

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING

***Date of School Committee Meeting:*** Monday, March 3, 2014

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

***Attending:*** Committee Members: Chairperson Deniz Savas, Mr. Phillip Lynch, and Mr. Andrew Mackie. Mrs. Marge Werner was absent and Mrs. Valerie Desmond will arrive later. 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 February 8, 2014 open and executive sessions, and February 10, 2014 open meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Mackie

VOTE: 3-0 in favor motion carries

The Committee deferred the vote on the minutes of the February 24<sup>th</sup> meeting until Mrs. Desmond arrived as there would only be two votes because Mr. Mackie did not attend that meeting.

***Student Representatives Update:***

Cassidy McDonald and Tyler McNeill reported that the English Honor Society held a movie night recently and gave short readings at the Yelle School in recognition of Dr. Seuss Day. The French Honor Society participated in Mardi Gras activities. The Math Department is planning the annual trip to Six Flags. The Senior Class is presenting two short plays on March 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> in the newly renovated auditorium. "Mr. Norton High" talent presentation will take place next Thursday.

Mrs. Desmond arrived at 6:45 and the Committee voted on the minutes of February 24 meeting held prior to the Town Meeting.

MOTION: by Mr. Lynch to approve the minutes of February 24, 2014 open meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 3-0 in favor motion carries

***Review of 2014-2015 School Calendar Option:***

The traditional calendar is proposed with school beginning after Labor Day. December 23<sup>rd</sup> is an early release day for Christmas break, returning on January 5<sup>th</sup>. February and April vacations are scheduled. The last day of school is June 19<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Baeta said he received a request from a parent to eliminate the February vacation. Any changes should be considered two years ahead due to the impact on schedules. The administration can look into options that will save days. A survey for parents and teachers could also be helpful in planning for the future. The Committee also discussed the half-day before Thanksgiving. The calendar will be discussed again at a future meeting before a final vote is taken.

***Discussion of User Fees:***

Kevin O'Neil addressed the meeting with his concerns about the continuation of user fees. He said although they were necessary several years ago, he feels things have changed and possibly they could be lowered or eliminated. In particular, the parking fees can only be used for upkeep and improvement of the parking lots, which now have been taken care of due to the renovations at the high school. Bus fees and club fees were also discussed. He suggested that if bus fees were lowered, perhaps more students would ride, thus increasing revenues. A student in the audience also spoke about the use of athletic fees and where the money is spent. Dr. Baeta said redistricting could save money on transportation costs. He will make some recommendations for the March 31<sup>st</sup> meeting.

***Norton Gold Star Committee Presentation – Mr. Bob Kimball:***

Bob Kimball, Chairman of the Norton Gold Star Committee, informed the Committee of two projects they are working on. The Trent Memorial Park dedication on West Main Street took place last Memorial Day. The Gold Star Committee would like to hang a framed flag with some of MSG Gregory Trent's personal artifacts. They discussed the placement of the memorial and it was suggested that outside the new auditorium entrance would be a good place. The Gold Star Committee would also like to participate in the dedication of the school. A request was also made to use the area around the Yelle School for a fundraising event for a future scholarship.

MOTION: by Mr. Lynch to approve the request of the Norton Gold Star Committee

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

Chairman Savas announced that the regular meeting would be recessed to enter the Public Hearing on School Choice. A public hearing and vote by the School Committee on whether or not to participate for the following school year was held. A vote and letter to the DESE must be completed by June 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. Dr. Baeta began the presentation with statistics on communities that participate. Norton would be the first town in the area. The purpose of this proposal is to offset costs. The district can charge tuition up to 75% of the per-pupil cost, up to a limit of \$5,000. Transportation is the responsibility of the student's family. Enrollment is down due to the birth rates and other choices open to families. The projection is for Norton to lose more than 500 students over the next ten years. Dr. Baeta proposed 90-95 open seats for the upcoming year. His recommendation is for 5 seats each in Grades 4 and 5, and 10 seats each in

Grades 1-3 and 6-10. He would personally interview each potential student, as he did in his former district. He does not anticipate filling all seats in the first year.

Chairman Savas reopened the regular meeting for the purpose of discussion and vote on the recommended proposal with the exclusion of Kindergarten, unless full-day Kindergarten is implemented. Mr. O'Neil requested that no seats be available in Grades 9 and 10, but Dr. Baeta did not wish to close them completely. It was changed to 5 seats each in Grades 9 and 10, and the rest to remain as originally stated. If voted, the application process would begin April 1<sup>st</sup> and selection to be first come, first serve.

Dr. Baeta's recommendation:            Grades 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8 = 10 seats each  
   Grades 4, 5, 9, 10 = 5 seats each  
   Kindergarten = 0 seats

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve participation in School Choice as recommended

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE:     4-0 in favor    motion carries

***Superintendent's Self Evaluation:***

Superintendent's mid-cycle progress report: Dr. Baeta stated he is on target on all goals with the exception of the completion of the Strategic Plan for 2014-2017. He decided to move it out because there is too much going on to get a committee together right now. He plans to present a plan to the Committee in September, with a vote in October and implementation of the three-year plan. He said Norton is a very good fit, he is pleased to be here, and intends to keep moving forward. Positive comments were made by the Committee.

***Personnel:***

***Resignations:***

Mrs. Christina McGourty – NHS Special Education Teacher, STEP Program, effective  
February 6, 2014

Mrs. Amy Mikels – NHS English Teacher, will not be returning in September, 2014 after a leave of absence for the 2013-2014 school year.

***Reassignment:***

Ms. Kelly Allen – Reassigned to long-term substitute Grade 4 teacher position at HAY from JCS Educational Assistant position. She will replace Mr. Bob Bielawa who is serving as Dean of Students at HAY.

***Other:***

The Committee received a letter from the NEED (Norton Embracing Education) Organization requesting that items donated by the group through a grant program be marked as such with a small label or sticker. A vote is required.

MOTION: by Mr. Mackie to approve the request made by NEED

SECOND: by Mr. Lynch

VOTE:     4-0 in favor    motion carries

Dr. Baeta informed the Committee that a group of 11 Chinese students and their chaperone will visit Norton on March 24<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup>. There will be an informal gathering at Norton High School to welcome them and thank the host families.

Dr. Baeta confirmed that Secretary of Education Matthew Malone will visit Norton Public Schools this month.

***Adjourn:***

MOTION: by Mr. Lynch

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: 4-0 in favor motion carries

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 P.M.

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

- School Choice Options and Recommendations
- NEED Request Letter
- Norton Gold Star Committee Letter
- School Calendar Draft, 2014-2015
- Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Goals Progress

***NEXT MEETING DATE:*** March 17, 2014, Norton Middle School Auditorium

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