

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, October 1, 2012

Location: L. G. Nourse Elementary School Cafeteria

Attending: Committee Members: Chairman Andrew Mackie, Vice-Chairman Deniz Savas, Mr. Phillip Lynch, Mrs. Elizabeth McManus, and Mrs. Marge Werner. Interim Superintendent of Schools Christopher H. Martes and student representatives Bryce McCarthy and Tyler McNeill were also present.

Call to Order: Chairman Mackie called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to approve minutes of September 17, 2012 Open Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: Unanimous

Budget Transfers: None

Opening of School Report – Principal Catherine Luke:

Principal Catherine Luke welcomed the Committee to the L. G. Nourse School. Her second year is off to a great start, and she thanked all her supportive and professional staff for their hard work to make it happen. The school year started with 347 students, with 7 new registrations and 18 transfers out. Mrs. Luke announced the new staff members and also grade changes for present staff. Unit Leaders are Mrs. Sedell and Mrs. LaConte this year. The school received official notification from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that its accreditation has been extended to 2017. Seventy-three percent of the students read over the summer. Four open houses and orientation for various grades have taken place. MCAS scores are being analyzed, and the staff continues to work diligently to meet the needs of the students in the areas that need improvement. Pre-school friendly smart boards were purchased for Project Early with grant money. Each classroom now has a smart board. Mrs. Luke stated that it was her goal to get to know the district and the town better.

Mrs. Allison Isenstadt gave a brief report on the PTA activities and fundraising plans. The PTA supports Bully Guard, field trips, third grade dictionary purchases, and recess equipment. Plans for fundraising include after school karate, book fairs, cookie sale, holiday shop, Breakfast with Santa, Family Movie Night, and Teacher Appreciation Week.

Mrs. Monica Allen addressed the Committee to discuss fundraising for a Pre K – Kindergarten playground. The NAEYC noted that it was needed. This is a multi-year project and possibly could involve various community service groups such as Eagle Scouts.

Mrs. Werner stated that she would like to see Study Island paid from the school budget rather than by the PTO's. Dr. Martes agreed.

Overview of District MCAS Results – Mrs. Jennifer O'Neill:

Mrs. O'Neill reviewed changes since last September. She said the state gained a waiver to close the proficiency gap. There is a change in the sub groups, adding a tenth high needs sub group. Norton is classified as a Level II district. Curriculum revision was achieved to include common planning time for teachers to plan lessons together. All the hard work over the past few years has paid off and Norton Middle School and H. A. Yelle are designated as Level I schools. The other three schools are designated Level II schools, but each missed Level I by a just a few points. Mrs. O'Neill stated that 51 students will receive Adams Scholarships. Smart goals for teachers are part of the new evaluation system. As a Level II district, 20% of Title I funding must be put aside for professional development. The Committee commented on how proud it was of the Norton Middle School and H. A. Yelle School for attaining Level I status, and Mr. Mackie complimented Mrs. O'Neill for her grasp of the material. Mr. Savas cautioned not to focus on accomplishments, but on the areas that need improvement.

Superintendent Search Update – Mrs. Beth McManus and Mrs. Marge Werner:

There will be a modified committee with fewer members. The timeline was discussed. Mrs. McManus said that the advertisement for the position should begin in a week, applications should close in November, and interviews could begin in December or January. The Committee will solicit volunteers for the committee. Attendance at all meetings is imperative. Interviews will possibly take place over a two to three week period, possibly including Saturdays. The search committee should present a pool of two to five candidates to the School Committee in January. The School Committee is responsible for hiring the Superintendent. Dr. Martes felt that this timeline would result in strong candidates. Interview questions have already been written, and this would save time. Mrs. McManus suggested that the site visits be restricted to School Committee members, but Mr. Mackie felt that other members of the search committee offered different perspectives that were valuable during the last search.

School Department Capital Plan for Fall Town Meeting – Mr. Barry Nectow:

The Capital Improvement Plan for the Fall Town Meeting is similar to what was presented to the Finance Committee last spring. High priority expenditures include repairs to the air conditioning system at the J. C. Solmonese School, upgrading of network switches at Norton Middle School, a grounds vehicle, and replacement of a special education bus. Town Meeting will be held at Norton Middle School on October 29th.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve the Capital Improvement Plan as outlined by Mr. Nectow

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 5-0 in favor.

Fall Town Meeting Article for J. C. Solmonese Roof – Mr. Barry Nectow:

Dr. Martes recommended the Committee table this article until the next meeting on October 15th, when final figures on the project will be available.

FY '13 Budget Update – Mr. Barry Nectow:

Mr. Nectow reported that 95% of the funds have been spent or encumbered. There is approximately \$1,000,000 left unencumbered to cover things they can't anticipate. Some savings came from salaries. He is closely watching special education tuitions. Mr. Nectow is optimistic about the budget and will report monthly.

Personnel: No changes

Other:

Student representative Tyler McNeill was recently interviewed on his role as the student representative. The other student representative, Bruce McCarthy, will be interviewed in the near future.

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mrs. McManus to adjourn the meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 5-0 in favor

The meeting adjourned at 8:10 P.M.

Documents and Other Exhibits used at Meeting:

- Copy of September 17, 2012 Open Meeting Minutes
- Copy of MCAS PowerPoint presentation
- NPS Five Year Capital Improvements Report
- Budget Update Report

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, October 15, 2012 at J. C. Solmonese Elementary School.

Respectfully Submitted,
Christopher H. Martes, Ph.D.
Secretary pro tem
