

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Tuesday, April 21, 2020
Video Conference - Online**

Zoom Meeting ID: 727 5862 6777

Meeting Convened at 6:32 PM

Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided

Present: Brian Callahan, David Hochheiser, Bruce Menin, Mayor Donna Holaday, Sheila Spalding, Sean Reardon, 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 6:32 PM. Roll Call found all members present. All those present pledged allegiance to the Flag.

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

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Sharif Zeid He commented on the budget process. He hoped the Committee would pass a budget that meets aspirations.

Afroz Khan He commented on remote learning. He would like a survey as to how it is going.

Matthew Kane He said there was great leadership in our schools. He agreed with Mr. Zeid. He said we should try to get more structure in kids' lives. He implored the mayor not to vote on the budget when it is ready to be passed as he felt it would be a conflict of interest.

Cyndi Doyle She suggested the Committee support a budget to at least 5%, an increase which would support children with the best possible education.

Lynn Scall, 75 High Street She said we need a robust budget. She said she was concerned with E learning.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants:

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.
\$9,071.34

Motion Passed Unanimously

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.
\$80,576.57

Motion Passed Unanimously

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.

\$27,094.18

Motion Passed Unanimously

Minutes:

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee Online Business Meeting minutes of Monday, April 13, 2020

Motion Passed Unanimously

REMOTE LEARNING UPDATE:

Superintendent Sean Gallagher gave a detailed explanation as to what has happened since Online Learning began. He stated we are moving toward Phase 3 of this process and we are in a pretty good place at this time; we have the foundation for longer closure. He then turned the meeting over to the following presenters: Lynne Cote; NHS - Principal Andy Wulf, Tom Abrams, Brandon Sturma; Nock - Principal Lisa Furlong, Mary Kate Allan, and Matt Sortor.

Principal Lisa Furlong explained the Phases of Work. Lynne Cote explained the feedback from students. Tom Abrams spoke of teachers' perspective. Brendon Sturma spoke of making sure students are staying where they are and when we come back in the Fall can we bridge that gap. Mary Kate Allen explained that they gave students a solid schedule and that participation has increased. Matt Sortor spoke of the strength of the Math program.

Principal Andy Wulf said he was appreciative of the Instructional Leadership Team at NHS. He explained what NHS is considering for credit (*not final*): CE - Credit Exceeds, C - Credit, NC - No Credit.

Principal Lisa Furlong spoke of Nock grading. She explained they are planning on using a Pass/Fail grading system. T3 assignments will be tracked in Aspen X2.

Superintendent Gallagher spoke of the Global Health Crisis and how we are dealing with it. He explained they are in a good place and meet regularly. He said he could not say enough about his staff, teachers and the community. We are already ahead of what the Commissioner is thinking.

Bruce Menin opened the meeting at this point to the Committee for questions.

Sheila Spalding asked for more information about students who are struggling. She asked how are we helping these students. Principal Wulf said they are keeping records and reaching out to those students. They have a comprehensive plan in place. Principal Furlong said they have a similar plan in place.

David Hochheiser thanked everyone. He commented on technology in the district and said we should give technology to those who don't have it. He said we are asking if we could expand access to Gmail. He commented on inconsistency and professional development and asked

Assistant Superintendent Bik to speak to this.

Assistant Superintendent Angela Bik explained that professional development will need to be ongoing and needs to be developed to needs. She said feedback around consistency is good.

Sean Reardon said what has happened in our district is wonderful to see. He asked about Summer School - is there going to be one - how can we identify students.

Superintendent Gallagher said guidelines will be provided as to reopening. Summer School - learning gaps: we are reaching out to families and will work with them over the summer. Conversations are happening.

Deb O'Connor commented on students who are struggling - we are discussing all issues and keeping informed. We are meeting with coordinators.

Angela Bik said we are keeping track of students who are not fully participating.

Brandon Sturma said all students are going to have a gap and that they are already thinking of how we can bridge that gap.

Nick Markos said he agreed with Mr. Sturma - look at assessments - 3 month gap - the first few weeks of school will be very informative.

David Hochheiser asked how can we reduce some of that lost time - offer projects, etc.

Nick Markos said they are doing this now.

Mary Kate Allan said present lessons.

Principal Furlong said they are presenting opportunities to make remote connections and other options.

Bruce Menin thanked everyone.

STATE / CITY FISCAL BUDGET OVERVIEW:

Mayor Holaday explained that the budget picture is horrible. She thanked people (over 75 e-mails) for their passion for supporting the work going on. She commented on 3.5% and explained one of the hallmarks of her administration is that increases to the Schools have been over 4% with one over 8%. She said she doesn't know where they are this year as yet. The good news is that we are going to be OK this fiscal year. The absolute last resort would be to do cuts. FY21 Budget Mass. Watchdog said we can anticipate a 4.4 billion loss of revenue. Everything is on the table as to meals tax; don't know re: excise tax or building permits. There will probably be a 12% to 16% loss of state aid. We do have the stabilization account and free cash account. The City Council is looking at the Capital Plan. We are coding all Covid expenses. She spoke of the Cares Act. The State budget will be delayed. We will do a 1 / 12 budget.

Bruce Menin questioned a monthly budget.

Mayor Holaday said what we put in the July budget is what we need.

FY21 SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET UPDATE:

Superintendent Gallagher explained the overall budget process as to what has happened. He commented and explained the following:

Budget Process Update as of 2/25/20

October/November '19 December '19 February 25

Scenario 1 - Regular Budget Process

Scenario 2 - Regular Budget Process

Unanticipated Budget Impact Since Preliminary Budget Presentation 2/25/20

Mass. General Laws C.71B, Section 5

Payment for Special Education Obligations

Scenario 3 Increase in Unanticipated Special Educational Costs

Superintendent Gallagher, upon request, gave an explanation as to what Circuit Breaker is.

Scenario 4 Increase in Unanticipated Special Education Costs

Unanticipated Special Education Costs

Scenario 4 SPED Cost with Late Start
Scenario 5 SPED Costs only NO Additions
Additional Areas COVID 19 Financial Impact
Late Start Financial Support

Brian Callahan asked about whether we are saving any money with the closure. He asked re: refund on Cafeteria Budget. **Superintendent Gallagher** explained about money saved re: closure. Ms. Lysik said re: Cafeteria Refund - yes we get that every year.

FY21 Staff Increases not Including Late Start

Budget Priority Listings

Ongoing Budget Adjustments If No Special Education Relief

Thank You

Brian Callahan asked re: later start. Answer - not in budget. Later Start Finance Support Page - is that related to SPED stuff. Computer Science teacher at NHS.

David Hochheiser commented on the huge increase in SPED costs. Do we move forward?

Bruce Menin said we have extraordinary costs. He asked **Superintendent Gallagher** what happened at Beverly if extraordinary costs were incurred. Deb O'Connor answered that and said that they went to different places to find money.

Mayor Holaday said she was concerned regarding children that are in out of district placement - what is happening with these students. Deb O'Connor said that we are receiving all information and are in touch with parents.

Mayor Holaday commented on transportation costs - we are legally obligated by contract - Salter is working with us on that. Salter is keeping staff on payroll.

David Hochheiser spoke re: SPED costs.

Bruce Menin said if we can't find a way to fund these costs outside budget we will have to fund it inside budget.

Mayor Holaday said that money still has to come out of the School budget. She said we will cover the costs somehow - we have 12 months.

Bruce Menin asked what was the bottom line number we have to divide by 12?

Mayor Holaday said we will do the best we can - put budget together for July - we will keep the information flow coming.

Sean Reardon questioned the budget to the City Council. **Mayor Holaday** said we are following guidelines from the State.

David Hochheiser said we submit the budget to the City Council - they can reject it and send it back. **Mayor Holaday** said we are not doing that this year - we are doing a 1 / 12 budget.

Brian Callahan asked when do we have to submit the budget to the City Council - May 15 - they are suspending that.

David Hochheiser spoke re: compulsory adds.

Bruce Menin said conversations re: late start have already happened.

Superintendent Gallagher said SPED costs might be reduced - we are looking into that. We can go back and look at what we can do with minimal funding.

Bruce Menin said Principal Wulf is going to have to run a schedule.

Discussion ensued re: a 1 / 12 budget.

Mayor Holaday said we should wait on a budget - we may have guidelines by the end of next week.

Bruce Menin said the Superintendent has to go back and figure out what we can do with minimal funding.

David Hochheiser asked what are the dreams and what do they look like.

Sean Reardon we must see what next year looks like - then make long term plans on how to get there.

Bruce Menin asked the Superintendent if he had enough direction from the Committee.

Superintendent Gallagher said we will figure it out.

Bruce Menin wondered if the School Committee should hold off on a Budget Forum for a couple of weeks.

Sean Reardon asked if they should have a forum on the 1 / 12 budget?

Mayor Holaday said they could make a decision on that next week.

Sean Reardon said to please leave things in the budget - it is much easier to pare later than to try to add things back.

2020 - 2021 SCHOOL CALENDAR:

Superintendent Gallagher explained suggestions for Fall - staggered day - hybrid remote learning - all students/faculty/staff wearing masks - social distancing - State says there may be a September 18 possible holiday for the Boston Marathon. We are looking at the calendar and making adjustments as to where we go in the school year.

Bruce Menin asked for his recommendation - vote calendar - vote later if changes are needed as to what comes down from the State.

David Hochheiser said we should vote a calendar that we want - vote changes later if needed.

Sean Reardon asked the Superintendent if Commissioner Riley has spoken regarding summer programs, etc.

Angela Bik said the CARE Act will come into play.

Sean Reardon commented on the Calendar - long weekends - Professional Development days.

Superintendent Gallagher said he could put together another calendar.

David Hochheiser spoke of absences - early release days - people take long weekends - breaking up weeks is not a good thing for teaching and learning.

Bruce Menin asked the Committee if they were asking the Superintendent to put together another calendar?

David Hochheiser spoke re: data gathering.

Superintendent Gallagher said whatever direction the Committee wanted him to go he will do.

Bruce Menin said take information into play re: additional calendar information.

Superintendent Gallagher said for April 28 re: calendar - what did the Committee want him to bring forth.

David Hochheiser said they could talk about this next week.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT ANGELA BIK'S REPORT:

Postponed until next week.

SUPERINTENDENT SEAN GALLAGHER'S REPORT:

Superintendent Gallagher updated the Committee on the following:

- Food Distribution - 100 families took advantage - they will do this again Thursday.
- Somalian Sister City - students still continuing to Skype - talking about the COVID virus.

Bruce Menin commented that Newburyport High School has been listed as 48 out of 348 best in the State.

SUB COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joint Education

Sean Reardon said they met and discussed the budget, remote learning, Statement of Interest for the High School.

ADJOURNMENT:

On a motion by **Sean Reardon** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

VOTED: To adjourn the Online School Committee Business Meeting at 9:55 PM.
Motion Passed Unanimously