

TOWN OF NORWOOD  
School Committee Meeting  
Savage Educational Center  
Wednesday, February 26, 2020

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2020. The meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m.

(An Executive Session was held prior to the School Committee Meeting at 6:00 p.m. for contract negotiations.)

**Committee Members Present:** Ms. Teresa Stewart, Chair; Ms. Myev Bodenhofer, Ms. Maura Smith, Mr. Dave Catania and Dr. Joan Giblin

**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:** Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of February 5, 2020, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 5, 2020 (Page #1 – Unit A Negotiations), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 5, 2020 (Page #2 – Superintendent Contract), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mr. Catania made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 12, 2020 (Page #1 – Superintendent Contract), which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Dr. Giblin made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 12, 2020 (Page #2 – Unit A Negotiations), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

**Correspondence:** None.

**Warrants:** Chairwoman Stewart informed that there were warrants to be signed. She then read the amounts:

Accounts Payable Warrants:	\$ 7,485.76
	\$ 9,778.44
	\$ 9,429.32
	\$ 7,646.02

\$ 7,619.09  
\$ 3,764.04  
\$21,589.83  
\$15,824.09  
\$20,628.49  
\$ 8,758.72  
\$ 165.00  
\$ 2,983.70

**Total Expenditure:**

**\$115,672.50**

**Public Forum:** None.

**Announcements:** None.

**Appearances: Student Awards:** Sean Chisholm – MASS Award Winner: Dr. Thomson shared some of Sean’s accomplishments at Norwood High School and then presented him with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents’ Award.

Bernice Pierre – NSDC Award Winner: Dr. Thomson shared some of Bernice’s accomplishments at Norwood High School and then presented her with the NSDC Award.

Presentation on ELA Curriculum: Dr. Wyeth, Mrs. Ferreira (Balch Principal and ELA Committee Lead), Stefanie West (Elementary ELA Coordinator) were here this evening to present the ELA Committee’s recommendation for a new ELA and they shared the process used to come to the recommendation. *Pearson My View* is the program that seems to fit best with our Core Values and Priorities, adding that none of the programs were totally perfect.

Ms. West thanked the many teachers that helped out and said that they are seeking the Committee’s approval this evening to purchase the *Pearson My View Program*.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments. Ms. Smith asked if we could afford this program. Dr. Wyeth reminded that this money is already in the budget. Mrs. Ferreira said that we can not afford to not do this, as it will provide stability and consistency to the Elementary Schools in the area of ELA. Dr. Thomson said that if we don’t invest in the tools that our teachers need, then we are not progressing. Dr. Thomson said one good investment we have made is hiring Ms. West as the ELA Coordinator as she has already done some great work for our schools.

Mr. Catania made a motion to approve this program, which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Dr. Wyeth sincerely thanked the Committee and those that agreed to try the pilot program over the past few months.

**Budget: Van Drivers' Benefits:** (Moved up in the agenda). Mr. Allen Bishop, Director of Transportation, was here this evening and updated that as of today, we are transporting 180 special needs students compared to 143 students at the same time last year. He was happy to inform that two new drivers have just started.

Mr. Bishop was here this evening to share some recommendations that would help with:

- Employee Retention; and
- To keep use of outside transportation vendors to a minimum.

He felt that a simple but formal agreement should be crafted. His recommendation is as follows:

- Monitors wages increased from \$15.38 to \$16.00/hour;
- 7-D Drivers wages increased from \$16.40 to \$17/hour;
- CDL Bus Drivers wages increased from \$20.76 to \$21.25;
- 5 sick days a year (up to 15 days);
- 3 paid personal days per year;
- 5 paid vacation days per year for the 1<sup>st</sup> 5 years. Then beginning Year 6, one additional paid vacation day/year maxing out at 15 paid days. No vacation while school is in session.
- Holiday pay in the amount of their average daily pay for Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Martin Luther King Day, Presidents' Day, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day.
- 3 Bereavement Days at average daily rate of pay for immediate family;
- Access to town health plans for those working 20+ hours weekly;
- Reimbursement for licensure to include physicals.

The Committee asked Mr. Bishop to come back to the next meeting (March 11<sup>th</sup>) with some estimates regarding what these benefits would cost.

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** Strategic Plan Bi-Monthly Report: Dr. Thomson reviewed how to find updates to the strategic plans on the website. (To find the updates on progress, go to the School Website - [www.norwood.k12.ma.us](http://www.norwood.k12.ma.us) and click on *District*. Scroll down to find the *Strategic Plan Dashboard*.)

Dr. Thomson updated on many of the items within the strategic plan and asked for adjustments to the timeline for items 3.7 and 5.2.

MSBA Update: Dr. Thomson said last Thursday he was in Boston at an MSBA Board Meeting and was pleased to inform that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) voted to invite the Town of Norwood to partner with them in conducting a Feasibility Study for the Dr. Philip O. Coakley Middle School. He said

the next step will be to hire an Owner's Project Manager and Designer, which will help bring the Feasibility Study to fruition. Dr. Thomson said he was happy that Cathy Carney (Town Purchasing Agent) and Alan Slater (Chair of the Building Committee) were there with him as they both seem to clearly understand everything that was being talked about, Dr. Thomson said this is a true partnership with the town and thanked everyone on the Building Committee who has helped get us to this point.

Dr. Thomson updated that Norwood is one of 7 or 8 communities in the Commonwealth that have seen an estimated \$1.5 million increase in Chapter 70 money due to the fact that Norwood has had a significant increase in ELL students and our Special Education student numbers are at 20.7%. Part of those funds need to be used to close the learning gaps. We are looking at targeting special education, growing literacy in the elementary schools, co-teaching at the Middle School and mental health at the High School. We are in the process of researching what those plans will look like and what it will cost to implement those plans. We have a very short window of time to put this together and our priority is to stay within the Strategic Plan. Dr. Thomson said the group will be meeting again tomorrow. Homework from last time was to come up with metrics and measures we can use.

Dr. Thomson said he has been receiving questions regarding the coronavirus. He said we sent out a letter in February to families, and added that we are not in a high-risk area at this point. Dr. Thomson said we have a level of cleaning that is very high (to avoid flu germs and any kind of viruses), and if there is a rise in illnesses, that level of cleaning rises.

Dr. Thomson updated that today was Student Government Day and about 70-80 students participated. Dr. Thomson said it was a wonderful day. The students who were part of the school group took a tour of the Savage and got to shadow some classrooms. All in all, he said it was a wonderful day, adding that he would like to find some time to have a mock school committee meeting as we have done in past years.

The Committee took a five-minute break at 9:10 p.m. (At this point in the meeting, Ms. Smith excused herself due to illness).

**Budget:** Grants Report / Revolving Funds Update: Ms. Sheridan reviewed the grants the schools are currently receiving totaling \$1,834,752. Ms. Sheridan said she will give another update at some point, as she is still trying to make sure these grants are all in Munis properly and being properly expended. She said her new assistant, Terry, will be making sure that all the checks and balances are in place.

Ms. Sheridan then reviewed the Revolving Accounts and gave a quick synopsis of what each revolving account covers. She updated that the current tenants of the Savage who pay rent are: Extended Day, WIC, Enable Early Intervention and Self-Help. The total rent that they pay is \$189,706. Other rentals

(i.e.: Norwood Basketball and Norwood Soccer) pay \$36 per hour to use the school facilities. Students who drive to school pay \$100 per year to be able to park at Norwood High School during the school year.

Ms. Sheridan then reviewed that in the Circuit Breaker Account we started the year with \$1,604,093. To date, we have received \$1,041,974 in Circuit Breaker reimbursement from the state. We have applied \$1,517,608 for tuitions, which leaves \$1,128,459 as the current balance.

Ms. Sheridan then said that as of now, we have an estimated balance in Munis of \$885,355.

FY20 Budget Update: (This item was moved to the next meeting).

FY21 Budget Process Discussion: Mrs. Bodenhofer updated on the process of the FY21 Budget. She reminded that the total budget for last year was \$49,415,000, which was a little confusing as the amount approved at Town Meeting had some free cash included, that we ended up giving back. She said that Town Hall has done some work for FinCom to figure out the real base-line figure (Not including capital expenditures and the free-cash money). Mrs. Bodenhofer said if we take the real bottom-line number and add 3.5%, we come up with \$50,911,691 as the new bottom line target number. She explained that special education mandates are something we need to add to the budget, but cannot afford to with the 3.5% cap. The SOA Plan (Student Opportunities Act Plan) is something that the Superintendent and his team are currently working on.

The Budget Sub Committee is combing through all the salary line items and making sure everyone is allocated to the right accounts and the right schools.

The Administration has gone through to:

- Review instructional supply requests;
- Looked at trimming instructional supplies requests;
- Looked at some of the revolving funds;

Circuit breaker has increased dramatically. We assumed we would bring in \$1.8 million dollars for reimbursements for this year based on last year's expenditures. We were going to draw down \$300,000 from Circuit Breaker Account to get to \$2.1 million.

We have looked at total number of out-of -state tuitions and subtracted out the foundation budget and the state reimburses a percentage. We have used 70% estimate for reimbursement, which brings us to \$2.47 million in reimbursement. We increased this estimate by another \$285,000, which helped bring our budget under control.

The Finance Commission has invited the schools to come to their meeting on Monday and there will be a Budget Balancing on Wednesday. She said they have started looking into a Special Education Reserve Account because if tuitions go up by more than 25% the state helps with Extraordinary Relief. If we do not go over the 25% we will not qualify for Extraordinary Relief.

Mrs. Bodenhofer reminded that we have three meetings scheduled for March and the last one will be a Public Hearing on the FY21 Budget.

**Old Business: Superintendent Contract:** The Chair updated that we are in a place as a Committee that we have agreed on the terms on Dr. Thomson's Contract (she added that we are still waiting on some language from the Attorney, but have come to an agreement on the terms) for:

- A 4-year Contract starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020;
- 2.5% salary increase for the first year.

Mr. Catania made a motion to approve the terms of the Superintendent's contract, which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted in favor 4-0 (Ms. Smith had been excused earlier in the meeting).

**Policy: Policy Sub Committee Update:** (First Review of Policies JHB and JFABD)

Dr. Giblin gave an update on the last two Policy Sub Committee Meetings (January 6, 2020 and February 10, 2020).

The first meeting was to strategize time-lines and how and when they would be working on:

- MOU's with P.T.O's;
- Fundraising Policies;
- Budget Transfer Policy;
- Handbooks;
- Social Media Policy;
- Wellness Policy; and
- Communication Policy.

They did recommend continuing to investigate the Mass Policy Audit.

At the next meeting, Lori Cimeno was in attendance. She updated that we will be going through a normal DESE audit (around Special Education) and there are three policies that Lori drafted that she would like the Members to review and give some feedback on for the next meeting.

The Chair said there are 16 different policies that are on the Special Education Director's radar, but we will begin with the three that the Members received in their packets this week.

**New Business:** Mid-Cycle Check in on Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Timeline: (This item was moved to the next meeting).

School Committee Protocols: (This item was moved to next meeting.)

InterFace and Metrowest Mental Health Data Update: (This item was moved to next meeting.)

School Committee Legislative Advocacy Discussion: (This item was moved to the next meeting).

**Consent Agenda:**

**Acceptance of Two Donations:**

- Christmas Holiday Concert Committee \$6,500.0 – Fine Arts Music Dept.;
- Bay State Textiles – January Rebate \$523.00

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to accept these donation, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**School Committee Addenda:** Mrs. Bodenhofer congratulated the Boys Hockey Team, Girl's Hockey Team, and Girl's Basketball Team who all made it to the post-season tournaments.

Dr. Giblin had none.

Mr. Catania had none.

Chairwoman Stewart said that the Members received minutes from the last School Start-Time Task Force Meeting. She said the Task Force is getting closer to coming before the Committee with a recommendation. She asked the Members to send her any questions before Monday. She then said it is time to nominate teachers for Teacher of the Year. All nominations should be submitted by March 13<sup>th</sup>.

**Executive Session:** There was an Executive Session before the business meeting (6:00 p.m.) and none was needed after the business meeting.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Catania made a motion for adjournment at 10:30 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee

