

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Monday, March 16, 2020**

**Senior Community Center
Meeting Convened at 6:33 PM**

Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided

Present: Bruce Menin, Mayor Donna Holaday, Sheila Spalding, and Steve Cole

Absent: Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser, 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 6:33 PM. Roll Call found four members present, and three members absent. All those in attendance stood for the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

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

CONSENT AGENDA:

Minutes:

Bruce Menin suggested the 2/25 minutes be held for approval until the next meeting.

Warrants:

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.
\$2,169.18

Motion Passed

Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser and 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.
\$15,409.247

Motion Passed

Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser and 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 the following warrant
\$468,001.47

Motion Passed

Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser and Sean Reardon absent for vote

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mayor Holaday provided the following updates:

- Comprehensive reports and updates can be found on the city website, as well as information from the CDC. This is an unprecedented situation. This is a highly contagious, rapidly spreading virus and we are looking to local and state for direction and guidance.
- Last week, key administrative staff from Anna Jaques and the City met to converse about recommendations and what can be done to protect staff and public.
- Information is slow in coming in. Testing not yet being done, and this is challenging to communities to quarantine and isolate. Best information is *wash your hands for 20 seconds; otherwise, use hand sanitizer.*
- Various actions taken:
 - Passport office in city hall has been shut down.
 - Senior/Community Center shut down; (no programming 8am-4pm, but staff are working & will continue to provide transportation and Meals & Wheels).
 - Youth Services shut down. Staff will be there and are working to identify volunteers in case there is a need for various services (collecting names of volunteers & people who are in need).
 - Public Library was shut down at 5pm on Saturday; staff is still working. The library website also has good information.
 - City Hall will shut down to the public on March 17th. Staff will be working; phone numbers will be posted on the doors.
 - School cafeterias will be cleared out & food brought to Nock/Molin. Grab & Go bags (single & family size) will be available to seniors and families in need on Wednesday from 10am-12pm.
 - Our Neighbors Table will continue to stay open for groceries on Thursdays.
 - Community members should contact the Sr. Center, NYS, schools or even city hall if they are in need of food.
 - Beginning Tuesday, March 17 restaurants will be open for take-out only until after April 6th per the Governor.
- At this time there have not been any confirmed cases in this area. People should call their doctor if they are sick or have a fever – do not go to the doctor's office. Test confirmation comes from the CDC, which reports back to the State and to our Dept. of Health, therefore there is a long delay.
- Social distancing is very important!
- Various types of important information will be posted on the city and school related websites.
- Communication is very important for everybody. The community is encouraged to reach out if they have questions. Needs will be coordinated and meetings will continue to take place.

Bruce Menin asked if the grocery stores will remain open. Answer: Yes, pharmacies & grocery stores.

Superintendent Sean Gallagher provided the following updates:

- Schools were closed on Friday, March 13th to allow administration and staff time to work collaboratively to develop plans and online, grade-level, learning opportunities in case of any long-term closures.
- On March 13th superintendents from twenty-eight North Shore school districts collaborated and signed a press release stating they will close schools for two weeks.
- Communications were sent to all families and staff notifying them about the 2 week closure, as well as online enrichment opportunities for students and information on the importance of social distancing.
- Lists were made to identify students and/or families in need of devices and/or online access. Distribution plans were made. Comcast was contacted to obtain internet service.
- Administration met with all union presidents to address concerns, such as office hours and pay.
- Providing food for all families impacted by the virus will be a priority.
- Academic enrichment opportunities provided to students will not be mandated at this time.
- All buildings were closed March 16th to allow for cleaning.
- All building-level principals will continue to reach out to their families.
- The safety and well-being of everybody is the #1 priority.

Ass't Superintendent Angela Bik commented that Our Neighbor's Table community market will change their pick up location to the Nock next week (Thursday, March 26) so that all food pick up will happen at the same location. If in need of food or any other services, contact the school or city hall.

Sheila Spalding commented that the Special Ed Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC) is willing to offer their assistance wherever they can.

Sheila Spalding asked how parents of students receiving special services are being assisted. Answer: Teachers are checking in with families at this time. Information and guidance is coming in from DESE.

Sheila Spalding asked about students receiving physical therapy or occupational therapy at the school. Answer: All of our service providers in the school will be reaching out to those families.

Bruce Menin asked if all learning enrichment activities are age/grade appropriate. Answer: yes.

Ass't Superintendent Angela Bik commented that WGBH, PBIS and many other online learning platforms have opened their educational services for free.

Steve Cole commented that he liked how the Superintendent said it was about safety first. He complements the state and this community and appreciates Mayor Holaday's leadership.

Mayor Holaday added that programs are starting to be created at the State level to help those that may have been financially impacted by corona virus in their job etc. Information will be posted on the city website as it becomes available.

Bruce Menin encouraged people to check the city website every day to find updated information.

Bruce Menin asked what is happening with the schools district information. Answer: Updates and resources will be provided in a central location on the district's website.

Miscellaneous

- **Bruce Menin** stated the next School Committee meeting will be electronically. Look for more information on the city and/or school website. The remaining agenda items will be picked up at the next School Committee meeting.
- Budget books were given out and will be reviewed. Mayor Holaday stated the Governor mentioned there may be a possibility of filing legislation to extend the deadlines.

Bruce Menin asked where people should call if they have questions. Answer: Mayor's office, Administrative offices, or the Health Department (health or virus questions).

Mayor Holaday mentioned how very important it is to check in on your neighbor's.

Bruce Menin asked if parents should contact principals through the schools. Answer: Contact Cathy Riccio (nurse Leader) for health/safety questions, email principals for individual questions (i.e. online learning), or contact Central Office

Mayor Holaday stated every staff will be paid. Also, it is important to stay home if you are sick; sick time can be used and communicate with your supervisor.

Sheila Spalding thanked for everyone for all they've done.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 7:18PM.

Motion Passed

Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser and Sean Reardon absent for vote