

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Monday, March 17, 2025

Present: Juliet Walker, Sarah Hall, Andy Boger; Breanna Higgins, Kathleen Shaw and Brian Callahan (Mayor Sean Reardon absent)

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Juliet Walker called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:30 PM. Roll call found all members present except Mayor Reardon and Breanna Higgins (arrived at 6:31 PM). All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Adriana Kostan, 17 Arlington Street (cell phones)

Introduction of new Athletic Director

Anna DeVitto was introduced as the new Athletic Director by Superintendent Sean Gallagher. She will join the district in July. Anna currently is the AD at Fontbonne Academy in Milton, MA.

Warrant:

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Sarah Hall it was

VOTED: to approve the Warrant in the amount of \$700,037.71 as presented.

The Superintendent provided background on the 2016 wheelchair accessible van that the district wishes to purchase (Warrant 8145).

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Minutes

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to adopt the minutes from the March 3, 2025 School Committee meeting as presented.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Brian Callahan and Breanna Higgins Abstained

Student Representative Report

Logan MacKnight presented the student report that included Responsibility Month at the Bresnahan, the school-wide Arbor Tree poster contest at the Molin, college trips at the Nock, and the high school's Slam Poetry team's participation in the Spoken Word Competition in Boston.

Onsite Daycare Plan Update and Proposed Job Description

HR Director Pam Kealey provided an update for plans to open an onsite daycare at the Bresnahan, including anticipated staffing needs, possible insurance needs and revenue sources. She presented the proposed job description for a Daycare Director/Lead Pre-School Teacher position. Pam explained that upon the approval by the School Committee, the daycare plans can move forward and the position can be posted.

Breanna Higgins suggested amending the job description to include experience as a daycare director and/or lead pre-school teacher.

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Sarah Hall it was

VOTED: to approve the creation of a professional staff position of Daycare Director/Lead Pre-School Teacher, using the amended job description, for the purpose of starting a daycare program in accordance with Policy GCA – Professional Staff Positions.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Student Activity Account Request

Principal Andy Wulf described the new Women in Sports Club at the high school. Juliet Walker explained that requests for new student activity accounts no longer need School Committee approval.

Two NHS Overnight Field Trips

Principal Andy Wulf provided background on the field trip to Washington, DC for the Real World Design National Competition in May 2025. The NEF will sponsor the trip at a cost of \$750 per person.

Principal Wulf also described the Band/Orchestra/Chorus/Theatre overnight field trip to Disney in Orlando, Florida during the April 2026 spring vacation. Students would compete in an arts festival with other students from around the US.

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Breanna Higgins it was

VOTED: to approve the Real World Design Challenge field trip to Washington, DC May 2 thru May 4 in accordance with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Motion:

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to approve the NHS Performing Arts trip to Orlando in 2026 in accordance with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Revised FY26 Level of Service Budget

Superintendent Sean Gallagher presented a revised LOS FY26 Budget, explaining that since the last meeting on March 3rd, the team was able to reduce the city appropriation from 7.25% to 4.12%. The Superintendent thanked the district unions and negotiation teams for their hard work and collaborative efforts which has led to a clearer picture of future contractual obligations.

In addition, the total overall budget increase went from 3.11% to 1.47%. Superintendent Gallagher reviewed the list of funding changes since the March 3rd meeting, including Medicaid and Circuit Breaker reimbursements and school choice. He also introduced a new chart that compares City Allocation budget increases from 2016 through 2025.

High School Competency Determination Policy – 2nd read

Breanna Higgins explained that the High School Competency Determination Policy was reviewed by the high school, the NHS School Council, Teaching & Learning Subcommittee and Policy Subcommittee, and there have been no changes. This would be an addendum to the current Policy IKF – Graduation Requirements.

Motion:

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to add the High School Competency Determination Policy as Policy IKF-R.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Brian Callahan reported a meeting was held on March 13th. The agenda included fundraising, review of financial statements and the CIP report, as well as planning for the upcoming Joint Budget meeting with City Council on Thursday (March 20th) at 4PM in the Nock library.

Policy Subcommittee: have not met

Communications Subcommittee

Sarah Hall stated this month's meeting was cancelled due to the upcoming Joint Finance meeting.

Teaching & Learning Subcommittee

Breanna Higgins said a meeting was held on March 5th. They discussed the School Council calendar and possible impact on the School Improvement Plan, as well as a mid-year data presentation and a targeted math professional development program at the Nock with Mark Littlefield.

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee: have not met

Superintendent’s Report

FY25 SOA Plan: Superintendent Gallagher reported that the progress report will be completed by the April 1st deadline.

2024-2025 Bus Transportation Update: The current bus fees, ridership numbers and revenue for 2023 through 2025 were reviewed by Superintendent Gallagher.

School Choice Potential Seat Offerings: Superintendent Gallagher provided potential seat projections for school choice in 2025-2026. A full break down will be presented at the April 7th meeting.

New Business

- Kathleen Shaw reported that SEPAC met on February 27th, and will meet in-person on April 17th. They are creating a new awards committee to honor teachers.
- Superintendent Gallagher reminded School Committee members that tonight’s packet contained a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in the old reporting format for the committee’s use. Juliet Walker would like to have a brief review of the CIP as part of the budget discussion at the April 7th meeting.
- Kathleen Shaw extended an invitation to everyone to attend the IFTAR event on March 27th that is being sponsored by the Human Rights Commission.

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:02PM and move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible contract negotiations and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in open session.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Roll Call Vote

School Committee Member	Vote
Mayor Sean Reardon	absent
Sarah Hall	Yes
Andrew Boger	Yes
Brian Callahan	Yes
Breanna Higgins	Yes
Kathleen Shaw	Yes
Juliet Walker	Yes

Student Report for School Committee

March 17, 2025

Submitted by: Logan MacKnight

Location: Senior Center

Bresnahan News:

Kindergarten Collaboration

We are excited to share a collaborative project between Mr. Brad Garleau's media class, our kindergarten teachers, and students! Last week, we started creating a video designed to help new families gain a deeper understanding of how special Kindergarten is at the Bresnahan School. As most of our incoming kindergarteners have not attended preschool here, we hope this initiative will ease their transition into Newburyport Public Schools. This project will highlight "A Day in the Life of a Kindergartner," showcasing curriculum, age-appropriate tasks, and the ways we support social-emotional well-being for our youngest learners. Through this effort, families will get a glimpse into the engaging and nurturing environment we provide. It is sure to be an adorable and meaningful resource for our incoming families as they begin this exciting journey! We will share the final product when it's completed!

Readathon!

Today was the first day of our PTO sponsored "Clipper Readathon." We are excited for an eventful two weeks with library campouts, book character parades and lots and lots of reading! Thank you to the PTO for making this happen. We have a number of parent volunteers coming in during the readathon. A huge thank you as well to the entire Bresnahan staff for making this such a special time for our students, and especially our Librarian Renee Ames for her vision in creating an inclusive camp out experience in the library that all students love.

Responsibility at the Bresnahan, Community Service of Newburyport Toilet Paper Drive

Our students had a wonderful assembly last week to kick off Responsibility month! The whole school is working towards getting "likes" for their responsible acts. Let's see how many we can get by the end of the month! Last month we did 1000 Acts of Kindness, can we get to 1000 acts of responsibility? We think so!

Part of being responsible is being responsible for helping your community. Bresnahan students are partnering with Community Service of Newburyport on a toilet paper drive. We figured out

that if everyone in the school brought in one roll of toilet paper, we would have over 700 rolls of toilet paper! If anyone listening would like to contribute, toilet paper rolls can be dropped off at the main office.

Molin News:

Congratulations to Sienna Burke for winning the school-wide Arbor Tree poster contest. Her poster will be entered into the state-wide competition.

-The PTO-sponsored Readathon has begun. Please register your child for this event.

-Thank you to the PTO for organizing Molin Music Bingo on Friday!

-The Molin School play 101 Dalmatians Kids opens on Thursday at 6pm! There are over 100 students participating and therefore, two casts! It runs all weekend. Friday at 6pm and Saturday at 2pm and 6pm.

Nock News:

A special thank you to the parents, faculty, and students who have joined the rosters for our March Madness Basketball Fundraiser and Community Event on Wednesday, March 26, at 6 PM. We're looking forward to another great night of school spirit and community engagement. Rosters are set!

Additionally, our college trips are underway . Last week, our seventh graders visited Merrimack College, while sixth graders will head to Endicott College, and eighth graders will tour Suffolk University later this month. These visits are an exciting opportunity to expose our students to higher education as we continue to support the district's Portrait of a Graduate mission.

The Intergenerational Book Club is in its second year at the Nock. The book club got its start last year when Clipper Crew members came to Ms Groskin wanting to connect with seniors in our community. Eighth graders and members of the Senior Center meet to share their perspectives on an assigned book. Coordinated by 8th Grade Social Studies teacher Jennifer Groskin Spurling and Intergenerational Projects Senior Center Volunteer Liz Walsh, the group always has a lively discussion!

High School News:

The Slam Poetry team competed this weekend in the Spoken Word Competition in Boston. As always, the team represented Newburyport in the highest fashion. Kudos to Lila Coffey, Lucius Nelson, Rachel Kinney, and Nadia Toth.