

**TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
Remote (On-line) Meeting
Wednesday, March 25, 2020**

A remote (on-line) meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, March 25, 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, Ms. Lori Cimen, Director of Student Services, Dr. Hugh Galligan – Principal, NHS and Mrs. Cindy Derrane – Vice Principal, NHS

Chairwoman Stewart welcomed everyone to this evening's meeting and reminded that we would be using the email: npsschoolcommittee@norwood.k12.ma.us for questions and comments until 7:15 p.m. this evening.

Minutes: Mr. Catania made a motion to approve the minutes of March 18, 2020, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 18, 2020 (part #1), which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Mr. Catania made a motion to approve the Executive Session minutes of March 18, 2020 (part #2), which was seconded by Dr. Giblin. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

Correspondence: None.

Warrants: Report on signed Warrants from Mr. Catania: Mr. Catania reviewed the many warrants that he signed on behalf of the Committee, which totaled \$1,962,837.00.

Mr. Catania said he would be available again this week to sign warrants on behalf of the Committee.

Announcements: Dr. Thomson said Governor Baker declared today that Massachusetts's schools would continue to be closed until at least May 4th and that the U. S. Department of Education has come up with a new ruling and guidelines for *Free and Appropriate Public Education*. Dr. Thomson said his team has been working to incorporate these new guidelines, and he thanked everyone who has worked so hard to make these changes happen, including the Food Service Department (as grab and go lunches and breakfasts are being handed out at all the elementary schools now), Joe Kidd and the Technology Department (for making sure every family has access to internet and Chromebooks), as well as the NPS teachers and staff.

Public Forum: Chairwoman Stewart informed that, as of 7:15 p.m., she has not received any email questions or comments, and she then declared public forum closed. The Chair informed that members of the public can send a question or comment at any time to this email address: npsschoolcommittee@norwood.k12.ma.us and she will address them at the next meeting, which will be on April 8th.

Appearances: Effective School Solutions Presentation: Dr. Thomson introduced Jen Murray and Mike Roseman of Effective School Solutions. They did a presentation on their therapeutic social/emotional program and how it could benefit and keep students at Norwood High School that might otherwise need to go out of district to get the clinical service that would go over and above what the school adjustment councilors do.

Mrs. Bodenhofer clarified that we are looking into possibly hiring Effective School Solutions as part of the Student Opportunity Act, as part of the plan that needs to be put in place to help close the gap between students.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

The Chair said she thought it would make sense at this point to go right into the update on the SOA.

Update on Student Opportunity Act: Dr. Thomson shared a spreadsheet on the Student Opportunities Act. He reminded that this program is designed to close the gaps between students. Dr. Thomson updated that the area that we have chosen to focus on is Special Education and he reminded that the amount we will be spending is \$575,000.00. The plan includes:

- New position: Speech/Language Pathologist – Early Childhood level;
- Mental Health consult / Crisis Intervention – HS;
- Wilson Training and WIST Assessment;
- Renaissance;
- Co-Teaching PD – MS;
- Foundations Tier 2 Training;
- Spelling City;
- Wilson Materials

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the budget plan of the SOA Program and the budget supplants that Dr. Thomson has recommended, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Dr. Thomson asked Dr. Wyeth to give an update on the work going on in the District at this point. He said that as of today, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has issued guidance to all the schools to treat our educational efforts like enrichment or efforts to engage in deeper understanding. He added that the guidance continues to evolve and may change in short notice. Dr. Wyeth said that we have had about 17 requests for internet access, and Joe Kidd is working to get internet access via Norwood Light or Comcast. He shared what kind of work is going on by grade levels at this point. He felt that we have made tremendous strides in this area over the last week. The elementary principals, Dr. Wyeth, Jill Milton, Stefanie West, Erica Lockwood, and Jennifer Sullivan have developed a unified plan and template for assuring students in each grade are getting comparable and engaging work in each academic area, with primary emphasis on ELA and math. Elementary principals have distributed about 164 Chromebook to students over the past two days to families who have requested them to ensure equitable access to digital resources and platforms.

Dr. Wyeth shared some of the templates that the staff is using. He said he has asked the staff to keep track of how many students are participating in the on-line learning. He is asking parents to help students and reinforce that the kids need to be actively engaged.

Dr. Thomson said we are working in uncharted territory at this point. He said we should have more guidance by the end of the week. He added how very proud he is of his staff. Dr. Thomson added that what ever happens, the last day of school will be Friday, June 26th for Norwood Public Schools.

Update on fees and refund options: Dr. Thomson said that the preschool has not collected for April and will not collect for April.

Extended day has collected for April, but not all families have paid. Dr. Thomson said we could either offer a credit or a refund for Extended Day. Dr. Thomson added that a refund could take a couple of weeks to get sent off to families.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and sharing their thoughts on this matter.

Budget: FY20 Budget Transfer: Mr. Riley would like to move \$10,000 from textbooks to repair and replace at the Prescott for new flexible seating.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 5-0. The Chair authorized Mr. Catania to sign on behalf of the Committee.

FY21 Budget Discussion: Mrs. Bodenhofer wanted to bring the Committee up to date on FY21 Budget planning.

With the SOA Plan:

- FY21 School Request = \$52,999,703
- BBC "Option 2" - \$52,736,691 + \$230,000 facilities salaries
- Difference - \$263,012

Mrs. Bodenhofer informed that if we eliminated a District Wide Registrar (\$51,563) and Elem. Psychologist (\$57,312) we could save \$108,875. She said we would then still need to reduce the request by \$154,137.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to eliminate the District Wide Registrar and the Elementary Psychologist, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mrs. Bodenhofer said the General Manager suggested moving some salaries now to reduce the budget:

- Facilities Director - \$94,163;
- Facilities Admin. - \$64,153
- Assistant Director - \$93,746
- Subtotal = \$252,062

Mrs. Bodenhofer didn't feel comfortable doing that at this time and suggested possibly reducing \$54,000 from the equipment repair and replace lines as the administrators were recommending and then find \$100,000 across all instructional supplies.

The Members had an opportunity to share their thoughts on this.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to request Administration to reduce *Repair and Replace* in the amount of \$54,137 and then reduce *Instructional Supplies* by \$100,000 and to leave it to the administration to determine how to do that, which was seconded by Ms. Smith.

After some discussion, Mrs. Bodenhofer reworded her motion to say that she request that the administration find \$154,137.00 of reductions in the budget, but not by cutting staff, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Budget Subcommittee Update: Mrs. Bodenhofer said we should try to set a date for the Budget FY21 Public Hearing. She added that she is hoping to get a Budget Balancing Meeting together in the next week or so. There was some discussion as to having the Budget Hearing on April 15th or April 22nd.

The Chair said that April 22nd would give everyone a little more time to plan and figure out the logistics of an on-line public hearing.

Old Business: MOA: Covid-19 Emergency Procedures Compensation: The Chair said at this point we need to take a vote on the MOA.

Mrs. Bodenhofer made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Agreement, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Ms. Smith abstained).

Policy: None.

New Business: MCAS discussion and advocacy: Dr. Thomson said there is a bill going to the legislature now allowing the Commissioner flexibility as to whether we have these tests or whether they should be postponed. Dr. Thomson said he will keep everyone updated as he gets more information.

Consent Agenda:

Acceptance of (0) Donation: None.

School Committee Addenda: Mr. Catania is very impressed with the tremendous amount of work our staff is doing during these difficult times.

Dr. Giblin thanked the School Administration, teachers and parents for all that everyone is doing for the kids right now. She is happy that we continue to work on solid learning plans.

Mrs. Bodenhofer echoed what Mr. Catania and Dr. Giblin said; adding that she is hearing about lots of wonderful opportunities for thinking outside the box as well as project based learning.

Ms. Smith thanked everyone in food service at all our elementary schools who are making sure our children are fed. She added that she was over the moon when she heard that grab and goes were handed out for the weekend as well. Ms. Smith also thanked Dr. Wyeth for the great presentation as she believes, for some students, the connections they have at school are vital and by making sure every

student has the technology needed it will be possible to make those connections with staff and no one will feel left out.

The Chair said that tomorrow there will be an Impact Norwood Steering Committee Meeting where they will discuss how to foster social/emotional learning, development and mental health during these trying times.

Dr. Thomson thanked General Manager, Tony Mazzucco who assured Dr. Thomson that he would do all he could to have Norwood Light get families connected who had no Internet service while remote learning is going on.

Executive Session: Chairwoman Stewart informed that there would be an Executive Session for Contract Negotiations.

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 in favor 5-0.

Adjournment: Mr. Catania made a motion for adjournment at 10:00 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