

TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
James R. Savage Educational Center
Wednesday, February 28, 2018

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 28, 2018. 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; Ms. Teresa Stewart and Ms. Maura Smith.

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 February 7, 2018, which, was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve the following **Executive Session Minutes**, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough:

- February 7, 2018;
- December 6, 2017;
- September 27, 2017;
- September 13, 2017;
- August 17, 2017;
- August 16, 2017;
- July 12, 2017;
- June 26, 2017;
- June 7, 2017; and
- May 10, 2017.

The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: Dr. Thomson updated that he has received a letter from the Board of Selectmen with information on submitting warrants for the May 14th Special Town Meeting. No article will be accepted after April 10th.

Warrants: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that there were warrants to be signed. She then read the totals.

Payroll Warrants	\$ 97,102.84
	\$1,350,679.37
	\$ 94,523.71

Accounts Payable Warrant:	\$ 46,808.30
	15,759.31
	2,234.53
	165,959.68
	208,188.45
	23,760.46
Interdepartmental Invoices:	\$ 237.72
	259.04
	259.04

FOR THE TOTAL EXPENDITURE OF \$2,005,772.45

Public Forum: None.

Announcements: None.

Appearances: Impact Norwood: Ms. Sigalle Reiss (Director of Health Services) and Ms. Aubrey Ciol (Director of Drug Free Communities Grant) were here this evening to give an update on the partnership between the Board of Health and Impact Norwood. Ms. Ciol shared some of the events being held this year to get parents more informed and involved. These events include: Parent Coffee Hours; High School Poster Contest; PSA Contest; and Support Prevention. The website for more information is www.impactnorwood.org. Ms. Reiss also gave a short update on the changes to the dental program in grades 1-6.

The Committee Members had an opportunity to share some of their thoughts and ideas.

Adjustment Counselors – Case Loads: Ms. Paula Alexander was here this evening with many of the Norwood Public Schools Adjustment Counselors to update the Committee on their caseloads and to let the Members know what is involved in the day of an Adjustment Counselor.

Norwood Public School’s Adjustment Counselors are:

- Noreen O’Hear – Cleveland (2.5) and Willett (1.0)
- Kimberly Lee – Callahan
- Erica Renault – Balch (2.5) and Prescott (2.5)
- Leah Stevens – High School
- Lisa Tartufo – High School
- Amy Riley – Coakley Middle School
- Lisa Collins – Oldham (2.5) and Willett (1.0)

Some of the responsibilities of the Adjustment Counselors are:
 -Being part of IEP Team;

- Chair meetings of students on 504 Plans;
- Try to spend more time in classroom environment and at recess to get to know students better;
- Mediate conflicts with students (individually and in a classroom environment);
- Stay in touch with parents to gain information and to give them some feedback as well as helping them get outside services;
- Crisis management.

Much of the work they do involves researching information on family situations (domestic violence, substance abuse, mental health issues).

Mr. McDonough asked the Adjustment Counselors their thoughts on therapy animals. The general consensus of the Counselors is that therapy animals can be very helpful to students with anxiety but they know there are liabilities involved.

Mrs. Mullen asked the adjustment counselors what they needed and they unanimously agreed that there is a need for full-time adjustment counselors at every school.

The Members had an opportunity for questions and comments.

Mrs. Alexander added that there is currently so much discussion in the country about school safety and student safety. She said that these are the people who are working closely with the students to help them every day.

Policy: Animal Policy (IMG), (IMGB): Mr. McDonough reminded that at the last meeting they reviewed the draft policies for:

- Animal Policy – IMG; and
- Service Animals and Therapy Animals in Schools – IMGB.

Mr. McDonough and Ms. Stewart reviewed the adjustments made to the policies.

There was some discussion as to the clarification of “*live animals on school grounds*”. Ms. Stewart suggested adding: “*live animals on school grounds for educational purposes should be directly related to the objectives of an instructional program*”, which the Members agreed upon.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve Policy IMG, with the additional language added this evening, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

The Chair suggested keeping these two policies on the same timeline so they would go into effect at the same time.

There was much discussion regarding Policy IMGB and the differences between service animals and therapy animals. There were questions about how these programs work, where the animals would be throughout the day, how to handle other students' fears and allergies, etc.

Mr. McDonough said he would like to see these policies sent for legal review for liability purposes.

Ms. Smith asked the policy sub committee to find out more about who can be considered the "handler" and what qualifications are needed.

Ms. Smith made a motion to table this item for the Sub Committee to work with administration and to get legal opinion regarding the concerns discussed at this evening's meeting, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Dr. Thomson was happy to announce that the Little Mustang Preschool Academy opened up today. He thanked the staff who worked tirelessly over vacation to get this program up and ready for the students. Dr. Thomson also thanked the Buildings and Grounds Department for all they did to get the preschool and Willett all set up with the changes.

Also, Dr. Thomson referred to the National Walkout Day in support of Parkland, Florida on March 14th. He said entering the school does not waive students' rights to free speech, but added that there will be consequences for those who choose to participate. He reminded that staff needs to remain neutral and families will be notified of the consequences beforehand.

Budget: Budget Sub-Committee Update: Chairwoman Bodenhofer said the Finance Commission has invited the Committee to meet with them at their meeting tomorrow night to discuss the school budget. She then updated the Committee with regard to the adjustments that have been made to date. The meeting for the 3rd pass hasn't happened yet, but added that new information that has been received is that shared costs are down a little bit and have brought the budget to 2.5% above last year's budget. (Decrease in shared costs: GIC, OPEB contributions, Blue Hills, Norfolk Ag.)

FY19 Budget Updates: Ms. Smith spoke about reduction of request for new positions, saying that keeping only the following positions at this point would result in a reduction of \$639,869.00:

- Keeping In School Suspension at NHS;
- 0.4 Language Teacher at CMS;
- TASC Aide at NHS;
- 2.6 Adjustment Counselors.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to adopt the recommendations of the Budget Sub Committee regarding reduction of new personnel requests, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted in favor 4-1 (Ms. Stewart voted against).

Ms. Smith made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Budget Sub Committee regarding level funding supplies for a savings of \$139,967.00, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Ms. Smith made a motion to adopt the recommendation of the Budget Sub Committee for no new library book purchases for FY19, for a cost savings of \$35,624.00, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Ms. Smith reminded that at this point we have cut or level funded as much as possible at this point without touching the classrooms. She did not want to continue on at this point, with the cuts, until after the 3rd Pass Meeting.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that there is still \$2,011,872 to be cut to reach the budget goal.

Mr. McDonough made a motion to table this item at this point, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Mrs. Mullen asked if we could ask Town Meeting to support a new writing curriculum and writing coaches for the English Department, as she has seen little growth in the area of writing and the curriculum has not had any changes for years.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said that we need more information, such as costs, before voting on a warrant item. She added that there is still a few weeks left before warrants need to be submitted to put it together.

Old Business: Superintendent Evaluation: Ms. Stewart began by reading a prepared statement summarizing the timeline of how the evaluation document was put together by the working group. She sent the Committee Members two documents through the Google Folder: (1) update on Dr. Thomson's goals; and (2) an update from the Working Group and Ms. Stewart's personal recommendations.

Ms. Stewart informed that the working group spent three hours reviewing the following:

- The Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation (part 3);
- The Guidance from DESE on the District Planning Process;
- The entire MASC presentation on evaluating the Superintendent;
- The Norwood Public Schools values that were created by Dr. Thomson and Mrs. Mullen and were voted on unanimously by the full Committee; and

- The worksheet that the Committee received from Dorothy Presser at the January workshop;
- The working group also reviewed two of Mr. Hayden's evaluations and evaluations from other districts (Waltham, Quincy, Belmont and Hanover).

Ms. Stewart said at this point, the working group feels confident that they have met all standards from DESE, MASC and MASS.

Mrs. Mullen asked for evidence on the safety/security preparations for the school system to be added to the evaluation as well as evidence of how he is moving curriculum forward.

Mr. McDonough asked for evidence of implementation of new policies.

Ms. Smith made a motion to adopt this portion of the evaluation (evidence portion), with the additions made this evening, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Ms. Stewart, at this point, suggested setting aside Dr. Thomson's mid-year evaluation, as a mid-year evaluation is not required by DESE or MASC and it is already the end of February.

Mrs. Mullen adamantly disagreed with Ms. Stewart's recommendation and she shared her thoughts and opinions as to why she disagreed.

After some discussion, Dr. Thomson said that usually the mid year evaluation can be a formative evaluation and the end of the year evaluation is a summative. He added that he has seen the composite draft and the individual comments/feed back from the members.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to not release a composite at this point and to finalize the composite for the annual evaluation, which was seconded by Ms. Smith.

Mrs. Mullen stands strong in her opinion that she felt her comments were censored and she was not represented. She added that to dismiss this whole thing is wrong and to not rework this composite again is wrong.

Mr. McDonough agrees the one-year evaluation is the most important evaluation, but he wants to be sure that the comments of the Committee Members cannot be censored.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said to Mr. McDonough that his characterization of censorship does not really reflect what really happened. She added that all members had comments included and all members had comments that were not included.

With regard to the motion on the table, the Committee voted in favor 3-2 (Mrs. Mullen and Mr. McDonough voted against.)

New Business: Out of State Field Trip – Coakley Middle School, Canobie Lake Park, NH: Ms. Smith made a motion to approve this field trip, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Out of State Field Trip – High School, Pennsylvania: Ms. Smith made a motion to approve this field trip, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

2018-2019 School Year Calendar: Dr. Thomson said the Committee Members have in their packets the proposed School Calendar for 2018-2019.

Dr. Wyeth said they use the current calendar for a guideline and then take into consideration contractual issues. He informed that professional development full days and half days are on different days of the week so that it will not affect specials at the schools. Dr. Wyeth said this calendar has been seen and approved by Administrators and Unions.

Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the 2018-2019 School Year Calendar, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0-1 (Mr. McDonough abstained).

Consent Agenda:

Acceptance of Nine (9) Donations:

- Women’s Community Committee - \$400.00 Gift Card – Willett ;
- Women’s Community Committee - \$400.00 Gift Card – Callahan;
- Women’s Community Committee - \$400.00 Gift Card – Oldham;
- Women’s Community Committee - \$400.00 Gift Card – High School;
- Coakley Middle School PTO - \$1,795.00 – BrainPop Annual Software Subscriptions;
- Alliance Energy, LLC/Exon/Mobil Gas Station - \$500.00 – High School;
- Music Drives Us - \$850.00 – Prescott School;
- Callahan PTA - \$65.14 – After School Stipend;
- Bay State Textiles – January Rebate - \$389.00 – System Wide.

Ms. Smith made a motion to accept these donations, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Personnel: Dr. Thomson reviewed the impending retirements, resignations and new hires to date.

School Committee Addenda: Ms. Stewart read a prepared statement she put together after speaking with people in the community regarding the budget process and how detrimental it can be when individuals share incorrect information. She shared how wonderful it has been watching the amazing students of Norwood succeeding and thriving with the tools that we have given them. She is on this Committee to advocate for the students and she feels that the students need more, not less.

Mrs. Mullen sent congratulations to the girls and boys varsity hockey teams for making the post-season tournament. She thanked all the fans that went to support these teams and encouraged them to cheer them on at their next games.

Mr. McDonough read a prepared statement regarding a report he asked the Superintendent for in November on security. He feels that he has received pushback from Members of this Committee because it was not the right time as it is budget time. He added that the safety and security of the students and staff is the most important issue that takes precedence over all others. He added that he did not ask for this report in the wake of Parkland, but long before. He takes this issue personally as he has family in many of the schools and he worries about their safety. He said he is deeply affected by this.

Ms. Smith believes that everyone who sits in these seats care about the safety of the staff and students, adding that her mother is a teacher in the schools. She agrees that these discussions need to happen but they need to happen in Executive Session where those who may want to bring harm will not have access to this information. She said she is deeply offended that it was implied that she did not care about the safety of everyone in the schools.

The Chair stood by her decision that not one member of this committee has the right to demand a report from the Superintendent. She added that her own children are in the schools every day. She said a written report, even a confidential document, makes her nervous. She previously encouraged everyone who had concerns to call the superintendent right away, adding that everyone on this Committee has his cell phone number.

Dr. Thomson said this request was brought to his attention at the end of November. After having time to think about this item, he spoke with Mr. McDonough saying that Mr. Riccardi was willing to come before the Board for a presentation in the Executive Session. He added that Mr. McDonough needed to speak with the Chair to get it on the long-term agenda. Mr. Riccardi was not able to attend this evening's meeting but was available to sit down and discuss safety with any member that had questions or concerns.

Ms. Stewart reminded that this Committee has talked many times about being respectful to each other. She told Mr. McDonough to never question her care or concern for the students of Norwood ever again. She added that she spoke with

Dr. Thomson extensively over the weekend and he took the time to answer her questions and speak with her about what his plans were going to be this week in the schools.

Executive Session: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that there would be an Executive Session for security plans and teacher negotiations

Mrs. Mullen made a motion for Executive Session at 11:20 to discuss security plans and teacher negotiations, which was seconded by Mr. McDonough. The Members were polled and voted unanimously in favor 5-0

Adjournment: Mr. McDonough made a motion for adjournment at 12:05 a.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee