

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
Tuesday, September 5, 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 meeting, Sarah Hall took over.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Marcus Fish, 5 Atkinson Street: Mr. Fish thanked the School Committee for their work with the Strategic Plan, as well as Steve Cole and Bruce Menin for their years of service. He would like to see more transparency in showing the progress being made with the strategic plan, and have the information available in timely fashion.

A new Public Comment Sign In Form will be used at School Committee meetings. The top of the form will contain the following text: (1) Please keep to topics within the school committee's scope of authority. (2) We encourage civility - Be mindful of the fact that this is a public meeting, which is being live-streamed and recorded for all ages in our community. (3) Please be aware that this is not an opportunity for discussion and you will not receive a response at this time. You will have two minutes for your comment. Longer comments can be sent to the school committee via email sc@newburyport.k12.ma.us.

NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

Building principals from the Bresnahan, Molin, Nock and High School introduced new employees.

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants:

Motion:

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Bruce Menin it was

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

Warrant 8096	\$298,984.10
Warrant 8095	\$ 60,632.45
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 9,532.96</u>
	\$369,149.51 Total

Motion Passed

Minutes:

Motion:

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Steve Cole it was

VOTED: to adopt the minutes of the August 21, 2023 School Committee Business meeting.

Motion Passed

Sarah Hall abstained

MIDDLE SCHOOL OVERNIGHT FIELD TRIP 2024

- Nock Middle School Principal Nick Markos presented a brief summary of a proposed 3-day overnight field trip to Philadelphia and Ellis Island to occur May 21-23, 2024 and is seeking the School Committee's approval to schedule the trip.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve the trip as proposed, referencing Policy JJH - Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Juliet Walker proposed the motion be amended to include a reference to Policy JJH - Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Bruce Menin it was

VOTED: to move into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible contract negotiations and/or legal matters, and will reconvene in Open Session.

Motion Passed

Roll Call Vote

Mayor Sean Reardon = yes

Sarah Hall = yes

Brian Callahan = yes

Steve Cole = yes

Bruce Menin = yes

Breanna Higgins = yes

Juliet Walker = yes

TIME: 6:48 PM

Committee returned to Regular Session at 7:16 PM.

SUPERINTENDENT'S 2022-2023 EVALUATION

- Bruce Menin described the evaluation process, including the four main standards, 25 indicators, three rankings (exemplary, proficient or needs improvement) and a possible 175 ratings.
- Based on the results, Bruce Menin reported the Superintendent is performing at a very high level, and the School Committee is greatly satisfied with his performance. This was a very strong evaluation, with 97.5% of the responses being Exemplary or Proficient.
- Bruce stated this was a very thorough evaluation by this School Committee, with an extraordinary response of 174 to 175 possible ratings.
- The 2022-2023 evaluation will be posted to the district's website.

SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT / COMPENSATION

- Based on the strength of the evaluation, as well as to be competitive, Sarah Hall moved to increase the Superintendent's salary. Bruce Menin moved to lengthen his contract.

Motion:

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Bruce Menin it was

VOTED: to increase the Superintendent's salary by 3%, retroactive to July 1, 2023.

Motion Passed

Motion:

On a motion by Bruce Menin and seconded by Steve Cole it was

VOTED: to add another year to the Superintendent's contract to carry through 2027.

Motion Passed

SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOALS – 1st DRAFT

- The SMART Goal worksheet and first draft of the School Committee SMART Goals for 2023-2024 was reviewed and discussed:
 - Budget workshops should be school specific, assigning one or two SC members to each workshop. Using a survey was suggested.
 - To improve SC communications, Sarah Hall will send a newsletter to families 2x per month. An email will be sent the day after a school committee packet is published. The pilot period will be October through December and be reassessed at the retreat in January 2024.
 - Juliet Walker confirmed the Policy audit could be completed by June 2024.
 - Modify the wording of the Special Education goal to read, "*.. meet the needs of all students.*"

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

- Brian Callahan stated the next meeting will be held on September 14th.
- Copies of recently approved fundraising forms will be brought to the next meeting for review by the committee

- Fundraising policies will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Policy Subcommittee

- The next meeting will be held on September 11th and will include a review of policies in Chapter “I”. The next meeting with Dorothy Presser will be held on October 30th.
- Juliet Walker stated the next group of revised policies (Chapters D through H) will be ready for a first reading at the September 18th meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

- Superintendent Sean Gallagher reviewed a bulleted list of strategic plan accomplishments in 2022-2023. Juliet Walker suggested the title be modified to include “Strategic Plan”. This list will be included in the Superintendent’s next newsletter.
- A district hiring update was provided. The Superintendent also spoke of his recent meeting with NEASC regarding the district’s upcoming search for the next Special Education Director. He will provide a more comprehensive plan for the Special Education Director hiring process in the September 18th SC meeting packet.
 - * Breanna Higgins would like the upcoming Special Education update to include information on focus groups with special education parents, as well as trends on what parents are looking for.
 - * In addition, Breanna suggested it would be very helpful to parents to have a comprehensive presentation in the Fall that covers all special education services, including the language & strategy based programs, how teachers are trained, what is inclusion, and which students are included in general education classes etc.
- The opening day assembly for staff was held on September 5th. Both Bruce Menin and Steve Cole were recognized for their years of service. The keynote speaker, Rick Wormeli, was very well received. The Superintendent thanked various staff, NHS band, musicians, and student athletes for participating in Opening Day activities.
- Forty-four new students accepted into School Choice for 2023-2024 are expected to complete the enrollment process. Ten international students will be at the high school this year.
- The Superintendent reported that 110 students participated in dual enrollment during 2022-2023, including 25 seniors graduating with transferable credit and 1 senior receiving an Associate’s degree from Northern Essex Community College.

NEW BUSINESS

- The Superintendent will reach out to Whittier Regional’s Superintendent regarding the opening for a Newburyport School Committee representative. An update will be provided at the next School Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee

at 8:03 PM.

Motion Passed