

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING  
Monday, December 21, 2020  
Remote**

**Meeting Convened at 6:31 PM**

**Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided**

**Present:** David Hochheiser, Mayor Donna Holaday, Bruce Menin,  
Brian Callahan, Sean Reardon, Sheila Spalding

**Absent:** Steve Cole

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**Mayor Donna Holaday** called the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:31 PM. Roll Call found all members present except Steve Cole. 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:**

There was no Public Comment at this time.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Warrants:**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.  
**\$312,594.83**

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.  
**\$1,765.75**

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor to make payment and deduct the funds from the school's account.  
**\$1,186.61**

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

### **NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:**

NHS Student Representative Sierra Leahy reported on the following:

- Cornell University Ornithology Lab recognized NHS senior Niholas for his research
- “Just Mercy” - met last Tuesday
- Spirit Week organized by Class Advisors was held - Seniors won
- Cupola - a screenshot of the cupola was sent to Committee members

### **GALAPAGOS ISLANDS OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP:**

NHS Principal Wulf explained that this overnight field trip was originally planned for April 16-24, 2020 and was approved by the School Committee on February 3, 2020. The trip was cancelled in March 2020 due to the pandemic. As international travel does not look promising for 2021, Erin Hobbs would like to offer this trip to NHS students for April 2022 pending approval by the School Committee. Students already signed up for the 2020 trip will have the opportunity to transfer their current trip voucher to April 2022 or to a sibling or another NHS student. Otherwise, those students could request a refund from EF Tours (trip cost minus \$565), or try to resell their voucher with Erin’s help. Fifteen current Sophomores will use their graduating seniors voucher, and there are 5 or 6 siblings who will get upperclassmen vouchers.

#### **Motion:**

On a motion by **David Hochheiser** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To approve the overnight field trip to the Galapagos Islands for April 2022.

**David Hochheiser** said it was awesome to get to g.

**Mayor Holaday** asked if someone purchased the trip and there was no one else to transfer the money to, how much money will they lose. Answer - \$1,000.

**David Hochheiser** asked how long are the vouchers good for. Answer - 2 years He suggested next year they do a match make.

#### **Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

NHS Principal Wulf spoke about the Spirit Week video, which he will send the link to. Each grade level put together a video presentation. Seniors used a drone in their video which gave some beautiful shots of the newly repaired Cupola - seniors won.

### **MEDICAL ADVISORY TEAM UPDATE:**

**Superintendent Gallagher** introduced Medical Advisory Team members Michael Allard, Dr. Jessica Su and Cathy Riccio, who discussed the current COVID-19 data trends and projections impacting the community and schools. Discussion included learning plan options.

**Superintendent Gallagher** said this team met on a weekly basis on Wednesday mornings, along with the Board of Health.

Dr. Jessica Su explained that the metrics have changed - the rate of people acquiring COVID are climbing. Mike Allard said they are watching surrounding counties as well as Newburyport.

The number of deaths has increased. He explained that the time period between Christmas and New Years is going to be worse.

**Brian Callahan** thanked the presenters and asked the Superintendent if the second series of testing in the schools was going to happen.

**Superintendent Gallagher** spoke of pool testing - surveillance testing. If this works, we can keep schools open. He explained the two tests.

**Brian Callahan** asked if there was a time frame on testing.

Dr. Su spoke of pool testing/surveillance testing - we won't get these until the beginning of the new year.

**Brian Callahan** said this is a Superintendent call, not a School Committee call. The Superintendent has the authority to make the call.

**Sheila Spalding** said it is more difficult to do contact testing.

Dr. Su explained unmanageable contact tracing.

**Mayor Holaday** spoke of the stimulus - we have until the end of the next calendar year to spend this. She explained they have hired 3 additional staff to do contact tracing.

**Sean Reardon** thanked the presenters and asked if they had more meetings before the 4th.

**Superintendent Gallagher** said they will still meet - January 4.

**Sean Reardon** inquired of the Mayor if she saw a bigger strategy getting us back in school.

**Mayor Holaday** said we have done well with hybrid learning - get hybrid model back in place.

**Sean Reardon** asked about winter sports.

**Superintendent Gallagher** said he would look into this.

**David Hochheiser** spoke about closing schools, but everything else is open.

**Superintendent Gallagher** said this is a temporary closure.

**Bruce Menin** spoke about the infection rate 0 - 19 and explained.

Mike Allard spoke re: asymptomatic - people not masked.

**Bruce Menin** asked the Superintendent re: tipping point - where are we relative to the point of not having teachers to teach.

**Superintendent Gallagher** explained - more and more teachers are having to quarantine.

Cathy Riccio showed cases by dates which are escalating. Tipping point - 12/10 - cases jumped.

**Brian Callahan** asked at what point could we go back to the open end remote.

Dr. Su said she sees this as a measure - this will be a very difficult month - close for a bit to stay open longer.

Mike Allard said he echoed that.

**Brian Callahan** said the vaccine is not for people below 16. Dr. Su explained all studies were done for 16 and over.

**Bruce Menin** said this is a School Committee decision - the Superintendent needs our support.

#### **Motion:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To go remote for the first 2 weeks after the holiday.

**Sean Reardon** said he did not feel comfortable taking a vote. He supports the information Dr. Su and Mike Allard have given the Committee.

**David Hochheiser** asked the Superintendent what his recommendation was. He suggested rewording the motion.

**Motion:**

On a motion by **David Hochheiser** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To reword the Motion.

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

**Motion:**

On a motion by **David Hochheiser** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To support **Superintendent Gallagher's** plan to go to Remote Education for everybody, except for high needs populations, and to restart our Hybrid program on January 19, the Tuesday after Martin Luther King Day.

**Brian Callahan** said the community needs to be updated.

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

**REMOTE LEARNING ACADEMY UPDATE & OVERVIEW:**

**Superintendent Gallagher** provided an overview of the Remote Learning Academy, including total number of students and staff per grade, a breakdown of trimester dates, and enrollment correspondence to parents.

**Full remote**

K	- 18 Students
1	- 11
2	- 10
3	- 19
4	- 13
5	- 13
6	- 14
7	- 17
8	- 27

K to 8 - 140

2 elementary teams K - 5

Full Team - working on a daily basis 6 - 8

First Trimester September 16 - December 11

2nd Trimester December 1 - March 19

3rd Trimester March 22 - June 16

Academy starts at 8 AM and ends at 3 PM  
Built as a school within a school

**FUNDRAISING POLICY (KHA) - first reading:**

**David Hochheiser** explained the fundraising policy.

**Mayor Holaday** said we would normally attach the application to the policy so that it's clear that that's the policy to be included on the form itself.

**David Hochheiser** said we could do this for this one.

**Mayor Holiday** suggested someone look at the grammatical framework on this - **Sheila Spalding** volunteered to do this.

**Motion:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To accept the Fundraising Policy (KHA) for a first reading.

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole** absent for vote

**PUBLIC GIFTS TO THE SCHOOLS POLICY (KCD) - first reading:**

**David Hochheiser** explained the Policy. It contains wording that anything over \$5,000 should be brought to the School Committee and anything under that given at the discretion of the Superintendent.

**Bruce Menin** stated the intention is the School Committee would need to approve / that leaves option that the School Committee can accept that - Answer - correct

**Bruce Menin** inquired if this has been run by an attorney - Answer - Yes

**Bruce Menin** questioned money given phrase.

**David Hochheiser** said that language came from MASC and he explained.

**Bruce Menin** said he wants this to be as specific as possible.

**Mayor Holaday** said she had a problem with that - the way it reads.

**David Hochheiser** said he had no problem clarifying this.

**Mayor Holaday** said this could be handled as a separate account and approved by the School Committee - that leaves it a little more flexible.

**Sheila Spalding** said if we could strike that we could end his sentence as handled as a separate account. Just strike and expend it at the discretion of the Committee as provided by law. Strike that and read it as ending after a separate account because the School Committee votes on it.

**Bruce Menin** said that's a good solution.

**Brian Callahan** said if this is from MASC and the lawyer looked at it, it was how you handled a separate account and expanded the direction of the Committee as provided by law. Is there a law that supersedes that?

**Mayor Holaday** said it's talking about how the finance laws work.

**Sheila Spalding** asked is it supposed to be in a separate account.

**Motion:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To accept the Public Gifts to the Schools Policy (KCD) revised policy as amended for a first reading.

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

**CROWD FUNDING POLICY (GBEBD) - first reading:**

**David Hochheiser** explained the policy.

**Motion:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To approve the Crown Funding revised Policy (GBEBD) section G personnel policies site file GBEBD.

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**

**RESPONSE TO LETTER FROM GOVERNOR BAKER:**

**David Hochheiser** explained that this is a follow-up to the MASS and MASC organization's correspondence to the Governor regarding messaging. He asked if everyone has read the drafted response which he had sent to the Committee.

**Bruce Menin** suggested, as everyone has not had the opportunity to read the response, that they hold off on this.

**DISCUSSION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE RETREAT:**

The School Committee Retreat is currently scheduled for 6:30 PM on Tuesday, January 19, 2020.

**Bruce Menin** stated he would like to have Dorothy Presser from MASC come and talk with the Committee about roles and David's request that we look at the Chair and Vice-Chair positions. She is available on January 13 - also having Michelle go over legal issues with us. This would mean changing the date of the retreat. He said he has a tentative draft of the code of ethics.

**David Hochheiser** said it sounds like we're planning on spending a lot of time talking about things that are a result of claims that were found invalid.

**Bruce Menin** said the meeting with Dorothy Presser was postponed twice - it makes sense to have her.

**Sheila Spalding** is this is where we set our goals for the year. Answer - no

**David Hochheiser** said it could be whether or not we're paying attention to the goals that we've written and agreed upon for the year.

**Sean Reardon** said he wouldn't mind revisiting the concept of working meetings. He asked are we going to try to have some of those this year whether they're topic based or just open dialogue meetings on some questions.

**Bruce Menin** asked if Committee members were available on the 13th.

**Sheila Spalding** asked if this was in the evening. Answer - yes

**Sean Reardon** outlined a Joint meeting on the 12th - then meet on the 13th - our regular meeting on the 4th - and would that be the meeting where we vote on the Chair and the Vice-Chair.

**Bruce Menin** said usually this is the first meeting of the year.

**David Hochheiser** asked are we going to meet on the 19th. Answer - Yes

**Bruce Menin** said he will put together a draft and circulate it.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

**Superintendent Gallagher** reported on the following:

- Commissioner Riley's call - Stimulus package
- Vaccinations
- MCAS - standardized testing - may be relief throughout country
- Access testing for our ELS will continue but the window will be all the way to the end of school working with ELS for that testing.
- High School Seniors - May and June if they are in good standing
- New criteria - student learning time - looking at synchronous and asynchronous throughout the commonwealth so all districts had to submit their plans - He stated we're in good standing for our student learning time.

**David Hochheiser** said they had spoken about bringing Michael Eatman to the Retreat in January - is that still possible.

**Mayor Holaday** suggested bringing him to a February meeting as they had a full Retreat meeting already.

**Bruce Menin** said Mr. Eatman could come in one of the next two meetings.

**David Hochheiser** said he felt the discussion that Mr. Eatman would have with them was much more retreat based.

**Mayor Holaday** asked **Bruce Menin** to look at the agenda.

**Sean Reardon** suggested getting dates from Mr. Eatman.

### **SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Joint Ed - Sean Reardon** - They met today. The representative from Whittier was there. They had a discussion on the acts of 1987, the Superintendent's Strategic Plan and the timeline of things going forward.

**Finance** - not met

**Policy - David Hochheiser** - delivered report tonight

**Superintendent's Evaluation** - on back burner for a couple of months

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion:**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To adjourn the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:32 PM

**Motion Passed**

**Steve Cole absent for vote**