

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
Monday, June 3, 2024

Present: Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker, Brian Callahan, Breanna Higgins, Mayor Sean Reardon
and Kathleen Shaw

Absent: Andrew Boger

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Sarah Hall called the School Committee Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:29 PM. Roll call found all members present, except Andrew Boger. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Amanda Zeller – 6A Noble Street – Performing Arts

Art Currier – 12 Partridge Street, Salisbury - Sustainability

STAFF RETIREMENT RECOGNITIONS

The following NHS retiring staff members were recognized by Superintendent Gallagher. Present were Mary Ahern, 37 years, Steve Bergholm, 22 years, Peter Hill, 24 years, Mary Lucci, 17 years, Aileen Maconi, 21 years and Pam Standley-Jamison, 27 years. Also recognized but unable to attend were Lisa Alexander, 19 years, Eriko Antos, 20 years, Beth Blynn, 30 years, Cynthia Klein, 25 years, Maureen Lyons-Taylor, 19 years and Susan Seabrook, 11 years.

NEW HIRE INTRODUCTIONS

Superintendent Gallagher gave a brief summary of the restructuring of the Special Education Department and introduced four current staff members who are assuming new roles as follows: Elise Comeau, Special Education Program Supervisor/Academic and Jeanna Guardino, Special Education Program Supervisor/Social Emotional Learning. Jessica Burke will assume the role of Team Facilitator for Molin and Nock and Amanda Drugan will be the new Team Facilitator for Newburyport High School.

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

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

Warrant 8118	\$398,870.25
Warrant 8118A	\$233,262.35
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 22,143.32</u>
	\$654,275.92 Total

Motion Passed

Absent: Andrew Boger

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

NHS student, Elizabeth Homer, provided the student report that included news about the Bresnahan's STEM Expo, an appearance by Spot the robot dog and the gratitude garland event, as well as Molin's STEM Fair and the 5th grade spelling bee. The Nock track team results and student showcase, and the high school's SAILBOT competition were also discussed. (report attached).

GOPEN FELLOWSHIP PROJECT PRESENTATION

Sophie Korpics, who serves as the Co-Chair for the Newburyport Commission on Disabilities, presented via Zoom her research project that she has been working on for the past year. Her project is titled "Understanding Assistive Technology: Barriers to Access and How to Improve".

SUSTAINABILITY IN NEWBURYPORT SCHOOLS PRESENTATION

A slide presentation and discussion was facilitated by teachers Jen Groskin and Katara Harding and Nock students Sadie Aiello and Cameron Grelle.

RECOMMENDATION TO HIRE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Superintendent Sean Gallagher spoke about the selection process. Starting with 40 applicants, three external and one internal candidate were selected to be interviewed. Lisa Furlong was the top selection of both rounds of interviews. Superintendent Gallagher spoke about Lisa's background and experience in education and made his recommendation for Lisa for the position.

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to approve the appointment of Lisa Furlong.

Motion Passed

Absent: Andrew Boger

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

- Brian Callahan reported no new updates.

Policy Subcommittee

- Brief discussion on the changes to Policies EFD and FF. Follow up items for the sub-committee – have not voted on the naming list. School Committee has asked the NEF for more parameters on how they make their decisions.

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Breanna Higgins it was

VOTED: to approve the changes to policy EFD.

Motion Passed

Absent: Andrew Boger

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve the changes to policy FF.

Motion Passed

Absent: Andrew Boger

CISL

Superintendent Gallagher is meeting on 6/18 with CISL & the Superintendent's Advisory Council, and noted it would be great to bring both committees together.

Communications

Juliet Walker invited City Counselor Ed Cameron to discuss communication between the two councils and how they can find other ways for regular communication. Sara Hall stated that Ed, as Chair of the General Government Committee, is looking to have three joint general meetings during the year to have more councilors involved prior to meeting with the Finance Committee.

Fundraising Advisory Committee

- Brian Callahan stated fundraising advisory concern – funding for sports related to families, Boosters, NEF and Athletics department. Several meetings were held with entities and hope to have recommendation to current practice.
- Juliet Walker noted that Brian Callahan was a great facilitator. Report summarized what was covered in individual meetings on how each group fundraises. Activities are consistent, not 501 3C but recommends they are. Newburyport PTO is a very organized and their organization is a 501 3C.
- Discussion about “Teacher Wish Lists” – PTO manages but does not contribute financially. Sub-committee feels more clarification is needed. NEF provides lots of information on their website.
- Athletic program – concerns about fees and fundraising. Number of policy recommendations coming regarding direct solicitations to parents, direct student fundraising, more regular auditing of student activity accounts.
- NEF naming opportunities – will send guidance to NEF
- PTO being clear how events are communicated to parents and families.
- Athlete/Parent Handbook – policies should be included in this handbook.
- Fundraising for Uniforms – discussions with Athletic Director. Inequity with uniforms – baseball vs. football vs. track. Athletic Director acknowledged inequity.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Superintendent Gallagher reported a great senior week with the senior walk through the Bresnahan, Molin and Nock, as well as the car parade. He expressed his thanks to the NEF for class photo given to every graduate. The Pride Parade was a wonderful event for our school community. Education Vital Sign survey will be sent this week to students in grades 8 through 11 and their parents to determine qualitative and quantitative data to understand areas of excelling and needs improvement.

NEW BUSINESS

- Sarah Hall said she is looking to move the School Committee retreat from 8/5 to 8/19, but keep 8/5 as a business meeting. She will follow up with Joanne Yelle about the change.
- The City Council is meeting on 6/4 from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on the School budget.
- Breanna Higgins stated that she spoke with Superintendent Gallagher previously about the use of technology in our schools; she felt this is a downside especially for younger students. She asked Superintendent Gallagher to look at the scheduled times students have screen time as well as noting cell phones in Molin and Nock, more studies of impact on mental health, distractions in class, hallway. Brian Callahan noted that a few years back the committee made a policy not to have a policy and let the Principals have that discretion. Superintendent Gallagher said he would address this at the next Principal's meeting. Juliet Walker stated that the student body, as well as parents, need to be engaged in these discussions.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

VOTED: to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible litigation and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in open session.
(8:50 PM)

Motion Passed

Absent: Andrew Boger

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Sean Reardon	yes
Sarah Hall	yes
Andrew Boger	absent
Brian Callahan	yes
Breanna Higgins	yes
Kathleen Shaw	yes
Juliet Walker	yes

Submitted by: Lizzy Homer

Location – Senior Center

Bresnahan News:

STEM Expo -

Last week, the Bresnahan hosted the annual STEM Expo. We had 16 vendors from community members (including Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard, Code and Circuit, Microsoft, and many more!) and Spot the Robot Dog from Boston Dynamics made an appearance. It was a wonderful day of exploration, and most importantly, our students saw other adults (besides their teachers and parents) who cared about them and encouraged them to ask questions and think outside the box. A huge THANK YOU to Stem teacher Kristin Spinney for helping coordinate such a wonderful event.

Bresnahan Gratitude Garland -

On Friday, all 620 Bresnahan students assembled our second annual Gratitude Garland - and it almost wrapped around the entire school!

For the past several weeks, students have made links on the garland with handwritten notes expressing gratitude. This is a fantastic social emotional teaching opportunity for us all to realize the power we have to change our thoughts, which then impacts how we feel, which then impacts the choices we make and how we behave. It's a great tool to help get kids in a good heart and head space for learning.

With the help of parent Scott Ripley, we were able to capture this fun event with drone footage over the Bresnahan. If you have a moment, [please check out this video](#) of our special morning together.

Molin News:

The Molin stem fair is Friday, June 7 on the early release day. The Molin fifth grade spelling bee is this Thursday, June 6.

Our fifth grade students wrote books to read to the third graders at the Bresnahan.

Nock News:

Congratulations to our Track Team. We had two FIRST place finishers! Our Boys team finished 4th overall out of 32 teams. Our Girls were 16th out of 34 teams.

Medalists: Tyler Lisauskas won the high jump and was third in the 100 meter hurdles. Jackson Webber won the javelin. Judah Pilz finished 5th in the long jump. Noreen Fadil finished 7th in the 800 meters. Gabriella DePena placed 5th in the shot put. Margaux Dupuis finished 5th in the 100 meter hurdles. McKenna Felts finished 7th in the 400 meters. Our girls 4x400 team of Cameron Todd, Margaux Dupuis, McKenna Felts and Quinnlan Fenn. Congratulations on a great year and big shout out to Coach Webber, Coach LaRosa, Coach Roper and Coach Brosnan.

The Nock Student Showcase is scheduled for Thursday. Students are excited to present their achievements this year. Our 8th grade students will be presenting on a handful of powerful middle school learning experiences that they have had over the years at the Nock and tie one of those learning experiences to one of our the Portrait of a Graduate's Competencies.

NHS News:

We are hosting the SAILBOT Competition, led by Sarah Leadbeater, this week on Lake Attitash in Amesbury.

Last week our Ignite Peer Mentors ran activities for our incoming 9th graders at the Nock Middle School. These activities provided a space for 8th graders to ask questions about high school while also learning from the insight of their older peers.

Tomorrow our students will participate in the End of Year Awards Ceremony. This ceremony recognizes students' hard work across our curriculum. Additionally, the Junior Book Awards are acknowledged and the Student Council President, Tyler Chorebanian and Vice-President, Gregory D'Ambrosio, facilitate the ceremony.

Student poets Aibhne Martino, Calli Taffel, and Lucius Nelson performed at the Annual Youth At Risk Conference on May 22.