

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING

RECEIVED  
NORTON TOWN CLERK  
2020 JUL -1 A 10:19

***Date of School Committee Meeting:*** Thursday, March 26, 2020

***Location:*** Remote Participation

***Present:*** Committee Members: Chairperson Kathleen Stern, Vice-Chairperson Carolyn Gallagher, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mr. Deniz Savas, Mr. Dan Sheedy ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, Director of Pupil Services Jeanne Sullivan, School Business Manager Matthew Wells, Technology Director Karen Winsper, Student Representatives Cooper Smith and Caroline Daly

Dr. Baeta announced the following:

- This is a public meeting and is being recorded
- The meeting is based on an agenda that was posted
- All votes would require a roll call vote

***Call to Order:*** Chairperson Stern called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

***Student Representatives Update:***

Caroline and Cooper addressed the Committee and noted the addition of online AP exam review sessions and that they were very helpful. They stated that they miss school and that the teachers were doing a great job checking in. It is heartbreaking as Seniors but they are keeping their hopes up. They talked about the article in the Sun Chronicle written by NHS student Alexis Pryharski, "The Senior Year That Wasn't". They have been keeping busy playing games with their families, watching TV and reading.

Dr. Baeta stated that a phone call with NHS student leadership was being scheduled as well as a call with student leaders of the class of 2020 in an effort to hear from students as changes are made. Dr. Baeta also stated that we would celebrate the Class of 2020 after all of this with activities.

***Response to National and State Emergency:***

Dr. Baeta updated the Committee. The original date for school closing was March 13<sup>th</sup> for two weeks which was then extended to three weeks. Now the date is May 4<sup>th</sup>. Earlier today we received Remote Learning Recommendations during the COVID-19 School Closures. We now have to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the NTA regarding getting students work and grading. The MTA is supporting the guidelines and the leadership team will be working with the NTA on a concrete approach to teaching and learning and meeting the needs of all students.

Dr. Baeta thanked Mike Vaccaro from Chartwells Food Services, as well as Matt Wells and Wade Lizotte. We have been serving food for 10 days now with over 1,000 meals served today (breakfast and lunch, for Thursday and Friday). We have been serving 40 to 45 non NPS students who are residents of the town but attending other schools or are a part of a NPS family. Process is going very smoothly. Happy to note we started right on day one. We are not a huge F&R district, but we are starting to see younger families going for food stamps and unemployment.

Dr. Baeta feels that SEL will be a big issue and Jeanne Sullivan and Vinny Cerce have been working to get information online. A webinar with Brown University's Dr. Plummer is coming up. We are going to push to have parents get online to watch.

Dr. Baeta noted that he meets with the Town every Monday at 2 p.m. along with Matt Wells.

Mrs. Gallagher wanted to thank Matt, Wade, and Mike publicly for supporting families. She also noted that back in 2018 Matt and Mike planned ahead and came up with a crisis plan and wanted to thank them for their efforts.

Dr. Baeta also wanted to thank Champions for donating snacks to food services. Champions is filing with the state to extend the number of students in their summer program as they are at capacity already.

Jeanne Sullivan noted that a survey was sent out to families and if they are in need to let us know. An additional survey was sent out looking for people who wanted to help in any way. As of this morning there were about 16 responses from people who were in need and around 39 responses from people who wanted to help.

***Vote on Hourly Employees' Wages:***

Custodians, Administrative Assistants, Para-Professionals and mini-bus drivers under federal and state law are considered hourly employees. The Commissioner of Education is highly recommending that we keep these people employed throughout this emergency as we will need them on day one upon return. Custodians are coming in Mondays-Thursdays and the Admin Assistants and Paras are doing professional development. This is all budgeted money for which we have contractual obligations.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Approve Wages for Hourly Employee

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

ROLL CALL VOTE: Dan Sheedy – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes; Kathleen Stern – Yes    4 – 0 Motion Carries



***Vote to Allow Superintendent to Negotiate (and Recommend to School Committee for Final Approval) Potential Contract Memorandums of Understanding with Unions (Norton Teachers' Association, Norton Paraprofessionals and Administrative Assistants):***

Dr. Baeta stated that we are now entering into agreements clarifying remote learning at home and what it would look like for these three different unions. The custodial union is currently working, is fine with working, and they want to work. They are considered our most essential workers.

Dr. Baeta would enter agreements through the School Committee. Meetings would be posted and recommendations would be made to the Committee. Mr. Savas recommended setting up rolling meetings for the purpose of finalizing these agreements. Meetings would be scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6:30 p.m.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Allow Superintendent to enter into negotiations under Memorandums of Understanding for Norton Teachers' Association, Norton Paraprofessionals, and Administrative Assistants

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes      5 – 0 Motion Carries

***Vote to Continue Food Services Program for School Aged Children PreK-12:***

Dr. Baeta noted that this was just a support statement from the Committee to continue the program with a financial discussion to follow. It is not recommended that we stop the program as we are providing approximately 150 families/meals every day.

Mrs. Cohen asked if it was possible to open the program to senior citizens who are struggling. Mr. Wells said that we can feed as many as needed and that we are just waiting on word if we should do so. He is working with Beth (Rossi), talking regularly to understand the needs of the Town. Currently the Cupboard of Kindness is closed until April 6<sup>th</sup>.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to approve to continue food services program in Norton as needed

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes      5 – 0 Motion Carries

Mr. Savas asked if we were in any position to receive any return via the Free and Reduced kids. Mr. Wells stated that as of now Federal reimbursement is only open for districts with greater than 50% on Free and Reduced. He has a call with DESE tomorrow regarding this issue. Reimbursement may be available through MEMA and FEMA. Dr. Baeta noted that since it's an election year it may be time to put pressure on our two Senators to get something in play.

***Other Business: Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance***

- Digital learning and 1:1 for Grades 3-12. The idea of 1:1 as a support is very different from online teaching and learning. Remote learning is project based etc.
- Continuing virtual meetings with staff

- Three positive cases of virus in Norton and the numbers are growing.
- Mrs. Stern brought up the community service graduation requirement. Dr. Baeta noted that further discussion is needed but some of the things that could be done is calling a loved one, or checking in on a grandparent. We can expand our definition of community service to include support family. Mr. Sheedy noted there could be a pen pal type of system for students to reach out to our senior citizens.
- Mr. Wells addressed the Committee and noted that Sheri Cohen and Kathleen Stern are set as the designee and alternate for warrant signatures. In light of the COVID-19 crisis, if both were to be quarantined we would not legally be able to sign warrants. We would like to move forward a vote pertaining to the warrant signature designee that would set up all members of the school committee as alternates.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to Approve Sheri Cohen to be designee to sign warrants, with Kathleen Stern designated as the first alternate, and any other available member of the School Committee designated as an alternate in the event the named designee and first alternate are not available.

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes 5 – 0 Motion Carries

All guests unmuted and were told they could ask questions; no response.

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallaher to adjourn meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Cohen

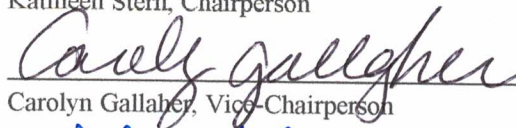
ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern-yes; Carolyn Gallaher-yes; Sheri Cohen-yes; Deniz Savas-yes; Dan Sheedy-yes 5-0 Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

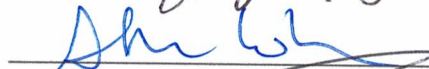
Respectfully Submitted,  
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.  
Secretary Pro Tem



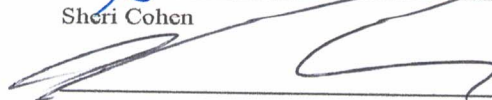
Kathleen Stern, Chairperson



Carolyn Gallaher, Vice-Chairperson



Sheri Cohen



Deniz Savas

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