

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING

***Date of School Committee Meeting:*** Monday, February 10, 2014

***Location:*** Norton Middle School Auditorium

***Attending:*** Committee Members: Chairperson Deniz Savas, Mrs. Valerie Desmond, Mr. Phillip Lynch, and Mr. Andrew Mackie. Mrs. Marge Werner was absent. Also present: Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Director of Operations and Finance Barry Nectow, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer O'Neill, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jeanne Sullivan, Student Representatives Cassidy McDonald and Tyler McNeill.

***Call to Order:*** Chairman Savas called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

***Pledge of Allegiance:***

***Approval of Meeting Minutes:***

MOTION: by Mr. Lynch to approve the minutes of January 27, 2014 Open Session

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

***Project 351 - 2014 Participant – Mr. Ronnie Goldstein:***

Mr. Goldstein gave a brief description of Project 351, which includes students from all 351 school districts in the state. Governor Patrick began this service project four years ago to honor Grade 8 students for their commitment to school and community service. This year Bobby Portway was selected to attend the day of service in Boston on Saturday, January 18<sup>th</sup>. He reported that the day began at Faneuil Hall, and the student ambassadors were assigned service projects to work on for the day. His group painted murals in an elementary school in Roxbury. The day ended with a dinner at the State House. The Committee thanked him for his involvement in the school and community.

***Student Representatives Update:***

The students reported that some of the science classes are taking part in the MIT Energy Leaders of Tomorrow in Boston. Cassidy reported that several members of the Swim Team have qualified for the state competition. Tyler reported that he will participate in a UN Model Debate, in conjunction with the Monterey Institute of Technology (Mexico), via Skype. The English Honor Society will have a movie night, and the History Honor Society is holding a March Madness Fundraiser at Alberto's. Many high school students are helping with the JCS Science Fair.

***Full-Day Kindergarten Feasibility Study Results:***

Jennifer O'Neill chaired a committee consisting NPS staff as well as community members to study full-day Kindergarten. Results of the survey have been posted on the district web page. Their recommendation is based on survey data from the local community, parent feedback, a multi-year budget analysis, and a comparison of programs in neighboring districts. Currently Norton offers two options for Kindergarten, the standard program which is half-day for two and a half hours, and the full-day tuition program, currently \$3000. The surveys were developed with the input of the entire community. They were distributed to local area preschools, and sent home with all Pre-K to Grade 5 students. A total of 250 surveys were returned. Results indicated that 86% of respondents believe that full-day Kindergarten would help their child be more prepared for future learning. Also, 85% believe that Norton should implement a full-day program, and 89% would be interested in enrolling their child in a full-day program if offered. On the question of what would prevent them from enrolling in the full-day program, 11% said it was too long a day for their child, and 81% said the program cost. The Budget Subcommittee reported the following key points of the project:

- The first year of the budget assumes class size of 22, with a teacher and paraprofessional in each room
- Grant revenue remains level funded throughout the project
- Free revenue (revolving revenue) is no longer available
- Mid-day transportation is no longer needed
- Chapter 70 funding (state aid) increases in year two, based on the formula for enrollment. The formula is complex and even in a flat enrollment projection, Chapter 70 aid will increase in year two and partially offset the increased cost of converting to tuition-free full-day Kindergarten

The projected cost of the program in year one is approximately \$250,000. In year two, this amount is reduced by \$142,000 from increased Chapter 70 state aid.

The Full-Day Kindergarten Feasibility Committee recommended that the district implement full-day Kindergarten for all entering students beginning in September, 2014. A full day of school allows Kindergartners the opportunity for more exploration and development of curriculum topics with increased time for hands-on learning experiences. It would also allow teachers and instructional support staff to provide early interventions, building stronger foundational skills in order to prepare students for the academic and social expectations of first grade.

The Committee voted 4-0 to close the regular session and enter the Public Hearing on the FY '15 School Department Budget.

***Public Hearing for Proposed Fiscal 2015 School Department Budget:***

The Committee met on Saturday, February 8<sup>th</sup> for the purpose of finalizing the budget. No vote was taken at that meeting. Although the district has made steady academic progress, it must not become stagnant. Over the past few years Norton has received short term infusions of federal monies, but now all of it is gone. Over the last four years every effort was made to insure that every dollar was spent wisely. Significant staff reductions were made in an effort to save

teaching positions and not have an adverse effect on the classroom. Having reviewed each individual budget item at the previous public forum on January 16<sup>th</sup>, Dr. Baeta highlighted the components of the FY '15 budget including a full-time school resource officer, Special Education staff, and full-day tuition-free Kindergarten. Dr. Baeta made the statement, "We can do better, we must do better, and together I believe we will do better". His recommendation for the FY 2015 budget is \$25,050,101, an increase of \$1,388,234, which is 5.87%.

		% Increase
<u>Mandates - Contractual</u>	\$981,984	4.15%
Salaries		
Transportation – Regular/SPED		
Instructional Supplies		
SPED – Fixed Cost Increase		
<u>Mandates – Legal</u>	\$71,250	0.30%
0.5 FTE ELL Teacher		
1.0 Teacher for Social Emotional Room		
<u>Reinstatements</u>	\$85,000	0.36%
1.0 FTE Technology Director		
<u>New Programs</u>		
Full-Day Tuition-Free Kindergarten	\$250,00	1.06%
Sub Total – Requests	\$1,388,234	5.87%
<b><u>FY15 Budget Request</u></b>	<b><u>\$25,050,101</u></b>	<b><u>5.87%</u></b>

MOTION: by Mrs. Desmond to close the Public Hearing on the FY'15 Budget and return to regular session

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

MOTION: by Mr. Lynch to approve the FY'15 Budget as recommended by Dr. Baeta

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

***Other:***

There was a brief discussion on the March 29<sup>th</sup> Open House at the high school.

***Adjourn:***

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 P.M.

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

- FY '15 Budget Documents
- Full-Day Kindergarten Budget
- Recommendation by the Full-Day Kindergarten Feasibility Committee

***NEXT MEETING DATES:***

February 24, 2014, prior to the Special Town Meeting

March 3, 2014, Regular Meeting, Norton Middle School

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

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Deniz Savas, Chairperson

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Marge Werner, Vice Chairperson

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Valerie Desmond

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Phillip Lynch

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Andrew Mackie