TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
Remote (On-Line)
Wednesday, March 10, 2021

A remote (on-line) meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 10, 2021 (remote due to the Covid-19 virus). The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Governor Baker issued an Executive Order modifying certain requirements of the Open Meeting Law, to enable public bodies to carry out their responsibilities while adhering to public health recommendations regarding social distancing.

"In addition, all members of a public body may participate in a meeting remotely; the Open Meeting Law's requirement that a quorum of the body and the chair be physically present at the meeting location is suspended.

Committee Members Present: Ms. Teresa Stewart, Chair; Ms. Myev Bodenhofer, Mr. Dave Catania, Dr. Joan Giblin and Ms. Ann Marie Mazzola

Administrators Present: Dr. Dave Thomson, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Alec Wyeth, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment; and Ms. Karin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations.

Minutes: Mr. Catania made a motion to approve the minutes of March 3, 2021, as well as the Executive Session Minutes of March 3, 2021, which was seconded by Ms. Mazzola. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Chairwoman Stewart informed that Mr. Catania signed warrants on behalf of the School Committee. Mr. Catania then shared the warrant report.

Accounts Payable	$ 36,677.03
	$ 54,270.94
	$ 16,681.04
	$ 15,309.12
	$ 3,229.47
	$ 68,867.98
	$ 245.75
	$ 20,028.57
	$ 17,404.34
Total Expenditure of:	**$232,714.24**

Public Forum: The Committee agreed to move Public Forum to a little later in the agenda due to the large group of people here for appearances this evening.

Appearances: CMS Project: Educational Plan and Space Summary Submission: (Ai3/Compass/Dr. Fraczek/Mr. Slater presented). Mr. Justin Thibeault began by saying that they were going to give a short recap this evening of what information was shared at the last meeting. Tonight, they are seeking approval from the School Committee for the draft Educational Plan and Space Summary.

Mr. Thibeault shared that the 5-8 Grade Level Configuration is for a 185,890 square foot building and the 6-8 Grade Level Configuration is for a 150,00 square foot building

The Committee had an opportunity to ask questions.

Mr. Catania made a motion for the School Committee has reviewed the Educational Plan and Space Summaries developed by NPS Administration and Ai3; and finds they reflect and align with the Norwood Public Schools' mission and education goals for the Coakley Middle School, which was seconded by Ms. Mazzola. The Committee voted in favor 4-0 (Dr. Giblin left the meeting for a short time).

Mr. Alan Slater thanked the Committee and said that the next Public Forum Meeting will be on March 18th at 7:00 p.m. They will be talking about the project status and the educational plan. He said they are really looking for public input. Mr. Slater reminded that people do need to rsvp to the meeting.

NHS Bell Schedule Adjustments and Graduation Requirements: Dr. Galligan, Principal of Norwood High School, was here with Ms. Cindy Derrane, Mr. John Quinn and Ms. Laurie McGrory to discuss why they began to look into improving schedule times and the results of a survey.

Why Do Schools Make Changes?
-To use time efficiently / in a way that meets school goals;
-To increase opportunities for students and teachers;
-To better address social-emotional and mental health needs of students;
-To strengthen the transition from middle to high school.

What types of changes are made?
-Create common planning time for teachers;
-Add flexible time during the day for students;
-Change length of classes or courses, required courses, # of courses;
-Modify schedule to accommodate new or existing programs.

Dr. Galligan presented the six recommendations from the :

(1) Increase student voice and choice;
(2) Implement flexible time into schedule;
(3) Make schedule friendly for college and career preparation;
(4) Enhance graduation requirements (beginning with next year's freshmen class):

-To align NHS graduation requirements more closely with MassCore:

-Four years (20 credits) of Mathematics'
-Two years (10 credits) of a World Language;
-One year (5 credits) of the Arts (fine, performing, visual graphic or industrial);
-Four years (10 credits) of Wellness (PE and Health).

(5) Improve Schedule Structure;
(6) Designate Teacher Common Planning Time.

The Committee Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve Dr. Galligan's recommendation #4 – *Enhance Graduation Requirements,* beginning with the Class of 2025, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Public Forum: Chairwoman Stewart 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. She reminded that we would be using the following email: npsschoolcommittee@norwood.k12.ma.us for questions and comments for Public Forum while our meetings are remote. Any questions received after tonight will be addressed at the next meeting. The Chair read six emails this evening.

Ms. Amy Dee sent a letter that was very similar to Ms. Cusack and Ms. Sheehan's letter last week. She read of part of the letter. She said she feels her family will be very much impacted by the change in times and asked the Committee not to move forward with the proposal.

Mr. and Mrs. Babb, parents of a 2nd grader and a 6th grader, have written asking the Committee to not change the start times. She shared the concerns they have, which include the length of time students elementary students will be spending at school as well as the financial impacts and burdens on families.

Ms. Lauren Corcoran sent an email that was very similar to the other's that were received. They are parents of a 3rd grader and a future kindergartener. They were also very concerned about the financial impact and burden of the change of start times.

Ms. Katie Button sent an email saying that she's been following the work of the School Start Time Task Force since 2017. She talked about what she has learned about the health and well being of students from one of the public forums that the School Start Time Committee hosted. She thanked the Norwood School Committee for all they have done for the health and well being of Norwood students. She said she is in favor of the start time changes.

Paula Flanagan thanked the Committee for all the work they do to make the schools the best they can be. She said two years ago she learned about the Task Force and started following the information and research of the Task Force. She ended up volunteering on the Task Force and has noticed the research that has been shared has been seen in their son during this pandemic. She urged the Committee to approve the School Start time changes as proposed.

Mrs. Anna Sangalang thanked the Task force for all the work they have done. She shared what the average day in her student's life looks like. She said they do not know at this point what their work schedules will look like as they are currently working from home. If they have to start back to work in person, they will have to take the commuter rail to work and have no ideal how their schedule will be. She asked the Committee to not vote for the changes to happen in the fall of 2021.

School Start Times Proposal: Mr. Bryan Riley shared that the work of the School Start Times Task Force is done. He then shared who the members of the Task Force were.

Task Force Members:

-Dr. Hugh Galligan, HS Principal
-Bryan Riley , Prescott Principal
-Ryan Quigley, Grades 6-2 Wellness Chair
-Jonathan Longley, Athletic Director
-Kristen Capezio, Extended Day Director
-Paula Flanagan, Parent Representative
-Sigalle Reiss, Department of Health Director
-Teresa Stewart, SC Chair
-Dr. Margo Fraczek, CMS Principal
-Nancy Coppola, Cleveland Principal
-Catherine Connor-Moen, Fine Arts Director
-Al Bishop, Transportation Director
-Eli Norris, Food Services Director
-Jhostin Baez, Student Representative
-Dr. David Thomson, Superintendent

Mrs. Cappola shared the results of the most recent surveys at the Elementary level.

Dr. Fraczek shared the results of the most recent surveys at the Middle School level.

Dr. Galligan shared the results of the most recent survey at the High School level.

Mr. Allan Bishop shared the reasons whey it is not fiscally responsible to have the schools start at the same time across the district.

Dr. Thomson said that the School Committee needs to vote on this proposal and if it is approved, would the changes start in the fall of 2021 or fall or 2022.

There was much discussion.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to not make a change for the Fall of 2021, which was seconded by Mr. Catania.

The Chair said that professionally, she could not vote in favor of that motion.

With regard to the motion on the table, the Committee voted in favor 4-1 (the Chair voted against).

After more discussion, Dr. Giblin made a motion to accept the proposal of the general tiered start time, assuming that school operations are back to normal in the Fall of 2022, including Mrs. Bodenhofer's amendment to see if the elementary start times can be pushed back if possible, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

There was more discussion that in the spring of 2022, Mr. Bishop should have the start times finalized and will come back to the Committee to give an update.

Dr. Thomson said that there should be a vote on the finalized start times.

Department of Health Update: Ms. Reiss was not able to attend this evening's meeting so Dr. Thomson will shared her report:

-Over the last two weeks, there were 82 cases;
-13 School aged cases;
-9 cases associated with school.

Dr. Thomson said that this week, there have been 5 student cases this week and one staff member.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Grades K-5 In-Person Learning: Dr. Thomson updated on in-person learning for the Norwood Public Schools:

-We now have the Commissioners plan;
-Remote will not count towards time on Learning;
-K-5 – April 5th / 6-8 – April 28th / HS – TBD;
-Town Election will create problems for April 5th;
-We have ordered desks, tables and air purifiers;
-Interior Rooms at CMS now able now able to be used if meet criteria;
-Waivers – only for specific reasons after review.

Dr. Thomson informed that there would be no more hybrid (in K-5). Families in RLA will stay RLA unless you let your principal know by this Friday that your student will move to in-person or if a hybrid student will move to RLA. Dr. Thomson then reviewed the many logistics.

The Chair said that there are a lot of moving pieces, and a lot to be done in a little amount of time. The Chair asked families to please try to stay up to date with the information that is changing daily.

Budget: FY22 Budget: Dr. Thomson said that he has been able to review the budget one more time and the budget that was presented last week will be the budget that he will put forward.

The Chair said the Committee would vote on this budget at the March 24th meeting.

Budget Subcommittee Update: The Chair forwarded to the Members a copy of two items that the Budget Sub Committee is asking to be added to the Town Meeting Warrant:

(1) Creation of a Special Education Reserve Fund – The School Committee can appropriate money into this fund, but money coming out will need a vote from the School Committee and Selectmen for Special Education, Out of District Tuition or Special Education Transportation;

(2) Revolving Fund for Building Rentals – the money coming in from the Savage rentals has only been used for the Savage. We are asking the Board of Selectmen to approve this be used for all schools.

Mr. Catania made a motion in favor of sending the letter to request these two items be added to Town Meeting Warrant, which was seconded by Ms. Mazzola. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Old Business: Human Resources Consolidation: Dr. Thomson reminded at the last meeting the Committee voted in favor of the consolidation with the caveat that we wanted to see the job description and have policy language worked on. Those were sent out to the Committee and Dr. Thomson hasn't gotten any feedback from the Committee.

Policy: Policy Subcommittee Update: Dr. Giblin met with Glenn Koocher regarding the Policy Manual Audit.

Dr. Giblin suggested that she give a once-a-month update with questions taken care of in advance.

The Chair said that she needs someone to step and take her spot on the Policy Sub Committee and work with Dr. Giblin through the rest of the audit process with MASC. She said she did not need a volunteer tonight.

New Business: None.

Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (0) Donations:

School Committee Addenda: Ms. Mazzola had none.

Mrs. Bodenhofer had none.

Mr. Catania had none.

Dr. Giblin said regardless of whether or not you think students should go back to school this quickly or not, the method the Commission is using is extremely problematic. We should all be concerned when the laws that are intended to provide local control of schools are superseded by individuals appointed to their position.

The Chair said this role is far more complex than she ever thought it would be. Every decision she makes is out of concern for the well being of the students. She said it is very important for her to advocate for our students and staff and she will keep on doing that. The Chair reminded that there will be an Executive Session tomorrow at 4:00 p.m

Executive Session: None.

Adjournment: Dr. Giblin made a motion for adjournment at 10:34 p.m., which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee