

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, April 11, 2016

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Present: Committee Members: Chairman Andrew Mackie, Vice-Chairman Deniz Savas, Mrs. Valerie Desmond, Mr. Daniel Sheedy, Mrs. Marge Werner. Also present: Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, School Business Manager Lincoln Lynch, Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jennifer O'Neill, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Jeanne Sullivan, Student Representatives Daniel Gao and Amanda Galpin.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM.

Pledge of Allegiance:

Vote to Approve Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: by Mrs. Werner to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2016 open meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: Unanimous Motion Carries

Student Representatives Update:

Student Representatives Daniel Gao and Amanda Galpin updated the Committee on current activities.

- Best Buddies Prom in Franklin
- Fundraiser for cancer patients
- NHS Art Show
- National Honor Society Annual Bike-A-Thon
- Junior/Senior Prom tickets are on sale

Presentation by NHS Art Department – Mrs. Robin Lewicki and Students:

Mrs. Lewicki of the Visual Arts Department discussed the new curriculum requirement of one year of music, performing arts, or visual arts for incoming students. Many pieces of student artwork were on display. Each student described their creations and discussed the methods and motivation for their projects. The Committee was very impressed with the outstanding quality of the work. Many of the pieces have been displayed at Patriot Place in Foxborough.

Update on Superintendent's Goals – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

Dr. Baeta informed the Committee that he is on track and all goals will soon be completed. The Full-Day Kindergarten goal is subject to the outcome of the override vote.

FY '17 Budget Update – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

The level-service budget number is \$1,651,754, slightly over 6.5%. The Finance Committee has approved an increase of \$178,000, which will necessitate cuts equal to \$1,473,754. In order to accomplish this, the following options are on the table. This list could change, be added to or subtracted from as the process continues.

- One technician position cut
- Dean of Students at H. A. Yelle School cut
- Academic coordinator stipends cut
- Unit leader stipends cut
- Transfer of \$50,000 from facilities revolving account to the general fund
- Transfer of \$25,000 from the NHS international students tuition account to the general fund
- Transfer of \$200,000 from the school choice account to the general fund
- Transfer of \$300,000 from expenses/supplies account to the general fund
- \$75,000 cut from the utility line item
- 15 classroom positions – increasing class size
- Eliminate double math, double ELA, and foreign language at NMS
- Increase sports fees or institute “pay to play”
- Increase fees for transportation
- Increase fees for activities

It is unknown what, if any, impact summer registrations and the new housing complex will have. There is also a potential savings to the Town on the health insurance which may help the school department. None of the above actions are acceptable but an increase of fees could save positions.

Overview and impact of cuts:

Fewer students taking bus

Impact on school resource officer position

Possible elimination of electives in Gr. 9-10 (substitute study hall)

Increase in SPED placement

Decrease in school choice enrollment

Increase in students enrolling in vocational/agricultural schools

Increase in students enrolling in charter schools

Increase in students enrolling in private schools

Decrease in student enrollment

“Pay to play” is significant and depending on the sport could be \$1,000 per participant or more

Dr. Baeta stated that his biggest concern is the class size of 27-31 students in the elementary grades. An override equal to \$3,784,477, which includes the town’s request, would be an impact of \$550.48 on the average home assessment of \$304,135. The proposed budget contains request for reinstatements and one-time costs and the school department should be on solid ground for many years with just the average yearly percent increase.

Presentation by Chairman of the Norton Board of Selectmen – Mr. Brad Bramwell:

Mr. Bramwell began by stating that at this time the Town Hall and the Council on Aging building are very cramped and in need of repairs. It was suggested that the front of the Yelle School building could possibly be utilized to provide a better space. Dr. Baeta said that an educational plan for PreK-8 would need to be developed and no funds could be provided from the MSBA. There is a need to look at the curriculum, enrollment, transportation, special and regular educational needs. Also, BICO Collaborative and DHH programs are utilizing space at the school and displacing them would result in the loss of approximately \$70,000 in rental fees. Dr. Baeta's main concern is the uncertainty of enrollment due to the many new apartments and 40B projects that are planned. The Town will also consider the cost of new construction vs. renovation. The Committee decided to table any action until June.

Vote to Award Transportation Bid – Mr. Lincoln Lynch:

The deadline for the three-year pupil transportation bid was March 28th. Of the three vendors obtaining bid packets, Bloom Transportation was the only one to return the bid. The total amount of the contract for 3 years is \$3,183,000, and increase of \$88,680. The Committee also expressed interest in the possibility of reducing the number of buses utilized and purchasing software that could save money by restructuring the routes.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to award the 3-year contract to Bloom Transportation

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: Unanimous Motion Carries

Personnel:

Retirement: Mrs. Kathryn Danforth, Paraprofessional, 19 years with the district, effective May 2, 2016

Recognition of School Committee Members – Dr. Joseph Baeta:

Dr. Baeta thanked Mr. Mackie and Mrs. Desmond for their service to the Norton School Department and presented each with a certificate from the Massachusetts House of Representatives and a plaque from the school department. Refreshments were served.

Other: Finance Committee meeting, April 13th

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to adjourn the meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Desmond

VOTE: Unanimous Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.

Next Meeting Date: May 2, 2016 at Norton Middle School Library

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

- Superintendent's Goals Update

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

Andrew Mackie, Chairman

Deniz Savas, Vice-Chairman

Valerie Desmond

Daniel Sheedy

Margaret Werner