

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK
2020 JUL -1 A 10:20

Date of School Committee Meeting: Thursday, June 11, 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, and Student Representatives Caroline Daly and Cooper Smith.

Call to Order: Vice Chairperson Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. noting that the meeting is being taped.

Vote to Approve Minutes of May 14th and May 28, 2020 Remote Open School Committee Meetings and May 14, 2020 Remote Executive Session Meeting:

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to Approve Minutes of May 14, 2020 Open Meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

ROLL CALL VOTE: Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Kathleen Stern – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes 4 Yes 1 Abstain Motion Carries

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Approve Minutes of May 14, 2020 Executive Session Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

ROLL CALL VOTE: Carolyn Gallagher – Yes; Dan Sheedy – Yes; Deniz Savas – Yes; Kathleen Stern – Yes 4 Yes 1 Abstain Motion Carries

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to Approve Minutes of May 28, 2020 Open Meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

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

Warrants:

Mrs. Cohen reported that she reviewed and approved the following warrants, to be entered into the public record:

- May 29, 2020 \$423,765.23
- June 5, 2020 \$131,353.04

Horizon Beverage Donation:

Dr. Baeta introduced Mr. Michael Epstein, Chief Operating Officer and General Counsel for Horizon Beverage in Norton. Horizon made a \$5,000 donation to the Norton Public Schools to be used to support the distribution of food to children, students, and adults in Norton in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Epstein stated that they are proud to be a part of the Norton community and feel a responsibility to be a good neighbor. In the past the Norton Public Schools have turned to Horizon for help for fun things such as athletics and DECA, but this time it is more for need by those impacted by COVID. Mr. Epstein noted that writing the check is the easy part. He said that they were happy to help and thanked NPS for including them.

Mrs. Gallagher said that many families have been impacted by the generosity of Horizon and probably don't even know it. Mrs. Cohen thanked Mr. Epstein, stating that they have been incredible in the past.

Vote on NEED Memorial Bench:

Dr. Baeta introduced NEED members present at the meeting: Kate Conway, Susan Deady, and Gina Heaney. Ms. Conway, NEED President said a few words about NEED member Beth Blakeley who recently passed away. Ms. Conway noted how Beth was very involved including being on every parent board. Approval by the School Committee is being sought to purchase a bench to be placed outside the NHS auditorium in memory of Beth.

An audience member asked if any financial donations were needed. People were instructed to visit the NEED Facebook page or website to make donations.

Committee members shared stories about Beth. Dr. Baeta noted that he was honored to be able to attend a private graduation for Beth's daughter, considering it a highlight of his career as a Superintendent.

The meeting was opened to public comment at this time. Mr. Savas asked if he was still able to get an "N" on his driveway. He was told that this fundraiser would be starting up again.

MOTION: by Mrs. Stern to Approve NEED Memorial Bench

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

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

Student Representatives Update:

Caroline said that the Class of 2020 parade was amazing and a great way to celebrate. Cooper noted that it was nice to see the teachers and to be able to have a goodbye. They also spoke about how well done the scholarship awards night was. Mrs. Gallagher said that her family watched it together and she was surprised at how enjoyable it was, noting that nice memories were still created. Also, she is hoping that the parade will become a new tradition.

Dr. Baeta introduced the new Student Representatives for 2020-2021: Malia Savas, Grade 10 (current Grade 9 student) and Zoe Duran, Grade 11 (current Grade 10 student). Mrs. Gallagher welcomed the new members and noted that the student update is the best part of each meeting.

Dr. Baeta and the Committee gave kudos to Cooper and Caroline for the excellent job they did over the years as School Committee student reps. It was stated more than once that Caroline and Cooper have been the best student representatives that we have ever had.

Cooper thanked the School Committee and teachers. Caroline said that Norton was a great place to grow up. She appreciates that the focus and priority is that of the students.

Dr. Baeta said that the Class of 2020 will be seated together on stage at graduation.

Update on Extended School Year Program:

Mrs. Sullivan shared with the Committee a memo regarding the 2020 Extended School Year program. The program is for students on IEP's who are found eligible. We have been waiting for guidance from DESE. A remote program has been organized, but we will consider in person services for the neediest of students as the summer goes on. The program runs three days a week from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. and includes a range of activities, nurse check-ins, and OT/sensory activities – similar to an in-person program. There will be ten classes with 8 to 11 students in each class and one teacher and one or two paras. Approximately 50 students will receive tutor services and 50 will receive therapy. A survey sent to parents indicated that they did not want their children attending an in school program.

Cost of the program is \$86,000, down from \$93,000 last year. The savings is due to not hiring the young adult assistants.

Dr. Baeta noted that he had a problem with the contents of a memo that came out from DESE indicating that district's should be choosing the neediest students for the program. He said we could be prone to legal issues as we are required to provide for all students.

Mrs. Sullivan noted that once more guidance is received decisions can be made regarding the fall. She is hoping that preliminary guidance may be forthcoming next week. Dr. Baeta said that he was hearing that schools would be opening in the fall, not just a hybrid model.

Reopening of School Steering Committee Membership:

Dr. Baeta read the names of those that are a part of the Reopening of School Steering Committee. He said that a READS and a BICO representative would be added.

The first meeting comprised of a general overview and members were positive.

Mr. Sheedy asked if the State was defining the parameters of opening or if it is a local decision. Dr. Baeta said that decisions from the State should be made in mid-July with specifics given in August.

Update and Vote on Athletic Complex Town Meeting Article:

The maker of an article in the warrant is required to withdraw the article. In this case the athletic complex article, due to the current financial conditions, and following the lead of the Board of

Selectmen, is requested to be withdrawn. This would give the School Committee the opportunity to join the Select Board for a future article. The Select Board voted to move their article to October Town Meeting.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to withdraw article for the FY21 Town Meeting as currently published
SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

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

Recommendation and vote on FY21 Fees:

A list of fee based programs was shared with the Committee. Mr. Wells said that it is recommended that the fees remain level, noting it is difficult to decrease fees at this time.

Dr. Baeta said that we will need to look at Little Lancers Preschool tuition if it is a remote program; may need to come back to the Committee for a vote to make changes to the tuition rates. Mrs. Gallagher asked if there was the option of all grades going back in the fall but not preschool. Preschool is mandated so this could bring up another interesting discussion.

Dr. Baeta said that the Committee could vote and then reconsider at a later time. He shared some financial data regarding fees including buses, athletics, clubs, and preschool. Mr. Savas said that it wasn't fair to parents and that he was against raising fees and that he is tired of us charging the highest fees in the state. Mrs. Cohen stated that parents need to get mad enough and go out and vote.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to keep FY21 fees without an increase
SECOND: by Mr. Savas

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

Discussion of FY21 1/12 Budget:

Mr. Wells shared with the Committee what he was filing with the Town for July 1st if a 1/12 budget is needed.

A 1/12 budget is an annual budget divided by 12 and is only necessary if Town Meeting is deemed unsafe and doesn't happen.

Discussion on Superintendent Evaluation Process:

Dr. Baeta shared an evaluation document with the Committee. Committee members complete individual forms and the Chair compiles the information. The Chair meets with the Superintendent and the evaluation is made public. Dr. Baeta asked the Committee to move forward to have the evaluation done soon. He already filled out the goals portion. He would like the evaluation done during June. Goals were reported publicly in January.

Other Business:

- Next meeting to be held on June 25th with an executive session to discuss negotiations.
- Meeting prior to Town Meeting on June 27th.
- Dr. Baeta was part of a Superintendents' Learning Council today and comprised of Superintendents from around the country.
- Dr. Baeta thanked the School Committee and said that he couldn't do his job without their support. He also thanked his admin team and support staff.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to Adjourn

SECOND: by Mr. Savas

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

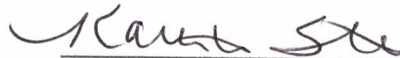
The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Next meeting date: Thursday, June 25, 2020

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Memo to Superintendent from Mrs. Sullivan regarding 2020 Extended School Year Program
- NPS FY2021 Fees Chart
- NPS FY2021 1/12th Budget
- Draft Superintendent Evaluation form

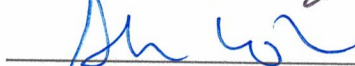
Respectfully Submitted,
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem



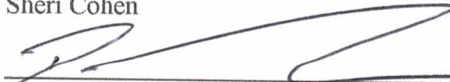
Kathleen Stern, Chairperson



Carolyn Gallagher, Vice-Chairperson



Sheri Cohen



Deniz Savas

Daniel Sheedy