

TOWN OF NORWOOD  
School Committee Meeting  
James R. Savage Educational Center  
Wednesday, March 15, 2017

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Committee Members Present:** Mr. James Gormley, Chairman, Ms. Lisa Igoe; Mr. Patrick McDonough, Mrs. Michele Eysie Mullen and Ms. Myev Bodenhofer.

**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. Igoe made a motion to approve the minutes of February 6, 8, 15, 16, 17, 23 and 27, 2017, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

**Correspondence:** Chairman Gormley acknowledged receipt of the following correspondence:

- Notice of Special Town Meeting from the Board of Selectmen for May 8<sup>th</sup> (Articles need to be sent to Selectmen's Office by Noon on April 11<sup>th</sup>); and
- NEASC Notice that the Scheduled visit in 2019 will be pushed back until 2020 due to changes in accreditation requirements.

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

**Public Forum:** Chairman Gormley informed that this was the time in the meeting for members of the public to address the School Committee with items that they would like to see on a future agenda

Mr. Bob Blood, a Norwood resident and a retired Corrections Officer who has seen first hand the effects of alcohol and drug abuse, was here this evening representing Impact Norwood. He informed that 53% of Norwood voters voted against legalizing marijuana, and he then encouraged everyone to vote "Yes" to stop pot shops from opening up in Norwood.

Mr. Hayden thanked Mr. Blood for representing Impact Norwood and for sharing this important initiative. He added that Impact Norwood will meet again on March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Norwood Police Department meeting room.

**Announcements:** None.

**Appearances:** Student Government Day: Student Government Day was postponed until the next meeting due to the recent snowstorm.

**Reports:** None.

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** None.

**Policy:** None.

**Budget:** FY18 Budget: Mr. Hayden said the budget sheet the Members received this morning have an area in blue which are items that we put back last meeting. He reviewed the budget process to date and thanked the Budget Balancing Committee for all the hard work they have done, including Mrs. Bodenhofer and Mr. McDonough. Mr. Hayden said Ms. Ellis has been reviewing Circuit Breaker, which includes an area for Extraordinary Relief, which towns can't be file for until the month of March.

At this point, Mr. Hayden said it looks like we will hopefully be able to qualify for Extraordinary Relief. Mr. Hayden said if some of our claims don't qualify, we could drop below the threshold and be denied. Mr. Hayden explained other ways we may not qualify. Mr. Hayden said we should know in early May whether we qualify or not.

Mr. Hayden said we were able to claim expenses for 53 special education students, adding that we could possibly receive \$2 million in Circuit Breaker reimbursements. He reminded that this would be FY17 money to be used in FY17.

Mr. Hayden recommended adding an additional \$210,000 back into the budget from Circuit Breaker estimates, which would allow putting back the math teacher, the Vice-Principal at the Middle School and the buses.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to approve the Superintendent's recommendation, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer for discussion.

Ms. Igoe expressed her frustration with planning the budget, making the huge cuts, and then finding the money. She said this process is the reason she pulled her papers and is not running again.

Mr. Hayden explained this is a very volatile process and information continues to change and be updated. Mr. Hayden said back at the beginning of the budget process, he did not have the information to make these decisions. He reminded that this is a fluid process that continues to change as new information comes in.

Ms. Ellis explained that the process could not be any more transparent but that the whole process depends on timetables and qualifiers.

Mrs. Mullen asked if there was any way we could start the budget process in March, when there is a clearer picture of the revenue.

Mr. Hayden said there are laws, deadlines and charters that need to be followed. He added that the Budget Balancing Committee could look into the timing of it.

There was much discussion regarding the need of the math teacher if the numbers are down and whether the Vice Principal should be added back if we may be moving to a Dean of Students system.

Mr. Hayden informed that May 24<sup>th</sup> is the date for recommendations for the Middle School, Callahan and Balch Principals. Mr. Hayden said that he recommends putting the Vice-Principal position back and hire a principal and then see what their thoughts are on the Dean system.

Mrs. Mullen said one area that hasn't been discussed is the area of substitute teachers. Mrs. Mullen would be in favor of a raise for the subs as she doesn't remember when they last got a raise. She has a letter from a retired teacher who stated that she isn't even making minimum wage.

Mr. Hayden said that Circuit Breaker is estimated on the low side and the hire-downs are at \$35,000 but there could be changes. He said that he agrees that the subs should get a raise, but he suggested to take it out of another bucket.

With regard to the motion on the table to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to put back a High School Math Teacher (line 21), Buses (line 31), One Middle School Vice Principal (line 34) and to increase Circuit Breaker by \$210,000 (line 45), the Committee voted in favor 5-0.

At this point, Ms. Igoe made a motion to increase the daily sub pay to \$100 and d\$125.00 per day.

Mr. Hayden asked for an opportunity to do some research on substitute pay.

Ms. Ellis explained the differences in substitute rates, including daily subs and long-term subs. She said the pay rates were \$55 for a non-college sub; \$65 for some college; and \$75 for a certified teacher (not long-term).

Ms. Igoe said she thought we had two tiers. She then made an amendment to her motion to \$75, \$100, and \$125, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The motion failed 3-2 (Ms. Igoe and Mrs. Mullen voted in favor).

Mrs. Mullen made a motion to survey other communities and to get a report back so that the subs' pay can be brought more closely into alignment with surrounding towns, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mr. Hayden agreed to put a report together for the next meeting.

Mr. McDonough then made a motion to send forward to the Town the FY18 Budget of \$42,709,86 inclusive of all clubs and activities, which was seconded by Ms. Igoe. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

**Old Business: Signing of 2016-2017 (1 Year) Collective Bargaining Agreement between Norwood School Committee and Norwood Teachers' Association (Unit A):**

Chairman Gormley announced that the Teacher's Union has ratified the

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to accept the 2016-2017 1-Year Collective bargaining agreement between the Norwood Teachers Association (Unit A) and the Norwood School Committee, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Signing of 2017-2020 (3 Year) Collective Bargaining Agreement between Norwood School Committee and Norwood Teachers' Association (Unit A): Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to accept the 2017-2020 3-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Norwood Teachers' Association (Unit A) and the Norwood School Committee, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0

Superintendent Search Updated: Chairman Gormley informed that he, Mrs. McDonough and Mrs. Bodenhofer visited the Blackstone/Millville School District last week and spoke with many groups regarding our candidate for Superintendent.

Mrs. Bodenhofer said that they met with many Central Administrators, Unions Members and 8 or 9 teachers. She said she got very positive feedback. Some of the teachers said he had mentored and supported them. Mrs. Bodenhofer said she was very pleased with what she saw there.

Mr. McDonough said that these people went over and above to share how grateful they were to Mr. Thomson for all he has done for them.

Chairman Gormley said the current Superintendent hired Mr. Thomson as an Assistant Superintendent after he was hired for the Superintendent's position they were both applying for because he knew how good he was.

Mrs. Mullen said she has spoken with many others regarding the last one standing. She has worked really hard to vet Mr. Thomson. She asked if anyone else has vetted him beyond his references. Mrs. Mullen said she wants the absolute best fit for our schools, and she really believes that we need to go in the direction of an interim at this point. She said that she does not feel that Mr. Thomson is the best candidate for this school system. She added that this search process was flawed and "last man standing" is not a good choice.

Mr. McDonough said that the Search Committee voted unanimously to move him along. Up until Friday, Mr. McDonough was on the fence and was ready to have an interim. After seeing Mr. Thomson in action, Mr. McDonough said he definitely can see him in that seat.

Mrs. Bodenhofer said she did take all the information she got from everyone very seriously. She has talked to many people she knows and trusts; spoke to a friend who has worked for him, and has done her research. She said she feels, on the whole, having watched him interact with people Wednesday and with his staff on Friday, and she really got a sense that he was a strong leader.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to appoint Dr. Dave Thomson Superintendent of Schools, pending successful negotiation of a contract, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted in favor 4-1 (Mrs. Mullen opposed).

Mr. Hayden suggested taking a five-minute recess to call him and see if he accepts.

Mr. McDonough made a motion for a five-minute recess, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Chairman Gormley welcomed everyone back to Open Session at 9:00.

During the recess Chairman Gormley spoke with Dr. Dave Thomson who was excited to accept the position pending successful negotiations.

**New Business:** Out of State Field Trip – 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH – June 19, 2017: Mr. McDonough made a motion to approve this field trip, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Representative to the Tech Collaborative and Town Capital Outlay Committee: Mr. Hayden said that since this is Chairman Gormley's last meeting and he usually attends these meetings, we should appoint another member.

Mrs. Bodenhofer said she would temporarily cover the Capital Outlay Meetings. Next Meeting is Monday at 5:30 p.m.

Mrs. Mullen said she would be the representative to the Tech Collaborative.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to accept those appointments, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

**Consent Agenda:**

**Acceptance of Five Donations:** Mr. Hayden recommended that the Committee accept the following donations:

- Women's Community Committee -Gift Cards – Oldham School, Prescott and High School;
- Bioridge Pharma – 10 Epi-Pens 0.3mg Two Pack, 6 Epi-Pen 0.15 mg Two Pack.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to accept these donations, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

**Personnel:** Mr. Hayden informed that the Middle School, Callahan and Balch principal positions have been advertised on School Spring and the deadline for applications is this Friday. Mr. Hayden said that lots of applications have come in. As of today there are 34 applicants for the Middle School Principal position. Dr. Wyeth said many of the applicants are not well qualified, but he is very happy with those that are qualified. He added he will be working on the Elementary applications tomorrow.

**School Committee Addenda:** Mr. McDonough thanked Chairman Gormley and Ms. Igoe for their service on this Committee, adding that it's not an easy job.

Mrs. Bodenhofer informed that the Building Study Meeting that was postponed due to snow will be held next Wednesday at the GSU Conference Room at the High School. The Public is welcome and encouraged to attend. She then thanked Chairman Gormley and Ms. Igoe for their service to the School Committee, adding that it's an enormous volunteer committeemen and effort.

Mrs. Mullen said she absolutely loved being asked to read at the Cleveland and the Oldham Schools. She loved being back in the classrooms and thanked the teachers for not minding that she went over the time limit. She then thanked Chairman Gormley and Ms. Igoe for their dedication and service to making this School System the best it can be for the students.

Ms. Igoe thanked her constituents who put her in this position. She said she believes that we have a good system that can be a great system. She wished Ms.

Maura Smith and Ms. Theresa Stewart well as they begin their time on the School Committee. She then wished the Norwood High School Varsity Cheerleaders well in Florida to compete in the National Competition. She gave a very special shout-out to Ernie Boch for his very generous donation to the Cheerleaders for the trip.

Chairman Gormley thanked those who put him in the position to serve this Community and School System.

**Adjournment:** Mr. McDonough made a motion for adjournment at 9:30 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee