

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Library @ High School, 241 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Monday, May 5, 2025

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

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Vice Chair Juliet Walker called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:32 PM. Roll call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments - none

Warrant

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Mayor Reardon it was

VOTED: to approve the Warrant in the amount of \$418,211.50 as presented.

Motion Passed

Minutes

Motion:

On a motion by Mayor Reardon and seconded by Sarah Hall it was

VOTED: to adopt the minutes for the April 2nd, April 15th, and April 29th School Committee meetings.

Motion Passed

Student Recognition

Superintendent Sean Gallagher presented a certificate of appreciation to Theo Roberts for his hard work, dedication and leadership as the high school's student representative to the School Committee over the past two years.

Student Representative Report

Theo Roberts presented the student report which included the Parent Speaker visitor Dr. Peter Gray and the *Gratitude Garland* project at the Bresnahan, and the spring play and the upcoming cell phone community dialogue at the high school.

Introduction – New Director of Finance & Operations

Superintendent Sean Gallagher introduced Ethan Manning as the new Director of Finance & Operations.

NHS Investment Club Presentation

Superintendent Sean Gallagher introduced club leaders, high school students Colin Fuller, Gregory D'Ambrosio and Hunter McCormick. They discussed membership, various club activities, things they've learned and the member's experiences managing the club's portfolio. Funding for the Investment Club is donated by the NEF.

NHS Media Lab Presentation

Superintendent Sean Gallagher and Facilities Director James McSweeney provided an update of the work being done for the new media lab at the high school. They reviewed various tasks that are in process, as well as anticipated dates for deliveries and/or quotes. Mr. McSweeney's presentation also included several pictures of the work currently underway in the lab.

2025-2026 School Choice Grades - 11 & 12

Superintendent Sean Gallagher provided a brief summary of choice registration numbers. The Superintendent requested approval for five spots in grades 11 and 12, as well as five additional spots in grade 6, and one additional spot in grade 1.

Motion:

On a motion by Mayor Reardon and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to approve five spaces in grades 11 and 12, five additional spaces in grade 6 and one additional space in grade 1.

Motion Passed

Andy Boger voted present

2025 – 2026 School Committee Meeting Schedule

Juliet Walker explained that version 2 of the proposed meeting schedule retains the regular Monday schedule through December 2025, then moves meetings to the 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month beginning in January 2026.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve version 2 of the School Committee Business Meeting schedule as presented in the packet.

Motion Passed

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Brian Callahan stated the next meeting will be held on May 21, 2025.

Policy Subcommittee

Kathleen Shaw stated they will meet on May 14, 2025.

Teaching & Learning Subcommittee

Breanna Higgins reported they last met on April 15th. The agenda included an overview of the new special education administrative structure by Brad Brooks.

Superintendent's Evaluation Subcommittee

Mayor Sean Reardon will begin this process in June.

Communications Subcommittee

Sarah Hall stated they met on May 1st, and the agenda included a review of several social media policies, the upcoming budget meeting and the community cell phone dialogue.

SEPAC

Kathleen Shaw said the next meeting will be held Thursday (May 15th).

Superintendent's Report

Tennis Court Update: Superintendent Gallagher provided a status of the work completed to date, as well as upcoming work that is scheduled to be completed by the end of May.

New Business

- Mayor Sean Reardon reminded everyone of the Academic Awards night at the high school on Wednesday night (May 7th).
- Sarah Hall shared that the high school production of *Into the Woods* will be happening May 8th through May 10th.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Mayor Reardon it was

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 7:53PM.

Motion Passed

Newburyport School Committee - Student Report

May 5, 2025

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Francis T. Bresnahan Elementary School

Before April break, a group of Bresnahan teachers, along with Superintendent Gallagher Assistant Superintendent Furlong, had the opportunity to have dinner and a discussion with Dr. Peter Gray, a developmental psychologist and professor at Boston College. Dr. Gray has studied the impact that societal and educational structures have on child development, and how that information can inform our education practices. The discussion centered around how educators can have a positive impact on students' happiness, wellbeing, and learning during their time at school. I'd like to thank Dr. Gray for his investment in our community and NYS for sponsoring his visit through their Parent Speaker Series.

Additionally, the Bresnahan is continuing a growing tradition with the *Gratitude Garland* project. Educators are challenging themselves and students to identify and celebrate all of the things that they are grateful for by creating a paper garland made of individual expressions of gratitude. Each link in the garland represents a moment, person, or appreciated idea. Last year, the garland wrapped around three sides of the building, and this year staff is aiming to wrap around the entire school. It is a beautiful reminder of the power of thankfulness and the strength of our community.

There is no news tonight from the Molin or Nock Schools, so we will now move on to the High School.

Newburyport High School

The spring play "Into the Woods" opened this past weekend, and will continue this week on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Nearly 50 students join the cast, crew, and orchestra, along with NPS Performing Arts Faculty Brian Nickerson, Risa Annicciaro, Kathy Sheperd, Steve Cohen, and our very own Sarah Hall on the flute.

Additionally, the high school will host a community dialogue around the topic of cell phones in school, arranged by a group of students, teachers, and parents. Led by faculty members Eric Schildge and Lynne Cote, the team has read literature and conducted interviews to help decide on the structure and questions to guide the dialogue. The conversation will be held on Tuesday, May 13th at the high school from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. Thank you to parents Kristen Vicente, Sarah Hall, Kate Suchecki; and students Caroline Jones, David Pearce, Lucy Rimer, Isla Trail, Tommy Rich; and teacher Kristen Prusinski for being a part of the planning team.