

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

Monday, December 2, 2024

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

Kristen Vicente, 52 Longfellow Drive: cell phone policy

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 8137	\$173,834.48
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Motion Passed

Minutes

Motion:

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

VOTED: to accept the minutes of the November 18, 2024 School Committee Business meeting with changes. (Page 4: remove absent notation, and delete reference to an executive session and delete the roll call vote.)

Motion Passed

Student Representative Report: none

Introduction of TMS

Superintendent Sean Gallagher introduced Andy Brown, Vice President, and Michael Wood, Sr. School Business Administrator of TMS, Inc., which the district contracted with to provide financial management expertise until a new business manager is hired. Michael will begin onboarding on December 3, along with Nicole Wood. They will be onsite Tuesdays and Thursdays, and working hybrid the remainder of the week.

Capital Improvement Plan Review (CIP)

Facilities Director James McSweeney reviewed the list of the district's capital improvement projects. His presentation included a brief overview of the Capital Improvement Program, as well as a review of in-process/completed projects and FY24/FY25 priorities throughout the district.

Kathleen Shaw suggested that a free play type component be considered for the playground, such as a Gaga Ball pit.

Breanna Higgins suggested creating a unit project to design a playground.

Juliet Walker asked when the final version of the CIP will be available. (answer = February/March)

High School Water Heater Update

Facilities Director James McSweeney reported that a new 150-gallon water heater was installed at the high school on Tuesday (November 27). The new tank will operate at 97% efficiency. The cost of the new tank is \$160K. Superintendent Gallagher thanked James and his entire team for their efforts expediting this project.

School Committee members discussed various legal and non-legal opinions regarding options to pay for the new water heater (i.e. using School Choice funds or using City free cash funds). Discussions also included whether the water heater repair should be considered a capital or an operational type expense.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to authorize the Superintendent to work with the school attorney to release the correspondence shared with the School Committee related to School Choice funds.

Motion Passed

Brian Callahan will review the School Choice funds at the next Finance Subcommittee meeting.

Superintendent Sean Gallagher will submit for emergency procurement to Ethan Manning to get on the city agenda.

FY26 Budget Timeline (draft)

Superintendent Gallagher reviewed the FY26 budget timeline. He feels the district is on target to meet the dates, and noted that having TMS, Inc. on board will be helpful.

Daycare Update / Donation

Superintendent Sean Gallagher read a letter announcing that the Swasey Foundation made a very generous \$50,000 distribution to Newburyport Public Schools to provide startup funds for an in-house daycare center. The district hopes to begin developing a plan to have an onsite daycare program for teachers, similar to the program offered at Ipswich Public Schools.

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Andy Boger it was

VOTED: to approve the acceptance of the Swasey \$50K donation in accordance with policy KCD - Public Gifts to the Schools to support the creation of a daycare for staff as presented by the Superintendent.

Motion Passed

Proposal for Instruction and Learning Subcommittee

- Mayor Reardon reviewed the description of the proposal for the new subcommittee.
- Juliet Walker explained the difference between an Advisory Committee and a Subcommittee of the School Committee
- Breanna Higgins suggested changing the name to Teaching and Learning.

Motion:

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Mayor Reardon it was

VOTED: to form a Teaching and Learning Subcommittee of the School Committee.

Motion Passed

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Brian Callahan reported the committee will meet at 9:30AM on December 12, 2024.

Policy Subcommittee

Juliet Walker briefly reviewed three new policies presented for a second read: EHB – Data and Records Retention, IJNDB – Use of Technology in Instruction, and JICJ – Student Use of Technology in Schools.

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Andy Boger it was

VOTED: to adopt policy EHB – Data and Records Retention as presented.

Motion Passed

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adopt policy IJNDB – Use of Technology in Instruction as presented.

Motion Passed

Motion:

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Kathleen Shaw it was

VOTED: to adopt policy JICJ – Student Use of Technology in Schools as presented.

Motion Passed

Communications Subcommittee

Andy Boger reported the next meeting will be held on December 19, 2024.

Superintendent's Report

Business Manager Update: The Superintendent stated the position has been sent to various organizations and posted, but no applications have been received. Further conversations regarding the formation of a screening committee will be on hold until there are applicants.

NSSRT Special Education Advisory / Legislative Meeting: Superintendent Gallagher explained the group is looking at special education services to see if they can cost-share and utilize each other's resources.

Follow-up

Hybrid Meeting Format: The Superintendent is working on this, and the Mayor is eyeing a start up on the first meeting in January.

Fundraising: Distribution of updated fundraising policies are ongoing (i.e. Athletics, PTO etc). The Student Athlete handbook has been modified to include the policies, fundraising information, and athletic fee information and will be posted to the website by the end of the week. New fundraising procedures will be reviewed by the principals on December 3rd. Fundraising ownership will fall under the business manager. The website is being updated to include revised fundraising procedures and a fundraising calendar.

New Business

- The December 16th School Committee meeting will be moved to Wednesday, December 18th in the high school library at 6:30PM.
- Breanna Higgins would like to have a future presentation by the Superintendent on graduation requirements.
- Kathleen Shaw reminded everyone about the upcoming parent speaker series with Jon Mattleman at the Nock Auditorium on December 5 at 7PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:17PM and move to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible contract negotiations and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in open session.

Motion Passed

Roll Call Vote

School Committee Member	Vote
Mayor Sean Reardon	Yes
Sarah Hall	Yes
Andrew Boger	Yes
Brian Callahan	Yes
Breanna Higgins	Yes
Kathleen Shaw	Yes
Juliet Walker	Yes