

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
BUSINESS MEETING
Tuesday, April 28, 2015**

**Newburyport High School
Meeting Convened at 8:45**

**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 8:45 PM. A roll call was taken and found one member absent - Mayor Holaday; Mr. Cole arrived immediately after roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants:

Motion

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payments the following warrant.
\$34,819.11

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payments the following warrant.
\$468,290.74

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 Business Meeting minutes of Monday, April 6, 2015.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

COMMUNITY USE OF FACILITIES & FIELDS POLICY:

Nick deKanter explained a minor change in the policy and explained the need to approve the policy with one reading by request of the Mayor, who needs this by May 1st. He explained the change; i.e. Use of Classrooms and Auditoriums to use of School Facilities.

Motions

On a motion by Bruce Menin and Audrey McCarthy it was

VOTED: To suspend the rules and have the Committee vote to approve the policy with one reading by request of the Mayor who needs this by May 1st.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

On a motion by Bruce Menin and Audrey McCarthy it was

VOTED: To approve the policy pertaining to School Facilities/Fields on the 1st reading.

It was explained that fee goes into School Maintenance.

Discussion:

Bruce Menin asked if we track schools - can we forecast future revenue. Superintendent Viccaro said there is no crystal ball.

Steve Cole asked how different was this to the prior policy. Mr. deKanter explained it is word for word with the exception of the minor change.

Steve Cole asked for an explanation of the word discretion. Mr. deKanter explained.

Cheryl Sweeney asked if it would be possible to have a line added for the Superintendent's signature. Answer - yes it can be added.

Bruce Menin said he was glad we looked at other districts and he appreciated the work done by Nick deKanter and Cathy Manning.

Bruce Menin and Audrey McCarthy said they would approve the motion as amended.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote

FY16 BUDGET DISCUSSION:

Cheryl Sweeney asked the Committee for an open discussion regarding the Public Hearing on the FY16 Budget.

Discussion

Cheryl Sweeney asked for an explanation regarding the Citizens for Education Funding. Bruce Menin explained.

Cheryl Sweeney asked if this would need to be reactivated. Bruce Menin said it would have to be publicized.

Cheryl Sweeney said the Committee was supposed to vote on the budget and they are running out of time.

Bruce Menin said we are running out of money. He stated he would like to know the drop dead time for voting on this. He would like to give people the opportunity to get other funds.

Nick deKanter stated that right now, if they were to vote on this, they would be sending the Mayor a budget that she would not approve of. He would like to keep the discussion open and

would like to hear from the Mayor what other possibilities might be. They need to continue to work on this - he is not prepared to vote on this, and if they were to vote he would vote no.

Cheryl Sweeney said they needed to talk about some of the items that came up at the Public Hearing.

Bruce Menin said new information came up; at Bresnahan the census of students would have required a cut of a teacher. Bresnahan Principal Davis stated currently there are 8 sections in third grade - 21-23 class size now; 2nd grade - 7 sections, 21-22 class size; 1st grade, same thing; 140 current K class coming into 1st grade.

(Audrey McCarthy left the meeting at 9:30 PM)

Bruce Menin inquired regarding incoming students. Principal Amy Sullivan said 108 as of this morning; 13/14 half day; there are 20 students who typically register over the summer.

Bruce Menin asked for clarification of grade 3. Bresnahan Principal Davis said 24 students, grade 3, 6 sections from 8 sections. Superintendent Viccaro said that is with no new students moving into the district. Bresnahan Principal Davis said this year 23 new 1st grade students moved in. Principal Sullivan said they are down a section from the previous year. She spoke to School Committee guidelines.

Cheryl Sweeney asked how far away they were from fully funding a K program this year. Principal Sullivan explained. Nancy Lysik gave figures.

Principal Sullivan said they have to prepare budget.

Steve Cole asked if guidelines were important in preparing her budget. He stated that one of the difficult things to understand was fractions - they need to know what the numbers are.

Nick deKanter spoke to demographics.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired regarding transportation - do we bus more than we are required to. Answer Yes. Nancy Lysik explained and stated that children need a way to get to school.

Steve Cole asked if the busing contract is up this year.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired regarding food service - have we heard back. Nancy Lysik said some are in.

Cheryl Sweeney inquired regarding athletic fees. Steve Cole said this will be discussed,

Bruce Menin said he has been getting feedback from parents regarding Junior Varsity fees.

Nick deKanter said paying fees, but not getting playing time - it is an equity issue.

Steve Cole said they need Athletic Director Bob Clarke on this - adjust this to make it a more quality issue.

Cheryl Sweeney said they should look at the High School. She thought that Honors classes were chock full. Principal Parent said this is schedule driven - there are different class sizes. It varies by schedule - he can get the figures to them tomorrow.

Cheryl Sweeney discussed new/reductions at the High School and class sizes. Is Virtual High School wiped out. Principal Parent said yes it is gone. There were 18 students; smaller than usual.

Cheryl Sweeney asked how many years have we funded this. Principal Parent explained.

Bruce Menin how many of the 18 students were taking the same class, Principal Parent said they are taking different classes. Mr. Menin said we are scraping a .2 successful program for 18 students who are trying to take classes that are not offered at NHS. Principal Parent said there

are schools in the area that have other programs that are not as expensive. Mr. Menin asked if this was a help for those 18 students. Principal Parent said not this year. Mr. Menin asked why was this cut.

Principal Parent said he was asked to cut \$190,000 from his budget. It was painful, but he does not want to cut staff.

Superintendent Viccaro said there are no easy choices. She stated it is their obligation to put together a budget that meets students' needs.

Bruce Menin said people are sick and tired - there are no long term solutions. We must tax to 2 ½ % and reinstate the Revenue Task Force. Not a lot from the Revenue Task Force was implemented. People are highly opposed at the cuts at the elementary school level and want a timelier budget.

Superintendent Viccaro stated her proposed budget was not funded.

Nick deKanter said they need to know how the city will respond to the concerns that were brought up.

Cheryl Sweeney said they must close down discussion for now and asked people to let the Committee know their concerns.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall Drive **CONCERN:** He chided the Committee for forgetting to call the public comment session as people had left in frustration who had comments to make.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Viccaro reported on the following:

- Real World Design - she listed the students and stated they have a new challenge - go to Washington. The students are Rowan Johnson, Lauren Healey, Dan Bennnett, Theo Dubus, Tucker Elmore, Nick Sundstrom, Jack Gobbi
- Art All State 2015
- Academic Excellence
- Fiddler on the Roof
- Peace Awards
- High School Class Meeting with Jr/Sr students - questions from students
- Respect
- Meeting with Geiger on Thursday

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Policy

Nick deKanter said they met and discussed policy changes; charging for lunch, and animals in school.

Joint Ed

Cheryl Sweeney they will meet on Monday evening.

Finance/Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability

They are working together

Superintendent's Evaluation

Cheryl Sweeney said this was in process. The Superintendent will provide us with a new template.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion

On a motion by Steve Cole and seconded by Nick deKanter it was

VOTED To adjourn the School Committee Business Meeting at 10:06 PM.

Motion Passed

Mayor Holaday absent for vote