

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING - amended  
Monday, February 1, 2021  
REMOTE**

**Meeting Convened at 6:36 PM**

**Mayor Donna Holaday / Brian Callahan Presided**

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

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

**Mayor Donna Holaday** called the Business Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:36 PM. Roll Call found all members present. All those present stood for the pledge of allegiance to the Flag.

At this point Vice-Chairman **Brian Callahan** assumed chairmanship of the Business Meeting.

**GOOD NEWS:**

Superintendent Sean Gallagher announced the district will contract with Cataldo Ambulance to vaccinate the NPS faculty and support staff at the end of February, as part of Phase II protocols. He is very proud of all the hard work done by Cathy Riccio, Mayor Holaday, and the community to make this happen. Mayor Holaday stated she is pleased with Cataldo and is excited about the plan.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Amy LeBlanc of 18 Woodman Way, Apt. 1:** Recently there was three weeks of remote learning, which started on December 21 through January 15. I first want to start off by saying how wonderful the teachers and staff have been, and how low the numbers have been. They have been amazing. I also work in a school, and I understand how these unprecedented times that it's hard to get all the kids in. I understand that there's approximately 150 kids across the district that are in Cohort C and with the schools empty, for the most part, except for those sub separate classrooms, I don't see why we can't spread the kids out amongst the schools and have those instructional assistants helping those kids that are in Cohort C. So I have one question: Why is it okay for students in Cohort C allowed to be out of school and do remote learning? Thank you for your time, and I hope that in the future we have remote learning again, that's not snow day related, that we can have all Cohort C kids in the buildings.

## CONSENT AGENDA

### Warrants:

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$1,663.85**

**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 for payment the  
**\$17,595.38**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

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

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following warrant:  
**\$291,686.22**

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

### Minutes

#### Motion

On a motion by **Sean Reardon** and seconded by **Sheila Spalding** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Business Meeting minutes of Monday, January 4, 2021.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Sean Reardon** it was

**VOTED:** To approve, receive and file the School Committee Retreat minutes of Wednesday, January 13, 2021.

**Motion Passed Unanimously**

### **NHS Student Representative Report – Sierra Leahy**

Congratulations to the NHS Real World Design Challenge team for winning the state competition: Emma Keith, Caroline Doyle, John Donovan, Oliver Pons, Tyler Cowles, Zach Wilson and Coach Sarah Leadbeater. This year's challenge was to design an unmanned aircraft system, otherwise known as a drone, to include creating a theory of operation and a business plan for the commercial operations for safe package delivery in an urban setting. Winning the state challenge distinguishes the students as being among the nation's best and brightest and the new report team will now compete against national and international challengers in a virtual format for the top award.

High school students continue to engage in its dialogue around Just Mercy. Several community groups have been reading the book alongside the students and will participate in a community dialogue on

February 10. Teachers who have been trained by Essential Partners will facilitate the conversation.

Winter sports teams continue to do well. Boys and girls basketball and boys hockey are undefeated. Girls hockey is 2-2-1 and are coming off a great win against Masco. Girls swim 3-1 and Boys Ski is 1-2 and Girls Ski is 2-2.

### **International Trip – Greece**

Principal Wulf explained that the trip is not going to be as viable. Ms. Maconi met with all the families involved with the trip, and many are going to be taking the voucher. They wish to seek a postponement of the Greece trip from this school year to 2022.

### **Motion**

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

**VOTED:** To postpone the high school's Greece trip from this school year to April 2022.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

### **Finance Report**

**Steve Cole** reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Meeting minutes were distributed. The meeting included a review of current fundraising and the financial loss update for Food Service. In addition, transfers were made to meet increased software costs and also to support school lunch/food services.

**David Hochheiser** asked about the fundraiser for \$6K. Answer: Golf tournament to benefit boys' soccer for new uniforms, practice shirts, jackets and awards. **Steve Cole** will find out if there was any revenue and will discuss at the next Finance meeting.

**David Hochheiser** asked about the deficit in Food Service. **Steve Cole** explained if we have full participation, then we generate more refunds from the Federal Government for school lunch program.

**Nancy Lysik** explained we get reimbursed for every meal we sell, but with fewer students in, fewer lunches are issued, so reimbursements are down. Food Service is doing all they can to make the revenue up in other ways.

**Donna Holaday** asked if furloughed staff in December was impacting the bottom line. **Nancy Lysik** stated some café staff has been furloughed and hours cut. However, unemployment related costs must be paid, as well as longevity. The amount we're saving is just not making up for the amount of lost lunches.

**Superintendent Gallagher** commented that many superintendents in the Commonwealth are talking about problems with reimbursements with the lunch program from the Federal Government.

**Nancy Lysik** said the State just issued today that the food service contract will be extended for one more year through June of 2022.

**David Hochheiser** asked if a system has been worked out for kids to eat breakfast in the morning. Answer: Yes.

### **Amend Request to Repair Tennis Courts**

Rosemary Turgeon and Greg Lynch explained that the original project was to upgrade the two existing tennis courts. They discussed that plan, as well as their grant writing activities. Currently, there has been interest to possibly expand the project to include creating three additional courts. If they are able to secure funding for three more courts down the road, could they have permission to put three more tennis courts on that piece. They are working with the Parks Dept. to write a CPA grant.

Committee discussion included possible locations for three new tennis courts, if there was opportunity to do so.

**Donna Holaday** asked if the courts had to be contiguous. Answer: no.

**David Hochheiser** is a little concerned switching to a vote for five courts without really seeing a plan for it. He is also concerned about funding.

**Bruce Menin** is concerned with losing the field. He wouldn't want to see two courts, then three new ones later in the same spot.

**Bruce Menin** feels a multi-tiered, multi-year plan is the way to go and suggests meeting with the Superintendent to walk the land.

### **Motion**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

**VOTED:** To give the Friends of Newburyport Nock Tennis Courts permission to restore the two tennis courts adjacent to the softball field and to explore building three additional tennis courts on the Low Street / Toppans Lane piece of land.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

### **Fundraising Policies**

**Sheila Spalding** read the three policies. She also stated that the Fundraising Permission form should be distributed to all organizations.

**Brian Callahan** asked if the form will be publicly posted. Answer: Yes.

### **Motion**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Donna Holaday** it was

**VOTED:** To adopt the Crowdfunding Policy (GBEBD) as written.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

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

**VOTED:** To adopt the Public Gifts to Schools Policy (KCD) as written.

**Motion Passed: 6 in favor; Bruce Menin abstained**

On a motion by **Bruce Menin** and seconded by **Donna Holaday** it was  
**VOTED:** To adopt the Student Fund-Raising Policy (JJE) as written.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

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

Steve Cole would like to modify the ending of the first sentence in paragraph three to include:  
teachers, and the state are all working together, on behalf of the children and students.

After a group discussion, it was decided to modify the sentence to say:

“teachers, staff and the state are all working together for the benefit of our children.”

Superintendent’s office will prepare four copies of the final letter on School Committee letterhead. All SC members will sign the letter.

### **Motion**

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

**VOTED:** To accept the letter with the minor modification.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

#### **School Committee Retreat Recap**

**Bruce Menin** provided a brief summary of the workshop that was facilitated by Dorothy Presser of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. The workshop was very helpful and helped to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the committee, as well as the job of the superintendent.

Bruce asked Superintendent Gallagher to post Dorothy Presser’s workshop materials, along with the minutes, on the website.

#### **Renaming Rupert A. Nock Middle School discussion**

**Sean Reardon** opened the conversation by stating he feels it is important to talk about Frank Cousin Jr.’s MLK speech at the Unitarian Church on January 17 and Charlie Collin’s letter to the Daily News regarding the Cousin family’s experience in 1941.

After much discussion and sharing of ideas, the Committee feels a conversation is needed, preferably in a public forum to include guest speakers. **Donna Holaday** and **Superintendent Gallagher** could speak with Michael Eatman as a possible facilitator as he is an independent person, and has been doing work with the school and city.

**Superintendent Gallagher** stated he could also contact Essential Partners who are skilled in facilitating community dialogue.

#### **Student Opportunity Act Plan (SOA)**

Superintendent Gallagher explained the plan basically is for additional funding that will be used to enhance two positions, a full-time reading coach working with the Faculty and a full-time reading interventionist working with the students. He also suggested that the Literacy Coordinators can do an in-depth presentation regarding the plan at a future school committee meeting.

### **Motion**

On a motion by **Donna Holaday** and seconded by **Bruce Menin** it was

**VOTED:** To approve the Student Opportunity Act plan.

### **Motion Passed Unanimously**

## **Superintendents Report**

### COVID Update

- Surveillance testing was completed on staff.
- NPS faculty and support staff will be vaccinated at the end of February.
- Cathy Riccio and the Medical Team are reviewing options for Pool testing for student groups which would provide important data to aid in decision making.
- The Medical Advisory Team continues to meet each Wednesday to review trends and discuss options available for surveillance testing and COVID vaccinations.

### Professional Development

- Michael Eatman continues to do cultural competency work on a regular basis with the Leadership team and building administrators.

### NEF

- The NEF continues to be a very strong supporter of our school system and community, donating over \$200K for various projects and enhancements. Superintendent Gallagher is extremely thankful for them.

### Budget

- Budget meetings were held last week and more will be held this coming week. A preliminary budget is being developed and will be presented at the February 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

### Enrollments

- Five students were homeschooled last year. This year 47 students being homeschooled, which is COVID related.
- Last year 234 students district-wide attended private schools. This year we have 211. More and more families are staying in Newburyport Public Schools, which Superintendent Gallagher thinks is a testament of the hard work of Faculty and support staff and the education that we're offering.

### School Choice

- Data from last year as well as this year will be looked at, and then grades will be looked at to see if anything can be opened for school choice.

**David Hochheiser** asked for clarification for the COVID vaccination dates. **Superintendent Gallagher** explained that if we are able to, we will use Moderna, and they are looking at the last week of February for the 1<sup>st</sup> dose (estimate Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose would be one month later.

**Sean Reardon** asked if there was any kind of early guidance from the Commissioner's Office as there must be other schools looking for ways to vaccinate their staff. Answer: Nothing specific known at this point, but at the last meeting with the Commissioner, he was hinting towards taking a look at those guidelines.

**Donna Holaday** gave a brief COVID update for the city. The Senior Community Center will start vaccines on February 12 and will run through April 16, Monday through Friday. The biggest concern for everybody is whether or not we can get vaccines, and that's what will impact whether or not we can get teachers vaccinated or, at least as many as possible, even if we have to break it up into different groups until we can get the vaccine.

### **New Business**

**Sean Reardon** and **Bruce Menin** suggested future meeting agenda items could be topics to tackle in public forums or working meetings we'd like to try to schedule this year, and looking at Mike Lukens calendar.

**Sean Reardon** suggested a future topic could be a public forum around diversity equity inclusion.

**Brian Callahan** would like to try Trello, a project management tool. It would not be an AOL violation to have it. Everyone will be able to log in, add things, and at a glance see where things are at. He will start set up this week.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by **Donna Holaday** and seconded by **Brian Callahan** it was

**VOTED** To adjourn the Organizational Meeting of the Newburyport School Committee  
at 8:29PM.

Motion Passed Unanimously