

TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
James R. Savage Educational Center – Room 219
Wednesday, March 14, 2012

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2012. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Mr. Paul Samargedlis, Chairman, Mr. Richard W. Kief, Ms. Courtney A. Rau, Mr. John Badger, Mr. James Gormley and Mrs. Eleanor Travers.

Administrators Present: Mr. James Hayden, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Alec Wyeth, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment and Ms. Ann Marie Ellis, Director of Finance and Operations.

Minutes: Ms. Rau made a motion to approve the minutes of March 7, 2012, which was seconded by Mr. Badger. The Committee voted in favor 6 – 0.

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Chairman Samargedlis informed that there were warrants to be signed.

Chairman Samargedlis welcomed everyone to this evening's meeting. There were 223 people who signed the attendance sheet for this evening's meeting. There were 53 people who signed up to speak during the Public Forum portion of the meeting.

Chairman Samargedlis reviewed how the School Committee came up with the FY13 Budget. He said they have worked very hard and the School Committee is not happy with the decisions we have had to make. He added that the School Committee was prepared to fight for the schools. Chairman Samargedlis said the Schools need a galvanized support system from the Town and that the community needs to be speaking with the elected town representatives. He also said that we are not adequately funded at this point.

Public Forum: Chairman Samargedlis informed that this was the time during the meeting that members of the Public can address the School Committee with issues or concerns that they would like to see added to a future agenda.

Nick Martin, a Senior at NHS, has spoken to the School Committee before describing the benefits of the Music Department. He said he wanted to explain the significance and impact cutting music will have to the students in all levels of the Norwood Schools. He asked the School Committee not to dispose of music in this town and invited the Members to come to NHS to attend a 5th Grade Concert.

Leo Blaise, a Junior at NHS, acknowledged that some people here this evening will be unhappy that cuts will be affecting them. He was here to explain why drama has

been so important in his life, spending his studies and many hours after school working on lines and practicing. He said he works on set designs on the weekends and he also works at Mug n Muffin. Leo said that the NHS drama program is a core subject in his life.

Matt Foley, a Junior at NHS, said he understands this is a very hard situation and everyone in the schools will be badly affected. He said he is here this evening to defend the Drama Program. His plan is to major in theatre in college and cutting Drama will affect his college plans. He is very worried if classes are cut and classes end up with many more students, it will also hurt the students. He said it is time to stop talking about numbers and to start talking about specifics.

Tom Burke, a Junior at NHS, was here to support the Latin Program, saying it would be a shame if Latin is cut. He said SAT scores will go down. He said he is in his 3rd year of Latin, adding he dropped Spanish to continue on with Latin. He got 100's on his report card all three years, not because it's easy, but because he loves it. Latin has helped him a lot with English. He said the teacher is an exceptional teacher who rally motivates the kids. He suggested asking Ernie Boch if he would donate \$1 million to the schools if we name the school after him.

Katelyn Sullivan is a freshman at NHS and she was here this evening to defend Latin. She said it's a great program run by a great teacher. He said he loved Latin and feels he now understands our own language better after taking Latin. He added that it is a great pre-requisite for getting into college. Her and her friend brought a petition with them from the Latin students.

John and Alli Campbell were here this evening with their little sister. John said his younger sister has been watching her siblings play music and has learned from watching them. He said she also loves going to the library and seeing the librarians and picking out a new book each week.

Alli Campbell said she was here to say how upset she was that music may be cut.

Megan McCarthy said she did band and chorus for many years and now takes French and Italian and plays sports. She said these cuts will affect all of the four A's at NHS. She said it is sad to think this school system's cuts could destroy students' futures.

Lauren Fleming, a 7th grade student at CMS was here to support Latin, saying he waited for years to study Latin like her older brother did. She said Latin is so important that three different Latin phrases are on the \$1 bill. She said Latin students usually score higher on tests. She asked that School Committee tries hard to keep Latin.

Kaitlyn Stahl, a Junior at NHS, said she is currently taking two languages and recently spent some time living in the Netherlands. She feels losing language at the Middle School level will put these kids at a severe disadvantage. She said that studies

support the fact that 11 & 12 year olds learn languages easier than older people. She doesn't want to see any of these cuts.

Bailey Smith is President of the Art National Honor Society at NHS and has done so many wonderful things this year. She has been taking art for many years. She said students get into many great colleges thanks to the NHS Art Program. She added that NHS has the best art teachers around.

Elizabeth Tuturo said she has had past experience of being bullied and said she finally has good friends thanks to the Drama Program. She said it's not a waste of time and it's so exciting and liberating to get into character and entertain. She listed all the positives that drama produces.

Madison Tribuna is a 10th Grader at NHS who has been singing for a long time and loves it. The Music and Drama Programs have helped her find her voice. She is in the Madrigal Choir and has so many new friends. She says she cannot imagine where she would be without these programs. She asked what the point is of having this big beautiful new school if there's nothing in it.

A student named Jim said Drama and Fine Arts have been a part of his whole life. He knows the School Committee's goal is to keep core subjects, but he said for many kids drama is a core subject.

Tessa Maguire was here to defend the TV Program. She said many students will be devastated without the T.V. Program. She also said it will be a sad school without Mrs. Kraus. She asked the School Committee to consider the dreams they will be destroying.

Anna Turosky and Colleen Morris are in orchestra. They said the Elementary School Music Program has shaped their lives and they are here to defend something many students care about.

Christine Vladlas said the Drama and Music Programs rock ! The students are all family to her. She said Mr. Quinn is one of the most talented, respectful, wonderful teachers in the world. She said he listens to the students and is always there for them. She said losing the Drama Program will be like losing a family.

Mary Bulos is a student at NHS and was recently inducted into the Latin Honor Society. She knows Latin, English and Arabic. She said Latin has helped her with her learning disabilities, and added it will really hurt her if Latin is cut. She said her dream is to be a nurse and Latin will help with that as well.

Kelsey Johnson was here to explain why cutting foreign languages at the CMS would be devastating.

Will Stamos was here to defend foreign language and said cutting languages at the Middle School level will make it harder and less likely for students to learn it later. He complimented his accounting teacher at NHS, Mrs. Julie Shore.

Christine St. Cyr said everything about the 4 A's matters to the High School students.

Another student named AJ has been involved in chorus for a long time and it is very important to him. He said he didn't really know who he was in the Middle School but he figured it out as soon as he got to the High School when he found music and drama.

Charlotte Hunter is a Member of the Drama Program at NHS. She said when she was a little girl her mom took her to a summer musical and then she couldn't wait to participate in that herself. She said all her friends participate in the arts and she would hate to see it go.

Kaileen Spaulding, Ryan Begley and Anthony Zona spoke on behalf of the T.V. Program. Kaileen explained that she watched the Norwood High School T.V. Programs when she was little and she's so happy to be in T.V. now. She wants to work at ESPN some day and is going to check out colleges for their Communication Programs during April vacation. Ryan said he signed up for T.V. as soon as he got to the High School and now realizes it's what he wants to do for a career. He said it's unbelievable what they can do at the new NHS Studio. Anthony said he does the youth video club after school and said he has had great opportunities. He also said it has been a lot of fun, but he really hopes it keeps going.

Kelly McGowan is a Senior at NHS and participates in Drama, Marching Band and Color Guard. She really wants to stress how important the Drama Program is. She is going into theater as a major. She also said that Drama brings everyone together as a family and community.

Kate Tatar is a Senior at NHS. She said these budget cuts will take away much of what makes NHS special. She said what she has learned at NHS is responsibility, team work and cultural diversity. She said colleges are looking for more than good students, they want the whole package with music, language and t.v. She said that we need to find a solution that is equitable.

Chairman Samargedlis thanked all the students for coming out and speaking at tonight's meeting. He then said the meeting would continue on with the adults speaking. He reminded that there would be a three-minute limit.

Jack McCarthy and Linda McCarthy were here as a volunteers with the Back Stage Boosters to support the Drama Program. They said drama is for all students of all abilities and that eliminating these programs will affect these students' futures as they pursue college and careers plans. Linda said she is so proud of all the students who spoke

about the 4 A's this evening. She informed that when the School Council heard the news about the potential cuts, they were devastated. The 4 A's will be cut to make it 1A, adding that even the 1A is becoming corroded. Their oldest student was in Drama at NHS and is now at Northeastern majoring in drama and pre-med. Jack said they are looking for leadership from this Board to try to find money between now and Town Meeting, adding that he will help fight at Town Meeting to get the money needed.

Amy Sobchuk is a parent and School Council Member. She said she spoke with the NHS PTA Board last night. She realizes every cut is someone's sacred cow. She is afraid that all these cuts will affect our accreditation with NEASC. She added that a 21st Century High School deserves a 21st Century Curriculum. She asked our leaders to take a deep breath and begin again to find a way to stop these cuts.

Carmel Kerrigan is a parent of two children in music. She is a Member of PMA and is wondering why the music Program is getting hit again? She said losing the elementary music program will be the beginning of the demise of Norwood's Music Program. She said it was a shame that the wonderful music area of NHS will become a closet. She is upset at the thought of Latin being cut as her son had a wonderful experience when taking Latin. She said better planning and budgeting needs to happen and cuts need to be equitable across the Board. She doesn't think Ms. Connor-Moen will mind having the new auditorium named after Ernie Boch in exchange for a nice donation.

Mr. Jack Tolman was here this evening. He is in charge of the T.V. Studio at NHS and is the Director of NPA-TV. He said there is a vibe at NHS due to the Fine Arts. He said he speaks for all the teachers here tonight in saying they wish they could help. He said he feels it's time to ask for help from the Community. He added that the T.V. Program has come a long way in 21 years. T.V. is usually under the radar because they are the ones covering all the other wonderful events. He said it would be a great shame to lose this program and have all this new equipment sitting idle every day.

Todd Gundlach thanked Paul and the Committee for listening to everyone tonight. He said this is a great exercise in Civics. Todd added that he is a Town Meeting Member from District 6 and has a Senior at NHS. He has two daughters in Norwood and they are both very involved in music, art and AP Courses. Many people in Town are nervous over these cuts. He has never understood the 45/55 % split between the Schools and the Town. He said we need to go before the Town and say 55% is not enough. He offered to help in any way possible. Todd said that more sports cuts need to be looked at. He said music is a major and it has 100% participation, adding that there are no 2nd strings or sitting on the bench. Todd finished with a request to stop bullying the arts. He said he will be passionate and fight for this. He said he will put himself out there.

Ed Ferris is a parent of students in the Norwood Schools. He said two of his children will be hurt badly if Latin and Music are cut. He said that the budget as it sits right now is untenable. He said he builds systems for companies as a living and offered to help the School Committee. He would like to see a change in this town as to how the town sees its schools. Ed said the schools are the heart of the town. He thinks too much

as already been cut out of the schools. He asked why sports were not cut. Ed said that students who participate in music and the arts will score higher on standardized testing. He finished by saying Norwood is renowned for music and arts and he will help in any way.

Brenda Farulla said this is the 2nd time she has come to speak of cuts in the Fine Arts. She feels music has no value to the Town of Norwood. She added without the Elementary Music Program, the rest of the Music Program will disintegrate. The loss cannot be measured monetarily. She feels removing Fine Arts at any level is not the answer. She said it's time to think outside the box and look at cuts in athletics.

Sean Geary thanked this Board as being the only Board in Norwood with a Public Forum. He reminded of a time a while back when the 3rd Grade Eureka Program was temporarily suspended due to budget and it has yet to be reinstated. He explained the importance of Fine Arts to his children and their friends. He understands the difficult position this Committee is in, but he said he hopes they will continue the path we've been on.

Bobby Smith is a NHS Class of 210 Graduate. He felt he was a very well-rounded student in drama, music and student government. He is currently in his 2nd year at Bentley and is also very involved in music and student government there. He sees these cuts as the complete destruction of the Fine Arts Program. Bobby mentioned some famous people whose lives were shaped by music. He says Norwood's Fine Arts Alumni were a very active group of people. He added that his little sister once told him she wanted to follow in his footsteps. He would hate to think of all the little siblings who wouldn't be able to follow in their older siblings' footsteps into these wonderful programs. Bobby said we all have moral responsibilities to be leaders and supporters of our Town. He said he will stand and fight with Mr. Gundlach and represent the youth of Norwood as he is very passionate about this.

Cindy Derrane, Foreign Language Department Chair for the Town of Norwood, said everyone at the first budget meeting was floored when they heard what the amount to be cut was. She suggested everyone see the Power Point that shows the impact of the cuts which is on the School Website. Mrs. Derrane said these cuts will affect the CMS. She referred to Mrs. Traver's son who was 5th in the Nation last year on the National Spanish Exam. She continued to explain the success of the other students in the area of language. She urged the School Committee, on behalf of the Norwood Staff, to please continue the fight for the schools.

Patricia Wong is a Back Stage Booster and parent of the alumni. She said she teaches in a Performing Arts School in Rhode Island. When she first started there, it was a "ghetto" school with lots of violence, drugs and destruction. Shortly after she started, a performance program started at her school. She said much of the bad behavior subsided as there was something creative for the students to get involved in. She cautioned that when you take good stuff away, you may get lots of bad stuff in its place.

Mike Maloof, a NHS Graduate and NPA Employee, took t.v. for three years at NHS and said it was the three best years of his life. He said the NPA staff work closely with the NHS students, adding that he was amazed at what the t.v. program had developed into when he came home from school.

Ryan Walker, an NPA employee, has grown to love this town, but said without these programs, many kids will want to go to private schools. He said he has a baby on the way and wouldn't consider moving to this town with these cuts. He challenged the School Committee, Selectmen, Finance Commission and Town Meeting to figure it out for the kids. He said this is a community problem.

Another parent asked to look at the valedictorians over the past 30 years and most of them were in the Fine Arts Programs. Her best memories were not in academics, but in the Fine Arts. She moved back here this year with a son who plays sports, but she supports the Fine Arts. The lessons she learned in life were learned from being involved in Fine Arts.

Ashley McGuinness said she is thriving in college due to what she's experienced in the Norwood Schools and Fine Arts Program

Michelle Kelley, a Spanish teacher at Norwood High School, said she doesn't live in this community but she breathes this community. She said she loves Norwood's students and wants and needs Norwood's students to be successful. She said we cannot afford one cut.

A mother of a Fine Arts student reviewed tools for future success that student's receive in the Fine Arts Programs.

Ian Cardoni, a NHS graduate, thanked the Board for their time this evening and for listening to the voices that are pro-arts. He is a 2008 Alumni and is a student at Emerson College who is a professional working actor. He is where he is today due to the Norwood Fine Arts Programs and staff.

Megan McGuinness, Ashley's twin, was here to support the languages and Fine Arts Programs. She explained how they helped her find her voice and be prepared for college.

Catherine Dundaro, a NHS alumni, read parts of a letter from a friend who could not attend this evening.

Jake Colamaria, a NHS Class of 2011, was here to defend the T.V. Program, saying he took four years of T.V. with Ms. Kraus. He is now in television production at B.U.

Public Forum closed at 10:50 p.m.

Chairman Samargedlis thanked everyone who spoke this evening and said we are listening. Then he said that the School Committee would be going right to the Budget portion of the agenda. Chairman Samargedlis said it was important to go through the timeline and he explained the process of putting this budget together. He reminded that we have gotten no support at Town Meeting in the past.

Budget: FY13 Budget Discussions: Mr. Hayden had a power point presentation and explained that \$310,458 still needed to be cut. He explained that there are still two circuit breaker payments which equal \$58,152 that can be used towards the amount.

There was some discussion on how to proceed.

The Members told those in attendance that they are needed to stand up and speak at Town Meeting which is scheduled for May 9th. Mr. Badger said there was still time for write-ins for vacant Town Meeting positions, which means those write-ins could vote at Town Meeting.

Chairman Samargedlis said we need to vote on a bottom line balanced budget and we could proceed to ask Town Meeting for the balance. He suggested that Mr. Hayden review the items he recommended for restoring.

After much discussion, the items Mr. Hayden recommended restoring were Elementary Music, Latin and the T.V. Program at the High School.

Chairman Samargedlis suggested having the Superintendent put together another \$500,000 worth of restorals for Town Meeting.

Mr. Gormley made a motion to institute a user fee for clubs at the Coakley Middle School in the amount of \$50.00, which was seconded by Ms. Rau. The Committee voted in favor 4 – 2 (Mr. Kief and Mr. Badger opposed).

Mr. Gormley made a motion to raise Athletic Fees from \$125.00 to \$150.00, which was seconded by Mrs. Travers. The Committee voted in favor 4 – 2 (Mr. Kief and Mr. Badger opposed).

Mr. Kief said he opposed because he feels this is getting confusing for the public. He feels we should vote on the total amount and take time to do this right.

Ms. Rau made a motion to accept the FY13 bottom line (including recommended restorals), which was seconded by Mr. Gormley.

Mr. Badger made an amendment to the motion to take \$160,156 to completely restore math at the Coakley Middle School and to raise fees to be shared globally (between arts, athletics and clubs), which was seconded by Mr. Kief. The Committee voted unanimously in favor.

Ms. Rau made a motion to accept the FY12 Budget (including recommended restorals), which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted in favor 5 – 1 (Mr. Badger opposed).

Budget Transfers: Mrs. Travers made a motion to approve the following FY12 Transfers, which was seconded by Mr. Kief. The Committee voted in favor 4 – 2 (Mr. Badger and Ms. Rau abstained).

<u>Transfer From:</u>		<u>Transfer To:</u>	
P7884 12	SPED Cont. Services \$ 25,700.00	P7888 12	SPED Other OOD \$ 2,000.00
		P7890 12	SPED – Cell Serv. \$ 3,500.00
		P7882 12	SPED – Rep & Main. \$ 10,000.00
		P7886 12	SPED – Gas \$ 10,000.00
TOT. TRANSFERRED FROM:	\$ 25,700.00	TOT. TO BE TRANSF. TO:	\$ 25,700.00

<u>Transfer From:</u>		<u>Transfer To:</u>	
P7883 12	SPED Tran-McKinney \$ 10,000.00	P7888 12	SPED Rep & Maint. \$ 10,000.00
TOT. TRANSFERRED FROM:	\$ 10,000.00	TOT. TO BE TRANSF. TO:	\$ 10,000.00

<u>Transfer From:</u>		<u>Transfer To:</u>	
P1256 12	Sch. Equip Rep - CMS \$ 1,881.11	P0931 12	Sch IS/TB – CMS Adm \$ 1,881.11
TOT. TRANSFERRED FROM:	\$ 1,881.11	TOT. TO BE TRANSF. TO:	\$ 1,881.11

<u>Transfer From:</u>		<u>Transfer To:</u>	
P1271 12	Sch. Grnd Maint. Rep \$ 10,000.00	P1270 12	Sch Grnd Main \$ 10,000.00
TOT. TRANSFERRED FROM:	\$ 10,000.00	TOT. TO BE TRANSF. TO:	\$ 10,000.00

Announcements: None.

Appearances: None.

Reports: None.

Superintendent’s Report and/or Late Agenda: None.

Policy: None.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

School Committee Addenda:

Executive Session: None.

Adjournment: Mr. Badger made a motion for adjournment at 12:50 a.m., which was seconded by Ms. Rau. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 6-0.

Respectfully submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee