

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950
Monday, February 5, 2024

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

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 Farrell – 28 Spofford Street

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITIONS

Seven members of the high school’s Real World Design Challenge team, along with their Technology teacher, were recognized for recently winning the state RWDC competition, and advancing to the National competition to represent Massachusetts! This year’s challenge was to design a UAV capable of assisting with wildfire management. Team Members: Bowden Gay, Parker Harding, Ben Healey, Tommy Lynch, Chris Rohland, Cedar Schumacher and Will Tymowski led by Technology Teacher Sarah Leadbeater.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW DIRECTOR OF PUPIL SERVICES

- Newly hired Director of Pupil Services Bradley Brooks was introduced by Superintendent Sean Gallagher.

CONSENT AGENDA

Warrants

Motion:

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

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

Warrant 8110	\$756,532.52
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 21,046.06</u>
	\$777,578.58 Total

Motion Passed

Minutes

Motion:

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

VOTED: to accept the minutes of the January 16, 2024 School Committee Business meeting with the following changes: page 3 – Communications section – change to read “*talk about activities related to discussions around the budget*”, and last sentence of vote – change to “*undertaken at the end of the year*”.

Motion Passed

Motion:

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

VOTED: to accept the minutes of the January 25, 2024 School Committee Special Business meeting as presented.

Motion Passed

STUDENT REPORT none

FY24 SOI SUBMISSION TO MSBA – ROOF RELACEMENT FOR THE HIGH SCHOOL & NOCK

Facilities Director Steve Bergholm provided a brief summary of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) and the two programs currently offered. Steve explained the qualifications needed to submit a Statement of Interest (SOI) to MSBA, the justification for roof replacement at the Nock Middle School and Newburyport High School, and a review of MSBA’s timeline.

FY24 SOI SUBMISSION – RUPERT A. NOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL

Sarah Hall read the Statement of Interest.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve submitting the FY24 Statement of Interest for the Rupert A. Nock Middle School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion Passed

FY24 SOI SUBMISSION – NEWBURYPORT HIGH SCHOOL

Sarah Hall read the Statement of Interest.

Motion:

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

VOTED: to approve submitting the FY24 Statement of Interest for the Newburyport High School to the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Motion Passed

TRANSPORTATION BID UPDATE

- Phil Littlehale reported the Transportation IFP is almost completed, and will be written to include a 5-year contract (3-year bid, with two 1-year extensions). The bid will also include a requirement for real-time monitoring, the ability to increase/decrease buses, and pricing for athletics and field trips. The bid will not be asking for electric buses. Phil anticipates responses to the bid will be back by the first week in March.

- Breanna Higgins inquired if the bid was asking for any wheelchair accessible buses. Phil Littlehale will look into this.
- Juliet Walker suggested the bid should include the use of “routing software”.
- Phil Littlehale would like to utilize “GIS” mapping to assist with transportation planning.

SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Finance Subcommittee

- Brian Callahan reported they will meet on February 15, 2024.

Policy Subcommittee

- The last meeting was held in January. Sections K and L will be reviewed at their next meeting. All updated sections to date are posted on the website as an indexed PDF.
- Juliet Walker reviewed changes to policies in Section J: Students.
 - ❖ JICH: Juliet Walker and Superintendent Gallagher will clarify language related to use of breathalyzers (i.e. in Policy JICH and student handbook) for the next meeting.

Fundraising Advisory Committee

- Brian Callahan reported their last meeting was with the NEF. The Building Naming Rights lists were discussed; Carrie O'Donnell will send the lists to each principal for their review. Juliet Walker stated that Policy FF – Naming New Facilities was held back for legal clarification during the Section F policy review, and will be further reviewed at a future Policy Subcommittee meeting.
- The next meeting will be on Monday, February 12th with Athletic Director Kyle Hodsdon.

CISL: have not met

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Chronic Absenteeism Grant: The district was recently awarded a \$10,000 grant. The Superintendent explained that a plan is being developed on how to best utilize these funds, and he shared various ideas being discussed. Breanna Higgins would like to see any data that shows trends as to what may be causing chronic absenteeism.

HRC Holocaust Remembrance Day: Superintendent Gallagher thanked Rabbi Alex Matthews for leading the program. He also spoke of the 8th graders book group with the Senior Center that reviewed “*An Orange in Winter: The Beginning of the Holocaust as Seen Through the Eyes of a Child*” written by local author Ms. Margaret McQuillan, as well as original poems performed by Poetry Soup students.

Classroom Visits: The Superintendent recently joined various staff members to perform scenes from Romeo and Juliet with 8th grade ELA classes as part of Bring Shakespeare to Life. He also visited 4th grade classrooms to hear student argument essays “for or against chocolate milk in schools”.

M.A.S.S. Mid-Winter Conference: The winter conference topic was “Navigating the Educational Landscape: Developing Political Acuman”.

NEW BUSINESS

- Newburyport's representatives on the Whittier School Committee will begin attending meetings on a monthly basis to provide updates. Sarah Hall will invite them to attend the 2nd meeting of each month.
- Mayor Sean Reardon posted the opening for the Whittier School Committee that will become available when Donna Holaday's term expires at the end of March. Two applications have already been received. Interviews will begin at the March 4th meeting.
- On Tuesday, February 6th, Mayor Sean Reardon will attend a meeting at Whittier with Superintendent Lynch and the 10 surrounding communities to discuss possible next steps. The Mayor plans to propose creation of a Whittier Task Force to revisit the regional agreement.
- The Whittier School Committee will meet on February 13th, which will be their first meeting since the recent vote regarding the proposed building project.
- Mayor Reardon reported three people are interested in being on the Communications committee (Sarah Hall, Andy Boger, and Juliet Walker). They will schedule a meeting and report back.
- Superintendent Sean Gallagher informed the School Committee that school will begin after Labor Day next year, based on the guidelines set in Policy IC/ICA School Year / Calendar. (Note: In 2024 Labor Day falls on Monday, September 2nd)

ADJOURNMENT

Motion:

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

VOTED: to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:17 PM.

Motion Passed