

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, January 7, 2013

Location: Norton Middle School Auditorium

Attending: Committee Members: Chairman Andrew Mackie, Vice-Chairman Deniz Savas, Mrs. Elizabeth McManus, and Mrs. Marge Werner. Mr. Phillip Lynch was absent. 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 Mr. Savas to approve minutes of the November 19, 2012 Executive Session.

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 3-yes, 1-abstain Motion carries

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve minutes of the December 3, 2012 Open Meeting.

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

J. C. Solmonese School Playground Update – Principal Riitta Bolton and Solmonese Parent Organization:

Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, on behalf of the Solmonese Parent Organization, gave an update for the project. Approximately \$56,000 has been raised and the components of the playground have been delivered. The old playground is 27 years old and as repairs were not possible, it has been taken down a little at a time. The SPO has held many fundraisers over the last few years, and also wished to thank the JCS community, staff, various town businesses, and especially the family of the late Chris Condon for their generous contributions to the project. The structure will accommodate 70-100 children at a time and also has an equal amount of play area underneath as well as above. The second phase of this project will include a memorial to Chris Condon, former JCS school adjustment counselor. The Committee and Dr. Martes applauded the group for the dedication and hard work on this project.

Norton Hockey Organization Presentation – Mr. Rick Palin:

A large group of parents, students, and organizers were present to request School Committee approval to offer hockey at Norton High School. Mr. Rick Palin began with an overview of the Norton Hockey Organization and its financial plan to support the sport, which will be fully

funded by the organization. They also made a request to add an additional \$250 to the sports user fee for hockey players, for a total of \$500 per athlete. The sport will follow all MIAA and school regulations. High school principal Megan Lafayette had no objections and felt it was a great opportunity to offer the students.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve hockey at NHS beginning in 2013-2014

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to add \$250 to the user fee for hockey, for a total of \$500

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

The meeting went into a brief recess to allow parents and students to leave.

Vote to Approve New Courses at Norton High School - Mrs. Megan Lafayette:

Mrs. Diane Martin explained the components of the a proposed math course, Advanced Math Topics – Cinemath. NHS is lacking an honors level math course. An additional course is needed since Algebra I is now taught in the 8th grade. The course will concentrate on how math is featured in movies and TV shows.

Mr. Jason Henry told the Committee that interest in science courses has diminished and he is hopeful that a Zoology offering will raise interest again. The course would include textbook and lab work.

Mr. Richard Godmintz presented Sports Reading and Writing as a elective course designed to enable students to appreciate sports writing as a literary genre similar to journalism and to build critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. He was also hopeful that this course may spark interest in resurrecting the school newspaper.

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to approve Advanced Math Topics, Zoology, and Sports Reading and Writing beginning in the 2013-2014 school year.

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

School Safety Update – Dr. Chris Martes:

The School Committee met in executive session on January 5, 2013 with Police Chief Brian Clark to discuss safety issues. The school department has an outstanding relationship with the police and fire departments. These departments are proactive and have very good plans in place. Detective Franco is the school resource officer, and the district relies on the training police have to help practice emergency procedures. Dr. Martes said the district has safe buildings and will stay on the cutting edge of new practices and technology. The district is in a good place, and ahead of many others.

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

Interviews of the four finalists, Bonny Gifford, Allen Himmelberger, Patricia Lally, and Joseph Baeta, were held on Saturday, January 5, 2013. The Committee decided to name two semi-finalists and invite them to visit the district on Thursday, January 10th, with a final interview that evening. They felt it was a wonderful pool of candidates. Each member stated their top two candidates, and Bonny Gifford and Joseph Baeta were the unanimous choices. A meeting was scheduled for Thursday evening to hold final interviews and hopefully name a superintendent, pending contract negotiations. Mrs. McManus and Mrs. Werner praised the search committee for their commitment and dedication during such a busy time of year.

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to offer a final interview to Bonny Gifford and Joseph Baeta on Thursday, January 10, 2013

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

Athletics and Clubs & Activities Revolving Accounts – Mr. Barry Nectow:

Currently, the Athletic Department and the High School Clubs and Activities share a revolving account. As both programs grow, the accounting process is becoming inefficient and time consuming. Mr. Nectow requested that the shared account be named the Athletic Revolving Account and establish a new account for High School Clubs and Activities. The new fund conforms to Chapter 71, Section 47 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to rename the current account as the Athletic Revolving Account and establish a new account, the High School Clubs and Activities Revolving Account.

SECOND: by Mrs. McManus

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

Town Meeting Article Discussion:

The School Department is preparing two articles for consideration at the May 2013 Town Meeting. The first article is to consider transferring approximately \$93,000 remaining from the Feasibility Study phase of the High School Building Project to the Building Project. A vote is required by Town Counsel even though the overall project budget approved in June, 2011 included this amount. Once approved, the funds will be available for use in the project.

The second article will be a placeholder for the purpose of funding additional security elements at the high school. The current estimate of such improvements is \$100,000. The project budget includes a certain level of security, but the administration would like to upgrade what is included in the project. At this time there are no funds available in the project budget to fund the upgrades. In addition to this article, the funds have been added to the Town 5-Year Capital Plan for consideration at Town Meeting.

The Committee felt obligated to live within the project budget. These articles will be presented for a vote at the January 28th meeting and submitted to the Town by January 31st.

Other:

The Committee was pleased that Norton Hockey Organization was able to present its proposal.

Personnel: None

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to adjourn

SECOND: by Mrs. Werner

VOTE: 4-0 Motion carries

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 P.M.

Documents and Other Exhibits used at Meeting:

- PowerPoint and documents from Norton Hockey Organization
- Background information for new high school courses
- Information on revolving accounts

NEXT MEETING DATE: Thursday, January 10, 2013 at Norton Middle School Library

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