

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

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NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Thursday, April 23, 2020

Location: Remote Participation

Present: Committee Members: Chairperson Kathleen Stern, Vice-Chairperson Carolyn Gallagher, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mr. Deniz Savas, and Mr. Dan Sheedy. ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Administrator Matthew Wells, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jeanne Sullivan, Director of Technology Karen Winsper, Director of Counseling and Social Emotional Learning PreK-12 Vincent Cerce, Director of Facilities Wade Lizotte, Student Representatives Caroline Daly and Cooper Smith, and Senator Paul Feeney

Call to Order: Chairperson Stern called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. noting remote participation only and that the meeting is being taped.

Update Relative to the COVID-19 National Emergency:

Senator Feeney addressed the Committee, starting off by thanking all for what they were doing, noting that these are trying times and how we were in the midst of a surge. We had gone from a decline in cases, showing progress, to another spike. The Senator stated that more testing is necessary across the state, but felt that hospitals are well prepared and that people are staying home. The surge is here and hospitals have not been overwhelmed.

On the school side, the Senator felt that Norton has risen to the occasion, keeping students engaged, supplying meals, keeping families safe and seeing they have what they need. He understands that the senior class is missing out on proms/graduations and offered help coming up with creative ways to recognize the students.

The Senator noted that he didn't know what the budget will be like but a \$4.7 - \$6 billion shortfall for FY21 is projected. There still isn't a plan about voting on the budget, which looks like will be a 10% reduction. The Rainy Day Fund is stable. The State is looking for the Federal Government to offer aid. He will get numbers to us when he can.

Questions were asked regarding buses, tech hotspots, and September re-opening. Regarding buses and other vendors, it varies by district. They are working on guidance for districts. Programs for tech hotspots in low income communities is being worked on and hopefully there will be measurable progress soon. Regarding reopening, working with vendors for PPE and cleaning supplies. A task force is putting together a plan.

Dr. Baeta noted that food services personnel should be recognized as first responders, noting that 455 meals were distributed today, including 200 seniors/adults. He also discussed the continuing

concern about seniors that haven't passed the MCAS, although there aren't too many in Norton. Students with struggles aside from academics should get high school diplomas.

Senator Feeney said that discussions are happening and that it is right to recognize food services workers and that they should be included in priority testing. If one is sick, then they all have to go home.

Dr. Baeta asked Senator Feeney to look into moving date to June 30th from June 15th for notifying public employees of layoffs, being more aligned to Town Meeting. The Senator stated that the next general municipal bill was coming out that will consider these things. He will bring it up to the chairwoman of the committee.

Local update:

- Number of lunches being distributed increasing
- Working on a calendar for staff and then students for access to personal items / lockers.
- Working with area towns regarding busing. By statute we only pay for services being provided.
- We are not in a position to send out bus information at this point.
- Discussion on holding Town Meeting outside, which is difficult to do.
- Upcoming MIAA meeting regarding restructuring of organization. Discussions on costs, i.e., transportation. NHS hockey program now considered Division 1 because of Sharon's enrollment.
- ITAC donations – The organization has received a lot of support and has helped 24 families since March 26th.

Vote on Recommendation to Waive Class of 2020 Community Service Requirement:

Mr. Cerce noted that the hours couldn't be done safely. About 70 students hadn't fulfilled the requirement, with close to 30 students waiting for paperwork for February, March, and April hours. The National Honor Society has their own separate hours requirement. On average, 15-20 hours of service hours owed.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Waive Class of 2020 Community Service Requirement

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

ROLL CALL VOTE: Kathleen Stern – Yes; Sheri Cohen – Yes; Dan Sheedy – No; Deniz Savas – Yes; Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; 4 – 1 – 0 Motion Carries

Vote to Cancel Final Exams as Recommended:

Discussion ensued regarding cancellation of final exams.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to Cancel Final Exams

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

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

Discussion on Director Position Process and Vote:

Dr. Baeta congratulated Mrs. Jeanne Sullivan (Director of Pupil Personnel Services) for being named Executive Director of Bi-County Collaborative. He would like to restructure the position to Director of Student Services. The candidate is recommended by the Superintendent and voted by the School Committee. The process for hiring will all be done virtually with Round 1 and Round 2 interviews, and then a Final Round. School Committee rep needed to serve on hiring committee in 1st Round, with the Chair of the Committee being involved in Final Round.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Restructure position of Director of Pupil Personnel Services to Director of Student Services

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

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

Discussion on 8th Grade Field Trip:

All field trips are being cancelled. Currently looking at reimbursing process. It will take weeks for Town Hall to process the refunds. At another time discussions/vote to take place regarding refunds. Trying to figure out best way to complete.

Other Business: Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

- Mrs. Gallagher and Mr. Savas to have conference call about contract negotiations tomorrow (Friday) to discuss offer.
- On Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. meeting with Superintendent, School Committee, Town Manager, Town Counsel, Moderator, Board of Selectmen, FinCom, candidates running for Town Moderator, and Matt Wells and Wade Lizotte regarding Town Meeting/elections.
- Next School Committee meeting to be held on Thursday, May 7th.
- NPS wishes to celebrate NHS custodian, Wayne Hudson who had 20+ years of service at NPS. His loss was very personal to the Baeta family. Comments were made about how helpful he always was.
- Mrs. O'Neill discussed contractual course reimbursements and the new online procedure being proposed. A vote to accept the new online format followed.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to Move Course Reimbursements to an Online Format

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

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

- Mrs. Stern noted that MASC resolutions are due June 1st.

Guests were asked if there were any comments. Peter Wiggins had entered a comment noting the good work Norton was doing.

- Caroline Daly noted that the Class of 2020 Officers had a meeting with Mr. Dolleman and that a survey was going out to get information from students regarding celebratory ideas.
- Mrs. Gallagher noted that there were comments on social media regarding concerns about the transition for students from 3rd to 4th Grade; 5th Grade to Middle School, and 8th grade to high school, as well as celebrations for the senior class.

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallaher to adjourn meeting

SECOND: by Sheri Cohen

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

Next meeting date: Thursday, April 9, 2020

The meeting adjourned at 7:41p.m.

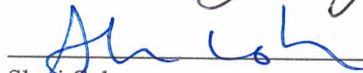
Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem



Kathleen Stern, Chairperson



Carolyn Gallagher, Vice-Chairperson



Sheri Cohen



Deniz Savas

Daniel Sheedy

tlr