

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING

High School, 241 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

Tuesday, September 3, 2024

Present: Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker, Andrew Boger, Brian Callahan, Kathleen Shaw and Breanna Higgins

Absent: Mayor Sean Reardon

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 6:32 PM. Roll call found all members present, except Mayor Sean Reardon. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments

Katie Suchecki, 8 Toppans Lane

Overnight Field Trip Grade 7 – Camp Jewell

Principal Nick Markos reviewed the proposed purpose, itinerary and cost for the grade 7 overnight trip to Camp Jewell located in Colebrook, CT scheduled from June 3 – June 5, 2025. Committee members inquired about fundraising options and expectations, and also want to ensure there is equity for all families, as well as full accessibility and/or accommodations to all activities for all students.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve the overnight field trip to Camp Jewell in accordance with Policy JJH – Student Overnight or Late Night Travel.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

Review / Approval NEF Naming Opportunities List

- Brian Callahan briefly explained the naming lists for the four schools and the review process.
- Carrie O'Donnell, NEF Executive Director, described the request process.
- Juliet Walker stated it would be helpful for the NEF to share their procedures/guidelines.
- Juliet Walker reviewed portions of Policy FF and reminded the School Committee that it is important to give the NEF permission to promote the naming opportunities, however the actual "naming" of any area is not automatic; the school committee retains its role and has a legal responsibility for final approval.
- Superintendent Sean Gallagher will contact legal to learn if there are any liabilities to NPS (i.e. if a room no longer exists or if a naming plaque is moved).

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve the NEF Naming Opportunities Lists consistent with Policy FF – Naming New Facilities.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent

NHS Video Lab / Media Center Project Update

- A brief presentation of the high school's Video Lab / Media Center project was provided by Superintendent Sean Gallagher. The Newburyport Education Foundation (NEF) is funding a lot of advanced technology (i.e. sound / lighting) for this project, and he thanked the NEF for their support. NPS will focus on the renovations needed in the classrooms.
- This project should go out to bid in the next month or two. He hopes to have the new lab operational after the new year.
- The Superintendent will provide an overview of the Nock Music Lab project next meeting.

Opening Day Preparations

Superintendent Sean Gallagher reviewed the following activities:

Opening Day: Teachers returned on September 3rd. Mayor Reardon, Sarah Hall and Brian Callahan attended the program, as well as Carrie O'Donnell of the NEF. Four staff members were recognized for working in the district 30 years.

Summer Professional Development: Over 80 teachers worked on curriculum development during the summer. Four days of iPad training were provided to the staff, which included iPad as a Teaching Tool, Reaching all Learners, and iPad as a Whiteboard. In addition, 32 teachers attended an in-service workshop, *Integrating Technology for an Engaging Classroom*.

Extended Leadership Retreat: Administrators participated in a 3-day retreat covering a variety of areas such as Portrait of a Graduate work, School Safety/Security, Special Education, School Discipline/Investigation, and HR Training.

School Safety Upgrades: Many upgrades were completed this summer, including upgrades to cameras/security systems, upgrades to visitor systems, and school infrastructures/doors. Thank you to James McSweeney (Facilities) and the Technology department.

Telephone Upgrades: A new phone system was installed at the high school over the summer. Thank you Mike Morse and the Technology team.

Hiring: The district is almost fully staffed. Second round interviews are scheduled for the Nock Middle School Assistant Principal position, and there are a few openings for IA's and building subs.

New Teacher / Mentor Orientation: New teachers and their mentors worked together for three days (August 27-29) to prepare for the school year and learned about the Portrait of a Graduate vision, as well as various resources available to them via the NTA, HR and city organizations.

Bus Transportation: Registrations went very well with the new company, Coach. Bus routes are available on the website, and bus pass pick up dates have been scheduled.

Communications: The Superintendent spoke of the importance of the tone of adult communication, constructive dialogue and productive conversation for the purpose of working collaboratively to make decisions and solve problems.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

Brian Callahan reported that FINCOM met on August 29th. Minutes were approved, enrollments and fundraising were discussed and a meeting calendar for 2024-2025 was drafted.

Policy Subcommittee

Juliet Walker stated the next meeting will be held on September 9th. There will be several proposed policy changes ready to review for "1st read" at the next School Committee meeting.

Communications Subcommittee

Andy Boger stated meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday each month. The next meeting will be September 26th (time = tba).

New Business

Cell Phones: Brian Callahan stated the local parent group will be looking for a survey regarding use of cell phones, and anticipates conversations during the year about cell phones and possibly new cell phone policies. Juliet Walker reminded members there are no school committee policies on cell phones; building level guidelines on cell phone use are actually listed in each school's student handbook.

After School Programming: Two emails were received related to lack of after school programming for grades 4 and 5. Superintendent Gallagher will look into what is available via local programs.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee
at 8:05 PM.

Motion Passed

Mayor Sean Reardon absent