

RECEIVED  
NORTON TOWN CLERK

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

2020 JUL -1 A 10:19

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Joint Meeting with Norton School Committee, Board of Selectmen,  
and Finance Committee

***Date of School Committee Meeting:*** Thursday, February 27, 2020

***Location:*** Norton Middle School Library

***Present:*** Committee Members: Chairman Kathleen Stern, Vice-Chairman Carolyn Gallagher, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mr. Deniz Savas, and Mr. Dan Sheedy. ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, School Business Administrator Matthew Wells, Director of Facilities Wade Lizotte, Director of Pupil Personnel Jeanne Sullivan, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, Town Manager Michael Yunits and members of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee

***Call to Order:*** Chairman Stern called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and announced that the meeting was being video recorded by Norton Cable Access for public record and asked if anyone else was recording the meeting.

***Pledge of Allegiance***

***Use of School Educational Facilities:***

Dr. Baeta referred to the packet of information relating to the facilities of the Norton Public Schools and the ongoing request for this information. He stated that he was irritated as his integrity was being questioned. He noted that it took a lot of work to put this information together.

It was noted that the Norton Public Schools has been seeing declining enrollment. We went through every building in the district and every classroom in the district and what is being presented is what these buildings look like.

Dr. Baeta referred to a multiple page handout which included interior maps of all of the schools. Discussions ensued as follows:

- LGN – 4 – 26 class size. It would be difficult to move around classrooms. Question asked about state recommended class sizes. Dr. Baeta stated in Grades K-1 that 20 or less is ideal.
- JCS – 4 – 25 class size. READS students housed at JCS. Some rooms are open classrooms. Rooms across from cafeteria are mechanical rooms. 2<sup>nd</sup> floor consists of classrooms, specials rooms and library.

- HAY – Would not recommending closing because of flexibility even if enrollment went down. Class size 3 – 25 class size. Central Office and READS office located at HAY.
- NMS – 2 – 22 class size. Two classrooms are used by BICO for which we receive funding for holding this program at Norton. BICO consists of 18 communities. READS program is similar and runs the biggest Deaf and Hard of Hearing program in the area. Adding our 22<sup>nd</sup> specialized classroom next year.
- Information was shared on specialized programs in each school.
- Bridge program at NHS for transitioning hospitalized students back into the classroom. All types of students are dealing with social emotional issues and are struggling with their own mental health.
- Adding new ELL teacher next year; we have 60 students that speak six languages other than English. We have been spending money using translation specialists.
- JCS preschool up to 111 students
- Looked at enrollment figures from October 1<sup>st</sup> and February 7<sup>th</sup>. Shifting of staff members next year to different grades due to enrollment.
- Approximately \$800K in school choice funds for 138 students
- READS funds go into facilities revolving account, providing a financial/educational win/win having the programs in Norton. Our students are learning sign language. We want to add ASL next year as a language.
- NESDEC provides enrollment studies for most schools in the Commonwealth. They take into consideration building permits, etc., birth rates. The cost is approximately \$3,800.
- NPS down 29 general ed teachers in the last 10 years. Overall impact is 10 because of increase in specialized classes / special ed as well as counselors, pt and ot.
- Potential for 40B with 60 units being built on JCS side of town.
- Bristol Aggie has a brand new facility with a cost to Norton. They will be expanding programs being offered. 41 students at Norton now considered vocational technical students because of our approved Chapter 74 programs.
- Boston Architectural College will soon be offering 3 credit online courses to Norton students for \$100.
- In discussions on another Chapter 74 program with BCC on alternative energy / wind energy
- This presentation has come about via a petition that was forwarded. People are welcome to visit the schools and new maps can be given out in September outlining any room changes.
- Question asked about actual occupancy, the amount of time rooms not occupied. Elementary level some teachers rotate to different buildings on different days, as well as OT and PT.
- Redistricting: HAY built before IDEA. Gained further ADA compliance with the window project.
- School Start Time Committee: to look at bus costs for neighborhood schools. Possibility of a PK-K school and two Grades 1 – 5 schools. Costs \$350k to bus all students.
- BICO currently looking for more space. We are looking to offer such programs on our own.
- May need to look at limits on number of School Choice students we can accept.
- Currently one international student from Mexico. Tuition for a year for a cultural exchange is \$12,200; \$14,200 for a Norton diploma. Today NPS accepted first Chinese student for next year. Four new preschool students in last month.



- Mrs. Cohen noted that putting this together was a tremendous amount of work due to an Article that was submitted last fall by a former member of the Board of Selectmen and wasn't moved on Town Meeting floor. Same person has had three public record requests. Feels this person cannot be an impartial moderator. Asked that everyone stand united and that all questions have been answered. Need to move forward. Ms. Deley said it wasn't moved at Town Meeting intentionally so not to spend \$45k. Looking for annual costs for each of the buildings, schools and municipal buildings. It was noted that NPS budget has line items detail by school. Discussion on article petitions ensued.

***FY 21 Budget Discussion:***

- Mr. Yunits noted that Joe Baeta, James, and Matt Wells have been meeting about FY21 budget and just tonight handed out the cherry sheet breakdown. Dr. Baeta said that the School Committee will finalize budget this week.
- Mr. Yunits discussed proposed two 40B projects: 100 units near McDonalds and 60 units near Norton Crossfit. 82 more units needed to go over the required 10%. Also noted that two buildings under construction in new industrial park and that TMobile facility is expanding. Cumberland Farms (next to HAY) in final stages.
- Update on LGN solar project: Dr. Baeta said that they will work with NPS to educate the public including our students.
- Mr. Yunits discussed other 40B projects in the works and explained the process.
- Dr. Baeta offered tours to anyone interested in seeing our schools, preferably when school is not in session.

***Update on RFQ for Energy Management Services:***

Mr. Wells advertised and five firms have requested the bid documents. Building tours being scheduled. Chapter 25 process: assigned a project manager for 20 years; run by state / grant programs. Firm plans all the projects. This would need to be a joint effort regarding utilities/costs. If we go forward with RFQ there is a cost, but the cost only comes through as a bill if we do nothing with the proposals brought forward. This is a collaboration which is all about efficiency. Tours being scheduled for all school and town buildings. Ultimately schools and town to collaborate depending on project.

***Other Business:***

Mr. Yunits reminded boards that there were five draft articles on the warrant:

- Fund Town Hall / Senior Center
- Fund Town Hall / Senior Center / Fields
- Purchase Land for Town Hall
- Purchase Land for Senior Center
- Purchase Land for Town Hall / Senior Center

Planning Board to hold a public information session before Town Meeting on the planning articles.

***Motion to Adjourn:***

MOTION: by Dan Sheedy

SECOND: by Deniz Savas

VOTE: 5 yes Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

***Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:***

- NPS Facilities / Enrollment Report

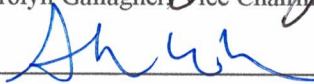
Respectfully Submitted,  
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.  
Secretary Pro Tem



Kathleen Stern, Chairman



Carolyn Gallagher, Vice Chairman



Sheri Cohen



Deniz Savas

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Sheedy

tlr