

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950**  
**Monday, January 16, 2024**

**Present:** Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker, Andrew Boger, Brian Callahan, and Breanna Higgins.  
Mayor Sean Reardon arrived late  
**Absent:** Kathleen Shaw

**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 6:30 PM. Roll call found all members present, except Mayor Sean Reardon and Kathleen Shaw. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Aine Quimby, 43 Francis Drive – Special Education  
Amy LeBlanc, 18 Woodman Way – Special Education  
Nicole Yousefinia, 18 Longfellow – Special Education  
Alicia Tague, 18 Collins Street – Special Education  
Renee Toth, 41 Fatherland Drive, Byfield – SEPAC

**STUDENT POETRY / RECOGNITION**

Three high school students were recognized for their poetry performed for the School Committee: *The Testimony of the Winds* written by Shannon Brock (gr 12) and Sofie LaFranchise (gr 11), and *There is a Certain State of Winter* written by Aibhne Martino (gr 12).

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Warrants**

**Motion:**

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

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

Warrant 8109	\$490,393.66
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 28,179.27</u>
	\$518,572.93 Total

**Motion Passed**

**Absent: Mayor Sean Reardon & Kathleen Shaw**

**Minutes**

**Motion:**

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

**VOTED:** to accept the minutes of the December 4, 2023 School Committee Business meeting as presented.

**Motion Passed**

**Absent: Mayor Sean Reardon & Kathleen Shaw**

**Motion:**

On a motion by Breanna Higgins and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

**VOTED:** to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2023 School Committee Business meeting as presented.

**Motion Passed**

**Absent: Mayor Sean Reardon & Kathleen Shaw**

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

NHS student, Elizabeth Homer, provided the student report that included college and career series news at the Nock, the OOOH assembly at the Molin, the new interactive playground addition at the Bresnahan, and a college planning night at the high school. (attached)

**ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL OVERNIGHT NYC FIELD TRIP**

Principal Andy Wulf reviewed the details of the proposed high school field trip to New York City that would take place February 9-11, 2024. It is estimated that 26 students can participate, along with two teachers. The estimated cost is \$750 per student.

Juliet Walker asked if high school staff could be proactive and reach out to students in need to help offset the cost. Answer = yes.

Brian Callahan asked if the PTO offered help for trips? Answer = No, the PTO is grades K thru 8.

Brian Callahan asked if there was any other way to cover transportation. Answer: Andy Wulf will check the budget.

Andrew Boger asked how many kids go. Answer = about 35 are interested in going.

Sarah Hall asked if anyone can go? Answer = yes

**Motion:**

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

**VOTED:** to approve the New York City field trip for February 2024 as presented, in accordance with policy JJH.

**Motion Passed**

**Absent: Kathleen Shaw**

**HIRING PROCESS UPDATE – DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES POSITION**

- Pam Kealey, Director of Human Resources, provided an update on the hiring process to date, and thanked all screening committee and interview team members for their participation. In summary, today two finalists spent the day in the district for building tours, a community forum, and interview. NESDEC will continue professional vetting of both candidates.
- If a finalist is selected prior to the next School Committee Business meeting, a special business meeting can be scheduled.
- Breanna Higgins would like an overview of how the process has gone. In addition, she would prefer the process run again if the superintendent and staff are not excited about the finalists.
- Breanna Higgins suggested an outside audit be done to interview staff, parents etc. regarding staff turnover, as well as identify barriers and challenges.

## **PROPOSED WHITTIER BUILDING PROJECT UPDATE**

- Mayor Sean Reardon provided an update on the regional informational session recently hosted on Tuesday night (1-9-24) at the Nock auditorium, and recent tours at Whittier Tech.
- A regional vote will take place on January 23 from 11:00AM – 7:00PM.
- The Senior Center will give rides to seniors that would like to vote.
- Letters to the newspaper are due by January 18<sup>th</sup>.

## **2024 SUBCOMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

- Mayor Reardon announced the assignments, including SEPAC and CISL.

## **COMMUNICATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE PROPOSAL**

- Juliet Walker reviewed a brief history behind why this subcommittee is being suggested.
- This subcommittee could provide an opportunity to help with district-wide communications, talk about the School Committee newsletters, talk about activities related to discussions around the budget etc.
- Sarah Hall asked if the policy had to be updated if this new subcommittee was added.  
Answer: maybe but it is not urgent
- Mayor Reardon likes the idea of trying this for 1 year.
- Juliet Walker prefers this be an official subcommittee (versus Adhoc) so it has a role in reporting to the school committee, and would be made up of school committee members.
- If SC members are interested in participating in this subcommittee, contact Mayor Reardon.

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

**VOTED:** to establish a Communications Subcommittee for a term of 1 year (thru December 2024) which shall be responsible for reviewing and advising the School Committee on communications, practices and methods between the School Committee, School District, City Council and the Community at large with a review of the subcommittee's work to be undertaken at the end of the year.

### **Motion Passed**

**Absent: Kathleen Shaw**

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **Finance Subcommittee**

- Brian Callahan reported that the committee met last Thursday and they discussed Whittier, fundraising subcommittee, and a joint budget meeting with City Council in March.

### **Policy Subcommittee**

- Juliet Walker stated their next meeting will be held on January 22, 2024.

### **Fundraising Advisory Committee**

- Brian Callahan stated their next meeting will be on Monday, January 22, 2024 with the NEF, followed by a meeting on February 12, 2024 with Athletic Director Kyle Hodsdon.

### **CISL:**

- CISL = Curriculum, Instruction and Student Life, and LisaMarie Ippolito is the Chair.
- At the last meeting there was a presentation from high school advisory & counseling staff and Aaron Smith related to mental health, career development, college readiness etc.
- It was suggested that a CISL presentation be scheduled for a future School Committee meeting.

### **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

School Committee Retreat: Superintendent Gallagher provided a brief summary of the workshops and presenters. School Committee SMART Goals were also created.

Professional Development Day: The day began with junior and senior students talking about their experiences in NPS and where they are at. The presentations were very powerful and really tied in to our strategic planning and Portrait of a Graduate (POG). Throughout the day teachers participated in a variety of workshops arranged by LisaMarie Ippolito. After lunch there was a budget presentation, followed by additional workshops. IA’s attended a workshop with Michael Eatman. Overall, it was a very positive day!

Interactive Playground Panels @ Bresnahan: The Superintendent thanked Melissa Dugie for her efforts to completing this playground project. He also thanked the NEF for sponsoring this project, as well as Steve Bergholm for organizing the installation. This was a great team effort!

### **ADJOURNMENT**

#### **Motion:**

On a motion by Sarah Hall and seconded by Juliet Walker it was

**VOTED:** to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations and/or legal matters, and will not reconvene in open session. (8:07 PM)

#### **Motion Passed**

**Absent: Kathleen Shaw**

#### **Roll Call Vote:**

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

Submitted by: Theo Roberts & Lizzy Homer

Location – Senior Center

### **Bresnahan News:**

**The Bresnahan, our mid-year assessments of iReady (math) and DIBELS (literacy) are starting this week.** This relevant, up to date data is extremely useful for our teachers and they will use this data to inform instruction, group students in small learning groups and also determine intervention cycles.

### **PBIS at the Bres**

Last week, our K-3 students reviewed what it means to be *safe, kind, and responsible* here at the Bresnahan. Students in grades 1-3 attended grade level assemblies where their peers modeled what expected behaviors look like in the hall, lunchroom, and recess. We encourage families to continue these conversations at home, reinforcing the importance of being safe, kind, and responsible not only at school but also in their daily lives.

### **Inclusive Playground Addition**

Thank you to the NEF, the Rotary Club and Melissa Duguie for helping to add four interactive panels to the playground! These panels will help students who may be temporarily injured, differently abled or who are overstimulated by the hustle and bustle of our busy playground. The installation of these panels is not only an example of the Bresnahan school's commitment to inclusivity and making learning equitable for all students - but also a testament to the surrounding community's commitment as well. This would not be possible without the generosity of the NEF - thank you!

### **The "Skills for Life" Series**

Newburyport Rec and Youth Services proudly presents The "Skills for Life" Series. Brett Outchcunis [ooch-KEW-nis] is a professional personality and life coach for kids. "Ooch," as kids affectionately call him, specializes in quickly and deeply connecting with children on a level rarely accessed by other performers. His assembly programs cater to elementary and middle school students and focus on making positive life choices for a healthy state of mind and spirit. His "Skills for Life" programs are designed to give students tools and techniques for navigating everyday life that are easy to use and remember... for a lifetime. Each show focuses on a specific life-skill that will be useful immediately, regardless of age.

Ooch joined us in school yesterday presenting his Kinds of Kindness show! [You can see videos of the event here.](#)

Now, families are invited to the Family Night Series: **Wednesdays Jan 17, 24, 31, Feb 7 from 6-7pm** at the Nock Auditorium. This series is free thanks to Newburyport Rec and Youth Services (formerly NYS) Kids and families who attend most of the sessions are invited to a pizza party and YoYo lesson with Ooch before the last night at 5pm.

- How to Make a Mistake
- Secrets to Being Social
- Find your Super Power
- The Perfectly Imperfect Show

Newburyport Rec and Youth Services for sponsoring this series for Bresnahan students and families!

### **Molin School:**

The Molin students had a great time in the assembly with Ooch, **Brett Outchcunis** [ooch-KEW-nis], a professional personality and life coach for kids. See the video below from Ooch himself. You can hear our Molin students in the background.

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### **Nock Student News:**

Since the holiday break and the New Year, the Nock has hit the ground running.

- The College and Career Series continues through the end of the month. Thus far over 30 professionals have come to speak to 8th graders about their careers. Students are reporting some similar messages that they are hearing from our speakers. One 8th grader reports, "it has been interesting how I have heard three speakers from three different careers and career paths but they all have similarities by telling us to "do good, to get into fields of service, to give back and find something that you are passionate about." Another student reports how one speaker said, " I have had two careers and I plan on having at least two more and that although the lessons I was taught in school were super important, it was the skills that I attained in school that has allowed me to transform from my first career in sales to my second career working in a non-profit. Lastly, another student reported that one speaker had a similar message around "using the skills we learn in school to adapt to a world that his changing and some of the jobs that we will be doing in our lives, do not exist yet." The Career Speaker series continues to support students and exposes students to new ideas and opportunities through our community partnerships
- Student Musicians performed at the Nock Winter Concert last Wednesday. There were over 20 performances and 95 students and 5 faculty members participated in the recital. It was a great night that was well attended by the community. Congratulations to all of our performers.
- Student Leaders are working with Mr. Markos on student leadership initiatives like organizing a "stress" free day and the 4th annual March Madness competition that ends with a competition for the illustrious Clipper Cup!

### **Newburyport High School News:**

As with prior years, our students will participate in the End of Semester Week during which they will wrap-up their first semester coursework. To accommodate for assessments and/or other course activities happening during this week, students will have an early release schedule all four days. Please see this link for the schedule. Also note that bus pick-up Jan. 23-26 will be at 12:45 PM

Newburyport High School will host the Greater Essex County College Planning Night on Thursday, Jan 25th from 6-8:00 PM in the auditorium. You are invited to attend our Greater Essex County College Planning Night. This is a great event for junior families; however, we encourage families from grade 9 and 10 to attend as well.

Newburyport High School will host the seminar, Future Pathways: Alternatives to Success Without a College Degree. This will be a good event for families to attend if you have a student interested in learning about other options for after high school beyond high school.

We like to congratulate and commend Kylee Farrell, Logan Freeman, Heather Mendez-Heavilin, Alexandra Paciulan, and Sydney Pearl on their very successful toy drive and donation to Toys for Tots. Working collaboratively with Mr. Shawn Bleau, they organized and marketed an impressive collection for this service organization. Way to go!

Congratulations to the Investment Club. With 50 plus members strong, the club has participated in a semester-long investment competition that involves over 900 public and private schools in Massachusetts. The club was given \$100k in virtual money to invest throughout the semester. I am excited to announce that the Newburyport High School Investment Club placed first. Be sure to be on the look-out for the press release in the coming months. Congratulations again to all of the student's part of the club along with their advisor, Mr. McCarthy.

This weekend three NHS musicians, Cedar Schumacher, Josh Burrell, and Evan Lagueux, will audition for the Massachusetts All State jazz band, band, and chorus. It is rare, indeed, that multiple students earn a spot to audition with the best of the entire state. We in the music department and NHS as a whole, are very proud of these students in earning the privilege of this audition, and wish them success.

The following students have been recognized as December 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. Addison Bentley, Julia Bentley, Briggs Lauranzano, Sophia Mattheson, Ani Mellett, Soma Mirzayee, Lucy Rimer, Noah Tarkan, Benafsha Tashi, Benjamin Warnat

The Gear to Share program collects new and lightly used sporting equipment for students in need across the region. This year the program is sponsored by the freshmen class with Lottie O'Brien as the main point of contact for questions. On January 19, Boys Basketball will host Pentucket. If you have any equipment to donate, please bring it to the game.