

**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Ashby - Pepperell - Townsend, Massachusetts  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, June 8, 2015**

**PRESENT**

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

**ALSO PRESENT**

Joan Landers – Superintendent of Schools  
Nancy Milligan – Assistant Superintendent  
Amber Edmonds – Student Representative  
Parent/Community Members  
Press

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.
2. The Chairperson hereby informs the Committee and audience members of the recording of this meeting.
3. The next meeting of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee will be held on Monday, July 13, 2015, at the North Middlesex Regional High School at 7:00 p.m.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the consent agenda. Anne Adams asked that the May 18, 2015 minutes be removed from the consent agenda where she was not present at that meeting.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to remove the minutes of Monday, May 18, 2015 from the consent agenda.

Vote: Unanimously passed

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Crystal Messamore to approve the amended consent agenda.

Vote: Unanimously passed

1. Approval of Minutes:
  - Monday, May 18, 2015  
A motion was made by Crystal Messamore and seconded by Brian Edmonds to approve the minutes of May 18, 2015. Vote: six yes; one abstention; the vote passed.

## 2. Acceptance of Donations

- A \$400.00 donation from C & S Pizza of Pepperell to the North Middlesex Regional High School Athletic Department for bus fees to attend the 2015 Hockey playoff games.
- Three yards of wood chips from Powell Gravel and Stone to the Ashby Elementary School for use in the playground.

The Chair requested if no objections by the Committee to move agenda items under New Business numbers 6-8 to here in the agenda. We have the OPM for the new high school, Anthony Pruner from Heery International in the audience to answer any questions if needed. No objections were stated.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

6. The chair asked to move that the North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee hereby confirms the award of a general contract for the construction of the new North Middlesex Regional High School, as described in the District's Project Manual dated April 6, 2015, and as amended by any and all addenda issued by the District, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 149, §§44A et seq., to the lowest responsible and eligible bidder, CTA Construction Company, Inc., where the District has accepted CTA's base bid of Sixty-four Million, Nine Hundred and Ninety-five Thousand Dollars and no cents (\$64,995,000.00).

The motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Messamore that the Committee votes to accept the motion as written.

Vote: Unanimously Passed

7. The Chair asked for a motion that the North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee hereby delegates full authority, on behalf of the School Committee, to Superintendent Joan Landers to sign, execute, and deliver the Owner-General Contractor Agreement, as well as any and all other necessary contract documentation and change orders between the North Middlesex Regional School District and CTA Construction Co., Inc. for the project. The motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont that the Committee votes to accept the motion as written.

Vote: Unanimously Passed

8. The Chair asked for a motion that the North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee hereby delegates full authority, on behalf of the School Committee, to Superintendent Joan Landers to make any and all required filings with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for the project.

The motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Susan Robbins that the Committee votes to accept the motion as written.

Vote: Unanimously Passed

## **PRESENTATIONS**

1. 2014/2015 North Middlesex Regional High School College Acceptances ~ Laurie Smith ~ High School Guidance Department Chair

Mrs. Smith provided a list of College Acceptances for 2015. Mrs. Smith shared the process that the Guidance Department follows with the students. Freshman year the Guidance Department teaches all students the Naviance College & Career Platform. Naviance is a system that helps our students connect with colleges and career options.

Sophomore year they start working on self-discovery, career thoughts, academic, and college planning.

Junior year students start making decisions, what colleges, what career path, etc. The students request a letter of reference from teachers, transcripts going to various colleges are all done through Naviance.

2. Squannacook Early Childhood Center Temporary Relocation ~ Linda Rakiey ~ Director of Special Education

Linda Rakiey shared with the committee that due to the damage that the Squannacook Early Child Center received over the winter to the ceilings, walls, and roof they will be temporarily relocating the SECC to Varnum Brook Elementary School. The administration had numerous meetings looking at the best resources and cost effective ways to move the students. The Administrative team looked at the Peter Fitzpatrick and the Varnum Brook Elementary schools. The final decision was the Varnum Brook Elementary School.

3. North Middlesex Regional School District ~ Acknowledgment of PTO Contributions  
Superintendent Landers shared each principal's letter of gratitude and thanked each of the PTO volunteers for their hard work and contributions that they make to all of the students and schools within our district. The programs and support they provide on behalf of the schools are outstanding.

Superintendent Landers also acknowledged and thanked all of the 2015 retirees for their contributions and dedication to the students and the District. Superintendent Landers also thanked all of the students for their participation in the groundbreaking ceremony. There is a video of the ceremony in the [www.lowellsun.com](http://www.lowellsun.com), please take a moment and watch it.

4. North Middlesex Regional School District Athletic User Fee ~ James Bunnell ~ Athletic Director  
Some members shared concern over the amount being requested. The Committee would like a breakdown of all costs and revenues that would be generated from the fees. Provide the amount anticipated to be collected and where that money would go, and a delineation of the expenses that would be absorbed through an increase. The committee recommended looking at doing incremental increases over two years. The Athletic Department is very fortunate for the boosters. The boosters provide funding to help supplement our programs.

## **REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Student Representative Report ~ No Report

2. Superintendent's Year End Report ~ The Superintendent would like to recognize our students who performed in our groundbreaking ceremony. Vicki Domings, an art teacher at the high school, has created a Building Project Artist Initiative. Four students from the class of 2018 started creating artwork and will continue to create artwork through their eyes over the next two years of phasing of the new high school as it is being constructed. All the artwork will be displayed at the grand opening of our new high school. Jack McCarthy, Executive Director of the MSBA, commented on how wonderful this idea was and is bringing the idea back to the MSBA for other school building projects to follow.

3. Building Committee Report – Update ~ Rob Templeton shared with the committee that the building committee approved CTA as the construction bidder, \$64,995,000 vs. our contract budget of \$68,829,726. That amount includes the building plus all of the alternates. They have the authorization to proceed on June 22, 2015. They will start physical work after the fourth of July. Our next NMRSD Building Committee meeting is scheduled for July 13, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

4. Public Communications – None was presented

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

### 1. Warrant Subcommittee

- Available for Committee review are accounts payable warrants 15-0521 and 15-0528, and payroll warrant 05/21/15. The warrants have been reviewed and signed by the warrant subcommittee.

### 2. Policy Subcommittee

The Policy Subcommittee recommends the Committee adopt the following policies (1<sup>st</sup> reading):

- Policy GCBB, Employment of Principals

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore and seconded by Anne Adams to approve policy GCBB, Employment of Principals for a 1<sup>st</sup> reading.

Vote: Unanimously passed

The Policy Subcommittee recommends the Committee adopt the following policies (2<sup>nd</sup> reading):

- Policy GCE, Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Messamore to approve policy GCE, Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies.

Policy GCE was brought back to the policy subcommittee in regards to the statement of “reasonable amount of time.” The Chair recommended an amendment to the policy to read “Openings in schools will be posted for a minimum of 10 days to permit current employees to submit applications before the position is filled.”

A motion was made by Brian Edmonds seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the amended policy GCE, Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies.

Vote: passed five yes; two no Crystal Messamore and Rob Templeton.

The Committee had a dialogue around the new approved language and would like this GCE policy to go back to the subcommittee for new language.

A motion was made Susan Robbins and seconded by Crystal Messamore to bring GCE, Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies back to the policy subcommittee.

Vote: Unanimously passed

- Policy AC, Nondiscrimination

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Anne Adams to adopt Policy AC, Nondiscrimination for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Vote: Unanimously passed

- Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Crystal Messamore to adopt Policy EEAG, Student Transportation in Private Vehicles for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Vote: Unanimously passed

- Policy GCG, Substitute Professional Staff Employment

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Anne Adams to adopt Policy GCG, Policy GCG, Substitute Professional Staff Employment for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Vote: Unanimously passed

- Policy GCJ, Professional Teacher Status

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Anne Adams to adopt Policy GCJ, Professional Teacher Status for 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Vote: Unanimously passed.

### 3. Finance Subcommittee ~ End of Year Budget Transfer

The Superintendent spoke on behalf of Ms. Haines. The district used more of the circuit breaker monies than planned to this year due to increases in Special Education costs. Oil prices are monitored and oil tanks are usually filled over the summer while the cost is lower.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Brian Edmonds that the school committee authorizes the Finance Subcommittee, for the balance of the 2015 fiscal year, to approve any budget transfers.

Vote: Unanimously passed

Rob Templeton requested that going forward that the committee will begin the process of meeting with the other town boards to discuss how to consolidate services, looking at our school facilities and ways to save money.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

1. The approval of the updated North Middlesex Regional High School Handbook for the 2015-2016 School Year.

The committee requested that the grade point average be added to the student report cards each semester; Mr. Taylor had the same suggestion and is looking at ways to be able to provide this to the parents. He will research this for next year.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Rob Templeton to approve the North Middlesex Regional High School Handbook as amended with the class rank paragraph to indicate that the students GPAs will be calculated at the end of the school year.

Vote: Unanimously passed

2. The Superintendent is requesting Committee authorization so that when she and Nancy Haines will be able to move on bids received over the summer and work towards project completion.

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Messamore that the North Middlesex Regional School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to award and sign a contract or contracts not to exceed \$45,000 for the Ashby Elementary School Water Tank Project.

Vote: Unanimously passed

3. The Superintendent is requesting Committee authorization, enabling the district to lock in competitive gas and selectricity rates. Representative Keith Sampson, who works with Competitive Energy, will contact the Superintendent and Nancy Haines regarding current pricing in gas and electricity. This motion will allow us to lock in competitive rates for the district.

A motion was made by Brian Edmonds, seconded by Jonna Clermont that the school committee authorizes the Superintendent to enter into Electric and Natural Gas Supplier agreements not to exceed a 3-year term.

Vote: Unanimously passed

4. The Superintendent shared with the Committee that our Attorney has vetted the contract. The Superintendent and Mr. Hills have met with FEMA and are following through with a claim. This is the only bid we received on this project.

A motion was made Jonna Clermont, seconded by Rob Templeton that the North Middlesex Regional School Committee authorizes the Superintendent to award and sign a contract or contracts not to exceed \$25,000.00 for the Squannacook Early Childhood Center water damage designer services to Russo Barr.

Vote: Unanimously passed

5. The Superintendent explained our postage equipment is outdated. Nancy Haines is requesting that we enter into a 48-month lease for a new mail system.

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Anne Adams that the Superintendent has authorization from the School Committee to enter into a 48-month lease beginning July 1, 2015, (for a new mailing system) at an annual cost of \$2,602.80.

Vote: Unanimously passed

6. Moved to beginning of the agenda.
7. Moved to beginning of the agenda.
8. Moved to beginning of the agenda.
9. The Superintendent is requesting that the School Committee vote to extend the food service contract for a second year: next year it is scheduled to go out to bid. We have a guarantee of \$22,000.00 profit in the contract. With our lower enrollment of students taking advantage of the food program, Whitson's has lowered the guarantee to \$18,000.00 for next year.

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont, seconded by Anne Adams to extend the Whitson's Food Service Contract for 2015/2016 school year.

Vote: 6 yes, one no Crystal Messamore, the vote passed

### **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Edmonds is requesting that the Study Hall presentations that the School Committee members were invited to during school hours, also be provided at a school committee meeting. Mr. Edmonds is requesting the students present at the July 13, 2015 School Committee meeting. This agenda item was requested to the Chair; the Chair declined the agenda item; the Chair does not feel it is a School Committee topic at this time. If there is any request to change the current study hall or dress code policy, it would have to come in front of the School Committee for a vote.

The chair would like to hear from the administration first if there are any recommendations for changing the policy.

A motion was made by Crystal Messamore and seconded by Brian Edmond to have the AP English students present their class research projects on study hall and dress code to the School Committee at the July 13, 2015, meeting.

Committee members feel this is a class project, if it goes to the administration for change, then the administration will bring the topics to the school committee. There is concern over the precedent which would be set

Vote: two yes, five no. The Vote fails.

The Committee asked that the Superintendent, through Principal Taylor, relay to the students the explanation behind the School Committee's no vote.

Anne Adams would like to add PARCC to the next agenda. Ms. Adams attended a PARCC meeting on April 28, 2015. Various members of the educational community were at the meeting sharing their opinions, pros and cons on the PARCC. The State is currently looking at the PARCC exam, and she would like to share with the committee what she learned at the meeting. There are three PARCC meetings being held on June 10, 2015, June 22, 2015, and July 7, 2015.

### **REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Chairperson recommends the School Committee enter into Executive Session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for contract negotiations with Superintendent of Schools. M.G.L. Chapter 39, Section 23B (2) Holding these discussions in open session may have a detrimental effect on the School Committee's bargaining position. The School Committee will return to open session.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont.

A roll call vote was taken: Jonna Clermont yes; Brian Edmonds yes; Randee Rusch yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Rob Templeton yes; Susan Robbins yes.

Vote: Unanimously passed

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

The School Committee reconvened from Executive Session at 9:26 p.m.

The Chair stated they were reaffirming a vote that was taken in Executive Session to approve Superintendent Landers three-year contract starting July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve Superintendent Landers three-year contract starting July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2018.

A roll call vote was taken: Anne Adams yes; Jonna Clermont yes; Brian Edmonds yes; Randee Rusch yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Rob Templeton yes; Susan Robbins yes.

Vote: Unanimously passed

A motion to adjourn was made by Crystal Messamore and seconded by Brian Edmonds.

A roll call vote was taken: Anne Adams yes; Jonna Clermont yes; Brian Edmonds yes; Randee Rusch yes; Crystal Messamore yes; Rob Templeton yes; Susan Robbins yes.

Vote: Unanimously passed

Meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary