

TOWN OF NORWOOD  
School Committee Meeting  
Savage Educational Center  
Wednesday, February 13, 2019

A meeting of the Norwood School Committee was held on Wednesday, February 13, 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 and Ms. Maura Smith.

**Committee Member Excused:** Mr. David Catania (The Chair read a statement from Mr. Catania explaining that he was not able to attend this evening's meeting as he has come down with the flu.)

**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. Stewart made a motion to approve the minutes of January 23, 2019 and February 6, 2019, which was seconded by Ms. Smith. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

**Correspondence:** Chairwoman Bodenhofer acknowledged receipt of the following correspondence:

-Statement from Mr. Catania that was read at the beginning of the meeting.

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

Payroll Warrants:	\$ 94,734.63
Accounts Payable Warrants:	\$ 15,334.14
	\$ 126,846.19
<b>Total Expenditures:</b>	<b>\$236,914.96</b>

**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 Neal-Rizzo, Julie Barbour Issa and Denise Kiley were here this evening to announce the formation of "One Norwood", a municipal ballot Question Committee, supporting the passage of the proposition 2 ½ Operational Override in Norwood for the June 3, 2019 Election. They explained that in the next few months

they will be launching a grassroots effort in the community, working together to support a stable financial future for Norwood.

Mary Wesley, a 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher at the Cleveland Elementary School, said she has been here many times over the years advocating for the schools at budget times. With so much emotion in her voice, she said she was recently holding a sign outside her school that said “Save our Schools”. She said she really means “Save our students”. She said the schools are currently short-staffed with little to no budget in some departments. She wanted everyone to know that her students continue to show up to school every day with smiles on their faces with little knowledge of this dire situation. She asked everyone to think of the students.

**Announcements:** Dr. Thomson shared that the \$10,000 Grant for the Career Pathways has come in and these funds will be used as start-up money to get the program going. Dr. Thomson thanked Dr. Galligan and his staff for their hard work in attaining this grant.

The Chair announced that the budget page on the School Committee website has been updated. To find this updated information, please go to [www.norwood.k12.ma.us](http://www.norwood.k12.ma.us) and go to the School Committee tab. Scroll down to find the budget information.

**Budget:** FY19 Budget Transfer: Ms. Ellis informed of the following budget transfer requests:

<u>TRANSFER FROM:</u>		<u>TRANSFER TO:</u>	
0870-19 SCH IS/TB-Balch Textbks	\$1,000.00	0654-19 SCH Inst Sal-Conf.	\$1,000.00
<b>Total Transferred From:</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>	<b>Total Transferred To:</b>	<b>\$1,000.00</b>

Ms. Stewart made a motion to approve this transfer, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

<u>TRANSFER FROM:</u>		<u>TRANSFER TO:</u>	
0965-19 SCH IS/TB-Presc. Inst. Supp.	\$1,445.80	1305-19 SCH Lib Books – Pres.	\$1,445.80
<b>Total Transferred From:</b>	<b>\$1,445.80</b>	<b>Total Transferred To:</b>	<b>\$1,445.80</b>

Mrs. Mullen made a motion to approve this transfer, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

FY20 Budget: The Chair began by reviewing the FY20 Budget process to date. As of this evening, there still needs to be \$1,550,038.00 in cuts to reach a balance budget (should the override not pass).

The Superintendent informed that at this point, we need to cut staff to reach a balanced budget. There were some questions regarding reducing staff at the

Middle School by One 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Team. Dr. Fraczek gave an explanation of how the logistics would work if the cut needed to be made.

Mrs. Mullen explained that she could not vote for something that she morally and ethically does not believe should happen.

After some discussion and much despair, Ms. Smith made a motion to reduce the Middle School by 3 FTE's, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted in favor 3-1 (Mrs. Mullen opposed).

Dr. Thomson continued on by saying unfortunately, the next recommendation is to eliminate 5 Elementary Teachers (Net 4 FTE's).

Ms. Stewart made a motion to reduce 5 Elementary Teachers (Net 4 FTE's), which was seconded by Ms. Smith.

The Committee Members shared their thoughts on these difficult votes.

Mrs. Mullen said she came to this Committee vowing not to cut teachers or increase class sizes, and she will not go against that commitment. She asked the Committee to try to dig down a little more to find another way to balance the budget.

The Chair explained that the Budget Sub Committee and the Budget Balancing Committee have both worked very hard over the last few months trying to come up with any other solutions to this problem.

Ms. Smith said we will now be eliminating staff and increasing class sizes, including kindergarten classes.

With regard to the motion on the table, the Committee voted in favor 3-1 (Mrs. Mullen voted against).

Ms. Smith made a motion to eliminate 3.2 HS Staff (Net 2.2 FTE's), which was seconded by Ms. Stewart.

Dr. Galligan was able to answer the Committee Members' questions as to how these cuts will impact the High School.

The Chair thanked the administrators for helping to try to keep the cuts spread out over the whole district.

The Committee voted in favor 3-1 (Mrs. Mullen opposed).

The Chair said at this point we are now a little below a \$1 million deficit and she would suggest tabling this until after the next Budget Balancing Meeting. She said the Committee will pick this up at the March 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Ms. Smith made a motion to table, which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted in favor 4-0.

Dr. Thomson thanked the administrators for working with him on this process. He said no one wants to lose staff members. He said it is very difficult to have these conversations with people you hire, work with and care about.

**Superintendent's Report and/or Late Agenda:** Dr. Wyeth gave an update on the ELA Committee. He shared the mission statement and strategies with the Committee. He said the next step is to have some vendors come in to share their products. (Pearson, MY View, E L Education.org, Wonders and Arc Core are some of the publishers they were going to look at.) Dr. Wyeth added that some of our staff members have taken professional development courses as well.

With the Social/Emotional Task Force the grant money received will pay for teachers to look at the self-assessment tool and they will bring it back to the schools. Also they will begin to look at some publishers, as well, for a possible refresh (currently using Open Circle).

Dr. Wyeth updated with Fuse Fellows – part II – as two more teachers can be put forth to become fuse fellows. He looks forward to continuing to grow that program.

Dr. Thomson said the Committee Members received, for their desks, laminated copies of the Strategic Plan. He said it was enlarged and put on the School Committee wall and will be put in various places around the schools.

Dr. Thomson thanked Mrs. Ferreira and the Balch School for hosting Instructional rounds this morning. He said the Administrative Team and he really enjoyed being at the Balch. The team was focusing on the question: *Are we addressing the needs of our diverse learners?* He said they planned on being there for an hour and a half and said they were actually there for over two hours. Dr. Thomson explained that this is not an evaluation, but the team coming together to answer questions from each school.

**Policy:** None.

**Old Business:** Facilities Committee Update: The Chair updated on the last Facilities Committee Meeting on January 29<sup>th</sup>. The Members received a draft of the Memorandum of Understanding between the schools and the Board of Selectmen. She said with all the different situations going on at the moment with the possible override and the Munis conversion for the town and the schools, the Committee is

thinking we should push off the start of the joint facilities to January 1, 2020. In order to move forward with this, the Board of Selectmen and the School Committee would both sign off on the Memorandum. The Chair said she was not looking for a vote this evening.

The Chair explained that there would be a facilities director, and assistant facilities director, and possibly a manager. Dave Hajjar has worked out a staffing chart and he will be sharing some large binders with everyone very soon. She said that the schools have been run very well over the years, and by combining facilities; the hope is for all the departments to be run as well as the schools.

The Committee Members had an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns.

Ms. Smith asked if our dedicated electrician and other dedicated B&G crew would be dedicated just for the schools or would they become part of the town crew, as that would impact the work done on our schools. Ms. Smith then asked if the start date has been pushed back from July, 2019 to January 2020 at what point would we need to give a vote to move it forward?

The Chair said if the plan is to begin with the new Facilities Department some time in 2020, we will need to make a decision whether or not we want to move forward with it in time for the budget to go through the approval process (by the end of March).

Ms. Smith said that makes her incredibly uncomfortable that we need to vote on this before we know whether or not an override has passed. She added that if the override does not pass, we will need to begin the process of closing down a school, moving all those classes into schools that do not have room for the new students, moving and storing all the athletic equipment, and all the changes that come with the Munis conversion.

Ms. Stewart seconded everything Ms. Smith said and added that she cannot vote on this until we know the outcome of the override. She then asked what Plan B would be. She also said that this is supposed to be a collaboration, but she feels this memorandum is very heavily worded for the town side, and she would want to see that it is for both sides in the wording.

Mrs. Mullen asked if there was an increase in salaries, specifically the person who will be running this Department. She also asked how many other salaries will be added.

The Chair said she would get more detail on the budget. She ended by saying that the last Facilities Meeting was in January and there has been a whole lot of focus on other items in the last few weeks.

**New Business:** Capital Outlay Committee Update: The Chair updated that the Capital Outlay Committee met on February 4<sup>th</sup> and they reviewed all of the requests across the town. Mr. Maloney and Mr. Mazzucco have worked together to put together a book that shows the requested projects over the next few years. The Capital Outlay Committee will be meeting again on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> and will make a recommendation for Town Meeting.

Overnight Field Trip Request – All State Music Festival: (Boston, MA – February 28<sup>th</sup> through March 2, 2019) - Mrs. Mullen made a motion to approve this overnight field trip request, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Out of State Field Trip Request – Coakley Middle School – Gr. 8: (Canobie Lake Park): Ms. Smith made a motion to approve this out of state field trip, which was seconded by Ms. Stewart. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

**Consent Agenda:**

Acceptance of Two (2) Donations:

Emily & Jeffrey Caille - \$75. CFCE Playgroup at the Village House;  
Oldham PTO - \$202.32 – Enrichment Programs

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

**Personnel:** Dr. Thomson shared the names of some new hires: Jean Van Putten (.5 aide at the LMPA) and Jennifer Zach (LMPA – Occupational Therapist). He then announced the retirement of our Director of Student Services, Ms. Paula Alexander, who will be retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup>. Also retiring on June 30<sup>th</sup> will be Judith Bowman (Food Services) and Thomas Duggan (Cleveland Instrumental Music). Dr. Thomson wished them all well and thanked them for their service.

**School Committee Addenda:** Mrs. Mullen had none.

Ms. Stewart read a prepared statement regarding how awful she feels as a human being, as a School Committee Member and as a mother, about the cuts that she has had to vote on to balance the budget at these last couple of meetings. She has shared this information with her children, adding that her children trust her and still have faith that their mom will be able to save the day. She said it breaks her heart she may not be able to save the day. She also added that those who think this is all a scare tactic clearly do not know her. She said she does not believe in scare tactics in any aspect of her life. She said she would never vote on something so devastating to her children or anyone else's children simply as a ploy. Finally, she said that at last week's meeting, she did not vote to close the Willett. She was not ready to vote on any school closings last week. She said she would now uphold and support the vote of the majority to close the Willett. She addressed the

administrators in the room. She said her many questions in the past are not from a place of mistrust, but from a place of needing to be able to make the most informed and unbiased decisions.

Ms. Smith asked everyone to think about *Success, Pride and Responsibility*. She explained how we have pride in all of our successes throughout the Norwood Schools and added that it is our responsibility to look in the mirror and do what we need to do to keep it going.

The Chair thanked everyone for their hard work tonight and wished everyone a nice vacation, adding that we all could use this break.

**Executive Session:** None.

**Adjournment:** Ms. Stewart made a motion for adjournment at 8:50 p.m., which was seconded by Mrs. Mullen. The Committee voted unanimously in favor 4-0.

Respectfully Submitted:

Donna G. Doliner, Clerk  
Norwood School Committee