

**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby, Pepperell, and Townsend, Massachusetts
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, April 9, 2018**

PRESENT

Chairperson	Randee Rusch	Member, At Large
Vice Chairperson	William Hackler	Member, At Large
	Anne Adams	Member, Pepperell
	Jonna Clermont	Member, Pepperell
	Lisa Martin	Member, Pepperell
	Crystal Messamore	Member, Ashby
	Michael Morgan	Member, At Large
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend
	Robert Templeton	Member, Townsend

ALSO PRESENT

Joan Landers	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Milligan	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Dr. Carolyn Burke	NESDEC
Dr. Arthur Bettencourt	NESDEC
Parents and Community Members	

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.
2. The chairperson hereby informs the committee and audience members that the meeting is being recorded.
3. The next regularly scheduled school committee meeting will be held on Monday, April 30, 2018, at North Middlesex Regional High School, Room 120, at 7:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

The chair asked whether any items needed to be removed from the consent agenda.

1. Approval of Minutes
 - February 28, 2018, School Committee Meeting (Joint Meeting with Town Boards)
 - March 5, 2018, School Committee Meeting
 - March 15, 2018, School Committee Budget Workshop Meeting
 - April 2, 2018, School Committee Meeting
 - April 3, 2018, School Committee Meeting
2. Acceptance of Donations
 - Donation of \$644.88 to Ashby Elementary School from Custom Ink, LLC.
 - Donation of \$2,793.00 to North Middlesex Regional High School from Hannaford Bros. Co. as part of their Hannaford Helps Schools program
 - Donation of \$100.00 to Varnum Brook Elementary School from Neil Stone Academy
3. Approval of Out-of-State/Country Field Trips
 - The NMRHS grade 10-12 robotics team will participate in a competition at Pembroke Academy in Pembroke, N.H., on April 15, 2018

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the consent agenda.
Vote: Motion unanimously passed

REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Superintendent's Report

a. Accelerated Repair Projects Update

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that Squannacook's pre-construction meeting was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2018. Major submittal packages have been received and are currently under review. The general contract plans to mobilize and start work on Tuesday, April 17, 2018. Also, a representative from the Department of Education Secondary Education will be coming out to assess the program space for Squannacook and Varnum Brook.

HBMS/VBES doors/windows: The architect met with Lockheed to review field dimensions and conditions. Shop drawings are anticipated to be completed within two weeks. The pre-construction meeting will be scheduled in the coming weeks.

HBMS/VBES HVAC, ADA/Structural Upgrades, and VBES Roof: These aspects of construction are pending School Committee approval at the April 9, 2018 meeting. The pre-construction meeting will be scheduled in coming weeks.

2. Superintendent Search – Update

Mrs. Rusch read a statement from Committee member Mike Morgan stating that, after the initial interview with a superintendent candidate, he was made aware of a possible distant family connection the candidate may have with Mr. Morgan. Mr. Morgan has filed a disclosure to the State with the town clerk. Mrs. Rusch advised the committee that a discussion would be held on this agenda item at the end of the meeting.

Dr. Bettencourt of the NESDEC reviewed the successful candidate's profile with the committee. He stated that the screening committee worked very hard, was very respectful and was a pleasure to work with; in total, they provided a slate of four highly qualified candidates.

Dr. Bettencourt reminded the committee that each candidate's personal background should not be discussed; the conversation should focus on the candidate's qualifications and how they meet the district's expectations.

The committee discussed the qualifications, the feedback received from the reference checks that had been completed by committee members on the four finalist. They demonstrated great skill and expertise in various areas of education.

Following a lengthy discussion, a motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Messamore to appoint Mr. Brad Morgan to the position of Superintendent of Schools beginning July 1, 2018 pending successful contract negotiations.

Roll call vote: Anne Adams yes; Michael Morgan yes; Robert Templeton no; William Hackler no; Jonna Clermont yes; Lisa Martin yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Susan Robbins no; Randee Rusch no. Vote: Five yes, four no, the motion passed.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Crystal Messamore to start contract negotiations with Mr. Brad Morgan to appoint him to the position of Superintendent of Schools beginning July 1, 2018.

Roll call vote: Anne Adams yes; Michael Morgan yes; Robert Templeton yes; William Hackler yes; Jonna Clermont yes; Lisa Martin yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Susan Robbins yes; Randee Rusch yes. Vote: The motion unanimously passed.

3. Building Committee Report – Update

Mr. Templeton stated that the committee did approve the asbestos costs associated with the building project; the original base bid for asbestos was 1.75 million, but it looks like it is now estimated to cost 4.6 million. The scope of the work has changed, and thus the cost has increased from the base bid. The committee had hired an outside consultant to provide the district with an unbiased, non-encumbered, third-party review of all the asbestos change orders, which also assessed the means and methods of removal recommended from SMMA, Heery, and CTA.

The committee is looking at utilizing the old gym as a field house containing approximately 2500 square feet. This space could be used for additional gym space, locker rooms, restroom facilities, a snack shack, and central office; the associated cost could be in the 2.5 million – 5 million range. Mr. Templeton stated that this decision would provide more community access for athletics teams and young sports groups, allowing them access to the central office, the restrooms for the fields, the snack shack, etc. Some concerns include timing, design changes, the fact that the maintenance building will need to be moved, and costs, including maintenance and operational costs; and asbestos must still be abated. The building committee created a subcommittee that is going to research this option and provide a report at the next committee meeting. This matter should be brought to a town meeting for a vote, as well as to review design changes and determine the costs associated with this project vs. the cost in the contingency budget. The subcommittee will go back to the building committee to present their findings, and then will submit them to the school committee. The building committee also asked that the subcommittee look at the third bay alternate that was discussed earlier in the design project.

Mr. Shepherd, Vice Chair of the Building Committee, is seeking approval for the building committee to look at the feasibility of converting the old gym to a field house. Mr. Shepherd has started speaking with the OPM, who will work pro-bono from now to April 30, 2018 regarding this matter. There should be no cost, unless, as Mr. Templeton stated, attorney fees are incurred. The OPM and designer need to assign square footage numbers to come up with some conceptual ideas and compare the cost to the contingency fund. The building committee is seeking the school committee's approval to do their due diligence to complete the research and look at the feasibility of managing the problems of storage, a snack shack, a comfort station, the infrastructure of the field house for athletic groups, and the central office.

Mrs. Adams asked if there would be any cost associated with this feasibility study; Mr. Shepherd stated there should not be.

Mr. Templeton noted that if there is a cost necessary to make this project work, and if the committee has to spend something to ultimately create savings, he will use the appropriate process.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to authorize the building committee to research the feasibility and cost to convert the old gym to athletic and central office facility.

Vote: Eight yes; one abstention.

4. Public Communications – No one approached the committee for public comment.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Warrant Subcommittee

Available for Committee review are accounts payable warrants 18-0329 and 18-0405, and the payroll warrant for March 29, 2018. The warrants have been reviewed and signed by the warrant subcommittee.

2. Finance Subcommittee Update

Superintendent Landers confirmed that, at the March 26, 2018 school committee meeting, the committee researched and reviewed two different budget options, and the committee voted on option one, with the understanding that the committee would come back with some cost savings. The superintendent is still in agreement that option one is the best choice.

Mrs. Haines stated that \$55,600.95 is a 5.34% increase in cost for the towns. Pepperell is requesting a reduction of \$230,000.00 to bring their assessment to an increase of under 5%.

Mrs. Clermont asked what the current amount in E&D is.

Mrs. Haines revealed that [the district is currently using \\$1,130,000.00 in E&D to support the budget.](#)

Superintendent Landers asked how much would be left in E&D if we added \$230,000.00 from E&D to Pepperell's assessment.

Mrs. Haines stated that 3% would be left.

Mrs. Rusch asked if the Valley Collaborative refund is included in these numbers. Mrs. Haines stated that it is not, as of yet.

Superintendent Landers asked about the assessments for Ashby (3.87%) and Townsend (4.03%). Without the debt, what is the increase from FY18 to FY19? Mrs. Haines stated that it would be 1.7%.

Mrs. Rusch informed the committee that E&D would be at 3.67%.

Mrs. Robbins is uncomfortable using that amount of money from E&D. E&D is for one-time cost items, and spending the money on reoccurring items will keep us in the same situation year over year.

Mrs. Adams asked if there is disagreement on where the money is coming from, or is it just a question of finding any source for Pepperell's assessment. Mrs. Adams feels that the path of least resistance is using E&D. It is incumbent on us to tell the towns that we hear their concerns, whether the solution is decided now or right up to the town meeting.

Mrs. Messamore personally agrees with the recommendation to take the necessary money from E&D.

A motion was made by Mrs. Clermont to revote the budget using an additional \$230,000.00 from E&D to help with Pepperell's assessments.

Mrs. Rusch asked whether the governor's numbers are in, and do the numbers historically come in higher or lower than what we are holding to.

Mrs. Clermont moved that the school committee adopt an operational budget for FY2019 of \$49,035,760, a FY 2019 transportation budget of \$2,543,165, a FY 2019 debt service of \$3,833,933, and to use these funds to calculate FY 2019 school assessments for member towns as required by statute. In addition, the committee should authorize the use of \$1,360,000 from the excess and deficiency account to offset the FY 2019 operational budget.

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Martin.

Mrs. Adams verified that \$340,000.00 will be going into E&D when received from Valley Collaborative; why would we not want to do this to lower the assessments for our communities? We have built relationships with these towns and need to acknowledge their requests.

Roll call vote was taken: Anne Adams yes; Michael Morgan yes; Robert Templeton yes; William Hackler no; Jonna Clermont yes; Lisa Martin yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Susan Robbins no; Randee Rusch yes.

Vote: Seven yes; two no, the motion passed

NEW BUSINESS

1. To authorize the superintendent to award the contract for the Varnum Brook Elementary School Roof & HVAC and the Hawthorne Brook Middle School HVAC Bids as part of the Accelerated Repair Project.

A motion was made by Mrs. Messamore and seconded by Mrs. Clermont to award the contract for the Varnum Brook Elementary School Roof and HVAC and the Hawthorne Brook Middle School HVAC bid to E. Amanti & Son, Inc. of Salem, MA in the amount of \$5,352,000.00 as part of the accelerated repair project.

Vote: The motion unanimously passed.

2. School Choice Openings 2018 - 2019

The superintendent recommends that in accordance with state law requiring all schools to be open for school choice, the North Middlesex Regional School District accepts choice students for the 2018 - 2019 academic year in the following school/grade levels where space is available. The administration will be cautious not to accept a number of choice students that would adversely affect District finances:

Ashby Elementary School	Spaulding Memorial School	Varnum Brook Elementary School
K - 0 slots	K - 0 slots	K - 2 slots
Gr. 1 - 0 slots	Gr. 1 - 2 slots	Gr. 1 - 2 slots
Gr. 2 - 0 slots	Gr. 2 - 0 slots	Gr. 2 - 0 slots
Gr. 3 - 0 slots	Gr. 3 - 0 slots	Gr. 3 - 1 slots
Gr. 4 - 0 slots	Gr. 4 - 0 slots	Gr. 4 - 1 slots
Hawthorne Brook Middle School	Nissitissit Middle School	North Middlesex Regional HS
Gr. 5 - 15 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 5 - 0 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 9 - 10 slots
Gr. 6 - 20 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 6 - 0 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 10 - 10 slots
Gr. 7 - 15 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 7 - 18 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 11 - 10 slots
Gr. 8 - 20 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 8 - 18 slots (6 Sections)	Gr. 12 - 10 slots

The motion was moved by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Robert Templeton to approve 2018-2019 school choice numbers.

Vote: Unanimously passed

The chair thanked Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Clermont, and Mr. Templeton for their time served as school committee members and presented them with gifts.

Superintendent Landers thanked the three members for all their time and hard work on behalf the students; she stated that she has grown professionally by working with the three of them, and thanked them for their time as committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Messamore to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Motion unanimously passed.

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary