

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

Tuesday, January 21, 2025

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

CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

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, Juliet Walker took over.

Public Comments: none

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants / Minutes

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda which includes the Warrant and the minutes from the January 6, 2025 School Committee meeting.

Warrant 8140	\$825,570.21
--------------	--------------

Motion Passed

Student Representative Report

Logan MacKnight presented the student report that included mid-year assessments at the Bresnahan, Molin field trips, the Career Speaker Series at the Nock, and the announcement of this year's Portrait of a Graduate ambassadors.

Athletic Director Hiring Process Update

Human Resources Director Pam Kealey described the various steps of the hiring process that she and Principal Wulf have followed, including providing names of members, describing roles of the screening committee, explaining the interview process, and the set up / participants of the community interview forum. Of 20 applicants, four finalists were announced: Aaron Abood of Winnacunnet, Anna DeVitto of Fontbonne Academy, Richie Pace of NHS, and Steven Burndett of Wilbraham. They hope to complete the process by the end of January.

MSBA Accelerated Repair Program Update

Facilities Director James McSweeney reviewed the next steps in the accelerated repair program involving the roofs at the High School and Nock Middle School. He stated two virtual meetings will be held prior to site visits at all four schools at the end of February. James is in the process of collecting data to complete MSBA's spreadsheets that will be needed for the school survey and site visits.

Playful Learning Grant

Superintendent Sean Gallagher announced that DESE has awarded the district with \$175K for the Playful Learning Grant. Assistant Superintendent Lisa Furlong explained this is an 18-month grant that focuses on incorporating more playful learning opportunities for grades PK thru Gr 3. Bresnahan teachers will participate in professional development workshops and also work with coaches to develop curriculum.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Brian Callahan reported the January 16th meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. He did meet with the Superintendent and James Antonelli regarding athletic fees and would like to see this topic on the next meeting agenda.

Policy Subcommittee: have not met

Communications Subcommittee

Sarah Hall stated they will meet at 6:30PM on January 23rd in the Nock library.

Teaching & Learning Subcommittee

Breanna Higgins stated they will meet at 6:30PM on January 27th in the Nock library.

Evaluation Subcommittee: have not met

Superintendent's Report

Cell Phone Use in Schools: Superintendent Sean Gallagher credited the high school with all the work they've done related to cell phone use, including student dialogues, assemblies and messaging. Principal Andy Wulf will provide a presentation at the next school committee meeting. Both staff and students at the Bresnahan, Molin and Nock continue collaborative efforts to maintain their "away for the day" policies.

Contract Negotiations Status: The negotiations process has begun for all three unions (NTA, IA and AFSCME). They are using an Interest Based Bargaining (IBB) technique. The Superintendent thanked the team members and school committee members for their support during these meetings. (Note: Two date corrections: Next NTA Negotiations meeting will be January 29th, and the next IA Negotiations meeting will be January 27th).

NHS Media Lab Update: Superintendent Gallagher thanked Facilities Director James McSweeney for his work on this project. He stated that James will serve as the General Contractor for the project, which will help expedite the project by a few weeks. The final design plans have been made, and they are working on technology equipment lists. James will speak with the high school's career counselor regarding Breanna Higgins' suggestion of NHS construction or engineering students possibly shadowing during this construction project.

Follow-up

Hybrid Meetings: A hybrid meeting option will be offered for the next meeting. Brian Callahan has the new equipment. Juliet Walker can help run a test with Superintendent Gallagher before the next meeting.

School Committee Retreat Notes: Juliet Walker explained the two sets of notes from the recent retreat. She asked everyone to review the School Committee Interim Goals on page 3.

New Business

- Brian Callahan attended the Budget & Finance Committee meeting and they voted for the water heater, 11-0.
- Superintendent Gallagher noted that the Human Rights Commission will hold a Holocaust Remembrance Day event in the Nock auditorium on January 22nd at 6:30PM.
- School Committee members will perform in the Community Talent show Saturday night (1/25).
- Kathleen Shaw reminded everyone to look at supports available in schools, as well as continue to support students and/or staff regarding gender identity.

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 7:31PM.

Motion Passed

Student Report for School Committee

January 21, 2025

Submitted by: Logan MacKnight

Location: Senior Center

Bresnahan News:

Mid-Year Assessment

Our students are diligently working on their mid-year DIBELS and iReady assessments in math and literacy. These assessments provide valuable, up-to-date data that enable our teachers to personalize instruction effectively and empower our interventionists to initiate a new cycle of targeted support.

Preschool & Kindergarten Information Night

Join us on **Thursday, January 30th**, for our Preschool and Kindergarten Information Night!

- **Preschool Session:** 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
- **Kindergarten Session:** 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Families are invited to begin the evening with a classroom tour, followed by a brief informational session in the gym.

All registration details have been updated on our website. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank you Aiya Al Khatib

Thanks to the efforts of Aiya Al Khatib, NHS student, and her family, the Bresnahan NEF Book Vending Machine is full of new books for the new year! Aiya's book drive was incredibly successful and we appreciate the support of our wonderful community. Students at the Bresnahan earn a token to the NEF Book Vending Machine when they meet personal literacy learning goals. At this time, 300 Bresnahan Students have received a book!

Molin News:

Molin:

5th grade is going on a field trip to the Museum of Science as part of their study of the planets.

4th grade is going on a field trip to the Tsongas Industrial History Center to learn about the impact of human migration on culture and community over time.

Nock News:

Nock Career Speaker Series continues to be successful with our 3rd round of speakers on tap for this Thursday.

The Nock will be having a spirit week next week for students to have a little fun during the winter months-

Tech and Stage crew sign ups have begun for the Spring Musical production of Newsies.

High School News:

The following students served as this year's Portrait of a Graduate ambassadors during the Staff Development Day. These students presented their educational journeys to the entire NPS faculty. By hearing what lessons have inspired them and how educators have impacted them, our teachers are able to better understand what they can do to make learning powerful.

Thank you to **Alex Ames, Calleigh Curran, Colin Fuller, Ciara Geraghty, Cooper Grant, Brendan Grossman, Lizzy Homer, Charlotte Kealey, Sophie Lavallee, Emerson McCormick, Laney Pare, Theo Roberts, Kamilly Russi, Cedar Schumacher, Jose Velasquez-Perez, and Jalen Wise.**