into the liability without the skate guards. He also agrees that the Committee has purview as the park is on school property.

**Ms. Sweeney** asked if the Committee needs to vote on the department transfer.

**Ms. Egmont** stated that there is no change. It is the Mayor's discretion on which department will take on the management of the skate park, and that the Newburyport Parks Dept., headed by Lise Reid, director, will form a team and present a management plan to the Committee for approval.

**Mr. Menin** stated that he would be willing to sit on the team with Parks Director, Lise Reid to work on the plan.

The Vice-Chair thanked Ms. Egmont.

### **STUDENT ACTIVITIES:**

Vice Chair Sweeney informed the Committee that the Student Activities information was vetted at the Finance Sub-committee meeting and member Steve Cole, chair of that Committee will present the information to the whole.

**Mr. Cole:** I am distributing copies of the information and rosters of Student Activity accounts received at the Finance sub-committee meeting. Mr. Cole read the following:

*Although not required, it is a good practice for the School Committee to approve each student activity annually. This should be done before the start of the school year unless activities are new and created during the year.*

*Any student activity inactive for a period of three (3) years or more, and for which there has been no receipts or disbursements recorded on their behalf, shall require the following actions in order to be closed:*

- *Written notification by the advisor or student officer to the school principal or other authorized administrator that the activity will cease to be a viable account. If an advisor or student officer is not available, such discontinuance shall be by vote of the School Committee.*
- *All assets of the recognized student activity shall be identified and stated in writing.*
- *Any disposition of assets of an inactive recognized student activity shall be determined by the School Committee, but in no case shall the disposition benefit specific individuals.*
- *Such policy will be communicated to the students who contribute to the accounts, when possible.*

It is good practice for the Committee to approve student activities each year.

There are a couple of accounts containing large sums at the Nock, Washington DC trip \$61,000; Camp Kieve \$45,000. There are 70 other activity accounts including the High School contingency account, and 40 at the Nock. Any account not active after 3 years would be closed and the funds rolled into the contingency accounts. There are unclaimed and undistributed funds. Unclaimed would be for example the most recent graduating classes left over monies, which may be used at future class reunions. Letters will be sent to the class advisors regarding the disposal of those funds within 90 days.

### **Discussion**

**Mr. Menin** asked what if any are the limitations on the use of the unclaimed/undistributed funds?

**Mr. Cole** responded that the law states that it is the discretion of the principal.

**Mr. Menin** would like to advise the principals that the undistributed funds be dispersed evenly among either all of the classes or activities.

**Ms. McCarthy** inquired about an audit. If these activity funds will be spent down, why would we have to pay to hire an auditor?

**Mayor Holaday** stated that the City performs annual audits where different accounts are chosen.

**Mr. deKanter** inquired as to the information on page 2 regarding student fees. What is that? Supt. Viccaro responded that if a student moves out of district etc., those fees collected would revert to the contingency account.

Vice-Chair Sweeney asked for a motion.

**Motion:**

On a motion by Nick deKanter and seconded by Michael Luekens it was

**VOTED:** To approve existing accounts for the Middle and High School student activities.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**Motion:**

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

**VOTED:** To dispose of assets from inactive/unclaimed accounts; i.e. all inactive/unclaimed funds will revert to a contingency fund with each school's student activities to be used at the discretion of building principals.

**6 YES, 1 NO,**

**Motion Passed**

**Mr. Menin** who would like a discussion with the principals in regards to the equity of dispersing of unclaimed/inactive funds.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE PLANNING CALENDAR:**

Vice-Chair Cheryl Sweeney asked member Michael Luekens, chair of the CIA (Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment) Sub-Committee to address the Committee.

**Michael Luekens** spoke about the task that the CIA subcommittee took on to look at mapping a planning calendar for the Committee to follow in planning the agendas for School Committee meetings throughout the year. The sub-committee reviewed prior year's agendas, as well as, planning calendars from other districts in the area, and input from the committee itself.

There is a monthly breakdown of topics as well as an attachment containing 47 additional items and 59 other items that may be incorporated from time to time. This calendar is open to edits, and I will begin by editing the following:

- Add approval of student activity accounts in August;

- Add an additional School Committee meeting in August;
- Move December #30, *School Choice* from December to February;
- Move February #38, *School Calendar* from February to December;
- Change wording on March #40, from Public Hearing to Public Forum;
- Add Budget Public Hearing to month of April;
- Add distribution of materials for School Committee Evaluation to May

**Ms. McCarthy** would like to add Special Education update reports in October, February and end of year.

**Mr. deKanter** would like to add a quarterly report by the Vice Chair on any violations of the Operating Principles

**Mr. Menin** would like to add a formal reporting by Whittier Vo-Tech on student applications, acceptances, etc.

Also, School Council leaders in October, and Contract Negotiations in years applicable.

**Ms. McCarthy:** Are we leaving Appendix A as Other? I may not want to share out information from SEPAC (Special Ed Parent Advisory Council) on a regular basis.

**Mr. Cole:** SEPAC could come once a year to speak about their outreach approach, surveys on programs, and speakers that are planned or have spoken.

**Mayor Holaday:** I wish to applaud you and the CIA Sub-Committee for this great work. It is a wonderful tool to have moving forward. We need to stay with the City Charter and consider the need to add on to January the topic of Capital Needs Plan.

**Ms. Sweeney:** I would like to say that the Superintendent and I used this when we planned the agenda. It is a great “guideline” and is not cast in concrete, items can be added as needed.

**Mr. Cole:** One more item to add in August, updates on hiring vacancies.

**Mr. Luekens** will make adjustments for a vote by the Committee at a future meeting in February. A vote by the whole Committee will hold us accountable.

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:**

Superintendent Viccaro reported on the following:

- The school principals and central office administrators are currently working on their budgets to be submitted by the end of January. Nancy Lysik will combine.
- I would like to request an Executive Session be held tonight.
- Principal Parent reported on the Signs of Suicide screening. Thirteen (13) students were identified as at risk, a significant number. One-to-one counseling, and follow up is being provided. This is a great screening tool. We are looking at screening seniors who face leaving high school and going to college, etc.
- Introduced Exec. Asst. Cathy Manning to give a brief tour through the new district and school websites.

Suggestions:

Mayor Holaday would like a link from the District site to the City website.

Mr. deKanter asked if we had a process for determining hits on pages.

Supt. Viccaro spoke to a Blackboard Connect announcement of the new site asking for feedback. Also, the new link to *Let's Talk* is scheduled for a soft introduction.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:**

### **Joint Education-** *No report*

### **Superintendent's Goals**

**Vice-Chair Sweeney** inquired to the Supt. how she came about her Smart Goals.

**Supt. Viccaro** responded that there are three areas professional goals (website), student learning goals, and district improvement goals (strategic plan).

Ms. Sweeney asked the Supt. to send copies to the Committee, as the Committee needs to set goals that are in a linear track with the Superintendent's and District's goals.

### **Finance**

**Steve Cole** reported on noting that we need to take a look at the equity of the Library/Media Centers at each level. Currently there is 1.6 FTE at both the High School and Bresnahan Schools, however, the Nock/Molin is at 1.0 FTE, servicing an equal amount of students, technology, etc.

School Lunch update on chart of accounts at 70 days (end of Dec.) there is a deficit of -\$30,000. We are in the red again, and the Finance sub-cmte. voted to transfer \$25,000 to cover payroll. We are struggling with participation. The month of October was strong, however, due to holidays, months of Nov. & Dec. were down. It would help tremendously to add 100 meals /day. We have to go out to bid this year as the contract is up.

**Ms. Sweeney:** time is of the essence and we will have to go to bid, not possible to explore in house scenario. The Supt. and Ms. Lysik are looking into surrounding schools to see how they are doing.

**Mayor Holaday:** What is the date for the RFP?

**Ms. Sweeney:** Next month.

### **Policy**

**Nick deKanter** said they met this evening and discussed the state mandated discipline law. There is more flexibility than first thought. The state puts responsibility in the principals' hands with some high level direction the principal can use. We will review and make recommendations. We also will review a Commission on Diversity & Tolerance document from 2006, to see how it can be modified to be sure it is not in conflict with existing anti-bullying laws. An attorney will also review and make recommendations.

### **Communications Ad-Hoc**

**Audrey McCarthy** reported that she reached out to the Ad-Hoc Committee members in an e-mail about the forums held in the fall and about how communications are going. I feel that I did not perhaps word correctly the information that I was seeking as I got a different response. One person commented on liking the forums but was disappointed in the attendance. I will send another e-mail in hopes of the responses I am seeking.

**Supt. Viccaro** said you must ask targeted questions and be specific.

**Ms. McCarthy** stated that we have a lot of communications methods, and I am not sure how much more we can communicate.

**Ms. Sweeney** stated that we need to look at the Public Conversation/Forums piece for the remainder of the year. We had 60 minute conversations and no increase in participation.

### **Curriculum, Instruction Assessment & Accountability**

Michael Luekens said they are meeting on January 27.

### **Brown School Re-use Taskforce**

**Bruce Menin** reported that the taskforce has met twice, they have a mission statement and lots of homework. They are currently working with shared Google docs. They are almost finished interviewing the principals about what their needs are, programming and space wise. We have a Google survey and are looking at revenue bearing and non-revenue bearing uses. We are reviewing budget trends and looking at other communities.

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN/ EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Cheryl Sweeney it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn the Business Meeting to Executive Session at 9:29 PM to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.

The Committee will not return to Open Session.

### **Roll Call Vote**

<b>Audrey McCarthy</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Bruce Menin</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Cheryl Sweeney</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Steven Cole</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Nick deKanter</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Mayor Holaday</b>	<b>- Yes</b>
<b>Michael Luekens</b>	<b>- Yes</b>

**Motion Passed Unanimously**