

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

RECEIVED
NORTON TOWN CLERK

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

2023 JAN 27 AM 9:12

Date of Meeting: Thursday, January 5, 2023

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Present: Committee Members: Chairperson Mr. Dan Sheedy, Vice Chairperson Mrs. Sheri Cohen, Mrs. Carolyn Gallagher, Deniz Savas, and Mr. Nick Schleicher. ***Also present:*** Superintendent of Schools Joseph F. Baeta, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning Jennifer O'Neill, School Business Administrator Kristine Hadfield, and Student Representatives Malia Savas and Antonio Romano.

Call to Order: Chairperson Sheedy called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Chairperson Sheedy announced that the meeting was being recorded and asked that if anyone was recording to let the Committee know.

Pledge of Allegiance

Approval of Minutes:

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to approve Minutes of December 8, 2022 Open School Committee Meeting

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

5 - 0 Motion Carries

Warrants:

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

School Expense Warrants:

- December 8, 2022 \$1,061,126.20
- December 29, 2022 \$ 992,062.68

School Payroll Warrants:

- December 15, 2022 \$1,250,345.09
- December 29, 2022 \$1,109,386.79

Student Representatives Update:

Malia Savas and Antonio Romano updated the Committee on school happenings, as follows:

HAY – Boosterthon activities have begun and culminates with the Glow Fun Run on Friday, February 3rd. In past years when incentives have been reached, Mr. Geoghegan and Mr. Bielawa have been taped to the wall, pied in the face, and have kissed a multitude of different species of animals.

NHS – 37 members of DECA headed to District competition in Hyannis; plans underway for a student vs. faculty talent show late in January; winter athletics underway with all teams performing well.

JCS – Electives for students in Grades K-3 beginning and will run for 4 weeks during the last period on Thursdays. There are 44 different courses being taught by teachers, paras, parents, NHS students, and Dr. Baeta.

Norton High School Items:

Principal Dolleman was present remotely to address the School Committee on NHS items.

Attendance Practices: Dr. Baeta stated that the issue is truancy and how to get these students back to school and to graduate. There are a number of students coming out of COVID needing credit. We can look at data, taking out the COVID issues, going back several years. There are significant stresses on families, i.e., poverty, housing, etc. Starting in Grades K – 5 we can meet with families and provide services. Currently we use our Principals and Assistant Principals as Truancy Officers. We may need to hire someone to knock on doors.

Mid-Year and Final Exams: Mr. Dolleman shared statistics with the Committee regarding the impact on final grades when not counting mid-year and final assessments as a percentage of a student's final grade, instead incorporating these assessments into second and fourth quarter grades. Data from a student survey relative to midyear and final assessments was also shared. Two additional early dismissal days were requested (January 25th and 26th) to provide time for departments to engage in project or portfolio based assessments during the time usually set aside for exams.

Discussion ensued regarding lowering the grade for exemption from final exams to a B from an A. Committee members stated that they would like see students learning life skills like changing a tire or budgeting. It was suggested that students do a community activity instead of final exam as a means of transitioning into real life.

MOTION: by Mr. Savas to approve early release days at NHS on January 25th and January 26th

SECOND: by Mrs. Cohen

5 – 0 Motion Carries

New Courses: Mr. Dolleman provided detailed information on three new courses for approval by the Committee for the 2023-2024 school year: True Crime and Horror; Leadership; and International Relations and Global Studies. It was noted that there would be a disclaimer / parent sign-off for the True Crime and Horror course, and world language classes will be prioritized over the proposed

courses if being taught by a language teacher. Any teacher can propose a new course to the Principal, then it is presented to the Academic Coordinator, Site Council, and then School Committee.

MOTION: by Mrs. Gallagher to approve new NHS courses as presented

SECOND: by Mr. Savas

5 – 0 Motion Carries

Announcement of Class of 2023 Adams Scholarship Recipients:

Dr. Baeta congratulated the Class of 2023 Adams Scholarship recipients. The list of recipients was furnished to the Committee members prior to the meeting.

Checklist for Suspension Hearings Under MGL c. 71 § 37H^{3/4} and Vote to Approve Update to Student Handbooks:

Dr. Baeta explained that due to regulation changes at the State level effective November 8th, changes are required to be made to all school handbooks to include the new suspension guidelines. The new regulation states that a student should not be suspended or expelled until alternative remedies have been used, and their use documented. Discussion ensued regarding the new regulation. Norton Middle School Principal, Vincent Hayward, stated that sometimes suspension is necessary to maintain order. This year Saturday School was approved for NMS, as well as expanded office detention. Dr. Baeta said that NPS supports safety of all students over rights of one student and that we are trying to correct actions early. He urged the Committee to vote yes for the purpose of consistency in the handbooks.

School Committee members voiced their disdain with the regulation. Dr. Baeta explained that the vote at hand was for the update to the handbooks and not a vote on the regulation. We are required to comply with the regulation under Massachusetts General Law. Dr. Baeta said he would draft a letter for the School Committee to send to local legislators as well as Massachusetts Association of School Committees, regarding the disagreement with the law.

Prior to voting on the handbook update, the Committee collectively stated: The Norton School Committee does not support legislature overreach that impacts the safety and wellbeing of all students.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to approve update to student handbooks

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

4 – 1 Motion Carries

Review and Vote on Field Rentals Recommendation:

Mrs. Hadfield presented information on recommended rates for NPS field rentals. It is anticipated that fees would be used to reduce athletic fees; deposits would go into a revolving account. Discussions ensued regarding upcharges for portable johns or for the use of the HAY restrooms. Seasons will be looked at to determine evening shut off times and weather limitations (over 95 or under 30 degrees). Extended use would cause faster wearing of the surfaces. Average resurfacing is 12 – 15 years; money would be put aside in the facilities account under a separate line item for the athletic complex.

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to approve field rentals recommendation as presented

SECOND: by Mr. Savas

5 – 0 Motion Carries

Sewer Warrant Article:

Dr. Baeta was copied on an email from Bob Kimball addressed to the Select Board regarding putting an article on the Town Meeting warrant regarding exempting any town owned property from having to pay connection fees for municipal sewerage. Mr. Sheedy noted that he would publicly support this request. Dr. Baeta said he would respond to Mr. Kimball saying there is support by the School Committee. The article will be considered once it is available.

FY2024 Budget Process Timeline Overview:

Mrs. Hadfield discussed the budget process timeline as outlined in her memo to Central Office Administrators and Principals. The public hearing on the budget would be held on March 9th prior to the due date to the Town. The budget workshop process was discussed as well as possible dates.

Other:

- No School Committee meeting to be held on January 8th; next meeting January 26th.
- 135 Learning Walks have taken place.
- 8 new student registrations have come in over the last 48 hours.
- Safety Forum for parents to be held on January 19th.

Adjourn:

MOTION: by Mrs. Cohen to adjourn

SECOND: by Mrs. Gallagher

5 – 0 Motion Carries

The meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

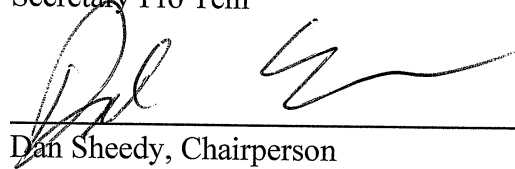
Next Meeting Date: Thursday, January 26, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the NMS Library

Documents and Other Exhibits Used at Meeting:

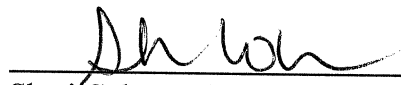
- NHS Attendance Policy information
- Memo regarding Mid-Year and Final Exams at NHS
- NHS new course proposals
- List of Class of 2023 Adams Scholars
- Suspension Checklist and Changes to Student Discipline Regulations
- Norton Athletic Complex Rental proposal
- Information on Sewer Warrant Article
- Memo on FY2024 Budget Timeline

Respectfully Submitted,

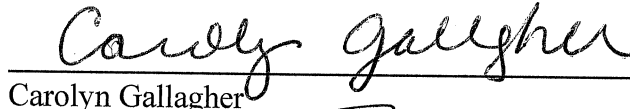
Joseph F. Baeta, Ed.D.
Secretary Pro Tem



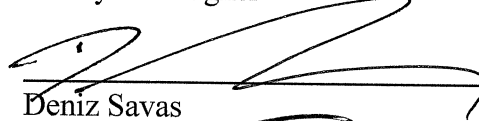
Dan Sheedy, Chairperson



Sheri Cohen, Vice-Chairperson



Carolyn Gallagher



Deniz Savas



Nick Schleicher

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