

TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
James R. Savage Educational Center
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, September 27, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Ms. Myev Bodenhofer, Chair, Mr. Patrick McDonough, Mrs. Michele Eysie Mullen and Ms. Maura Smith.

Committee Member Excused: Ms. Teresa Stewart

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

Minutes: Mr. McDonough made a motion to approve the minutes of September 13, 2017, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Correspondence: Chairwoman Bodenhofer acknowledged receipt of a letter from NPA-TV informing that the traveling School Committee Meetings will be live-streamed but not shown on live television. Chairwoman Bodenhofer read the letter, which explained how to access the live-stream.

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

Public Forum: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that this was the time in the meeting for members of the public to address the School Committee with items that they would like to see on a future agenda.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to add a second Public Forum at the end of the meeting as he has heard that there are people who are attending the High School Parent Night at the High School who would like to speak this evening, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0. (The Chair asked that going forward if someone wants to do something like this again, that she be informed before the meeting.)

Mr. Crowley, of Norton Drive, was here this evening to share his concerns about the safety of the preschool children after the preschool program is moved to the Savage Educational Center.

Mr. Kalyan Veerla, of Plymouth Drive, was here this evening to oppose the move of the preschool to the Savage Educational Center for safety reasons.

Announcements: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that the MASC Conference will be in Hyannis in November. Any Member interested in attending should let her or Dr. Thomson know.

Appearances: English Language Learners Staffing Requests: Mrs. Carole Poirier and three ESL Teachers (Kate Platt, Ellen Lasri, and Naza Mejid) were here this evening to inform the Committee Members about the process to identify and support English Language Learners in the Norwood Schools. At the end of her presentation, Mrs. Poirier asked for 1.4 new ELA Teachers (.4 for the High School; .5 for the Willett and .5 for the Balch).

The teachers shared their concerns regarding class sizes, less meeting times than recommended, no prep time, travel time, the inability to meet with classes when testing is being done due to scheduling issues, and the difficulties with planning and administering the mandatory testing.

Mrs. Carole Poirier shared her concern of being out of compliance in many areas and putting a grant in jeopardy. She said there are students from 28 different countries who speak 30 different languages that need services.

Mr. McDonough said he will only support a 2.4 ESL increase.

Dr. Thomson said adding a 1.4 ELS Teacher would cost the School System \$75,000.00. He said at some point going forward we may need to add more, but he is comfortable recommending a 1.4 ESL increase. He added that there is also a need for a Special Education Paraprofessional (\$22,000) and a .2 Special Education Teacher (\$15,000). All these needs would total \$112,000.

Mrs. Mullen asked Mrs. Poirier and the teachers to tell her what they really need to do their job well this year.

Mrs. Poirier said that there are many needs in this district but 2.0 ESL increase would alleviate many of the scheduling issues and keep the program in compliance.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said tonight is the last night to add warrants for Town Meeting, but that would mean that we could not do any hiring until after Town Meeting in November.

Ms. Ellis informed that the Circuit Breaker balance is \$122,000 at this point.

The Committee decided to table this until later in the meeting.

Athletic Requests: Mr. John Longley, Director of Athletics, was here this evening to ask the Committee to consider funding JV Girls Ice Hockey and Winter Cheerleading.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to approve these teams, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Reports: Willett Space Committee: Ms. Stewart was not able to attend this evening's meeting due to a death in her family. Chairwoman Bodenhofer read a statement from Ms. Stewart regarding her thoughts on the Willett Space issues. She was in favor of moving the Preschool from the Willett to the Savage Educational Center.

Ms. Carolyn Robbins, Principal of the Willett Early Childhood Center, was here with parent Julie Barbour-Issa to share how:

- How we got here;
- The impact on student learning and building operations;
- Gym/Library space issues;
- State/Reading Specialist/ESL Classroom;
- Cafeteria/Special Education Classrooms;
- Special Education Services in a closet and a trailer;
- Minimal Storage Space;
- 1 Extended Day Preschool in a space that is too small;
- Operational Challenges.

Ms. Robbins said she believes that the Willett Space Study Committee has done a thorough job looking into the space options. She believes that moving the Preschool to the Savage is the best way to solve the space issues. She said that the Committee has agreed that any safety issues will be able to be addressed.

Mr. Paul Ricciardi said he feels very comfortable that the Savage Educational Center will be a very safe spot for the preschool program. He shared the security plan and informed that the other programs that will be renting space will be Enable Early Intervention and the WIC Program, which are both early childhood programs.

Ms. Robbins said that over a three-year period, there is a 53% increase in referrals from Early Intervention for three-year olds.

Mrs. Barbour-Issa encouraged the School Committee to approve this plan for the Preschool to be moved to the Savage Educational Center.

Dr. Thomson said that the Willett Space Issue Committee is in favor of moving the Preschool to the Savage Educational Center in February. Dr. Thomson then reviewed the costs involved in moving the preschool to the Savage, which totals \$90,213.00.

Ms. Robbins asked that the Committee consider increasing the Team Leader from a .8 position to a 1.0 position.

Mr. McDonough and Mrs. Mullen did not like the idea of waiting until February for the preschool move.

Dr. Thomson said that the Committee voted with a majority (with one exemption) in favor of a February move. He reviewed the reasons, which included budgetary, allowing the families to have time to get through the holidays and have the time for families and teachers to help students adjust to the changes, to allow the buildings and grounds crew time to make the upgrades and changes needed, as well as allowing the teachers time to pack up their classes at the Willett and unpack their classrooms at the Savage.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer shared all her concerns, which included:

- the cost involved in running a 9th school; and
- was moving the preschool mid-year really the best option.

Mr. Ricciardi suggested breaking this down into two votes:

Mr. McDonough made a motion to support the move of the preschool from the Willett to the Savage, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Smith made a motion to accept the Committee's recommendation to move the Preschool to the Savage in February, to ask Town meeting for an additional \$55,000.00 for the additional staff for the .2 increase for the Team Leader, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen.

Mrs. Mullen amended the motion saying it should be two separate motions.

Mrs. Bodenhofer cautioned that what ever the motion is, it should be contingent on getting the money from Town Meeting.

Ms. Smith retracted the previous motion. She then made a motion, contingent on funds from Town meeting, to open the new preschool at the Savage Educational Center in February, which was seconded by the Chair. The voted was 2-2 (Mr. McDonough and Mrs. Mullen voted against.)

The motion failed.

There was much discussion regarding the opening time.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to not open in February.

After some discussion, he rescinded his motion.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said since we are at in impasse, we should table this item until the next meeting to figure out how much a January opening would cost in order to put this on the Town Warrant for a January or February opening.

Mr. Ricciardi clarified that this can be pulled off, but no other work will be done at any of the other buildings in order to pull this off. He felt like December was going to be a good plan. After listening to the teachers and everyone on the Committee, he feels that February is a good compromise.

Ms. Robbins said it would be difficult for her to walk away from this meeting without having a clear time-line on this move.. She said if the move ends up being in December, it will mean she will have to put a lot of things she is working on right now on hold to focus mainly on the move. As a new principal she is still working on building relationships and getting a feel for the routine and culture of the school.

Mrs. Poirier said that there were 18 people on this Committee and the suggestion of a February move generated a collective sigh of relief that it could be done correctly and with less stress.

There was much more discussion on this topic. Mrs. Bodenhofer again recommended tabling this item.

At 9:45 p.m., the Chair recommended a five-minute break.

Ms. Smith made a motion for a five-minute break, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

At 10:00 p.m., the Committee came back to Open Session.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer asked for thoughts on a January opening.

Ms. Robbins said that she believes that a January opening will be impossible. She said doing this during a vacation week is the best for the families. She said that it is a big leap to say students that are being educated in less than ideal spaces are being kept in closets. She added that no one is being kept in a torture chamber and students are still receiving their services in the spaces that they have.

Mrs. Poirier felt that the wrong message is being sent to the public. She said that she apologizes to the teachers and staff at the Willett for the wrong message being sent out. Mrs. Poirier asked that the Committee wait until the next meeting to take a vote and go back to ask the Willett teachers

Ms. Smith made a motion to put a Warrant on the Special Town Meeting for \$80,000 for the move of the Preschool, which was seconded by Chairwoman Bodenhofer. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Smith made a motion to do the line transfer from the Buildings and Grounds accounts in the amount \$91,422.30, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Public Forum: As it was discussed at the beginning of the meeting, a second Public Forum was added and Chairwoman Bodenhofer asked if there was anyone from the public who wanted to be heard in Public Forum.

Mr. Kalyan Veerla again approached the Committee and said he is not opposed but he doesn't feel separating Kindergarten and Pre-Kindergarten is a great idea and there are lots of logistics that need to be worked out.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Dr. Wyeth gave a quick overview of the October 6th full day Professional Development Program.

Dr. Wyeth then updated that there will be an open forum on October 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the Savage in room 219 on the proposed changes and updates regarding report card changes and updates.

Dr. Thomson then read his entry plan as the Superintendent of the Norwood Public Schools. Dr. Thomson also said he will be hosting three *Coffee with the Superintendent* dates.

Policy: New Residency Policy / Sub-Committee Update: The Sub Committee has requested waiting another week for this item as the sub committee is still waiting on feedback from council.

Mr. McDonough thanked everyone who was involved in putting this policy together.

Budget: New Personnel Requests: Dr. Thomson has received two requests for more staff::

-Cleveland Elementary School – requesting to increase a .5 Sped Teacher to a .7 Sped Teacher;

-Callahan Elementary School – requesting an additional paraprofessional.

Ms. Smith made a motion to add the requested additional staff at the Cleveland and Callahan, in the amount of \$112,000.00, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Ms. Smith made a motion to put \$60,000 on the Town Meeting Warrant for an additional ESL teacher, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Old Business: School Start Time Sub-Committee Update: Ms. Smith said the Committee will be meeting with Mr. Longley and Cathy Connor-Moen to see how Athletics and Fine Arts will be impacted if there is a time change. There will be a couple more forums added for parental input.

Budget Sub-Committee Update: Ms. Smith updated that they spoke about Athletic and Bus Fees and they dug into funds from grants, fees and circuit breaker. The next meeting in this Friday at 11:00 a.m.

Building Study Update: Received the final draft, which is a very detailed and lengthy report. The electronic version will be on the website.

TEC Meeting Update: Mrs. Mullen attended the first meeting of the year for TEC. She said she is thrilled to be part of the group. She was so happy to see a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new pool. They have also completed a new playground that was done with a 100% fundraising efforts. TEC has also partnered with the Highlander Institute and there will be opportunities for Professional Development. Mrs. Mullen said she looks forward to the Job-Alike Meetings for districts to share information with other towns.

Agenda Plan: Chairwoman Bodenhofer discussed additions to the Tentative Agenda Plan.

New Business: Special Town Meeting Warrants: There was nothing more to add at this point.

Consent Agenda:

Acceptance of Two Donations: Dr. Thomson recommended accepting the following donations:

- Norwood Lodge of Elks – (45) Dictionaries for Prescott School 3rd Grade;
- NPA-TV Equipment Donation – valued at approx.. \$70,000.00

Ms. Smith made a motion to accept these donations, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Personnel: None.

School Committee Addenda:

Ms. Smith congratulated the cast and crew of Peter Pan. She then congratulated the Girls' Varsity Volleyball Team on their recent win against Framingham. Ms. Smith then highlighted some of the other great events going on around the School District.

Mrs. Mullen had none.

Mr. McDonough had none.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer had none.

Executive Session: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that there would be an Executive Session for the following items (adding that we would only come back to Open Session for adjournment):

Unit B Negotiations; and
Union #50 Negotiations.

Mr. McDonough made a motion for Executive Session at 10:50 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Adjournment: Mrs. Mullen made a motion for adjournment at 11:25 p.m., which was seconded by Mr. . The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee