

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING  
Monday, January 4, 2021  
REMOTE**

**Meeting Convened at 6:34 PM**

**Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided**

**Present: Sean Reardon, David Hochheiser, Mayor Donna Holaday, Bruce Menin,  
Steve Cole, Brian Callahan, Sheila Spalding**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

**Mayor Donna Holaday** called the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:34 PM. Roll Call found all members present. All those present stood for the pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

At this point Vice-Chairman **Bruce Menin** assumed chairmanship of the Business Meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Shanna Perrucci, PhD: (via email, read by Bruce Menin) Mental health professionals in town are seeing major increases in depression and anxiety in children in this community due to isolation and being expected to sit in the same place and stare at a screen for 6 to 7 hours a day, which goes directly against all previous research on child brain development and mental health.

**CONSENT AGENDA:**

**Warrants:**

**Motion**

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

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

**\$123,189.32**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**School Committee Retreat**

- **Bruce Menin** stated that Dorothy Presser is available and he is awaiting her reply. By having her come in to train with the School Committee, we will be in compliance as part of our settlement made with the union.
  
- Edits are finished for the MA State Ethics, Operating Principles and Norms of Interaction documents. **Bruce Menin** asked Superintendent Gallagher to send the documents to the attorney

for review. Once they hear back from the attorney, the documents will be sent to everyone and discussed at the retreat. Bruce Menin said he drew language for Principals & Operating Norms from MASC and other communities (Concord, Tewksbury, and New York State).

- Michael Eatman would like to provide training to the School Committee in a separate session that will be scheduled after the January retreat.
- **Bruce Menin** stated another item for the agenda is conversation about Vice Chair and Chair roles. Any other ideas for agenda items should be sent to Bruce.

**Sean Reardon** asked if this is the time to look at the calendar for the year and talk about possible working meetings or topics for those meetings. **Bruce Menin** said he'll put that on the agenda.

### **DRAFT Response to letter from MASC & MASS to Governor Baker**

- Discussion took place regarding the draft response letter, including Sheila Spalding's edits.
- Several members felt the draft should be reworded to lighten the language in order to avoid an angry tone.
- **Steve Cole** asked about a sentence in paragraph 3 "*This is the most irregular....*". Compared to the pandemic? **David Hochheiser** replied yes, and said "*This*" could be changed to say "*The COVID pandemic has made this the....*".
- **Bruce Menin** shared two concerns: (1) our experience with the union was not as characterized and (2) throughout the entire pandemic the State has offered guidance and not direction.
- **Sheila Spalding** offered to rework the letter to include ideas discussed at this meeting.
- **Mayor Holaday** stated this is an important letter and should be looked at one more time at the next meeting. She asked all members if they support Sheila Spalding's offer to re-draft / reframe the letter. All members were in agreement.

### **Superintendents Report**

#### **Flu Shot Vaccination Update**

- The district is currently on target to meet the State mandate.
- The State requires all students to have the flu vaccine by December 31, 2020. Governor Baker recently extended the mandate to the end of February 2021.
- Cathy Riccio and the nursing staff have been working with the families at each school. Currently the unknown vaccination status at each school is: 12% Bresnahan, 10% Molin, 30% Nock and 25% High School.
- Families are able to apply for a waiver due to medical or religious reasons.

#### **COVID-19 Update**

- Medical Advisory team continues to meet on Wednesdays.
- Superintendent Gallagher provided the following COVID case update:

December 23, 2020 - Jan. 4, 2021

| School         | Positive Student Cases | Student Close Contacts | Positive Staff Cases | Staff Close Contacts |
|----------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| NHS            | 9                      | 18                     | 1                    | 0                    |
| Rupert A. Nock | 2                      | 0                      | 0                    | 0                    |
| Edward Molin   | 0                      | 1                      | 0                    | 2                    |
| Bresnahan      | 3                      | 1                      | 1                    | 1                    |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>14</b>              | <b>20</b>              | <b>2</b>             | <b>3</b>             |

- **Dashboard:** Catherine Page and Cathy Riccio have created a COVID dashboard to track both the school and city case numbers. The dashboard will be updated on a weekly basis throughout the school year. The dashboard is on the district’s website, and the link will be sent to families.
- **Vaccine:** According to the Commissioner and Governor, school personnel will be part of Phase 2 for vaccinations some time by end of February – early April.
- **Surveillance Testing:** Initial meetings have taken place with Cataldo Ambulance, CIC Health, Board of Health, and the Mayor’s office to develop a surveillance testing program. The idea is that surveillance testing for staff, and eventually students, would be especially helpful for the next two months, and would add another layer of protocol / precautions for the school system. Another meeting will be held over the next few weeks, which will include Dr. Jessica Su and Mike Allard. **Superintendent Gallagher** hopes to have more details by January 19.
- **Mayor Holaday** said she had reached out to Cataldo Ambulance because she heard they are the EMS provider in the city and have been providing testing in large areas around the Northshore. Surveillance testing is expensive, and would cost over 93K to test all students and staff. **Superintendent Gallagher** will work with the Medical Advisory Team to discuss what makes the most sense.
- **Mayor Holaday** stated there is approximately 600K left of CARES fund, but need to be careful how that money is spent as it must cover many other expenses for both the city & school. Another piece, after the baseline, is “pool testing”, where 10 swabs are pooled together in a vial, then tested. Pool testing drops the cost.
- **Bruce Menin** asked when 1<sup>st</sup> responders will have the vaccine. **Mayor Holaday** stated the Senior Community Center recently was approved as a vaccination site by the DPH. Newburyport doesn’t have 200 1<sup>st</sup> responders, so the City partnered with neighboring communities in order to be approved. Hopefully the vaccinations will start date before the end of January.
- **Brian Callahan** asked if once we have surveillance testing going for groups of students, would it mean students could be in five days, or still two and two. **Superintendent Gallagher** replied it is a possibility. If you have an understanding of the cases in the school on a regular basis, then you can start making decisions based on that data. Bringing more kids back might be one of those options, if we feel safer.
- **David Hochheiser** asked if the flu vaccination numbers are pretty regular or are the percentages better this year. **Superintendent Gallagher** stated the district is on track. The majority of students on the list are remote, so they are not coming into the building.
- **David Hochheiser** asked the Superintendent if he knew why the Governor pushed out the date to the end of February. Answer: The governor didn’t say.

- **Brian Callahan** asked if all winter teams are still playing? Superintendent Gallagher said yes, on a day-to-day basis. He explained the district is monitoring the winter sport activity on a daily basis. Winter sports look a lot different due to many safety modifications, small group cohorts, following safety protocols, practice times are limited, season is shorter (5 weeks), no playoffs, no spectators etc.

SUB-COMMITTEE:

**Joint Ed**      **Sean Reardon** stated there is no meeting schedule at this time; waiting for subcommittees to be finalized. Will probably meet end of the month.

**Finance**      **Steve Cole** said there is a meeting next week.

**Policy**      **David Hochheiser** will do a 2<sup>nd</sup> reading of the Fundraiser policy at next meeting.

**Superintendent's Evaluation:**

**Motion**

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by Sean Reardon it was

**VOTED**      to adjourn the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee  
at 7:15 PM.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

**Mayor Donna Holaday** called the Organizational Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 7:15PM. Roll Call found all members present.

**Subcommittee Assignments 2021**

Mayor Holaday announced the following subcommittee assignments:

*Finance:* Chair Steve Cole, Brian Callahan, and Bruce Menin

*Education:* Chair Sean Reardon, Brian Callahan, and Bruce Menin

*Policy:* Chair Sheila Spalding, Sean Reardon, and David Hochheiser

*SEPA Liaison:* Shelia Spalding

*NEF Liaison:* Sean Reardon

*Superintendent Evaluation:* Mayor Holaday and Bruce Menin

**VIVA-VOCE VOTE FOR 2021 VICE CHAIR**

**Nominations**

- David Hochheiser nominated Brian Callahan, seconded by Brian Callahan
- Steve Cole nominated Bruce Menin, seconded by Mayor Holaday

**Brian Callahan** stated he can bring a lot to the role. It is his fourth year on the committee and believes we need change in the School Committee in terms of better communications between us, the Superintendent's office, the way packets are sent out, what is in them and what is not. Change is good for anybody, and he knows he'll do a good job communicating with the community and the rest of the board.

**Bruce Menin** stated it has been a privilege serving as the Vice Chair. He feels that consistency is important. We are in the middle of a pandemic and he is willing to serve.

**Roll Call Vote**

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| David Hochheiser | Brian Callahan |
| Sean Reardon     | Brian Callahan |
| Sheila Spalding  | Brian Callahan |
| Steve Cole:      | Bruce Menin    |
| Bruce Menin      | Bruce Menin    |
| Brian Callahan:  | Brian Callahan |
| Mayor Holaday:   | Bruce Menin    |

**VOTE**                      **Brian Callahan = 4 votes**  
                                    **Bruce Menin = 3 votes**

**Brian Callahan is elected to serve as the Vice-Chair.**

**Brian Callahan** would like to schedule a meeting with Mayor Holaday and Superintendent Gallagher.

**Sheila Spalding** thanked Bruce Menin for his leadership this year and thinks he did a great job.

**Mayor Holaday** agreed, stating it has been a difficult year and she appreciates all the work Bruce Menin has done this year, and all his years he served as Vice Chair.

**Steve Cole** echoed what was said and stated that Bruce has been a key person of knowledge during various very difficult situations and he appreciates all his efforts.

**David Hochheiser** also thanked Bruce Menin, and said he appreciates all the time and effort he put in.

**Mayor Holaday** suggested that Bruce Menin continue to coordinate the Retreat as it is coming up in next couple of weeks.

**David Hochheiser** stated that Principals, Norms and Ethics are in the Policy book, therefore Ms. Spalding should be consulted at some point before the Retreat. **Bruce Menin** will contact Sheila.

**Superintendent Gallagher** thanked Bruce Menin for all his efforts over the past few years, his hard work and institutional knowledge brought to the district. He looks forward to working with Brian Callahan and rest of committee.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

On a motion by **David Hochheiser** and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

**VOTED**                      To adjourn the Organizational Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee  
                                    at 7:27PM.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**