

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING

Senior/Community Center, Newburyport, MA 01950

Monday, December 4, 2023

Present: Mayor Sean Reardon, Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker, Bruce Menin, Brian Callahan, Steve Cole and Breanna Higgins.

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Sean Reardon called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:30 PM. Roll call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. At this point in the meeting, Sarah Hall took over.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ralph Orlando, 4 William Hall Drive: Would like to express his sincere thanks and appreciation to Bruce Menin and Steve Cole for the many valuable contributions they have made over the past 20 years while serving on the School Committee. In addition, he feels public comments are no longer welcomed like they were in the past.

Dave Hochheiser, 2 Forrester Street: Thanked Bruce Menin and Steve Cole for their time serving on the School Committee. He feels the draft letter to Whittier should be strengthened. A vote on the Whittier project in January would be irresponsible, and more information is needed.

Constance Preston, 18 Atwood Street: Commended Bruce Menin and Steve Cole for serving on the School Committee; She has not heard any support so far for the Whittier project and the community feels they are being bullied to pay an unfair amount. She would like more information to help the community understand the cost of the proposed project, as well as costs to city if the vote doesn't pass.

Stacey MacMillan, 16 Highland Street: Thanked both Bruce Menin and Steve Cole for their years serving the School Committee. She echoes the feelings about Whittier and feels there is no information to help people understand. There needs to be an engaged process and more information so people can be informed voters.

Andrea Weetman: 183 High Street: Thanked Bruce Menin and Steve Cole for serving the School Committee. It is hard to become educated on the project and the amount of money doesn't make sense for Newburyport. There is a lack of transparency and communication. She is also concerned about a January vote, and feels most people do not know anything about the Whittier project.

STUDENT & STAFF RECOGNITIONS

Student and staff members of the Bresnahan Green Team were recognized for their hard work and commitment to composting and recycling at the Bresnahan School: Harper Dugan, Juliet Swift, Penelope Misa, Casey Conley, Landon Scrupps, Kennedy Bligh, Morgan Rabeau, Hadley Coffin, Teddy Quinn, Keegan LeBlanc, Piper Yuhasz, Lucas Knapp, Sarah Burola, Holly Curtis, Kelly Garbarino, Katara Harding, Whitney Hussein, Kerrie LaBroad, Kaitlyn Nickerson, and Suzanne Simon

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following Warrant:

Warrant 8105	\$316,740.72
Warrant 8106	1,224.52
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 6,719.50</u>
	\$324,684.74 Total

Motion Passed

Minutes

Motion:

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Mayor Reardon it was

VOTED: to accept the minutes of the November 20, 2023 School Committee Business meeting as presented.

Motion Passed

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

NHS student, Elizabeth Holmes, provided the student report that included the Scholastic Book Fair at the Bresnahan, upcoming winter concerts (Molin & NHS) and Kindness Month at the Nock (attached).

WHITTIER REGIONAL'S REP UPDATE

- Mayor Sean Reardon introduced Brett Murphy and Donna Holaday, Newburyport's representatives on the Whittier Regional School Committee. They answered many questions and shared details about the proposed Whittier building project.
- The next Whittier School Committee meeting will be held on December 13th; they will vote to decide if a special election should be held in January.
- The "Mayor's Office" section of Newburyport's website provides information regarding the proposed Whittier building project (see tab on the left hand side). Whittier's website also has a link to the building project information.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN REVIEW

- Superintendent Sean Gallagher provided a brief overview of the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). He reviewed a list of in-process / completed projects and their funding sources, as well as explained a list of FY24 district priorities.
- Steve Bergholm will provide a capital improvement plan update in February, as well as submit an application to MSBA that will include school roof repairs.
- Juliet Walker encouraged that "classroom space needs" be included in the budget "asks" while it is the budget season.

HIRING PROCESS UPDATE – DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES POSITION

Pam Kealey, HR Director, provided the following update:

- The district partnered with NESDEC to run the search and is following their process.
- The job has been posted on School Spring, as well as sent out through a variety of NESDEC's resources. Applications will be accepted until December 9th, when the posting will close.
- On November 15th three in-person focus groups for key stake holders were held, and were attended by 10-12 parents, 6 administrators, and 6-8 teachers (predominately Special Education).
- 126 responses were received for a survey that was run from November 9 thru November 22. NESDEC commented that this was a very strong response. Breakdown: 52% from parents; 31% from educators, and 17% "other" (i.e. OT, students, related service providers etc.)
- A candidate profile was created by NESDEC utilizing all the feedback from both the focus groups and survey responses.
- NESDEC supplied the process to create a screening committee that will include parents, community members, educators, and administrators.
- A public meeting will be held on December 5 at the Nock from 3-4PM with the NESDEC consultant, Dr. Michael Palladino, to explain the search process thus far, including establishing a screening committee. An Executive Session will be held at 4PM with the participants that were invited to be on the screening committee to discuss their role and responsibilities. Screening committee members and their qualifications will be publicly presented once they've committed to participate.
- Juliet Walker asked if the public meeting on December 5th can be recorded. Pam Kealey will provide a Zoom link.
- Breanna Higgins encourages that a school committee member and SEPAC member be included in the screening committee. Pam Kealey said there would be representation.

DRAFT COMMUNICATION TO WHITTIER REGIONAL VOTECH

Brian Callahan presented a draft communication to Whittier Regional's School Committee requesting a performance audit and a postponement of the January 23rd vote related to the proposed building project. The School Committee members discussed whether or not this type of communication should be sent from themselves or by the Mayor / City Council.

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to empower Vice Chair Sarah Hall to act on behalf of the School Committee in supporting a communication to the Whittier VOTECH that will be decided in conjunction with the Mayor and the City Council on Monday.

Motion Passed

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

- Brian Callahan said the next meeting will be held on Thursday (December 14).

Policy Subcommittee

- Juliet Walker stated they have a meeting on Wednesday (December 6) to review policy sections K & L.

Fundraising Advisory Committee

- Brian Callahan reported they met on November 27. They interviewed the Booster's representative Alex Coir regarding the group's fundraising processes, including scholarships and the Snack Shack.
- Brian suggested a policy may be needed that states only the All Sports Boosters can have use of the Snack Shack for selling food etc at the games.
- Bruce asked if the Boosters were registered as a non-profit. Answer = no;
- Next meeting will be held at 4:30PM on December 18 with the PTO.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Trade Programs Dual Enrollment: 110 high school students in grades 9-12 participated in dual enrollment last year. The Superintendent would like to pilot dual enrollment for the trade programs in 2025 with the Peterson School. This would provide an opportunity for upperclassmen to learn a trade. He provided an overview of the programs vision and goals, as well as what the program would look like (i.e. courses, assessments, costs). Breanna Higgins suggested also looking into the state's After Dark Program.
- Superintendent's Advisory Council meeting: The council has twenty members. Their recent meeting consisted of a budget workshop and an overview of dual enrollment for trade programs.

NEW BUSINESS

- The School Committee retreat will be held on Saturday, January 6 from 10AM – 3PM in the Nock Library.
- CISL will be added to the Subcommittee Updates section of the business meeting agenda.
- The Superintendent distributed the PTO's financial report.
- Mayor Reardon stated that new school committee members will be sworn in on Tuesday, January 2 in the City Council Chambers.
- School Committee members should contact Mayor Reardon if they have an interest in a specific subcommittee.
- Juliet Walker suggested a future discussion about creating a communications subcommittee. Sarah Hall will add that to the Retreat agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 9:15 PM.

Motion Passed

12/4 School Committee Student Report

Bresnahan:

Before the Thanksgiving break, 2nd graders created their own Macy's Day Parade! After reading the book *Balloons Over Broadway*, students created their own "balloons" and were able to show them off to our younger students! We already can't wait for next year's parade!

Bresnahan students are participating in a Food Drive organized by NHS student Logan MacKnight. We are excited for the opportunity to give back to our community.

Across the school, we are working hard on Iready Math! If you were to walk into a first grade classroom last week, students were adding and subtracting number partners for 10. They worked in small groups to demonstrate the relationship between addition and subtraction to determine the unknown whole number in an addition or subtraction equation. They could explain how to use visual models (10-frames, and number bonds) to find missing number partners for 10 and describe how to record number partners for 10 in a number bond and use it to write up to four related addition and subtraction equations. Great work first graders, and props to the grade 1 teachers as well!

Mr. RM will lead a sing along downtown on Invitation Night on Friday December 8th at 5:15 in front of the big tree. All Bresnahan families are invited to attend!

Our 3rd graders have been talking about what it means to have gratitude and what they are grateful and thankful for. In this (amazing) video they cover the song "Thankful" by Juicebox Jukebox. We were blown away by this video and can't wait for you to experience it. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ToveWC-Oig>

Hour of Code

Next week all students will be participating in the world wide event the Hour of Code for Computer Science Education Week December 4-10. This week in STEM students in grades 1-3 will be learning what code/computer programming is and get instructions on how they will be participating in the event. Next week K students will be coding with the BeeBots and students in grades 1-3 will be using the online resource [Hourofcode.org](https://hourofcode.com/us/learn) to practice computer programming. I wanted to share the online activity resource if anyone wanted to use it in class: <https://hourofcode.com/us/learn>

Each student will receive a certificate for participating in this global event.

Finally, we have our Scholastic Book Fair this week! This is an exciting literacy event for our school and is a great fundraiser for the school library! Classes will have the

opportunity to visit during the school day and parents are invited to shop during one of our after-school and Saturday opportunities:

Monday, 12/4	Tuesday, 12/5	Wednesday, 12/6	Thursday, 12/7	Friday, 12/8	Saturday, 12/9
3:15-4:30 pm Parent/family shopping opportunity <i>*Please wait until the buses depart before entering the building.*</i>	3:15-4:30 pm Parent/family shopping opportunity <i>*Please wait until the buses depart before entering the building.*</i>	4:00-6:00 pm Parent/family shopping opportunity	4:30-5:30 pm Parent/family shopping opportunity	Early Release@ 11:40 12:00-1:00 Parent/family shopping opportunity <i>*Please wait until the buses depart before entering the building.*</i> *	9:00a.m.-11:00 p.m. Parent/family shopping opportunity

Molin:

The Molin Winter Concert is December 13th at 6pm in the Molin-Nock auditorium. We are excited as this is the first time that ALL students have music year-round! We will hear from the general music classes, the Molin singers, and the beginning band and orchestra students.

We hope the Molin Community will take a moment to watch the Molin School “We are Grateful” video sent out by Principal Rossi on Wednesday, November 29th. Thank you to Maggie Flaherty and Siobhan Green, Molin School Adjustment Counselors, for putting the video together! Link: <https://youtu.be/5yMZVOnJZgg>

Nock:

Congratulations to the Nock Music Department for the amazing Fall Recital. There were over 35 musical performances from middle school students ranging from solos to a sibling duet and even Nock faculty members performing with their students. It was arguably one of the best recitals we have had at the Nock.

In the Nock’s continued work to the vision of the Portrait of a Graduate, creating civically engaged students and increasing student voice the Nock has kicked off their kindness

month. Student Leaders have taken the lead in creating awareness around noticing acts of kindness from their classmates, faculty and staff. Throughout the month, student leaders are taking the role in writing notes to their classmates and inspiring others to also deliver an act of kindness as their thank-you. As we know, one act of kindness can change the world.

The second round of student led conversations is happening on Wednesday, December 6th. Students have worked diligently with their advisors in creating their story around academic data, behind the scenes data and most importantly the conversation.

High School:

NOVEMBER - CLIPPERS OF THE MONTH

The following students have been recognized as Clippers of the Month.

Accomplishments for these students range from embracing learning and demonstrating growth in the classroom as well as collaborating and persevering through difficult tasks in and out of the classroom.

Richie Rocco
Jose Velasquez Perez
Michelle Kilroy
Cedar Schumacher (selected twice)
Liam Fernlund
Olivia Wilson
Nora Geerlings
Tatsu Davis
Elizabeth Homer
Abby Kelly
Jack Sullivan
Josie Palma
Michael Mohoric

There is a lot happening in the world of visual and performing arts.

This past weekend the National Art Honor Society hosted their annual auction at the Senior Center on Saturday from 6 to 9:00 PM. This was a fabulous night of art, prizes, music, and hors d'oeuvres. It was a great way to see artwork produced by our students and the community.

Our music program will be on full display on Tuesday, December 12 starting at 7:00 PM. The winter concert showcases our band, orchestra, and chorus. It is a great way to get into the holiday spirit.

Last Thursday, students participated in their November advisory session.

- In grade 9, the peer mentors ran an activity with their freshmen peers around managing relationships and building connections with peers and adults.
- In grades 10 and 11 students had the opportunity to participate in a college tour activity as well as explore non-college options for after high school. This is all part of helping students develop a flexible post-secondary plan.
- In grades 12, students participated in the Get Smart About Credit presentation with the Institution for Savings. On behalf of the students, we are very appreciative of the work the Institution of Savings takes on to help students understand how to be smart about money.

Last week officers who are part of the Investment Club updated a team of advisors on their thinking around their investment portfolio. The club consists of over 50 students who learn the research involved in making investment decisions through participating in the national stock market game alongside preparing a portfolio with money allotted from the NEF. Last week's presenters included Stephen D'Ambrosio, Matt Hurley, Matt MacDougall, and Nolan Smith. They received valuable feedback from the advisory team and exhibited a strong understanding of the language associated with finance and investment. On behalf of the club and school, we want to thank the NEF for making this experience a reality along with all the members of the community who have taken time to offer feedback to the club on their portfolio.

Before the Thanksgiving Break, we had one of our most-spirited Color Day Rallies in recent memory. Thank you to both Mayor Reardon and Supt. Gallagher for adding to the spirit.