

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Monday, October 19, 2020
Senior/Community Center**

Meeting Convened at 6:35 PM

Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided

Present: David Hochheiser, Mayor Donna Holaday, Bruce Menin, Steve Cole,
Brian Callahan, Sheila Spalding

Absent: Sean Reardon

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Donna Holaday called the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:35 PM. Roll Call found all members present, except **Sean Reardon**. All those present stood for the pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

At this point Vice-Chairman **Bruce Menin** assumed chairmanship of the Business Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Simone Bui: She questioned the 6-foot social distancing mandate and what would happen when 50% of students came back to school.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants:

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.
\$2,132.41

Motion Passed

Sean Reardon absent for vote

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.
\$475,401.98

Motion Passed

Sean Reardon absent for vote

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor to make payment and deduct the funds from the school's account.
\$1,580.01

Motion Passed

Sean Reardon absent for vote

Minutes:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee
Business Meeting minutes of Monday, September 21, 2020.

Motion Passed

Sean Reardon absent for vote

REOPENING UPDATES:

Building Principals for the Nock Middle School (grades 6-8) and the High School (grades 9-12) provided updates as to how reopening is going at their schools.

Principal Lisa Furlong, Nock Middle School:

Principal Furlong provided the following information re: the Nock Middle School:

- Start with Advisory
- Implementing Health and Safety Protocols
- 5 points
- What in-person learning looks like
- Our approach to supporting students and families
- Technology is supporting learning
- Instructional strategies
- Curriculum development
- Educators and addressing teaching and learning

Mayor Holaday asked for an explanation re: the percentage of students who might not be engaged at this point. Ms. Furlong explained that there were students who may not be completing the work but they do not have students who are not engaging. Attendance is taken, which looks pretty good, and families are contacted.

Bruce Menin said we have had to do some quarantining of students. How is that process working? Ms. Furlong explained that a particular plan is devised for each particular student.

David Hochheiser commended Ms. Furlong for creating a web-site early on. Live remote proves to be the most difficult and the least efficient. Ms. Furlong explained this is a team based approach and they are doing a 5 class rotation on every block.

David Hochheiser asked how long do we have until the first trimester ends? Answer - December 11.

David Hochheiser asked if parents could expect information on how things are going soon. Answer - Yes. Ms. Furlong explained there would be an Open House on the 28th and then two sessions of parent conferences by Google Meets.

Principal Andy Wulf, NHS:

Principal Wulf provided the following information re: Newburyport High School.

- Back to school update
- Implementing Health and Safety Protocols
- Implementing Health and Safety Protocols - Person Max Capacity up/down
- How students are doing without safety protocols

Weekly Staff Questionnaire

- Weeks 1 and 2 Remote with in-person Clipper Block
- Our School year goals
- Clipper Block NHS Action news
- Hybrid Instruction - past 2 weeks
- What the high school has learned and what's coming up
- Operational focus for both Nock and NHS
 - Health and Safety Operations
 - Scheduling Staffing

Mayor Holaday commented that she had received e-mails - 2 parents concerned - social emotional - when you get an email like that what do you recommend we do? Mr. Wulf said have them contact Tricia Blackstock at NHS or Michael Testa.

Mayor Holaday asked if students who potentially doing much more remote would be invited to participate in the movie on the field and those kinds of things. Mr. Wulf said yes - that's a big thing at NHS - it is a social element.

Sheila Spalding asked if students are fully engaged at this point? Mr. Wulf said they had an increase of around 11.6%. He sent out a communication asking people to commit to a time frame - they can choose up till the November break - they did it by the quarter.

David Hochheiser asked if families felt that the education would be compromised with regards to coming or staying at home.

David Hochheiser questioned time frames - if people are saying they want to go remote, are they signing up for a certain amount of time? Is there a chance that if there are people feeling they really want their kid back in school could we offer them those spots? Mr. Wulf said he would have to discuss that with the district as to how they could do that.

David Hochheiser said heading into winter he was assuming they're going to be people who are more prone to keep kids at home. When we go to 50% they might be more nervous. Is the plan moving forward to always have that dual pedagogy going? Mr. Wulf said that was our objective so we could afford that flexibility at NHS.

David Hochheiser asked if there any way to share what that looks like with the community? Mr. Wulf said that was the message that he sent home.

Brian Callahan asked if there's a family that doesn't want to go to Remote Academy, but their kid just is not getting anything out of Clipper Block and says I'm not going - how is that being handled? Mr. Wulf said Mike Testa is having conversations with those families.

David Hochheiser asked how were teachers, people feeling about synchronous learning. Mr. Wulf said it's a lot of work and a big piece of it is the ongoing feedback that they're trying to give for the materials that are being submitted by the students.

David Hochheiser asked are the kids at home up on a screen. Answer - yes.

David Hochheiser asked if the kids at home can see the kids in the classroom. Mr. Wulf said it's an option that a teacher can have based on the goals of the lesson.

David Hochheiser asked is there something technical keeping that from happening. Mr. Wulf said it's a comfort level with the technology.

Brian Callahan questioned the Monday holiday last week that the NHS kids go on Wednesday. He wondered if that was going to happen again (Jan 18) and could the Middle School do that.

Superintendent Gallagher said that's all part of when we're looking at scheduling we're adapting to the environment.

Brian Callahan asked is it just too difficult to do the lower case? **Superintendent Gallagher** said he didn't think it's too difficult - the High School is at 25% capacity and don't see teachers as frequent at the elementary. They cleaned NHS at night.

Brian Callahan asked is that also sort of a test to see if we can do what we've been talking about. Answer - Yes.

Bruce Menin commented that the community wants to know what we're doing - we're making adjustments and tweaks.

Mr. Wulf said social emotional concerns are funneled to adjustment counselors who reach out to families.

David Hochheiser said when they have discussions about the calendar for the rest of the year - Wednesdays are shorter - are you able to confirm that time for professional development or not?

Mr. Wulf said at the High School we're incorporating common planning time - using that chunk of time for teacher teams to collaborate on assignments

David Hochheiser said content times like that would happen during the day. Mr. Wulf said they weren't able to have those the way their schedule is set up.

David Hochheiser asked how their needs are different than in past years. Mr. Wulf said this gives them actual time to do whereas the time they had last year was once a month.

Ms. Furlong said those early release days where a content based vertical team can meet - our teams meet daily at the grade level.

COVID UPDATE & NEXT STEPS:

Superintendent Gallagher presented the following data:

District Health Data **Health Office Statistics**

Injury Visits:	99
Illness Visits:	261
Non-encounter	436
Medication Admin	135
Treatment	271
Absence Days Due to Illness	232 days

COVID-19 Statistics

Student Dismissal COVID Exposure	23
Student COVID-19 Positive Cases	4
Staff COVID-19 Positive Cases	3
Students Quarantine Currently	68
Staff Quarantine Currently	3
Absence Days Due to Quarantine	89
Number of Staff Tested by District	61

Days of Notification	#Staff/Student Positive		#Staff/Student Quarantined from Contact Tracing	
9/2	1	Staff	2	Staff
9/16	1	Staff	3	Staff
9/28	1	Student	15	5 students/10 staff
10/5	1	Student	12	2 NHS students 10 K-8 students
			17	16 NHS students and 1 staff
				Considered close contact with Student who was in school
10/12	2	Students	44	Students part of sport team
				Quarantined based on BOH and District investigation
10/16	1	Staff	1	Student
10/17		Outside contact	2	1 student/1 staff
10/19		Outside contact	1	Staff person
TOTALS			97	Quarantined through District

Superintendent Gallagher explained that hundreds of hours go into contact tracing - working with Mayor Holaday and the Dept. of Health and our team. He commented on how COVID-19 outside of school could happen and how contact tracing is essential.

Mayor Holaday commented that she received a text from the Health Dept. - we have 10 active cases, 2 who will be stopping out of isolation in 2 days. 2 are school cases.

Brian Callahan asked if 10 was the total of everybody in the city. **Mayor Holaday** said it's only city residents. A restaurant recently had to close because a person there tested positive and they had to deep clean. We still have to contact trace and this takes a tremendous amount of time.

Superintendent Gallagher commented on the challenges connected with COVID-19.

Mayor Holaday commended families for making calls regarding COVID-19.

Superintendent Gallagher said this type of information from families assists us to keep our schools open.

Brian Callahan asked if we had plans to test staff on a weekly or regular basis.

Superintendent Gallagher explained that we have tests optional and can send people to get tested free of charge.

Bruce Menin asked if we were referring students and parents to places where they can get tested. Answer - yes,

Brian Callahan commented that there was no requirement for a person to be tested - they can go home for 2 weeks. **Superintendent Gallagher** said it's up to the families - if they remain symptom free for 14 days they are not required to be tested.

Brian Callahan asked are we also monitoring people with siblings who go home symptomatic.

Superintendent Gallagher said when you have multiple siblings that's where the families will get tested.

Brian Callahan asked if the number of kids in quarantine was 68 in total? Answer - yes.

Brian Callahan asked if we knew if any of the people that have gone into quarantine - have any of them called and said "We came up positive". Answer - no.

Superintendent Gallagher commented on outside activities that affect COVID-19.

FUNDRAISER PERMISSION FORM DRAFT:

David Hochheiser explained that the Policy Sub-committee has been talking about this for a couple of months. All the schools and the sporting programs have different processes for moving through fundraising - they wanted to streamline the process and come up with a common form. He explained the process.

Bruce Menin said it's been a decentralized process for the last 10 years. Centralizing it would be helpful.

Superintendent Gallagher said they created one form that articulated the information that they were looking for re: the fundraising process. He explained the process.

Bruce Menin that this is very good work.

Brian Callahan asked when we talked about the vendor of the school sponsored activity involving students and fundraising projects via sales. Would the PTO be required to give us the information? **Superintendent Gallagher** said we had a minimum of 2 weeks.

David Hochheiser said they talked about the kind of disclosure about the profit margins and for whom.

Bruce Menin said they should also talk about our ceiling as to what we are willing to allow companies to take. He asked can we get a time frame date of permission for response from the district within X days.

Brian Callahan said it can't go on for a month waiting for an answer.

Superintendent Gallagher said there were going to be some scenarios where a fundraiser may have to happen quickly that wasn't planned.

Brian Callahan said he was more concerned about the response from the district to the organization. He would like to see things broken out.

Sheila Spalding said she liked the idea of a form which takes the onus off the Principal.

Mayor Holaday asked because this came out of policy were they looking for two readings or can they approve this tonight. **David Hochheiser** explained the process.

Bruce Menin said they were not going to be voting on the form. The form would be part of the policy. There's no reason you can't pilot it now.

David Hochheiser explained there were 4 or 5 different policies in the policy book about fundraising - they wanted to go back into that and clean the whole thing up.

Brian Callahan said he wanted that percentage of profit on the form. **Superintendent Gallagher** said he would make that modification.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

Superintendent Gallagher explained that they were in the last year of our 5-year Strategic Plan. From Spring of last year, we lost some momentum. He said he will work with the Leadership Team - his entry plan is complete and ready for the School Committee in the next couple of months. We will work with a start plan committee in each of the subcategories work

throughout the Spring and summer and then present a new Strategic Plan in September of 2021 for approval to the School Committee.

Mayor Holaday said this will be her 4th Strategic Plan and the one thing that has not worked at all is the book that comes out after months and months of work and then the book just sits on a shelf and collects dust. She said if we decide to do something a little more robust than a trifold she would like to emphasize that it comes out in a similar format.

Bruce Menin said some of the school improvement plans have also begun referencing the Strategic Plan as well.

Mayor Holaday said it all comes together.

Steve Cole said he liked what has been suggested compiling data regrouping meetings during the Spring and summer. It's important to take a look at how the environment changed. He commented on bringing people in to collaborate on compiling the new Strategic Plan - look at social emotional learning.

David Hochheiser asked if we have a 5-year Strategic Plan what do year 1,2,3,4 look like with regards to yearly goals based on the big thing - how do we then turn that or recognize at least the budgetary needs in each year. He commented on the consultant that came to help drive the process the last time and people felt they were not heard.

Superintendent Gallagher said he thought this work needs to be done with the community and not a consultant.

Bruce Menin said one of the things that's going to make this process dramatically different from the prior process is we've got 5 years of trying to do stuff that we wanted to do that we have as a basis.

Mayor Holaday said all the interviews the NIOSK Team did for our accreditation came together. We need to organize something like this and assign it to someone who can coordinate schedules and all kinds of things that have to happen.

CODE OF ETHICS:

Bruce Menin said the Mass. Code of Ethics and our principals that we sign off on at the beginning of the year - it seems worthwhile to have a conversation about them over the next several meetings and see what is working and what isn't and what some of these mean to us. He explained what the Code of Ethics means and does. The Code of Ethics delineated 3 areas of responsibility for the school committee - our community responsibility; a responsibility to the school administration and our relationship to one another and breaks out what our school responsibilities are in each of those areas. He asked - signing off on - is it something we're comfortable with. **Mayor Holaday** said yes.

Bruce Menin said his or her basic function is policy making and not administrative. The decision is made whether its' a 7-0 or a 4-3 decision - the decision is made and we should support implementing that decision.

Steve Cole said we must do a good job to hold ourselves accountable.

Bruce Menin said they must be well informed re: the duties of a committee member on both local and state level.

Mayor Holaday asked if it was posted anywhere re: the roles and responsibilities of a school committee member - was it on the website? **Bruce Menin** thought it wasn't.

Steve Cole said there was a general definition that MASC sends out on a yearly calendar.

Sheila Spalding asked if that was on the Facebook page - it would be an important thing to put on there.

Bruce Menin said he or she represents the community at all times. It can be hard.

Sheila Spalding said there's also exceptions such as special populations.

David Hochheiser sometimes it doesn't hold up either, like when they were discussing school start times.

Bruce Menin said benefits outweigh the inconveniences. They must accept the office as a committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to plan politics in any sense of the work or to benefit personally from his/her committee activities.

Brian Callahan read a comment relating to item C.

Bruce Menin said they will shift this to the next meeting.

PROPOSED MASC RESOLUTIONS FOR 2020:

It was decided to vote up or down of the following resolutions:

Resolution 1

Bruce Menin said he was happy with substituting that.

Brian Callahan said some individuals object to this provision because it stifles dissent and disagreement.

Bruce Menin asked does that seem reasonable.

Brian Callahan said the MASC protocol from 2012 has a whole lot of this as well as norms of operation in one document - we should look at this. Change it or adopt it entirely.

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 2 - COVID-19 State funding

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 3 - Anti-racism

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 4 - Lowering the voting for municipal elections

Brian Callahan said he liked it.

Sheila Spalding said it's great, it fosters civic engagement.

David Hochheiser said he agreed.

Bruce Menin wondered if they can vote - can they run for city office.

Mayor Holaday said she met the High School Youth Council about the empower act and she was surprised that the majority of 18 or 19 students voted against this, because they felt kids would vote as their parents told them to.

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 5 - Supporting increased federal support and stimulus funding for public K-12 education

David Hochheiser said they tie this very sneakily into progressive tax legislation.

Mayor Holaday she didn't know what this means where it says - emerging about the pandemic then demanding an immediate overhaul of the instructional plans and strategies of school systems across the country.

David Hochheiser said we can only vote for the whole thing.

Mayor Holaday said they could make amendments.

Bruce Menin said they would hold off on this particular question.

David Hochheiser said it reads to him that they have to change everything we're doing. He said he was more concerned that it supports the progressive tax legislation.

Mayor Holaday said they passed massive bills - changes to the school - last year's student opportunities act.

Bruce Menin said they will hold off on this until the next meeting and if anyone wanted to draft an amendment could do so.

Resolution 6 - Retention of Medicaid Revenue

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 7 - Attempt by US Dept. of Education to direct funding to private schools

Bruce Menin said this is trying to address the last 4 years of the Dept. of Education at the Federal level funding in private schools, charter schools, religious schools with federal money. They want the Attorney General review or not - we have to comply with that on a state level.

Brian Callahan suggested postponing this one as well.

Bruce Menin said they will postpone this until the next meeting.

Resolution 8 - Membership of a School Committee member on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

VOTE - UP

Passed

Resolution 9 - Providing Equity for sexual orientation

VOTE - UP

Passed

Brian Callahan commented that Massachusetts does recognize the protective class.

Resolution 10 - Relative to the monitoring of attendance of students during the pandemic

Bruce Menin said they are asking the State to adopt a policy that we're already functionally doing here in Newburyport.

Sheila Spalding asked that weren't all schools mandated to offer remote learning. **Bruce Menin** said yes, they just want to make sure that the students and their families are not punished for making decisions about not sending kids into school.

Brian Callahan said we do that because we work directly with families. He wondered if there were districts that said No and then they were in trouble.

Superintendent Gallagher said they were referring to the attendance requirement and accountability for this year.

Bruce Menin wondered if the funding was tied to attendance.

Superintendent Gallagher said he would get more information.

Mayor Holaday said it's an important piece for us to relate to parents that attendance is required whether you are remote in-person, by saying we want you to wave all those rules.

David Hochheiser said it also sounds like they're trying to advocate for parents' choice and holding them far too accountable for making decisions to keep their kids out of school where they don't feel safe.

Bruce Menin said they will hold on this one - get clarification on numbers 5, 7, and 10 and discuss at the next meeting. He will contact MASC and get some clarification on these.

SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION:

Bruce Menin said they met - consequently with getting some guidance from DESI - a hard copy and an e-mail file suggesting how we might focus administrative/superintendent evaluations on for the past year with the pandemic. The Mayor and he looked at the document of indicators and the evaluation form that they had been using. The Mayor plugged in all of the values and factors into the evaluation form that the State is said to focus on.

Mayor Holaday explained the four district goals which are the only ones we are being asked to make our evaluation on.

Bruce Menin said each of the ratings are proficient although it has been his practice to comment regardless.

Superintendent Gallagher said his goal for the Google Classroom for the School Committee is to take each standard with his Friday Memos, but also provide more evidence tied into each one of those standards.

Mayor Holaday wondered about the due date.

Bruce Menin said the 16th - do this in a month - have it ready for our second meeting in November before Thanksgiving - the 16th. He said to send them to him.

Sheila Spalding said it's interesting how the State seems to reverse the negative to positive in the columns - it starts with negative or moves to positive usually it's reversed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Gallagher reported on the following:

- Our Neighbor's Table Champion Award - He congratulated the Newburyport Public Schools for receiving this award for the food to families throughout the pandemic. Pam Kealey, cafeteria workers and food service workers with Cathy Riccio organized this, making sure our families were receiving lunch and

breakfast for the week - started in March through June - they're being recognized for going above the call of duty.

- Speaker Series - He had amazing questions from the 8th grade students and was really impressed.

Bruce Menin said it's a wonderful program - teachers are tremendous and it's giving students a voice.

- He attended the parent teachers advisory meeting, looking at the curriculum and working with a diverse group of parents and looking at how we're teaching History, teaching some difficult subjects. We had teachers, myself, Principal's Furlong and Jen Groskin on the Zoom call.

David Hochheiser asked if that group was in addition to the School Council.

Superintendent Gallagher said this was specific parents being called on to discuss some of the curriculum.

- NHS Student School Representative - Sierra Leahy will be here on November 2
- Open Houses - he gave the dates of the upcoming Open houses.
- He thanked Nancy Lysik for the completed comprehensive financial report which was recently submitted to the State.

Mayor Holaday said this is also referred to as the October report.

- Cultural Competency - Michael Eatman has been working with the district - the extended leadership team. Asst. Supt. Bik and he have been meeting with Michael developing a roadmap for the district. In addition, they are utilizing a mentor tax coaching for equity for the extended leadership team. They will continue to work with Michael and train and model so by the end of the year many of our district leaders and district personnel will be trained in a lot of this work.

Mayor Holaday said they appreciated the time because they want to be sure that the work Michael is doing dovetails with this new alliance on diversity equity and inclusion that we have about 50 applicants for.

- Remote Academy - home school - We currently have 147 students in the remote academy from grades K to 8. As a High School, as Mr. Wulf is live streaming right now - we have 4 teachers including Special Ed. teachers working. Grades K to 5 - we have 7 teachers including Special Ed. teachers and foreign teachers working with the grades 6 to 8 as rotation is on a trimester basis. Thus far we have positive feedback for the remote academy. We have 46 students who are homeschooling.
- Commissioner's update - we had a commissioner's update on attendance - he reviewed the attendance taking in categorizing those absences. He also mentioned COVID-19. New information was on testing - the State may be receiving some antigen tests from the Federal government - he will get us more information on this. There were questions around transportation and flexibility on

physical distancing in schools - he says no change. We'll get guidance on snow days next week.

- Special Education Update - Nancy Koch

She gave Special Education numbers school by school.

Sheila Spalding asked if those figures reflect 504 numbers. Answer - no

David Hochheiser said in order to be considered High Needs through the IEP process students must meet at least 2 of these criteria, so 2 of the 3 that are bulleted - Yes - the second bullet. Students doing OK live with Special Ed. support and now not doing so well because they are home. How do we decide who cannot engage? Ms. Koch said we have looked at data prior to school closing and their performance in the Spring - we cannot bring every student back and there are some who are struggling and we are working closely with those families in terms of offering extra support.

David Hochheiser asked what kind of data we are using at the beginning. Ms. Koch said how many lessons or Zoom lessons are they engaging in, and how many assignments they are turning in.

Bruce Menin asked her to talk about reaching out and supports. Ms. Koch said it is highly individualized. A lot of the most common concerns is that the younger group is often restless and just can't sustain sitting in front of a computer. Aides consult with families coming up with strategies. SEPAC and our BBA's are doing a presentation on de-escalation techniques for parents and giving strategies in terms of helping them engage in learning. Parent training and support is as important as supporting the students, especially for the little ones. Parents are asking for de-escalation training.

David Hochheiser asked Mr. Wulf if people are opting out can we think about allowing more people to opt in.

Superintendent Gallagher said that's something that we're always going to look at on a weekly basis and the challenges with Special Ed. is the focus and the priorities on your high needs students, but you're not going to have the ability to bring all students back. We are now creating more services at home.

Ms. Koch said we're also exploring remote evaluations.

Bruce Menin asked if there were some kinds of things that we can submit for funding to some of the grants.

Nancy Lysik said it's something that's not currently carried in the budget and it's COVID related. We've hired additional coders, then yes you can take care of them but you can only do it from now until the end of December unless we get additional funding.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joint Ed - not met

Finance - **Steve Cole** said they will meet tomorrow at 8:30 AM at the Nock Auditorium

Policy - **David Hochheiser** said they met last week and discussed fundraising, a la carte in the cafeteria - at the next meeting they will discuss Wellness Policy.

Superintendent Evaluation - **Bruce Menin** said they gave their report.

Mayor Holaday asked the Superintendent if he had set a date yet for the Joint Meeting which by charter they're supposed to have before they start the budget process - we've picked November to do that. She stated she has concern re: the Governor's budget.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **David Hochheiser** it was

VOTED: To adjourn the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 9:58 PM.

Motion Passed

Sean Reardon absent for vote