

**Town of Norwood**  
**School Committee Meeting**  
**School Committee Room @ Savage Educational Center**  
**Hybrid**  
**Wednesday, March 29, 2023**

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 29, 2023. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. (The public can access the meeting in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as it is live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org> ).

**Committee Members Present:** Ms. Anne Marie Mazzola, Chair; Ms. Teresa Stewart, Mr. David Hiltz and Ms. Kate Sibbing-Dunn

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

**Administrators Excused:** Dr. Joan Giblin arrived at 9:09 p.m. (flight landed late)

**Minutes:** Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following minutes:  
-March 22, 2023 (Business Meeting Minutes); and  
-March 22, 2023 (Executive Session Minutes)

This motion was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Warrants:** None.

**FY24 Budget Hearing:** Ms. Sheridan shared a power point presentation for the FY24 Budget. She began by informing that the FY24 Budget is \$54,824,886.

-FY24 NPS School General Fund Budget	\$54,824,886	%
-\$ Increase	\$	55.37%
-3.5% Override Pledge Increase	\$1,848,036	3.5%
-Total Additional Increases unable to absorb in Budget staying with override please of 3.5%	\$175,817	0.33%
-Remaining FY24 Chapter 70 Increase	\$1,630,963	44.63%

-FY24 NPS General Fund Budget - Payroll vs. Expenditures:  
-Payroll - 86%  
-Expenditures - 14%

-FY24 General Fund Budget by Major Categories:

**Budget By Category:**

	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
-General Education	\$33,474,841	\$35,171,718	\$1,696,877	64%
-Special Education	\$17,578,552	\$17,516,943	(\$61,609)	32%
-English Learners	\$1,747,640	\$2,136,225	\$388,585	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$52,801,033</b>	<b>\$54,824,886</b>	<b>\$2,023,853</b>	<b>3.83% total incr.</b>

**Payroll By Category:**

	<b>FY23</b>	<b>FY24</b>	<b>Difference</b>	<b>% of Budget</b>
-General Education	\$30,113,055	\$31,536,362	\$1,424,307	67%
-Special Education	\$12,535,198	\$13,495,132	\$959,934	29%
-English Learners	\$1,658,572	\$2,057,542	\$398,970	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$44,305,825</b>	<b>\$47,089,036</b>	<b>\$2,783,211</b>	

-Special Education Transportation & OOD Tuition:

- Special Education in house transportation continues to rise - 3 years from 141 to 185 to 203 student;
- Out-of-District Special Education Students continue to rise - 3 years from 60 to 68 to 79 students;
- Operational Service Division of the State authorized a 14% rate of inflation increase for all approved private special education schools (average increase past 10 years 1.92%).

-Norwood Select Student Profiles:

- Changes to our Student Population continue to drive our budget with increased Student need.

-English Learners / SPED Population:

-FY24 Budget District New Staffing Requests - General Fund: \$777,694 - 10 FTE

-SPED Education

-Special Ed Teachers	3.0 FTE
-Adjustment Counselor	0.2 FTE
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.2 FTE (3 benefitted)</b>

-English Learners

-EL Teachers	2.0 FTE
-EL Coordinator (prev grant funded)	0.5 FTE
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.5 FTE (2 benefitted)\</b>

-Gen. ED - Other Needs

-Preschool Administration	1.0 FTE
-Elementary Students Support Specialist	1.0 FTE
-Interventionists (prev. Grant funded)	2.0 FTE
-*Nurse LMPA (prev. Grant Funded)	1.0 FTE
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.0 FTE (5 benefitted)</b>

\*Began this Budget with 32 new staff requests  
\*LMPA is a special education preschool program

-FY24 Budget Additional Staffing Needs Unable to Fund - General Fund - \$1,142,206  
-22 FTE  
-Original New Staff Requests 32 - only 10 remain in Budget

Revolving Funds - Ms. Sheridan explained that the District collects fees to offset the cost for the district and we continually monitor, evaluate and effectively use our Revolving Funds. This year we are increasing our budget offset in the amount of \$1,376,516 - up 34% since last year.

Circuit Breaker - Circuit Breaker reimbursements rise as the increase in Out of District tuition costs rise - the Budget Offsets have risen as well. It is important to note that the District should be mindful to keep some reserves in this fund for future unexpected Special Ed costs. The State allows 2 years to expend the funds.

Medicaid - The School-based Medicaid Program offers LEA's an opportunity to receive federal dollars to offset costs for providing certain Medicaid-covered direct services in a school setting. FY 23 - 3 out of 4 quarters received to date in the amount of \$237,730.

Grants - NPS continues to search for Grant Opportunities - Federal, State and Private. All grant employee benefits are paid through the grant funding.  
(FY23 - \$2,902,323)

Chapter 70 Aid Historical Comparison - Norwood continues to see large increases in their Chapter 70 Aid due to the Student Opportunity Act and changes in the School District population.  
FY24- another 28.81% increase of \$3,654,816 - Chapter 70 Aid increase accounted for 93% of the Town's total FY24 Cherry Sheet increase in revenue and 94% in FY23.

Net School Spending - Norwood continues to be over the Required Net School Spending, however, FY23 estimates a dip in the % over the requirement from 48.10% to 43.20%.

Warrant Article Requests:

**Special Ed Trans Warrant Article: \$500,000**

One time warrant article to cover unanticipated Special Education Transportation Out of District Contracted Services due to supply chain issues causing a pause in delivery of much needed Special Education vans on order.

**School-Based Medical Program Revenue Transfer from Free Cash - \$350,000**

One time transfer of funds from free cash to cover extraordinary and unanticipated Special Education Expenses for the schools. School-Based Medicaid program revenue is based school districts Medicaid-covered services.

**Homeless Transportation Revenue Transfer from Free Cash - \$22,000**

One time transfer of funds from free cash to cover extraordinary and unanticipated increases in the School Districts Homeless Transportation. Homeless Transportation Reimbursement from the State is based on the Schools' Homeless Transportation Costs.

**Elementary School Study Warrant Article - \$60,000**

One time transfer of funds from free cash to cover a consultant for an Elementary School Study.

**Override Stabilization Fund - \$1,487,643**

One time request to utilise some of the Override Stabilization Fund to cover some of the School District's extraordinary and unanticipated increases due to changes in population increased numbers in special education/EL, and supply chain issues with special education transportation.

**Total** **\$2,419,643**

Ms. Sheridan shared what we will accomplish with this Budget:

- Meet the needs of an increasing diverse student population;
- Additional attention to educational learning loss and social emotional needs of students through targeted intervention;
- Increased staffing and assistance as well as instructional support for students with disabilities, English Learners and the General Ed Student Population;
- Continuation of 1:1 Chromebooks (grade 6 and 9);
- Teacher Laptop Refresh
- Curriculum refresh - PreK - 12 Art; K-5 Multilingual Program; K-5 Health/Wellness/PE;
- Professional Development - diversity, equity, inclusion, technology and instructional practice;
- Continue Community Service-
  - Minds Matter Interface Referral Helpline;
  - Metrowest Youth Behavioral Survey
- Effective use of Grants/Revolving Funds

There was no one from the Public here this evening to speak at the Public Budget Hearing.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve the FY24 Budget, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Adjourn Public Budget Hearing:** The Chair declared the Public Budget Hearing closed at 7:52 p.m.

**Public Comment:** Chair Mazzola 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. The School Committee has switched to a hybrid meeting and the public can access the meeting in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as it is live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org>.

The Chair reminded that there are now two ways the public can participate in the public forum portion of the meeting. (1) In person at the meeting (sign up in advance at the Superintendent's Office by noon the day of the meeting to pre-register, or sign in at the meeting; and (2) Call the Superintendent's Office at 781-762-6804 by noon on the day of the meeting to register and receive a meeting link that will be accessible for public forum only.

No one registered in advance or at the meeting for Public Forum and the Chair declared Public Forum closed at 7:54 p.m.

**Appearances: Facilities FY24 Budget Presentation:** Mr. Paul Riccardi and Ms. Mary O'Brien were here this evening to present the Facilities FY24 Budget.

Mr. Riccardi said that \$8.6 million dollars is on the table of which 5.7 million is made up between utilities and labor. He shared that the Department is made up of 53 people, mostly custodians.

Other budget items:

- Snow and Ice - \$264,000 (we had a mild winter and did not come close to spending this much this year, but need to carry it forward);
- Equipment Repair and Replace - \$304,000;
- Maintenance - \$470,000;
- HVAC - \$233,000;
- Custodial Supplies - \$213,000

Mr. Riccardi said we can control our utilities a little bit, but we have very old and drafty buildings. He said we need to have a decent environment for learning. Mr. Riccardi said that even though we get good electric rates from the Norwood Light Department, the High School electric bill for February was \$50,000 and the CMS bill was \$40,000.

Mr. Riccardi said we brought a plumber on board and we have an electrician who takes care of the low-voltage items (alarms, fire-alarms and cameras) town-wide which used to be taken care of by an outside vendor. We are starting to realize some savings.

Mr. Riccardi said we are going to start replacing one vehicle a year and not have to bring it to Capital Outlay.

Mr. Riccardi then shared that his Department is getting very old and we are going to have some challenges going forward. He said we need to start thinking of how we can incentivise the work to bring in more help.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the FY24 Facilities Budget, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** Dr. Thomson updated on the following:

-Ash to Flame - competitive play - going to State Finals and have been invited to represent New England at a competition in Maine. (This is why we have a last-minutes field trip request.

-Winter Sports Recognition - addressing Hate in School Sports Workshop last Monday at Babson College - joint effort between MIAA and Governor Healy and the Principals' Association. Dr. Thomson said he was so proud of our Winter Sports Teams, many of who went very far into the post-season tourney. Dr. Thomson said he was very proud of how well these students represented Norwood.

-Extended Day Registration is now open - please register so we can figure out staffing.

-Field Trip Approvals:

-CMS - NYC - June 13-14

Ms. Stewart made a motion to give preliminary approval this trip, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

-New England Drama Festival - Rockport, Maine - April 20-22

Ms. Stewart made a motion motion to give preliminary approval for this field trip, which was second by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Stewart said that in the past, she has mentioned setting up an Educational Foundation, which would be a way to help all students afford these field trips. She said she because she is on the School Committee she can not set this up, but she would be able to talk about it to anyone who may be interested in getting an Educational Fund organized.

Job Openings:

- School Psychologist
- 5 paraprofessional
- Long and Short Term Stubs
- Extended Day Staff
- Summer Program Staff

**Budget:** Budget Sub Committee Meeting: Ms. Stewart recapped that the Sub Committee met last week and then went to the Finance Commission last Thursday. She said they didn't take a vote yet but she believes they will approve it. We are meeting again tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. to get back to some of the longer term budget items and to get presentations done for Town Meeting. The Sub Committee will keep meeting about two times a month. Some of the items they will be working on will be the HR study, Long-Term Budgeting, and some work that will be done with the Budget Balancing Committee. We will also be looking at the Shared Cost Allocation with the Town.

Approval of Grants: Ms. Sheridan said there were 4 new grants for approval.

- (1) Title III Part A - Immigration Grant - 16,468
- (2) Influence 100 - State Grant - Select Rising Leaders - \$2000
- (3) Supporting SEI, Behavioral & Mental Health & Wellness - \$99,186
- (4) Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessment - \$36,710

Total amount of Grants - \$154,363

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to accept these grants, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Old Business:** Update on SC and SAC Meeting: Ms. Stewart shared that last Thursday during WIN Block at the High School, Chair Mazzola and Ms. Stewart met with the Student Advisory Council. Ms. Stewart reminded that this is a new collaboration this year and we will be getting quarterly reports from Keira O'Donnell, the student liaison. She added that between the quarterly reports, Members of the School Committee are supposed to meet with the members of the Student Advisory Council and that's why they were at the High School. She it was a really good meeting and the students have some really good insight into what is going on and what they are concerned about. Ms. Stewart and Chair Mazzola had shared with the SAC how a School Committee works and what comes under the School Committee purview. There were some questions around clubs so Ms. Stewart and Chair Mazzola explained how clubs are approved. Then they shared some feedback around mental health.

The next quarterly report will be on May 17th and the SAC Members who cover the Elementary Schools are planning to work with the principals to get feedback from students in grades 1-5 on how they feel about the School Start Time Change this year and on improvements that the students would like to see at their

schools. They will also ask the students their thoughts on clubs at the elementary level.

At the last quarterly report, they did not touch base with the Willett so they will be meeting with Dr. Baulier about how things are going at the Willett.

At the Coakley Middle School, they will get student feedback on the School Start Time Change and what improvements the students would like there. They will talk with Dr. Fraczek about getting some of the programs back up and running (i.e. SEARCH and Student Council).

At the High School they will work on getting student feedback on the School Start Time Change as well.

There is another meeting with the students on April 27th. They will start to create a template on topics when talking with students and another template for when interacting with principals. The SAC Members would also like to dive into policy work so we will work on a template to help guide them in that area.

Chair Mazzola said that it is really great seeing that these students value this experience and are still full of great energy.

Ms. Stewart said we need to figure out who will be the advisor going forward. Dr. Galligan has assumed the role this year (although it shouldn't have) but this is a district-wide role and we need to figure out who will be in that role next year.

Draft of School Start Time Survey: Dr. Taylor reminded that when the School Start times were changed, one of the caveats was that there would be a mid-year survey to get some feedback from the community. That survey has been completed with input from Union and Staff representation. This survey will go out to parents and caregivers to get their perspective on how the start time changes have affected them. Dr. Taylor will make it a google form so it can be translated. It will be in Dr. Thomson's newsletter and will go out Friday through *Parent Square*. They will have two weeks to fill out the survey and get it back.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the survey, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Joint Facilities MOU: This item will be tabled to next meeting.

Executive Summary for Superintendent Mid-Cycle Evaluation: Chair reminded Members that the Executive Summaries are due to Dr. Thomson by Friday (March 31st)

**Policy:** Policy Sub Committee Update: The Chair and Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said there were no updates. The next meeting is scheduled for April 5th at 6:00 p.m.



Communications Policy: Chair said through an oversight, we took a 1st vote on this new policy in August. The policy has been added to the website and needs a second vote and a new file number.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the Communication Policy, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Legislative Advocacy:

Ms. Stewart said in the packets, the Members have received a draft letter that was co-written by Ms. Stewart and Mrs. Jody Smith asking the Representatives (one to Representative Rush and one to Representative Rogers) to vote:

- In support of Governor Healey's Budget;
- School funding for the Student Opportunities Act;
- Proposed changes to Circuit Breaker (90% reimbursement)
- Special Education Reserve Fund (Bill HD1419 - allows for 5% net school funding)
- The retention around Medicaid Revenues go to school districts (not municipalities).

Ms. Mazzola said there is another topic around MCAS and supporting the full child. The Committee and Dr. Thomson agreed this should be a separate letter.

Chair Mazzola reminded that last week the Board of Selectmen decided to send a letter (jointly with the School Committee) around building a new middle school with all the inflationary issues that have arisen, which Mr. Donnelly drafted. The Board of Selectmen voted on the letter last night with a couple of edits and Chair Mazzola will sign the letter once it is ready for her to sign.

**New Business:**

**Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (2) Donations:**

- Roche Brothers Gift Card - \$50 - Post Prom - High School.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to accept this donation, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

- Oldham PTO Kids Clubs - Teacher Stipend - \$1,388.52

Ms. Stewart made a motion to accept this donation from the Oldham PTO in the amount of \$1,388.52 but designate this donation as a restricted donation to pay the stipends. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**School Committee Addenda:** Ms. Stewart shared some candid thoughts she has written down for this evening's addenda. She said she sits in this seat this evening in a situation that she's never been in before. She is up for re-election and is not sure if she will be back in her seat for the next meeting. She looked back through her time on the School Committee and all that the Committee has gone through over the past six years. She said she has the skill set and the desire to continue her work on

the School Committee and hopes she will continue on in this role for another three years.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn encouraged everyone to vote.

Dr. Giblin had none

Mr. Hiltz had none.

Chair Mazzola said she is also up for re-election and hopes to be back for another term. She said the work has been so rewarding and she has really enjoyed it through the ups and downs. She agrees with Ms. Stewart that this is a sacrifice on our families, but her family know it is worth it. She is three years into this work and wants to continue her work for another three years.

**Executive Session:** Chair Mazzola informed that there would be an Executive Session for legal matters.

Ms. Stewart made a motion for Executive Session at 9:14 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

**Adjournment:** Dr. Giblin made a motion for adjournment at 10:30 p.m., which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee