

TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
James R. Savage Educational Center
Wednesday, April 30, 2014

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, April 30, 2014. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Ms. Courtney Rau, Chairwoman, Mr. John Badger, Mr. James Gormley, Mr. Paul Samargedlis and Mr. Joseph Montesano

Administrators Present: Mr. James Hayden, Superintendent of Schools and Dr. Alec Wyeth, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment.

Minutes: Mr. Gormley made a motion to approve the minutes of April 9, 2014, which was seconded by Mr. Samargedlis. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: Chairwoman Rau acknowledged receipt of many letters, phone calls and e-mails over the past few weeks regarding the calendar wording. She thanked Mr. Jeffrey Wildstein, of Temple Beth David in Westwood for the letter he sent and his kind words and appreciation for all the School Committee does.

Mr. Edward Mulvehill invited the Members to walk in the annual Memorial Day Parade.

Warrants: Chairwoman Rau informed that there were warrants to be signed.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Samargedlis made a motion for the FY15 Public Budget Hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Badger. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

FY15 Public Budget Hearing: Superintendent Hayden gave a presentation regarding the FY15 Budget. He began by thanking the administrators and the Committee for all their hard work and dedication to balancing the budget. He also thanked Chairwoman Rau and Mr. Samargedlis for representing the School Committee on the Budget Balancing Committee.

Mr. Hayden reviewed the Strategic Goals for 2013-2015:

- Prepare all students to be college or career ready;
- Technology Integration;
- Social Emotional Needs of Students;
- Maximize parent and community relationships to support student learning; and
- Facility Improvements and Upgrades.

He added that there are many great things going on with our students, and a Facebook Page has been created as a way to share all these good things.

Mr. Hayden then reviewed the steps taken during each pass of the budget process.

Mr. Hayden shared some ideas for future plans:

- Continue to Monitor the progress of the Districts' Strategic Goals;
- Work with Finance Commission & Selectmen to set up a Committee of 21;
- Examine our school system's goals and set a vision for the future.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

There were no members of the public that wanted to speak.

Bottom line number was approved at the last meeting.

At 7:34 p.m., Mr. Gormley made a motion to close Public Hearing, which was seconded by Mr. Samargedlis. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Public Forum: Chairwoman Rau informed that this was the time during the meeting when a member of the public could come before the School Committee to talk about an item they would like to see on a future agenda.

Mrs. Linda Rau was here this evening. She explained that she is the mother of Chairwoman Courtney Rau, Willett teacher Colleen Reynolds and Kat Rau, former NHS coach. She said she sees no problem with the name change of the winter break. She listed some questions of the School Committee and then explained that recently, a member participated in the Dan Rea radio show where the host, Dan Rea portrayed our Chairwoman as a bitter person who must have not had good Christmases growing up. Mrs. Rau said it became personal for her at that point. She shared her family's past Christmas traditions and memories, saying it is a very important holiday for their family and extended family. Mrs. Rau said it is very disheartening and at this point, getting scary.

Mr. Samargedlis said he was the Member on that show and, although he speaks for the other point of view, he does not believe anyone should attack someone personally for their views.

Ms. Lisa Litin moved here many years ago and her children went through the schools. She has many fond memories of Norwood, but she shared another sad memory. She said her children were told by other 8 year olds that they couldn't be friends because they had a different religion. A few years later, her child couldn't participate in a popular field trip as it was scheduled on one of her family's holidays

and the child would not be in school. She said we need to recognize diversity and respect each individual's' identity.

Mr. Samargedlis made a motion to suspend the rules for a discussion regarding this item, which was seconded by Mr. Badger. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mr. Hayden answered Mrs. Rau's questions and the Members were able to share their thoughts and opinions regarding this matter.

Announcements: Mr. Hayden was happy to announce that the Norwood Public Schools now has a new Facebook page. Mr. Hayden suggested, "liking" our page. He would like to get to a 1,000 people to "like" the page.

Chairwoman Rau said that our foreign language students were in Italy last week and were able to share in the excitement while the Vatican was preparing for two Popes being

Appearances: None.

Reports: None.

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

Policy: None.

Budget: FY14 Monthly budget Report and Budget Comparison Report: Mr. Hayden reviewed the FY2014 Actual and Projected Spreadsheet dated April 24, 2014.

Mr. Hayden said at this point there is an anticipated differential of (\$412,009.87).

Mr. Hayden then said that he has had to add additional SPED Staff in the amount of \$28,460 for a total differential of (\$440,469).

He then shared that a letter was received from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in response to our request for Extraordinary Relief. We have been informed that we will be receiving a payment of \$224,646 by the end of April as well as \$96,000 from Pot Hold Funds for a total of \$320,646.

Mr. Hayden said that \$119,823 is currently not covered.

There was some discussion regarding this item.

Old Business: None.

New Business: Approval of 2014-2015 School Calendar: Mr. Gormley made a motion to approve this calendar, which was seconded by Mr. Badger for discussion.

Mr. Hayden reviewed a couple of minor changes that need to be made to the draft.

Mr. Samargedlis made an amended motion to add Christmas Recess/Winter Break into the Calendar instead of Winter Break for the reasons he has previously explained during the editing of the calendar, which was seconded by Mr. Montesano.

There was more discussion regarding this item.

Mr. Gormley wanted to state that his vote this evening will be to not put one holiday at a higher status than any other group's holidays.

Chairwoman Rau said the referendum question was phrased in a religious manner. The Chair spoke with the ACLU last week and they supported the change.

With regard to Mr. Samargedlis' amended motion, the motion failed 3-2 (Mr. Montesano and Mrs. Samargedlis voted in favor).

With regard to the original motion to approve the calendar, the Committee voted in favor 3-2 (Mr. Gormley, Mr. Badger and the Chair voted in favor).

Approval of One Out-of-State Field Trip Request: Mr. Hayden recommended approving an out-of-state field trip for the 1st Graders at the Callahan to visit Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence, RI on June 11, 2014.

Mr. Gormley made a motion to approve this request, which was seconded by Mr. Samargedlis. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Approval of Two Donations: Mr. Hayden recommended accepting the following donations:

A donation in the form of a grant from Steven A. Burns of the Blue Hills Bank Charitable Foundation, West Roxbury, in the amount of \$858.28 to purchase rockets for a 5th Grade Science Project at the Callahan School;

Mr. Samargedlis made a motion to approve this donation, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

A donation from the Neponset Valley Sunrise Rotary Club of \$500 to the Prescott School For the 'Share Our Books Act'.

Mr. Samargedlis made a motion to approve this donation, which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Personnel: Mr. Hayden said the search for the Middle School Principal is in progress.

School Committee Addenda: Mr. Gormley informed that the Athletic Hall of Fame is now accepting nominations for this years induction.

Mr. Samargedlis wished all the spring athletes well this season.

Mr. Badger said he was disappointed to hear from Mrs. Rau of their bad experiences over the calendar issue, adding that his own experiences haven't been as bad.

Mr. Montesano had none.

Chairwoman Rau had none.

Executive Session: None.

Adjournment: Mr. Badger made a motion for adjournment at 8:30 p.m., which was seconded by Mr. Gormley. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee