

TOWN OF NORWOOD  
School Committee Meeting  
James R. Savage Educational Center  
Wednesday, April 29, 2015

**Public Hearing:** A Public Hearing of the Fiscal Year 2016 Budget was called to order at 7:00 p.m. in Room 218/219.

**Committee Members Present:** Mr. John Badger, Chairman, Mr. James Gormley, Mrs. Courtney Rau-Rogers, Ms. Lisa Igoe and Mr. Patrick McDonough.

**Administrators Present:** Mr. James Hayden, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Alec Wyeth, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment; and Ms. Ann Marie Ellis, Director of Finance and Operations.

Chairman Badger welcomed everyone to this evening's Public Hearing for the FY16 Budget. He explained that the Superintendent will present the FY16 Budget, which will then be voted on by the School Committee Members. Those that have signed up to speak this evening will then be able to have the floor for approximately five minutes. Chairman Badger asked that if many people come from different groups, they elect someone to speak on behalf of the group.

Mr. Hayden welcomed the public, including many parents, teachers and administrators to this evening's meeting. He began by explaining that we want to have a top notch School System that's going from good to great. Besides students doing their best in academics, Mr. Hayden would like to see a School System that students can participate in Activities, Athletics and Arts, whether they have the money to pay for it or not. Mr. Hayden said our MCAS scores are improving and the teachers and administrators continue to find ways to work with the students to make greater improvements. Mr. Hayden then reviewed other priorities including the new teacher evaluation system, purchasing of new elementary and middle school math books, preparing for PARCC Testing, technology training at all levels, and many more.

Mr. Hayden informed that:

-A top notch School System budget:

$\$41,788,091 + \$1,596,989 = \$43,385,080;$

-Level Services –

$\$41,788,091;$

-Approaching Level Services –

$\$39,483,830 + \$500,000$  Revised Estimates &  
 $\$370,000$  Special TM Assistance

-Backwards Progress:  
\$39,353,830.

Mr. Hayden informed that the Town has not left the Schools in the lurch, but that problems have arisen as tax rates are flat year after year and state aid is being cut. The House Ways & Means recently decided to only reinstate the Kindergarten Grant to those towns who have a 35% Free and Reduces Lunch, and Norwood has just under 29% so we will not qualify for that grant. Mr. Hayden informed that he and his staff are never done with the Budget process. He continues to revise estimates with backing from the Town. He informed that Special Town Meeting is May 11<sup>th</sup> and everyone will continue trying to make this System better.

At this point in the Public Hearing, Chairman Badger invited the public to address the School Committee Members.

Ms. Kathy Spillane spoke on behalf of the newly formed group, *Friends of Norwood Schools*. ( [www.friendsofnorwoodschoools.org](http://www.friendsofnorwoodschoools.org) ). She said that there are currently 756 members (parents, teachers and citizens of Norwood) on Face Book and a few more members who are not on Face Book. She said that this group was successful at adding 15 new Town Meeting Members at the most recent election. She invited Mr. Hayden and the Committee Members to reach out to her or the *Friends of Norwood Schools* to let them know the needs of the school system. She asked if there were public records of how students' fee monies are spent and how many families pay into the fee pool.

Mr. Hayden summarized that the fees collected for Athletics and Fine Arts (approximately \$87,000) goes towards expenses for both programs. Each season in the athletic department, approximately 25 students request scholarships, but there are over 500 students playing sports. Mr. Hayden said bus fees collected (approximately \$300,000.00) doesn't even cover the cost of the gas. Mr. Hayden then said that the budget comparison information from year to year is on the Norwood Public School's website, in the School Committee section. He said it can be accessed by going to the *Budget* tab and scrolling through until you come to the page that says **FY16 Summary of Accounts** which shows past years (Actual) compared to FY16 (Budget).

Ms. Rebecca Deeks wanted to know how impact statements from teachers, Department Heads, School Councils, etc, affect the budget process.

Mr. Hayden said that the Principals meet with their staff to see what each school needs. Mr. Hayden then plans budget meetings with Administrators to put together the 1<sup>st</sup> Pass Budget Draft. Then reality hits and we work with the Town to see what the revenue forecast is. Mr. Hayden said he needed to make sure that the students picked their classes for next year in the Middle School and High School levels to see what the numbers would be in each class and to see the whole picture.

Mrs. Sarah Quinn asked how budget constraints have affected the goals in the strategic plan. Mrs. Quinn also asked for the Strategic Plan goals for the next five years, with dollar amounts so she can stand up and speak in favor of these needs at Town Meeting.

Mr. Hayden said in some areas, instead of growing, our school system is treading water. He said that the Committee of 21 was put together to look into the situation. They will be presenting their findings here at the Savage Center on Monday evening. There was some discussion and Mrs. Quinn said she will ask this information again at Town Meeting and again in the fall.

Mrs. Amy Sobchuk asked at what point will the Schools do a classroom analysis to see about possible redistricting or closing of a school. She said at some point she feels that everyone needs to look at the whole picture. She said she knows that there was a study done in 2012 and she hasn't heard the outcome of that study.

Mr. Hayden said he looked into that on his own, but that an official study will cost approximately \$50,000.00. He believes that an analysis should be done at some point. He added that closing a school will save administrative costs, but not bussing costs. He informed that he will be losing \$80,000 in rent this year at the Savage when the Phoenix Program moves out. He will be looking into adding more rooms to extended day to accommodate more families and increase rent.

Chairman Badger said closing a school is a problem if there is an increase in students down the line because then to reopen the school, it will need to be brought up to code first.

Mr. Gormley reminded that this isn't just a budget problem but it is a revenue problem, adding that we are restricted by Proposition 2 ½ .

Ms. Julie Barber-Issa was concerned about staffing for Special Education and wondered if there was some study of cost savings for out-of-district placements.

Mr. Ed Ferris was here as a new Town Meeting Member, and a representative of the Fine Arts. He suggested that the projections for the next few years should be shared with Town Meeting to keep the momentum going.

Ms. Myev Bodenhofer, Co-Chair of the CMS Council, said that she believes the Coakley Middle School is taking an unusually large hit with cuts compared to all the other schools. She reminded that the Coakley has had so much staff and administrative turn-over in the recent years and things are finally on a good track.

Mrs. Jody Smith, teacher at the Oldham, and President of the Norwood Teacher's Association said the residents of Norwood need to know how all these cuts will affect everyone. She reviewed the areas in the elementary schools that are strained already. She reminded that most people don't know the amount of social

and emotional issues these teachers deal with on a daily basis. She asked the teachers here this evening to stand up. (There were many teachers in the audience and they received a big round of applause). Then she asked a representative from each level to come sit with her and explain the concerns at each level.

Mrs. Laura Tolman was here from the Willett Early Childhood Center and as a parent of students at the Oldham. Mrs. Tolman explained why it isn't humanly possible for one DLC teacher to service all the students at the Willett who need special services.

Mrs. Carol Thornton represented the Elementary level and the Prescott teachers. She was here to explain her concerns for the Prescott School for next year. She said there is only one special education aide to assist all the students who need extra help. The class sizes will increase and she reminded that the Prescott is not a Title One School so there are no Title One teachers there to provide extra help.

Ms. Angeline Kelly represented the Middle School. She shared her concerns of losing 3 core teachers and basically losing a part of a team. Class sizes vary, but there are times there are not enough seats to accommodate everyone. She said there are good suggestions for the short-term, but it seems there are band-aids being put on top of old band-aids at this point.

Mrs. Cindy Derrane represented the High School, and the Foreign Language Department. She said there is not enough room for all the students at the Middle School and some kids sit facing the heater, which they use as a desk. We are only the only school district around that does not have 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade foreign language classes every day. The Foreign Language Department lost a 1.0 teacher last year and will be losing another one this year. She reminded that loss of staff keeps us going backwards.

Caroline Haberline teaches 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at the Oldham and has two daughters at the Oldham. Over the 16 years she has been teaching, she has noticed dramatic changes. Class sizes have gone up. Students' needs are more involved. Adjustment counselors are not in every school every day.

Mrs. Smith thanked the teachers who came out tonight and then thanked all the teachers for their dedication and commitment, adding that it's time Norwood stands up for our schools.

Ms. Kerry Barrows wanted to know what the class sizes are for the AP classes at the High School level. Mr. Hayden said no more than 25, and informed that there needs to be at least 10 students to have the class. She asked what the justification is of having 10 or 11 AP students in a class at the High School when elementary classes are 25 or more in some cases.

Mr. Hayden and Dr. Wyeth explained that the High School staff is doubling up AP classes with college course classes and also explained that colleges are very interested in students with AP classes on their transcript.

Mrs. Derrane also explained that English Language Learners also are able to be in the AP language classes to access the curriculum.

Chairman Badger thanked everyone for coming out this evening and invited everyone to attend the Committee of 21 Meeting Monday evening in this room to hear the findings of their group.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion at 8:55 p.m. to adjourn the Budget Hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

At this point in the meeting, there was a short break.

**Call to Order:** A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, April 29, 2015 in the School Committee Room at the Savage Educational Center. The regular meeting began at 9:10 p.m.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to move Executive Session – Transportation negotiations, up in the agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

**Minutes:** Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to approve the minutes of April 8, 2015, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

**Correspondence:** None.

**Warrants:** Chairman Badger informed that there were warrants to be signed.

**Public Forum:** Chairman Badger informed that this was the part of the meeting where anyone from the public may address the Committee to discuss items they would like to see added to a future agenda.

Jody Smith, of the Back Stage Boosters was here this evening to invite the public to the presentation of *Mary Poppins* next weekend, May 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>. She said it is an amazing joint production consisting of High School and Middle School students and she recommends everyone bring their mother for Mother's Day.

**Announcements:** None.

**Appearances:** None.

**Reports: School Lunch Update & Plans for Next Year:** Ms. Jane McLucas was here this evening to update the Committee with regard to the Food Service Department. She said that the Healthy Kid Act has made many changes to the Food Program and our Department has worked diligently to meet these guidelines, although it has been a challenge. She added that after a review by the DOE, we have shown that we understand and administer the program well. She said these changes have come at an increase in the cost of food. Ms. McLucas recommended an increase in pricing as outlined in her letter to the School Committee dated April 16, 2015.

After some discussion, Mr. Gormley made a motion to accept the proposed price increases, which was seconded by Mrs. Rau-Rogers. The Committee voted in favor 4-1 (Mr. McDonough opposed).

**Status of Federal Reauthorization of No Child Left Behind Act:** Mr. Hayden updated the Committee regarding information that he has received from Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents regarding No Child Left Behind changes that may be coming down the pike.

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** None.

**Policy:** None.

**Budget: FY16 House Ways & Means Budget:** Mr. Hayden reviewed with the School Committee the FY16 House Ways & Means Budget. The Members received the Governor's proposal and the House proposal for state aide.

**FY16 Capital Outlay Report:** Mr. Hayden updated with regard to the Capital Outlay Projects. He informed that the Selectmen's Budget will fund the Willett portable and they will also set aside money for the walk-in cooler at the Balch Elementary School. He hopes that project will get passed at Town Meeting. Through bonding we will get \$125,000 for technology (Chromebooks). Also, the parking lot at the Coakley is in disrepair after the long winter. Mr. Hayden added that this parking lot has been a topic of conversation for quite a while. The Selectmen have put aside \$200,000 to fix the front area only at the Coakley.

Chairman Badger asked for an update on the Balch Field lights.

Mr. Hayden thanked the Town and everyone involved for the removal of the damaged light poles at the Balch in time for last weekend's double-header. Mr. Hayden said he has not received a final report from Mr. Carroll regarding the lights at the Balch as of yet, but there is a place-holder for lights at the Balch and for lights next to the modular at the Coakley Middle School.

**FY16 Budget Updates:** Mr. Hayden said there was an adjustment to the Reductions to Meet Revenue Projection sheet to eliminate a 1.0 In-school

paraprofessional (\$21,045) and to decrease various textbooks and supplies (\$53,000) as described in lines 14, 15, and 16 on page one and lines 63-74.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to approve the proposed cuts, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley for discussion. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

**Old Business:** Committee of 21 Update (Monday, May 4, 2015 – 7:00 p.m.): The Committee of 21 has received the consultant's report and will share the information at their meeting on Monday evening, here at the Savage Center, at 7:00 p.m.

**Executive Session:** Chairman Badger informed that there would be an Executive Session at 9:45 p.m. for the following items:

-Van Transportation – Equipment & Drivers.

Mr. Gormley made a motion for Executive Session, which was seconded by Mrs. Rau-Rogers. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

**Open Session:** Open Session resumed at 10:20 p.m.

**New Business:** Van Transportation – Equipment & Drivers: Mr. Hayden reminded that we have a great Transportation Department. He complimented Ms. Sylvia Nogueira and Mrs. Marie Shaughnessy for all they do to get the Special Education Students to school every day.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to increase the hourly rate of pay as follows: \$15 for 7D drivers and \$19 for CDL drivers, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Special Town Meeting Warrant Articles: Mr. Hayden asked the Committee to give him until next meeting on May 6, 2015, to finalize the Articles for Town Meeting.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to finalize Town Meeting Warrants by the School Committee meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Lost Bus Passes – Proposed fee adjustment \$10 to \$50 per incident: Mrs. Rau-Rogers made a motion to table, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0

**Personnel:** None.

**School Committee Addenda:** Mr. Gormley had none.

Ms. Igoe had none.

Mrs. Rau-Rogers invited everyone to the NPA-TV's NEMMY Award Night on May 20th and then congratulated the Norwood High School T.V. Program on all their recent awards and accomplishments.

Mr. McDonough congratulated NHS teacher, Ms. Jan Cohn, on receiving the Golden Foundation of Excellence Award. Mr. McDonough then wished all the spring sports teams good luck as they proceed through the season. He then encouraged everyone to see Mary Poppins, as it should be awesome. Mr. McDonough then ended by congratulation the Norwood gentleman who was on Jeopardy for two nights last week on his success.

**Adjournment:** Mr. Gormley made a motion for adjournment at 10:30 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Rau-Rogers. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee