

Town of Norwood
School Committee Meeting
School Committee Room @ Savage Educational Center
Hybrid
Wednesday, January 10, 2024

A hybrid meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 p.m. (The public can access the meetings in person at the Savage Educational Center or live via NCM on cable, as they are live-streamed. For the cable channel guide and on-line link, please visit: <https://norwoodcommunitymedia.org>).

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

Administrators Present: Dr. Charisse Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Operations and Strategy (filled in for Dr. Thomson); Dr. J. J. Munoz, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum; Mr. Matt Wells, Director of Finance and Operations

Excused: Dr. Dave Thomson, Superintendent of Schools

Minutes: Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following minutes:

- December 20, 2023 (Business Meeting); and
- December 20, 2023 (Executive Session)

This motion was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 3-0-2 (Chair Mazzola and Ms. Sibbing-Dunn abstained).

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Chair Mazzola informed that she has signed warrants on behalf of the School Committee. Chair Mazzola then shared the warrant report.

Payroll for meeting of 12/20/23: \$2,296,226.32

Accounts Payable:	\$ 201,611.07
	\$ 73,191.72
	\$ 23,975.25
	\$ 4,386.86
	\$ 643,566.34
	\$ 675,536.78
	\$ 37,182.37
	\$ 10,357.50
	<u>\$ 839.48</u>

Approved for: **\$3,966,873.69**

Payroll for meeting of 1/10/24: \$1,986,926.71

Accounts Payable:	\$. 36,242.06
	\$ 56,316.99
	\$ 11,340.61

\$ 24,607.46
 \$ 768,626.04
 \$ 101,296.68
 \$ 17,553.51
 \$ 176,669.16
 \$ 7,446.45
 \$ 15,976.75
\$ 67.50
\$3,203,069.92

Approved for:

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 comment 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 7:10 p.m.

Appearances: 2024 Town Meeting Dates: Geri Slater, Town Moderator and Marylou Folan, Town Clerk, attended this evening’s meeting to share the upcoming Town Meeting schedule. Mrs. Slater said she was here as a follow-up to a commitment she made after a previous scheduling snafu during the fall Town Meeting. Out of respect for Town Meeting, Ms. Slater was taking it upon herself to make sure that all Boards are informed about the Town Meeting dates. She informed that this is in addition to the correspondence that goes out from the General Manager’s Office that lists all the dates as well. In the spirit of collaboration, she wants to make sure everyone is aware of all the dates.

Mrs. Slater said the new Town Meeting will be starting in the winter and will begin on March 21st. This will begin on a Thursday, not Monday as is tradition. It will go for as long as needed. There are currently six Articles slated for that meeting. The Warrant to the Board of Selectmen closed yesterday. There will be a Town Meeting Information Session on land use on February 28th.

The May Annual Town Meeting, and probably a Special Town Meeting will begin on Monday, May 13th. Again, this will go for as long as it needs to go. Articles for this Town Meeting are due to Town Hall by March 12th.

Mrs. Slater added that information sessions will begin on
-Monday, April 29th;
-Wednesday, May 1st; and
-Thursday, May 2nd

All these will be recorded and played on NCM as well.

Mrs. Folan informed that nomination papers are available in the Town Clerk's Office for anyone who wants to run for a Town Office or Town Meeting Member and are due back by Monday, February 12th.

Ms. Stewart asked Dr. Taylor and Chair Mazzola to ensure that policy is being followed and the dates that are being shared with us have been cleared and there are no conflicts at the High School.

Dr. Taylor checked the calendar and spoke with the principal and there are no conflicts at this time.

Ms. Stewart informed that regarding the information sessions, there are School Committee Meetings scheduled for February 28th and May 1st, which means if the School Committee or Administration are expected to be there, they will not be able to.

ELL Update (memo shared with FinCom): ELL Update was postponed as Ms. Bourgois was not feeling well).

Update on HR Improvements: Ms. Lisa Ugliodoro, Director of Human Resources, was here with Ms. Janice Weitbrecht, school liaison, this evening to give an update on Human Resources.

Ms. Ugliodoro updated that this team of 7 people takes on a little of the school work, but Janice is the main liaison. She said they are very happy to be part of the team that works with the schools.

Dr. Giblin had some logistic questions and said Mr. Wells is the person that HR should be working closest with.

Ms. Ugliodoro said Ms. Weitbrecht does work closely with Mr. Wells and his team in the Business Office. They have created a good working relationship. Mr. Wells has set up bi-weekly meetings and they met earlier today.

Regarding financial reporting, they use MUIINIS but not on the payroll side. The bumps that are perceived and that exist are happening and are being looked at. Ms. Ugliodoro has tried to connect the Town Treasurer Payroll Office with the School Payroll Staff to find a better way to manage the process. She said it is very detailed

and the Treasurer said he is willing to engage in a conversation to make that process better.

Ms. Uglialoro also updated that HR is currently doing postings, investing in staff, recruiting, processing stipends, but there is more we can do. Over the past three years recruiting has skyrocketed. Ms. Uglialoro said recruiting is something they can help the schools with.

In response to Dr. Giblin's question around doing market analysis, Ms. Uglialoro said they would be able to help with doing market analysis. Ms. Uglialoro said HR is a "Team Sport" and keeping staff happy, healthy and motivated is a huge part of her job.

Ms. Stewart gave a quick overview of the memo, dating back to 2021, from Dr. Thomson and Mr. Mazzucco informing that a partial consolidation of the HR Department would be more efficient and effective. At that time, it allowed the School Department to absorb and gain an additional financial analyst position that was needed. It was the beginning of this relationship. Ms. Stewart added that we were supposed to be reviewing the consolidation memo and checking in along the way. She said a lot has been going on and that has not happened. Ms. Stewart reminded that this is part of the strategic plan (Objective #1). Ms. Stewart read objective #1. She said our Wellness Policy has a whole section on staff well-being and staff support. She thinks this could be an area of opportunity for more support for our staff. She asked if they thought there was an opportunity to focus on that area.

Ms. Uglialoro said this is an area she is passionate about, keeping staff happy, healthy and motivated for success. She said mental health is a big part of that. She is looking for opportunities for grants and for speakers to come in. She is definitely supportive of jumping in and making this as good as possible, but added that we are limited time-wise. We are looking for efficiencies in making this happen.

There was some discussion around the School Committee and School Department being a filter to provide guidance to HR around where they should be looking and what resources are needed.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Dr. Taylor informed that she is filling in for Dr. Thomson this evening.

TEC Capital Reserve Fund Modification (Only vote to disapprove): Dr. Taylor reminded that Dr. Thomson gave an update on TEC recently and shared that TEC would be looking to increase their Capital Reserve Fund from \$750,000 to \$3.5 million. The reason is that \$750,000 is not enough for any capital project / emergency that they may need to account for. Dr. Taylor said that the Committee does not vote to approve, but only needs to vote if they disapprove this item.

The Committee agreed that they would not disapprove this request.

Move Preschool Conferences to 2/7 from 2/14 (vote): Dr. Taylor informed that the original date for conferences was schedule for February 14th (Valentine's Day). The Preschool community would like to move the conferences to February 7th.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to approve the change of date of the preschool conferences to February 7th, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

School Updates: Dr. Taylor shared some of the events and activities going on in the schools.

Job Openings: Dr. Taylor informed that there were still openings for the following positions:

- Daily Substitutes (College Students);
- Assistant Transportation Director;
- Special Education Teacher;
- Title I Teacher;
- Paraprofessionals;
- Van Drivers; and
- Extended Day Staff

Dr. Taylor said if there are multi-lingual members of the Norwood Community there is a need for you in these roles as that is an increasing need.

New Arrivals:

- State notified Norwood we would be a consolation shelter site;
- Presently 63 families will be relocated at the end of January;
- We anticipate up to 40 (33 as of today) students. Some may choose to stay in the original district;
- State reimburses \$104 a day for educational costs (quarterly);
- Norwood Town and Schools have been collaboratively planning since the fall;
- Much can and will change over the next few weeks

Dr. Taylor said as the daughter of Caribbean immigrants, as a first generation American, from an island very close to where many of these folks are coming from, it is a privilege for us to be able to cultivate and to share in the journey of the greatness of who they are going to become. Dr. Taylor said as we think about diversity and inclusion, this makes us richer. If we say in our 5 C's that we are looking at citizenship and global citizenship, this richness and diversity of community and having exposure to other cultures gets us to where we need to be. That is a core value we cannot meet if we do not embrace those who are different. Dr. Taylor asked that everyone be patient as we go through the process and when they get more information, they will share more.

Dr. Giblin clarified with Dr. Taylor that the schools were informed in late November that we were a potential site, but were not informed of the new arrivals until very recently.

Ms. Stewart said many people do not know about the 5 C's and the core values and suggested that this should be shared with the Community.

Parents should have received a letter with a FAQ page. Dr. Giblin said the FAQ page is excellent and everyone should read it on *Parent Square*. If anyone has any questions around this, they should contact the Superintendent's Office.

Budget: Budget Sub Committee Update: Ms. Stewart updated that the Sub Committee met on January 4th. The Members should find the agenda and links to the material to the last meeting in the folder. Ms. Stewart informed that Dr. Fraczek joined the meeting to continue the previous discussion around the staffing needs of the new Middle School and to work on being able to tell the story of how these requests came to be and how it has evolved since we wrote the Educational Plan for the new Middle School in 2020-2021. She said the work will continue on that.

There was some discussion around Budget Balancing Committee. Unfortunately there still is no date set for a January meeting. As soon as we have a date, we will share it with the Committee. She said it's important to prioritize, at this point, what is going to happen with Fiscal Year 2025, because as we all know, we are deep into the creation of the FY25 Budget and the Override Pledge has ended. She said that we really need discussion, parameters and agreement on how we are building that budget (School and Town).

- Ms. Stewart said some of the things they are keeping on the radar are:
- Town Audits (previously happened);
 - Fiscal Policy (at some point she hopes the 3 Boards can meet to work on Fiscal Policies again);
 - Budget Workshops -(scheduled for January 22nd) - Ms. Stewart said hopefully the Principals, Administrative Team and Directors will be attending the workshop for that discussion;
 - New Arrivals - there was some discussion around the information Dr. Taylor shared this evening and any of the financial implications will be sent to the Budget Sub Committee and then shared with the full Committee;
 - Ms. Cimeno updated that two maternity leaves in her department that required replacements through contracted services are ending so the full-time staff will be back and we will be down to one contracted service position; She also updated that there is a new PACs teacher at the Oldham that has started and there is still an opening for a Speech/Language Pathologist.

Ms. Stewart said the next three months will be very 'budget-heavy". The next meeting will be on January 18th and Dr. Munoz will be joining for some budget discussions around curriculum, assessment and professional development.

Ms. Stewart said that we all need to have the Governor's Budget on our radar. Ms. Stewart shared some of her questions and concerns with administration around possible FY24 cuts around some Grant lines:

- Extended Learning Time;
- Dual Enrollment;
- STEM;
- School to Career;
- Connecting Activities;
- Student Wellness School Supports;
- AP Grants

Ms. Stewart said MASC is recommending that we analyze our line items and check with our representatives to see if Norwood was impacted by cuts to those grants.

Mr. Wells has already taken a look and said it looks like were brining it down to match the actual expenses that were there, adding that they were just coming in line with the with what the state was expecting to spend, There were small buckets that were cut that could affect us in some way but the details behind it were not there yet. He will continue looking into this.

Budget Transfer: Mr. Wells said there were two Budget Transfers this evening.

- \$7500 transfer to cover the "over-cost' of the Elementary Space Study - The actual quote came in at \$67,000. Article 10 was funded at \$60,000 so we had to find the balance. This is a transfer between two lines to cover the balance;

Mr. Hiltz made a motion to approve this transfer, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

- \$256,000 transfer for adjustments for movement of staff from Hire Down Savings to balance accounts for post-budget School Committee approved positions.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve this transfer, which was seconded by Mr. Hiltz. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Old Business: Superintendent Search Update: Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said that everything is going as planned, adding that the first set of interviews were on Monday and the next set will be tomorrow. Everything is going according to schedule. She said one information is public about finalists that will be posted for

the public. She said we should be announcing finalists during the January 24th School Committee Meeting.

Mr. Hiltz said they are trying to finalize dates with Mr. Hardy tomorrow but the 2-week window of time for School Committee interviews will be between January 24th - February 7th. Mr. Hardy will be at the next meeting and will go over next steps with the Committee.

Elementary Study Update: Mr. Hiltz informed that they will have their first Working Group meeting on Tuesday, January 30th from 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. They have invited those staff members who's feedback has been important to the process. There was some discussion around it not needing to be posted as it is a working group meeting and will be run by administration. Mr. Hiltz said minutes should probably be taken.

Mr. Hiltz asked that the next update for this be on February 14th.

Policy: Policy Sub Committee Update: Ms. Sibbing-Dunn sent apologies to everyone as she and Chair Mazzola were both not able to attend the last meeting as there has been a lot of illness going around. There were no updates for this evening.

Policy JLCA Revisions: Postponed

Policy BDFA-E (2nd vote): Chair Mazzola informed that the Committee needed to take a second vote on Policy BDFA-E. She informed that this has been on the School Website for over the two-week required time and there has been no feedback from the public around this policy.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve this policy, which was seconded by Ms. Sibbing-Dunn. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Ms. Stewart asked Dr. Taylor if she could share out this policy and the School Council one be shared out to the principals so they are aware of the changes.

New Business: None.

Consent Agenda: Acceptance of (5) Five Donations:

- Bay State Textiles - November Rebate - \$651.30;
- Gift Basket / Gift Cards from local businesses/organizations;
- LEAD - \$100.00 Gift Card from Sandra and William Discepolo;
- Women's Community Committee - \$500.00 Gift Card - Oldham;
- Women's Community Committee - \$400.00 Gift Card - Prescott

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn made a motion to accept these donations/rebates, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee Members voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Dr. Taylor thanked the businesses that contributed to the Baskets and making sure our families all have meals at the holidays:

- St. Tim's Parish;
- Norwood Jr. Women's Club;
- Gaston Electrical;
- Khouri Team;
- One Local Bank;
- St. Catherines Parish;
- Burn Boot Camp;
- Old Colonial Cafe; and
- Conrad's

School Committee Addenda: Ms. Stewart updated that there was a School Health Council Meeting yesterday and there is now a "Save the Date" for the Wellness Fair, which is Saturday, November 2nd at Norwood High School. She then updated that she had sent the Members an e-mail around the School Advisory Council and said Dr. Galligan was hoping some of the Members could meet with the Student Advisory Council on January 25th during WIN Block. Ms. Sibbing-Dunn and Ms. Stewart were planning on going. She then said the Impact Norwood's next Coalition Meeting will be on Thursday, January 25th at 6:00 at the Civic.

Ms. Sibbing-Dunn said she was excited about the Wellness Fair. She said she's been here about 8 years and she loves being involved in this Community of do-ers. It has been a privilege to learn from people who have been here a long time and to meet new people and new families who have come here and want to contribute. She looks forward to seeing that continue and as we work together.

Dr. Giblin thanked all the business and organizations that have contributed to the various events that have been organized through the schools. And she echoed Mary Lou Folan's message that you can pull papers and they are due on February 12th. She encouraged everyone who wants to help shape the town to pull your papers for Town Meeting.

Ms. Hiltz said he will be pulling his papers for re-election. He said this has been a very rewarding experience and is happy to give back to a Town that's given a lot to his family.

Chair Mazzola hoped everyone had a great holiday break and said the next School Committee Meeting would be on January 24th (hybrid).

Executive Session: Chair Mazzola informed that there would be an Executive Session for contract negotiations strategy session.

Mr. Hiltz made a motion for Executive Session at 8:20 p.m. which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee Members were polled and voted in favor 5-0.

Adjournment: Ms. Stewart made a motion for adjournment at 10:20 p.m., which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Members were posted and voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee