

**TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
Remote (On-line) Meeting
Wednesday, March 18, 2020**

A remote (on-line) meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2020. 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, 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; Ms. Karin Sheridan, Director of Finance and Operations and Ms. Lori Cimeno, Director of Student Services

Dr. Thomson said a lot has changed since our last meeting. He updated that after being at a fundraiser a couple of weeks ago, he found out he was exposed to the Covid 19 virus, and has been in self-quarantine since. He said that the administration team started coming together the last week in February assessing how things would continue to work in light of this virus. Since 11 people in Norwood were exposed to the virus, Dr. Thomson, in an abundance of caution, shut down the schools on Friday, March 13th and for the entire following week. Teachers used that Friday to make plans on how to work with their students remotely. Dr. Thomson said many changes happened very quickly. He thanked Mr. Joe Kidd and the Technology Department as well as all of the staff for keeping schools going remotely. He also thanked the Food Service Department for serving grab-and-go breakfasts and lunches for any students under 18 years of age. They are serving these meals currently from the Callahan and Balch Schools. Dr. Thomson said he is looking forward to expanding serving these meals from other parts of town very soon.

Chairwoman Stewart thanked Dr. Thomson for the really strong partnership between the schools, the Board of Health and other Departments in town.

Dr. Thomson said that families should be checking their children's school web page for more information on schoolwork and information that they should know about.

All schools in the state have shut down for at least three weeks due to the Corona Virus (Covid 19). Dr. Thomson said we are in compliance of the open meeting laws this evening as Governor Baker's Executive Order allows meeting remotely.

Minutes: Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the minutes of February 26, 2020, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 26, 2020 (part 1), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of February 26, 2020 (part 2), which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 16, 2020 (part 1), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 16, 2020, (part 2) which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Vote on Designee to sign warrants: The Chair informed that there are warrants at the Savage Center waiting for signatures. She said the Committee should vote on a Member to sign warrants on behalf of the whole Committee while we are in the midst of this shutdown.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to allow the Chair to appoint a member, which was seconded by Mr. Catania (as he had offered previously). The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mr. Catania accepted and will review the warrants at next week's meeting.

Public Forum: Chairwoman Stewart informed that anyone that wants to send in comments and questions for Public Forum can email them to the Committee at Npsschoolcommittee@norwood.k12.ma.us until 7:15 p.m. tonight.

At 7:15 p.m., there were no emails from the public, so the Chair declared Public Forum closed. She said any emails she gets from this point would be shared at next week's meeting.

Announcements: None.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Student Opportunity Act –Plan

Update: Dr. Thomson reminded that we are required to put together a plan by April 1st to show how we are going to use the money we have received from the Student Opportunity Act (approx. \$575,000). Dr. Thomson updated that they have identified Special Education as the area of focus, specifically:

- Mental Health at the High School;
- Co-Teaching in Middle School; and
- Literacy at the Elementary level.

Dr. Thomson shared some of the ways they will be working towards bridging the gaps.

Oldham Principal Search: Dr. Thomson updated that the Screening Committee did an excellent job screening the candidates that applied for the Oldham Principal position and we are down to two final candidates. Dr. Thomson said we are in the process of planning a forum for the staff and public to meet the candidates. Dr. Thomson said he is hoping to have a forum on Monday, March 23rd, staying within the states guidelines.

There was some discussion as to the safest way to hold a forum with the candidates. Dr. Thomson said he does not want to wait any longer as three finalists are now down to two and he doesn't want to lose these two to other districts.

The Chair asked if it could be televised so more people can see it.

Dr. Thomson said he would look into it.

There was some discussion as to how the school closings would affect MCAS Testing.

Dr. Thomson informed that he will have another phone-in conversation with the Commissioner on Friday, so we may get more information then.

Budget: FY20 Budget Report: Dr. Thomson and Ms. Sheridan shared an update on the FY20 Budget. Ms. Sheridan said that the transition to Munis is still proving to be a big challenge. She gave updates and balances on many of the accounts. Ms. Sheridan said that this has been like putting together a huge puzzle, but added that when it is all done, it will be so rewarding.

Ms. Sheridan informed that the estimate for the year-end-balance to date is \$604,880.00, but she reminded that this remains a moving target.

There was much discussion as to the Coakley Middle School heating bill and the Extended Day tuition (schools are closed and tuitions were prepaid).

Dr. Thomson explained that Food Service and Extended Day staff are paid out of the revolving funds. He reminded that right now, we are not collecting fees to pay our workers and we do not have money budgeted to pay them. He said the FDA Grant would hopefully help pay the food workers.

Ms. Sheridan said it has been suggested that she set up a new account for items incurred during the school shutdown. She informed that at this point we have about \$100,000 in Snow and Ice Removal that hasn't been used and may be able to help pay the employees not covered.

After some discussion, Mr. Catania made a motion to use \$96,000 from Snow and Ice Removal to pay for Food Service and Extended Day workers for three weeks, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

FY21 Budget Discussion: Dr. Thomson shared the FY21 Budget presentation that he gave to the Finance Commission two weeks ago.

Overview: The School Budget is facing some challenges:

- Mandated positions added in FY20;
- English Language Learner mandates;
- Special Education mandates; and
- Out of District tuitions.

FY20 Baseline Numbers:

- FY20 Operating Budget
 - *without free cash returned when override passed
 - *without Capital Outlay appropriations
 - *\$49,190,040
- Without Out-of-District, FY20 Baseline
 - *\$45,766,114
- FY21 "Apples to Apples"
 - FY21 Preliminary Request:
 - *without out of district tuitions
 - *without any staff additions
 - *\$47,367,927.90
 - *\$45,766,114 (FY20 Baseline)
 - *3.5% increase

Dr. Thomson reviewed the ELL Population, which rose from 340 students on October 1, 2018 to 436 students on October 1, 2019. As of today (3/18/2020), Norwood Public Schools now has 446 students.

Dr. Thomson then updated on Out of District tuitions:

- FY20 Budget
 - *\$5,523,926 tuitions

- *-\$2,100,000 circuit breaker
- \$3,423,926

- FY21 Budget
 - *\$7,128,545 tuitions (29% increase)
 - *-\$2,755,000 circuit breaker
 - *\$4,373,545 net budget (28% increase)

Dr. Thomson reviewed the ELL and Special Education mandates.

He then reviewed the Student Opportunity Act, which requires a plan that focuses on closing achievement gaps in a sub group.

- \$600,000 of 1.53 million recommended
- Has to be measurable and a two year plan
- The cost of some items can supplant those already budgeted

Budget Balancing Committee Update: Mrs. Bodenhofer updated regarding the last Budget Balancing Meeting, which met on March 4th to discuss:

- Revenue estimates;
- Shared expense projections;
- Override Pledge and Spending Caps;
- Unusual issues with School Budget; and
- Voted for additional money for Schools.

Mrs. Bodenhofer explained money available for Schools and General Government:

- Previous method:
 - “Split” money after shared expenses subtracted;
 - Override pledge calls out 3.5% cap and exceptions;
 - School Budget cap = \$50,911,691 + exceptions;
 - Use smaller of these two options
 - For FY21, limited by Pledge rather than “split”

Mrs. Bodenhofer reviewed the Override Pledge and then talked about changes to state funding.

- Student Opportunity Act
 - Norwood receiving extra \$1.5 Million in Chap. 70
- Larger increase than some other districts
 - ELL population increase
 - % of students “economically disadvantaged”
- Requirement that portion of money must be spent on SOA Programs (Plan due to State 4/1/2020)
 - \$564,886 min. amount to spend on SOA Plan

First Pass Numbers:

- 3.5% increase = \$50,911,691
- Director of Finance recommendation
 - Add \$600,000 for SOA
 - Add \$800,000 for new Out of District Tuitions
 - Bottom line = \$52,311,691
- Current School Administration Request = \$52,722,115
- General Manager recommends:
 - Increase Dept. Receipts estimates by 92%
 - Add \$575,000 for SOA
 - Add \$1,250,000 for new Out of District Tuitions
 - Use \$600,000 for new Facilities Dept. and move \$230,000 of School Dept. Salaries into this account
 - Bottom line = \$52,736,691 + \$230,000 in salaries moved
- BBC will meet again to review all numbers

Capital Outlay Committee Update: Mrs. Bodenhofer updated that Capital Outlay met on March 5th. She updated on the Facilities requests:

Capital Outlay approved all of the requests from the schools:

- Replacement of PA systems in schools;
- Replacement of Oldham floor tiles;
- Design in advance of replacement of NHS track and turf field.

IT Projects – approved all projects from the schools:

- Laptops and iPads;
- NHS classroom A/V equipment;
- New VOIP phone system – plan to replace Gen. Govt. phone system as well.

Transportation Vans:

Capital Outlay reviewed rolling stock replacement schedule:

- Schools had requested \$120,000 to replace 4 vans;
- Capital Outlay felt we should be more aggressive with replacements;
- Approved \$180,000 to allow replacement of 8 vans.

Infrastructure Investments:

- General Manager proposed borrowing to significantly speed up some infrastructure improvements;
 - *Water main relining;
 - *Road repair.
- Committee agreed to schedule another meeting to discuss this plan.

Budget Sub Committee Update and Budget Survey Results: Mrs. Bodenhofer reviewed the Budget timeline:

SC – Budget updates & revisions	Resched. 3/25 & 4/8
Public Hearing	Resched. 4/15 or 4/22
FinCom Mtg re: School Budget	Resched. – TBD
Budget to Printer	TBD
Annual Town Meeting	5/11 – possibly changed

At this point, Mrs. Bodenhofer shared the results of the Budget Survey:

- 12 paper surveys were received;
- 365 on-line surveys were received;
- 239 parents responded
- 96 teachers/school employees responded;
- 49 Town Meeting Members responded;
- 11 Town government officials responded;
- (Note: people could check more than one box);
- 64.2% of respondents had a child or grandchild in the NPS.

Mrs. Bodenhofer shared the results of the questions in the survey.

Old Business: Superintendent Contract: The Chair reminded that at the last School Committee Meeting, the Members voted on the terms of Dr. Thomson's contract. She updated that the final wording is all set and the Committee needed to vote on the final contract.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve Dr. Thomson's contract for four years, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously 5-0.

Policy: Dr. Giblin reviewed the following policies with the Committee:

-Educational Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations (McKinney-Vento): With regard to this revised policy, Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

-Homebound Instruction: With regard to this new policy, Mr. Catania made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0. This policy will go on-line for public comment and be put on the agenda for a future meeting.

-File: JKAA – Physical Restraint of Students: With regards to this revised policy, Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion for approval, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

New Business: Consent Agenda:

Acceptance of Three Donations:

- Bay State Textiles - \$373.50 System wide;
- Cleveland PTA - \$1980.36 – MCAS Tutoring Services;
- Dedham Savings - \$900.00 – Coakley Middle School

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

School Committee Addenda: Mr. Catania thanked NCM for covering this evening's meeting. He thanked the staff and students, adding that they are all wonderful. He read a prepared statement regarding the current situation we are all in at the moment. He said everyone needs to try to make the world a better place if you can.

Ms. Smith echoed Mr. Catania's words, adding that we all need to reach out to our neighbors to make sure they are ok. She thanked the Chair for all of her hard work and many hours she's put in to keeping everyone updated along with Dr. Thomson and Sigalle Reiss from the Board of Health. She asked everyone to remember during these dark and scary times that life and love have not been cancelled.

Mrs. Bodenhofer said she wanted to thank the very many people who have thanked her during the last couple of weeks, especially the High School Community. She thanked Joe Kidd and his staff for working so hard to get everyone up and running with Google Hangouts. Finally, she thanked John Rogers for working hard to get changes made to the Open Meeting Laws, which said changes are the reason the Committee could meet remotely this evening.

Dr. Giblin said due to the fact that Norwood got hit fast, hard and early, she believes that our people were at the forefront and put pressure for changes to open meeting laws so we could keep working as usual, and Eli in Food Services put pressure on Federal Agencies to get help so we can get food out to our students. She thanked everyone again, and said she is so proud of everyone working so hard. She also suggested that parents give themselves a break if the home-schooling isn't going well.

The Chair said she has a degree in public health, and said that never in her life did she ever think she would see the likes of what is going on now with this virus. She gave a big thanks to Dr. Thomson and Sigalle Reiss for all they have done. The Chair said as a School Committee, we are going to continue to lead this district.

Dr. Thomson thanked the Chair, the Committee and his administrative team for all the coordination and planning involved in this situation. He thanked the staff, adding that this community really does come together to solve problems. He said he thinks we are all stronger than we were a few weeks ago.

Executive Session: Chairwoman Stewart informed that there would be an Executive Session for Emergency Procedures (Covid 19), MOU with Unit A and DESE recommendations for contracts.

Mr. Catania made a motion for Executive Session at 9:45 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Bodenhofer. The Committee Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 50.

Adjournment: Mr. Catania made a motion for adjournment at 10:59 p.m., which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee