

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING
Monday, December 7, 2020
Remote**

Meeting Convened at 6:35 PM

Mayor Donna Holaday / Bruce Menin Presided

**Present: David Hochheiser, Mayor Donna Holaday, Bruce Menin,
Brian Callahan, Sean Reardon, Steve Cole, 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 6:35 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:

Sarah Hall of 8 Arthur Welch Drive: She appreciated the hybrid program. Stay the course - do not go remote - keep hybrid.

Monica Studer of 7 Whites Court: She urged the Committee to keep the hybrid.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Warrants:

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.
\$6,069.75

Motion Passed Unanimously

On a motion by **Steve Cole** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant.
\$459,232.32

Motion Passed Unanimously

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

VOTED: To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor to make payment and deduct the funds from the school's account.
\$29,496.64

Motion Passed Unanimously

Minutes:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business Meeting minutes of Monday, October 19, 2020, as amended.

Motion Passed Unanimously

On a motion by **Sheila Spalding** and seconded by **Mayor Holaday** it was
VOTED: To approve, receive and file the School Committee
Business Meeting minutes of Monday, November 16, 2020.

Motion Passed Unanimously

NHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT:

NHS Student Representative Sierra Leahy reported on the following:

- Clipper Block
- Color Week - December 14-18
- Photography 2 Class - Global Contest
- National Art Workshop
- Collection of sporting equipment
- Leo's Club Toy Drive - drop off toys at the High School
- Rotary Parade
- Earn credit for service activities

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Motion:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **David Hochheiser** it was

VOTED: To adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing possible contract negotiations and legal matters. Committee will be returning to Regular session.

TIME - 6:50 PM

Committee returned to Regular Session at 7:21 PM.

SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION 2019 - 2020:

Bruce Menin gave background for the community:

Documents:

1. Numbers tabulation - Bruce Menin gave the goals numbers of how each member rated.
2. Comments from School Committee members.

He stated each member thought the Superintendent was proficient at his job.

School Committee members commented on their ratings.

Superintendent Gallagher spoke of his appreciation of being the Superintendent of the Newburyport School District. He spoke of the following: Entry Plan, Leaders, Staff, Parents and Collaborative Leadership.

SUPERINTENDENT'S SALARY 2020-2021:

It was the recommendation of the School Committee that **Superintendent Gallagher** receive a 3% salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2020.

Motion:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

VOTED: To grant **Superintendent Sean Gallagher** a 3% salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2020.

Motion Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT RENEWAL 2021 -2024:

Mayor Holaday outlined the changes in **Superintendent Gallagher's** contract:

- Contract will roll over on July 1, 2021 - 2024
- 3% raise each year of contract
- Outside district travel
- In-town travel adjustment of \$200 per month
- Buy back vacation days - increased to 10 days

Motion:

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

VOTED: To approve **Superintendent Sean Gallagher's** contract as recommended by the School Committee.

Motion Passed Unanimously

Sean Reardon commented that we were very fortunate to have him as our Superintendent.

SCHOOL CALENDAR REVIEW:

Bruce Menin led the discussion of the calendar review.

Superintendent Gallagher gave the following presentation:

Scheduling Made Easy

School cancellation procedure due to inclement weather - snow

Full remote day - will not have to make up days due to cancellation - recommend this model for the remainder of the year.

December Date Options - December 21, 22, 23

Semester II - Professional Day Options

Bruce Menin inquired if there were any contractual obligations?

Sean Reardon asked are you having internal discussions right now?

Superintendent Gallagher will work with all building principals.

Steve Cole asked what would it be like if we had a massive power failure? **Superintendent Gallagher** said it would be like a regular consolation and days would have to be made up.

Motion:

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

VOTED: To allow us to use our snow days as remote learning opportunities for all students as opposed to using it as traditional snow days were school is cancelled.

Motion Passed Unanimously

December Date Options

Superintendent Gallagher explained.

Motion:

On a motion by **Mayor Holaday** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

VOTED: To approve the recommendation by **Superintendent Gallagher** to go to Cohort A and Cohort B - December 21, 22, 23.

Brian Callahan asked how does that work and so on Monday, the 21st, how are they going to do say Algebra whatever, how is the staff going to be able to handle dealing with twice the amount of kids - is that how it's going to work.

Superintendent Gallagher said it would be similar to their Wednesdays because right now they have both cohorts in on the Wednesday, so we would have both cohorts on those 3 days. It would be their full classes and then what we'll do with the snow days is after tonight's meeting we'll work with the building principals on each school and develop what their schedule is going to look like and then we get that out to parents sooner than later.

Bruce Menin said you have had some conversations with teachers and principal about this and can you characterize their reaction to it.

Superintendent Gallagher said right now the teachers and principals would be in favor of this.

David Hochheiser had a couple of community comments. He thought Cohort B people were actually hoping to get those live days for them being that they lost some live days over Thanksgiving break, so equity is what it is. We wouldn't be the first community to have the discussion of whether our schools are going to be closed extra days, but our town is going to be open. Right now there is more transmission going on in town, restaurants, parks, boardwalk and that sort of thing then there is in our schools.

Brian Callahan said B kids missed out.

Motion Passed Unanimously

Steve Cole said at some point the State may have to mandate.

Vaccine date - keep in mind

David Hochheiser asked what is vaccine date.

Steve Cole said when it becomes available, delivering to as many people as possible.

Motion Passed Unanimously

SCHOOL CALENDAR REVIEW:

Superintendent Gallagher outlined the following:

Current Dates	Professional Changes Dates Moved	Impact
Friday, Jan. 15 Full day PD	Wed. Jan 13 Full day Students Already Remote	No impact on Cohort B Staff PD & Collaboration
Fri, Feb 12 Early Release	Wed., Feb 10 ERD Students Already Remote	No impact on Cohort B Staff PD and Collaboration
Fri., March 19 Early Release	Wed., Mar 17 ERD Students Already Remote	No impact on Cohort B Staff PD and Collaboration

Fri., April 2 Early Release	Wed., April 14 ERD Students Already Remote	No impact on Cohort B Staff PD and Collaboration
Fri., May 14 Early Release	Cancel May 14 PD	State Assessments/Internal Assessment Focus MCAS Exams
Fri., June 4 Early Release	Wed., June 2 ERD Students Already Remote	No impact on Cohort B Staff PD and Collaboration

David Hochheiser said it seems that most of these days are already early release days - Wednesdays are already short days - so we're just looking to make a few Wednesday's a little shorter.

Superintendent Gallagher said we'll work out the details because it's really like a whole new: from moving the early release and what that schedule would look like.

Sheila Spalding asked Sean will these Fridays then become full days. Answer - Yes, full days for the hybrid, and if things change in the reopening plan, the Wednesdays if the cases go down and maybe there's surveillance testing and all these things that are in the process then some of these Wednesday's for Cohort A and B would bring more students in on those days.

Bruce Menin said we made a commitment to the community to revisit this in December. I feel you are coming up with ways to minimize the impact on students particularly on Cohort B creating better equity between the Cohorts.

Motion:

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

VOTED: To approve the proposed changes to the second half of the School Year Calendar.

Bruce Menin asked the Superintendent if he would be bringing back the work that he and his staff have done to implement these changes for the meeting of the 21st. Answer - Yes

Superintendent Gallagher said yes we'll take the original schedule we had for this year - we'll utilize those dates once again for the next school year.

Motion Passed Unanimously

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Superintendent Gallagher reported on the following:

- COVID update as to cases impacting the school.

DATA since November 16th		COVID - 19 Statistics
Illness Visits	695 (109)	Student Dismissal COVID = 17
Non Encounter	1,139 (296)	Exposure = 69 (30)
Medication Administered	356 (71)	Student COVID = 19
Treatment	632 (117)	Positive Cases = 36 (11)
Absence Days due to		Staff COVID = 19
Illness	646 days (191)	Positive Cases = 6 (3)

(63) Students quarantined
Today (12-7-20)

(13) Staff absence today
COVID -19 Related Event
(12-7-20)

Bruce Menin asked the Superintendent if he had any sense of how those statistics on an average year would look at this point in the year.

Superintendent Gallagher said we probably have more students staying home this year as a precaution than coming into the schools.

Mayor Holaday reported on the following:

We had 17 more cases over the weekend. Our numbers are now almost up to 500 in terms of positive cases. We've hired on an additional 3 nursing staff to help with the contact tracing because this has been really difficult. This has been one of the most important things for us in order to keep the schools open and keeping the model working is being able to identify those who have been in contact and quarantined students. We're trying to tear a bit about some of the CDC changes now - apparently they dropped to 10 days instead of 14, but I'm asking everybody until we have firm information about that that you stick to the 14-day quarantine that was established. There have been clusters in long term care facilities. This past weekend and the weekend before we had 18 cases in a long term care facility - visitation has been restricted and all ancillary services have stopped except for hospice and end-of-life family visits.

We currently have:

2 police officers positive

1 parks staff positive

City Hall - by appointment only - a lot more on-line services

Restaurants - doing good

Health Department - busy as ever

The state keeps changing the criteria - cases are surging - people are seeking medical care sooner and are not getting as sick now as before. We have been accepted into the vaccine distribution system. We're almost out of our CARES money - the money that came to the schools in the State to help support all the COVID activities, PPE's, remote laptops, etc. That money has to be spent by December 31st, and we're hoping that we're going to need to pay teachers to teach remotely, so we're encouraged by the conversations that are happening in Washington and hopefully we'll receive another round of funding to help states and our community in particular over the next couple of weeks.

MCAS - We have received work from the Commissioner for the Juniors. They've postponed that test until the Spring so all planning we did for 3 weeks for the January test for the Junior class is null and void. We have a Superintendent's conference call with the Commissioner on the ninth - this week.

Winter Sports Update – Winter Sport practices were going to start on December 14th. Sports that got moved to Fall season 2 (football & volleyball) and those seasons will begin on the 28th. Winter indoor track was moved to that Fall Season too on February 28th, so there will be no winter track starting on December 14. The sports that will begin or that were approved were both boys and girls basketball, boys and girls ice hockey, boys and girls swimming and the skiing teams. Part of some of the regulations is there are no scrimmages allowed, locker rooms

not to be utilized and all safety and health protocols will be followed - wearing masks at all times in practice and in games.

Cape Ann League - They've only scheduled a 10 game season; just 10 teams within the league so there's no out-of-league games. The first game is scheduled at this time to begin in January and the season will conclude before February vacation. There are no fans/spectators. Many of our games will be live streamed with a camera system that was set up in the gym. This was approved by the state's medical team about a month ago and then MIA approved the winter sports.

Bruce Menin expressed extreme frustration with the state for the way they have provided no guidance.

Brian Callahan said he wished the state would get us the news before we read it in the newspapers.

Superintendent Gallagher said on the ninth the Superintendents will express some of the concerns with the communication that goes out before the Superintendents or districts know.

David Hochheiser - Scheduling - we talked about a remote week for the Juniors to take MCAS exams - and traditionally the high school has a final week in January. Can we assume that's not going to happen this year, and we're going to have the same hybrid schedule throughout.

Superintendent Gallagher said the planning for the High School was to finish that semester. The Juniors were going to come in the week before January 25th. I'm not sure if it's going to be a traditional midterm week that was planned - I can get Mr. Wulf to provide a little more detail on that.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS:

Joint Ed - postponed from tonight until the 21st - a remote meeting before our meeting.

Finance - Steve Cole: We met on November 17 - spoke about food service - meal count is down, loss of a client access, we're down for the year about \$46,000, We had one transfer of \$10,000 from math textbooks to Library software at the High School to acquire software subscription.

Policy - David Hochheiser: Legal team looking at fundraising policy.

Bruce Menin commented on the Finance Report - there are challenges with lunches - it is happening in every district in the Commonwealth.

Mayor Holaday said there will be a joint City Council meeting on January 12.

ADJOURNMENT:

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

VOTED: To adjourn the Business Meeting of the School Committee at 9:05 PM.

Motion Passed Unanimously