

TOWN OF NORWOOD
School Committee Meeting
Oldham Elementary School
Wednesday, January 23, 2019

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, January 23, 2019. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Ms. Myev Bodenhofer, Chair, Mrs. Michele Eysie Mullen, Ms. Teresa Stewart, Ms. Maura Smith and Mr. Dave Catania.

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: Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of January 16, 2019, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Correspondence: Chairwoman Bodenhofer acknowledged receipt of the following correspondence:

-A letter from Lee Kennedy and the Circle of Hope thanking some of our Norwood High School students who assisted in organizing the Luminary Night. Dr. Thomson read the list of those students who assisted.

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

Payroll Warrants	\$1,387,430.38
Buildings and Grounds Warrants	\$ 13,126.46
Accounts Payable:	\$ 224,723.57
	\$ 165,853.47
Total:	\$1,791,133.80

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

Katie Neil Rizzo, (Norwood resident, mother of three children, PTO Mother and Town Meeting Member) was here this evening to express a call to action to families of this town. She informed that Norwood is one of the last 30 towns in Massachusetts to do an operational override. She shared her concerns and asked everyone to send e-mails to your Norwood elected officials and stay informed, adding this is your future on the line.

Ed Ferris, Town Meeting Member, was here this evening to share his thoughts on Norwood's needs and Norwood's history of choosing not to go the route of an override. He asked everyone to think of Norwood as being one of the last towns to ask for an override, which means there has been a long history of very good Town Management.

Announcements: None.

Appearances: Oldham School Presentation: Dr. Wes Manaday welcomed everyone to this evening's School Committee Meeting at the Oldham Elementary School. Dr. Manaday gave an overview of what has been happening around the Oldham. Some of the exciting activities are:

- Students in grades 4 and 5 will be voting on their favorite books;
- Grade 2 students will be starting their research unit on Penguins;
- Grade 1 students will be celebrating 100th day of school by collecting 100 canned goods per grade;
- Second grade students will get to enjoy the Rainforest Café;
- Third graders are excited for the Living Wax Presentation;
- Fourth grade students will research a state and family, staff and Community Members are invited to attend the presentation.
- The entire school will read "How to Steal a Dog" and the students will be able to skype the author.

Dr. Manaday thanked the PTA for providing snacks for this evening's meeting.

Ms. Smith thanked Dr. Manaday, on behalf of the School Committee, for the dedication he has given the students, staff and families of the Oldham School over the last 12 years as he will be retiring after this school year.

Capital Outlay Requests: Mr. Kidd/Mr. Riccardi: Mr. Joe Kidd and Mr. Paul Riccardi were here this evening to present the Capital Outlay requests.

Mr. Riccardi began by thanking the Buildings and Grounds crew and custodians who dealt with one of the most difficult storms he can remember last week. He informed that they used a month's worth of salt/ice melt in this one storm. He said he truly believes they did the best job they could under the conditions.

Mr. Riccardi said that Buildings and Grounds is not actually asking for any capital outlay items this year, but he is here on behalf of Ms. Ellis and the Transportation Department requesting one wheel chair van. He said there are usually three wheel chair vans in use and one just died (with 157,000 miles). He said that in FY21 Buildings and Grounds would like to finish the floors, but they are all set for FY20.

Ms. Smith read the list of items that Buildings and Grounds is putting off until FY21 and FY22 due to the tight budget.

The Chair reminded that the track and field at the High School will need to be updated and she said that has been put off until 2025.

Mr. Kidd said they are looking to replace 10 network switches across 6 buildings in the next year. He said they still have some category 2 funding left to use at a 50% discount. He said teacher laptops will need to start being replaced as will administrative desk top computers. He said he is trying to be prudent, but by replacing these now, it will save money. (\$145,500 for FY20)

Mr. Kidd said for FY21 there needs to be a plan in place on what classrooms will look like at the High School.

Mr. Riccardi wanted to end by saying that he has never seen a Central Technology Department that employs 3 staff members and services over 4,000 users that doesn't miss a beat. He said this is a credit to Mr. Kidd and his amazing department. Mr. Riccardi also added, as two schools are getting ready to fundraise for new playgrounds, that the P.T.O's in this town have been incredibly active, adding that they have had a great partnership with buildings and grounds.

At this point, Mr. Catania made a motion to forward to the Capital Outlay Committee, the request for a new wheelchair van (\$65,000) and Technology requests as outlined (\$145,500), which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Ms. Stewart made a motion to move the field trip up in the agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Old Business: Field Trip Approval: Mr. Jeff Brunt, NHS Television Teacher, was here this evening to share the plan on an exchange trip, which has been signed off by the Principal.

Mr. Brunt said they would like to do an exchange with another student from Carlsbad High School in California. Mr. Brunt has been a friend of the teacher in Carlsbad, adding that they have a pretty amazing program. They both believe that it would be a great experience for the students to share their experiences with the other students in their class. The student from Norwood would be Joe Spadorcia. He would go there on February 20th, during school break. He would return on the 27th with Jake Watts from Carlsbad who will spend a week here. Dr. Thomson said we have liability insurance through the same company that we go through for student travel as well at the homeowner's policy.

Ms. Stewart said there were two different policies that were in conflict with each other. At this point she thinks all the requirements are met.

Mr. Catania made a motion to approve this trip, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Reports: None.

Budget: Budget Balancing Committee Update: The Chair updated that the Budget Balancing Committee has not met since the School Committee last met, but she added that there is a meeting scheduled for this coming Monday at 6 p.m. The Budget Balancing Committee has been invited to attend the Selectmen's meeting on Tuesday, January 29th, and will be appearing at 8:00 p.m.

The Chair then shared some news that was posted on the Boston Globe website today. Governor Baker has proposed a \$1.1 billion 7-year overhaul to the School Budget Formula. This would revamp the 26-year-old formula that has been used to determine how much each community needs to spend to provide adequate education for its students as well as determining how much of the tab the state and community needs to pay. With regards to the 2020 Budget, Governor Baker proposes that the state spend \$200 million more on its portion of school funding costs, which is approximately a 5% increase. The Globe also stated that 85% of that amount is slated to go to the high-needs districts (towns with at least 50% low income). The Chair said that we may not see a significant increase, but it is very exciting that he's looking at a 7-year plan.

FY20 Budget: The Chair began by stating that we need to cut \$3.1 million to eliminate our deficit. She reminded that if there were an override, that would eliminate the need for these cuts and would add some money for more curriculum refresh, more teachers as new classes are added, along with project based learning, career pathways and ELL Programs as needed. The budget we are talking about with all the cuts is our contingent budget if the override does not pass.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer and Ms. Smith reminded that in the last few years, there have been cuts and 1-year fixes to get balanced budgets. Last year, this Committee eliminated library books and we took supplies down to nothing. We cannot run a school system without fundamental things that already have been cut. There is not much left that will get us to \$3 million without hitting the classrooms. Ms. Smith said that things happen when people show up. She thanked everyone who came out to this evening's meeting.

The Chair said this evening she wanted to limit the discussion to what can be eliminated outside the classroom.

Dr. Thomson said we are going to have some difficult conversations in the next couple of weeks, adding that he and his administrative team have been having

these conversations for a few weeks now. He said we are talking about a structural deficit. If an override does not pass, we will continue to have to cut more each year. Dr. Thomson said he decided to interview for the Superintendent position for the Norwood Schools largely because Norwood's philosophy is to educate the whole child. The four A's (Academics, Activities, Athletics and Arts) are the main factors. Now he finds the Norwood Schools making cuts like this Town has not seen before.

The Chair began by talking about transportation. She said that bus fees only cover approximately 20% of the cost to run the buses. Students who are in grades 1-6 who live more than 2 miles away from their school must be given free transportation. Since the 6th Grades are at the Coakley and the Coakley is on one side of town, there will be 6th graders who will need to be bussed.

The Chair asked Dr. Thomson to look into how much will be saved if we provide buses for just those students who we, by law, need to transport.

The Chair said that Athletics is the next item for discussion. Ms. Smith informed that the League fees, rentals, officials and supplies are \$292,017.00. Sports coaching stipends are \$297,708.00. The Chair said if we eliminated athletics, we would be saving somewhere in the area of \$600,000. The Chair said they were looking to see if the sports teams could be self-funding. Mr. Longley put together some figures for just Varsity athletics. The Chair shared the costs for some of the teams. The players currently pay \$200/player per sport with a cap of \$800 per family. We do also offer discounts for students who are on free and reduces lunch.

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Approx. Cost To Run</u>	<u>Divided by Players</u>	<u>Cost per Player</u>
Field Hockey	\$10,000	20	\$487.00
Football	\$38,000	28	\$1,327.00
Boys & Girls Hockey	\$38,000	17	\$2,200.00

Dr. Thomson said other towns that have pay to play sports fundraise (usually for a year) and then figure out the amount the players will have to contribute. He added that our fall sports teams will be at a time-line disadvantage.

The Members discussed the challenges families will have trying to come up with the money for their kids to play sports as well as how many students go to school every day for the sports, fine arts and extracurriculars.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer, at this point, shared a disclaimer that her daughter is currently a senior and will be graduating, but that her son is currently a freshman at Norwood High School and played soccer, hockey and hopes to run track. Any changes like this will directly impact her family.

Ms. Smith kept going with the Fine Arts costs to self-fund.

Activity	Approx. Cost To Run	Divided by Students	Cost per Student
Marching Band	\$55,000	55	\$1,000
Jazz Ensemble	\$5,000	20	\$250
Acapella Choir	\$1,800	20	\$90
Summer Musical	\$40,000	40	\$1,000
Honor Band (Element. Level)	\$4,545	35	\$130

Ms. Smith reminded that right now there is a \$150 fee per year for Fine Arts. These new fees we are talking about is per activity. She added, that to be clear, we are talking about actually eliminating 2 of the 4 A's.

Ms. Smith shared that stipends for clubs and activities at the Coakley Middle School are \$18,683 and the High School is \$26,066.

The Chair wanted to discuss elementary school configuration at this point.

Mrs. Mullen asked for a five-minute recess, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

The Chair welcomed everyone back into Open Session and said they would continue with the budget discussion, beginning with elementary configuration. Currently, we have one kindergarten and five elementary schools. The chair shared the total number of classrooms at each grade along with the numbers of students in each class. The Chair shared some of the ideas that have been discussed.

- Each school could hold an entire grade, so the students would move to a new school each day. The Chair shared the pros and cons of this idea.
- Redistrict the whole district. The Chair shared the pros and cons of this idea.
- We could do away with set districts and use a lottery system. The Chair shared the pros and cons of this idea.
- We could think about combining schools (i.e., Oldham could do 1-3 and Callahan could hold 4-5).
- We could eliminate one elementary school, but if we closed the Callahan, we would need to reimburse the MSBA for the boiler system that was installed a few years ago. The Chair shared the pros and cons of this idea.
- We could move the 8th grades to the High School and move the 5th grades to the Middle School. The Chair shared the pros and cons of this idea.

Ms. Stewart shared that the Callahan only has 10 less students than the Oldham, but shared that the TASC program is at the Callahan and is one of our most high-needs group of students.

There was a lot of discussion about how to make these cuts so that one group of students don't get hit harder than the others. There was some discussion as to which ideas won't work at this point, for a variety of reasons.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said the Budget Balancing Committee voted in favor of the override. She said that we could have a vote in April, June or July. Town Meeting is scheduled to start on May 13th (second Monday in May). After Ms. Smith and the Chair met as a sub committee, she drafted a letter to the Board of Selectmen with a list of concerns regarding the timing of the vote.

Ms. Smith read the draft for the Committee out loud. The Committee Members agreed to send this draft. Ms. Smith made spelling correction and an adjustment to the *Team Model* at the Middle School. Ms. Smith then made a motion to accept, sign and send this letter, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda: Dr. Thomson informed that the Members have in their packets a memo from Mrs. Alexander regarding two students who will be coming back into the district. He said we would be hiring another para to fill this mandated position.

Ms. Smith made a motion to hire another paraprofessional, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Dr. Thomson said the Chair asked him to report out on grant funded FTE's. He added that the way the FTE's has been reported at Town Meeting have been inaccurately reported for years. He said they have only reported those that come out of the Town's budget. We currently have 20.1 FTE's (mostly from Unit 50) that are paid from grants.

Dr. Thomson then updated the Committee regarding the out of district placements.

The next Strategic Planning Meeting will be Tuesday at 1:30 in Room 219 at the Savage. He said everyone is welcome.

Dr. Thomson gave a shout-out to the Civics students he got to go to Washington, D.C. with. He said they will be competing in the *We the People Competition* at the Kennedy Center on Saturday.

Dr. Thomson thanked the Oldham PTO for hosting coffee with the Superintendent this evening.

Policy: Field Trip Policy: Ms. Stewart made a motion to table, which was seconded by Mr. Catania. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Old Business: Facilities Committee Update: The Chair said there was a meeting last week and there is another one scheduled for this week. She will have more information at the next meeting.

Town Budget MOU: Dr. Thomson has shared a draft with the Committee. The Chair said the Members can share their thoughts with Dr. Thomson. Dr. Thomson said an MOU is a promise in good faith, but is not legally binding. The Members should e-mail Dr. Thomson by Monday with any suggestions.

New Business: None.

Consent Agenda:

Acceptance of Two Donations:

HPHC - \$500 – Little Mustangs Preschool Academy;
Callahan Retiree Group - \$300.00 – Callahan Library

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

Personnel: None.

School Committee Addenda: Mr. Catania addressed a letter from a former Norwood High School student (graduated 20 years ago) who wanted to apologize for being a troublemaker. This individual is now enrolled in college and is on his way to being a professional technician. Mr. Catania said this gentleman graduated from school without anyone realizing he suffered from mental illness. Mr. Catania said maybe the Norwood Schools should be apologizing to you for not seeing you needed help. Hindsight is 20/20. Maybe if we had enough adjustment councilors then, Mr. S. wouldn't have struggled as much.

Mrs. Mullen said she was a teacher 20 years ago. We were all as good as then as the teachers are now. She said kids are different today with different needs. We did not fail our kids. This was one kid. Mrs. Mullen then mentioned a Facebook post that talked about one particular School Committee member. She said the member referred to was her. It was stated publicly that a School Committee member wanted to abolish foreign language. She reviewed the meeting and she wanted to make clear that she did not say that. She said she wanted to review the requirements for college. She said the comments in that thread were mean and hurtful. She always tells people that if you have questions or comments, they should call her. She said she called Harvard to see their requirements. Harvard said two year are the requirement. She would never suggest abolishing foreign language.

Ms. Stewart said due to open meeting laws, this committee can not brainstorm with the other members outside the meetings. Some of the brainstorming is done here in open session and we have to work through the issues

in public. She asked for the public for some respect as this Committee tries to work through some difficult tasks. Ms. Stewart attended last week's Impact Norwood event on mental health last week, adding that it was very well attended. She shared some statistics, one being that 20% of youth will be diagnosed as having a mental health disorder. The earlier you identify and treat the better. Impact Norwood just released a PSA today. Ms. Stewart asked everyone to watch it. It gives her chills. She wanted to get the message out that everyone in town has a responsibility to our youth. Ms. Stewart wanted to share that she was invited to attend the T.O.N.Y. Awards last Monday night as a presenter. She was proud to inform that 8 of the 10 winners were Norwood students. Ms. Stewart said the student who were nominated were athletes, members of the fine arts programs, Global Citizens, etc. She ended by saying we need to be accountable to our youth.

Ms. Smith wanted to just remind everyone that we are talking about little kids here. Some of these kids may feel safest when they are at school. These cuts will impact the students and their families. Ms. Smith said as we talk about disrupting these schools, these schools are more like families. She asked everyone to be respectful of that.

Chairwoman Bodenhofer said she was elected to this committee three years ago and has come to the end of her term. She informed that she filled out her nomination papers and will be running again. She said as a Committee, we have been working hard on the budget process, but said clearly there is still a lot to do. She would like to see this through until the Town is in a more stable situation.

Executive Session: Chairwoman Bodenhofer informed that there would be an Executive Session for negotiations.

Ms. Smith made a motion for Executive Session at 10:00 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 5-0.

Adjournment: Mr. Catania made a motion for adjournment at 10:40 p.m., which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 5-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk
Norwood School Committee