

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Norton, Massachusetts

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NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
MINUTES OF MEETING

**Date of Meeting:** Thursday, April 15, 2021

**Location:** Norton Middle School and Remote Participation

**Present:** Committee Members: Chairperson Carolyn Gallagher, Vice-Chairperson Deniz Savas, Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mrs. Kathleen Stern, and Mr. Dan Sheedy (remotely). **Also present:** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, Norton Middle School Assistant Principal Ronnie Goldstein and NMS Student Jacob Berry. **Present remotely:** School Business Administrator Matthew Wells, Director of Facilities Wade Lizotte, Director of Technology Karen Winsper, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Vincent Cerce, Coordinator of Special Education Casey Russo, and Student Representatives Zoe Duran and Malia Savas.

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Gallagher called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. noting that the meeting was being recorded.

**Reorganization of the Norton School Committee:**

Reorganization of the Norton School Committee is required by the School Committee Bylaws at the first meeting following the Annual Town Election. Mrs. Gallagher turned the meeting over to Dr. Baeta who thanked Mrs. Gallagher for her year of service as Chairman of the School Committee.

Dr. Baeta asked for nomination for the position of Chairman. Mrs. Gallagher nominated Mr. Savas seconded by Mr. Sheedy. Hearing no other nominations, Mrs. Gallagher motioned to close nominations, seconded by Mr. Sheedy. Receiving only one nomination, Dr. Baeta, acting as Chairman pro tem, cast one vote for Mr. Savas and declared him the new Chairman of the Norton School Committee.

The next item on the agenda was the election of the Vice Chairman. Chairman Savas asked for nominations and nominated Mr. Sheedy, seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Hearing no other nominations, Mrs. Gallagher motioned to close nominations, seconded by Mrs. Cohen. Chairman Savas asked for a vote to approve Mr. Sheedy as Vice Chairman. The vote was unanimous in favor of Mr. Sheedy.  
(5 – 0)

In accordance with the School Committee Bylaws, Article 1, Section 2, both the chairman and Vice Chairman hold their respective offices for one year or until their successors are duly elected.

All members agreed to hold their current positions for the next year as follows:

Deniz Savas: Employee Negotiations Representative  
Dan Sheedy: Legislative Representative  
Sheri Cohen: Capital Improvements Committee  
Carolyn Gallagher: Employee Negotiations Representative  
Kathleen Stern: Special Education PAC Representative

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to re-appoint members to their current positions as noted

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

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

***Minutes:***

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallagher to approve Minutes of March 18, 2021 Open School Committee Meeting

SECOND: by Mr. Sheedy

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

***Pledge of Allegiance***

***Warrants:***

Mrs. Cohen reported that the following School Expense Warrants and School Payroll Warrants were reviewed and approved to be entered into public record:

School Expense Warrants:

- March 18, 2021      \$ 275,621.86
- April 1, 2021      \$ 298,178.79

School Payroll Warrant:

- March 25, 2021      \$ 982,536.95

***Student Representatives Update:***

Students Malia Savas and Zoe Duran shared with the Committee some student opinions on being back in school full time. These comments were provided by the school Principals:

- JCS – Some comments from Kindergarten and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade students included: *We can make new friends; It's a little noisy; I kind of miss my mama and there's lots of people on buses; I am glad that we are full in person so I can make new friends and get to know more people.*
- LGN – Some comments from students included: *We get to play on the playground now; I'm happy we don't have to learn remotely anymore.*
- HAY – Some comments included: *I appreciate having my teacher by my side supporting me the whole time now; It does make it easier to learn since we have been back; I feel like I am learning more and learning has improved because we are getting to more things.*
- NMS – Comments from students included: *It's definitely been hard to get back into a full week schedule but I do enjoy seeing everyone and getting back to normal; I do not think it is going well. It's only the third week of school and so many people are quarantining and a lot of people have gotten COVID 19. I do enjoy socializing, but I think it is putting peoples' safety and learning at risk.*



- NHS – Results of a recent survey sent by Principal Dolleman to students were shared. Items covered in the survey included: Excitement, Concern about Safety, Suggestions for Improvement, Overall Experience, Workload, and Work Outside of School.

Both student representatives felt that all has gone well so far having all students back in the classrooms.

Mr. Sheedy noted that if students are concerned with safety in the schools, perhaps a reminder could go out to the school building leaders regarding educating students on the proper wearing of facemasks. Dr. Baeta mentioned that this has been communicated in writing and that he would be willing to meet with students and staff as well regarding this.

Mr. Savas took a moment to thank all who came out to vote at the annual Town Election. He welcomed Ms. Deveau to the Select Board and thanked Mr. Brad Bramwell for his years of service. He noted the importance of the 2<sup>nd</sup> vote at Town Meeting on May 8<sup>th</sup> and how he was proud to see the town moving forward as one on the article.

***NMS Project 351 Student Representative:***

Mr. Ronnie Goldstein addressed the Committee regarding Project 351, the largest service organization in the country. This organization's goal is to train the next generation of service leaders. Governor Patrick started the organization 11 years ago and consists of representatives from the 351 towns/cities across the Commonwealth. Mr. Goldstein introduced 8<sup>th</sup> Grade student Jacob Berry who was chosen as the ambassador the Norton Middle School. Jacob is a leader among his peers, having been involved in "Pennies for Patients" as a 6<sup>th</sup> Grader.

Jacob stated that he was honored to be present at the meeting and shared a presentation regarding the "Cradles to Crayons" clothing drive service project that he wants to hold district-wide, not just at Norton Middle School.

Mr. Savas shared the he is very proud of Jacob. He noted that they were friends and share a love for football.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to expand the "Cradles to Crayons" clothing drive to all schools  
SECOND: by Mrs. Stern

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

Dr. Baeta thanked Jacob for being a student leader and for expanding the service project to all schools. A certificate was presented to Jacob.

A 2-minute recess was called for pictures to be taken of Jacob and his family with the Superintendent.

Dr. Baeta thanked Mr. Goldstein for being a leader of Project 351 at NMS.

***National School Board Association 2021 Magna Award:***

Dr. Baeta was informed by Mrs. Gallagher that the NSBA recognizes School Committee's for what they do. For the School Committee, Administration, and Norton Teachers' Association the most important thing is the social emotional wellbeing of our students. Dr. Baeta applied for the award and NPS was recognized with a 1<sup>st</sup> place Magna award. An article regarding the awards was in the April edition of the American School Board Journal.

Members of the Committee expressed that it was nice to be recognized. It was noted that Norton was ahead of the curve regarding the social emotional needs of children. Mrs. Stern said that this recognition was an honor but that she wasn't surprised because we started years ago.

***NPS Virtual School Application Consideration and Survey:***

Per DESE, districts will be open full in-person in the fall. Due to COVID, districts have been losing families (students) to digital learning, homeschooling, etc. For informational purposes only, Dr. Baeta shared information regarding the application process for virtual school. He said that we don't want to lose students; he would look into it and get feelers out to colleagues.

***MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Educational Stability Program Review Final Report:***

Mr. Cerce stated that, regarding the Magna award, bus drivers, van drivers, cafeteria workers, and custodians all offer support as well to our students.

The Educational Stability Program focuses on three sub groups: Homeless/Dislocated; Foster Care; and Military. Following are the monitoring elements:

- Registration process needs to be readily available and easy.
- Training for staff regarding what the laws say and the processes.
- Review of all policies and procedures and necessary changes made.

Mr. Cerce stated that at this time NPS is up to code and no corrections are needed.

***Review and Vote on School Committee Meeting Dates for 2021-2022 School Year:***

Dr. Baeta presented a draft schedule of School Committee meeting dates which included 17 regular meetings, not including school vacations weeks. Also included was a meeting prior to Town Meeting. Mr. Savas asked if anyone objected to having meetings start at 6 p.m. All were in agreement. Mr. Sheedy asked that the schedule be forwarded to the Finance Committee and Select Board for setting a schedule of joint meetings. Dr. Baeta noted that Zoom meetings were an option as per an Executive Order by the Governor. The option to have remote members join a meeting is available as long as the majority of members are present in person.

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallagher to approve School Committee meeting dates as written

SECOND: by Mrs. Stern

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



***Discussion and Vote on Spring Athletic Fees:***

The Superintendent recommended athletic fees for the spring 2021 season be set at \$200 per student-athlete with a balanced budget projection.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to approve setting spring 2021 athletic fees at \$200 per student-athlete

SECOND: by Mrs. Stern

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

***Other:***

Discussion ensued regarding appointing members as designated signers of warrants. It was agreed that designees would remain the same.

MOTION: by Mr. Sheedy to appoint Sheri Cohen as primary signer and Kathleen Stern as secondary signer

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

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

- MCAS Update: Mrs. O'Neill shared recent information received regarding the MCAS exams. She noted the later testing window for Grades 3-8 and shorter window (one day). Districts will not be ranked; testing is for diagnostic purposes. DLA students will have the option of taking their test in person at their respective schools or to take the assessment remotely.
- Dr. Baeta wished all a great April vacation and thanked everyone for being flexible and for prioritizing safety. He also noted that the six district school nurses were key in making determinations regarding quarantining, etc. He said that they have gone above and beyond and have been working long hours.
- Mrs. Cohen reminded teachers and parents that the MCAS is just a test and to tell students to just do their best.
- Dr. Baeta thanked Karen Winsper and Paul Driscoll for setting up the evening's in-person / virtual meeting.

***Motion to Adjourn:***

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallagher to enter into executive session for the purpose of discussions on non-union and union contracts

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

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

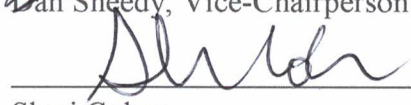

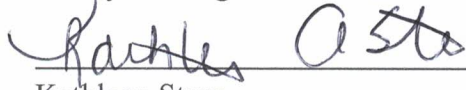
The meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.

*Next scheduled meeting date:* April 29, 2021

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

- MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Educational Stability Program Review – Final Report
- Draft Calendar of School Committee Meeting Dates for 2021-2022
- 2021 MCAS Administration informational sheet

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

  
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Deniz Savas, Chairperson  
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Dan Sheedy, Vice-Chairperson  
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Sheri Cohen  
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Carolyn Gallagher  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kathleen Stern

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