

**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Ashby, Pepperell, and Townsend, Massachusetts  
MEETING MINUTES  
Monday, October 23, 2017**

**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 ~ Absent
	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
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
NMRSD Staff	
Parents/Community Members	

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:06 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, November 6, 2017, 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
  - October 2, 2017 School Committee Meeting
  - Approval of past Executive Session minutes
2. Acceptance of Donations
  - Donation of one clarinet to the Ashby Elementary School from Mrs. Olmsted
  - Donation to the Hawthorne Brook Middle School for an after-school robotics club through Go Fund Me fundraising
3. Approval of Out-of-State/Country Field Trips
  - North Middlesex Regional High School: Choral students & stagecraft students will travel to the Palace Theater, Manchester, NH, December 8, 2017
  - NMRHS Robotics Team to Biddeford High School, Biddeford, ME ~ October 28, 2017
  - NMRHS Robotics Team to Pembroke Academy, Pembroke, NH ~ December 2, 2017
  - NMRHS Robotics Team to Middletown High School, Middletown, CT ~ January 6, 2018
  - NMRHS Robotics Team to Scituate High School, N. Scituate, RI ~ February 10, 2018

A motion was made by William Hackler and seconded by Susan Robbins to approve the consent agenda.

Vote: Unanimously passed

## **PRESENTATION**

1. SEPAC Report ~ Co-Chairs Sally Greig & Connie Menice ~ The chair stated that the SEPAC presentation will be presented at a future school committee meeting.
2. NMRSD MCAS ~ Student Assessment Update  
Assistant Superintendent Nancy Milligan gave a presentation on the Next-Generation MCAS results released by the Department of Education and Secondary Education. The new MCAS assessment is being called the Next-Generation MCAS; it was designed based on the input of hundreds of teachers and administrators from all over Massachusetts.

The Next-Generation MCAS is an updated version of the current MCAS assessment. Mrs. Milligan told the committee that the legacy MCAS four scoring categories were Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning/Failing. On the Next-Generation MCAS, the four scoring categories have been changed to Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. This new scoring system gives the teacher more evidence of students' readiness for the next grade level.

Mrs. Milligan further explained this test would be taken by computer, and that NMRSD will assess all grades 3-8 online in spring 2018. 2017 is a baseline year, and scores should not be compared to previous years' scores. A copy of the presentation is available at <http://nmrsd.org/nmrsd>.

## **REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Superintendent's Report
  - a. NMRHS Open House for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students ~ November 2, 2017  
Superintendent Landers reminded the community of the eighth-grade open house being held on November 2, 2017, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. All seventh and eighth-grade families are encouraged to attend.
  - b. Accelerated Repair Project ~ Update  
Superintendent Landers informed the committee that the OPM and designer are working on the 60% schematic design. The OPM is requesting a meeting at SECC regarding the HVAC system. The superintendent will schedule a meeting with the accelerated repair subcommittee.
  - c. North Middlesex Education Foundation  
Superintendent Landers advised the first meeting of the Education Foundation is being held on Monday, October 30, 2017, in Room 120 at the high school. A vital component of the foundation is setting up educational grants for classrooms and teachers. The foundation is also a meaningful way to celebrate our staff. Wonderful things happen in our district, and the excellent work done by our staff, students, and alumni should be recognized.
  - d. Extended Learning Workgroup ~ Snow Days  
Superintendent Landers explained that Principal Janda has asked if she could research how other communities handle snow days. Mrs. Janda has completed extensive research on best practices for inclement weather make-up days and, to this end, she has been speaking with school districts throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire. She has talked to superintendents, administrators, and teachers, asking them what types of programs they have implemented to make up those missed days. Superintendent Landers shared that the administration will be creating an extended workgroup to discuss potential new processes to handle make-up snow days. Principal Janda will chair the workgroup. The district would like to encourage participation from parents, school committee members, and staff. The first meeting will be held within the next couple of weeks. Mrs. Landers thanked Mrs. Janda for all of her hard work reaching out to her colleagues throughout the state.

2. Building Committee Report – Update

Mr. Templeton thanked school committee members and the community in general for attending the high school open house that was held at on October 14, 2017. The students did an excellent job leading tours through the new building; over 600 community members attended the open house. At the building committee earlier this evening, there was a discussion regarding the asbestos issue at the old high school. The OPM, Designer, and CTA are working on identifying the amount of asbestos found within the interior and exterior of the building and calculating the cost associated with its removal. Mr. Templeton informed the committee that they continue to work to resolve the grading levels on the athletic fields. SMMA provided two proposals at the meeting, one included the design services to address the needs of the snack shack on the athletic field. This proposal will provide a design to add additional square footage to the new restroom building. The second design proposal was for a peer review of the solar system being proposed on the roof of the new high school. Mr. Templeton stated that the contractor has completed approximately two-thirds of the high school project.

The superintendent stated that the ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on Friday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, at the new high school. Jack McCarthy, Executive Director at the Massachusetts School Building Authority, was so impressed with our student speeches that he has requested permission to publish the speech of one of our students on the MSBA website. It was great to have participation from the school committee, building committee, a member of the original high school building committee, all the community members, the students, staff, and the administration. Superintendent Landers said that she was very proud of the district's students who contributed to the event.

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that staff members Mike Day of Hawthorne Brook Middle School, Mike Lavoie of the Gateway program, and Al Barbar are performing with the students in Godspell.

3. Public Communications – No one from the community approached the committee for comment.

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Warrant Subcommittee

Available for Committee review are accounts payable warrants 18-1005 and 18-1012, as well as the payroll warrant for October 12, 2017. The warrants have been reviewed and signed by the warrant subcommittee.

**NEW BUSINESS**

1. MASC Resolutions/Delegation

Discussion/Vote

a. Vote on MASC Resolutions

Resolution 1: Movement of the Chapter 70 Funding Enrollment Date to March 15

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to support Resolution 1.

Vote: Six yes, one abstention (William Hackler), motion passed.

Resolution 2: Reform of Circuit Breaker Funding

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to support Resolution 2.

Vote: Unanimously passed

### Resolution 3: Litigation for Fair School Finance

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Susan Robbins to support Resolution 3.

Mrs. Adams asked how this resolution differs from Resolution 6. It is not clear where the money is coming from or what the reserves are. Mrs. Adams stated that the fact that this information was not presented is cause for concern . She stated that she cannot make an informed decision on this resolution, and thus cannot be in favor of litigation as the first step.

Mrs. Robbins thinks that Resolution 3 is being brought forward through the judicial branch and Resolution 6 is handled by the legislative branch. We can request that our delegate ask these questions at the meeting.

Mrs. Robbins would like to know what the intended use of the reserve at MASC.

Mrs. Robbins made a motion, seconded by Jonna Clermont, to amend Resolution 3. The amendment is intended to remove bullet number four from Resolution 3.

Vote on the amendment: Unanimously passed

The school committee voted to support Resolution 3 as amended.

Vote: Unanimously passed.

### Resolution 4: Privatization of Public Education and the Oversight of Public Schools, Including Small and Regional Districts

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to support Resolution 4.

Mrs. Adams stated that she can agree with some of this resolution but cannot agree with all of its aspects. She is going to abstain from this resolution.

Mrs. Robbins asked what elements of the resolution Mrs. Adams does and does not agree with for her own understanding.

Mrs. Adams shared that, in the first paragraph, the resolution does not support a voucher program, which is an issue as she supports families having choice. She said that she could not support the first paragraph but does support the second paragraph.

Mrs. Clermont voiced her agreement with Mrs. Adams.

Mrs. Robbins stated that she thinks the committee supports the second part of the resolution. Mrs. Rusch recommended that the committee vote for the resolution in two motions.

A motion to amend Resolution 4 was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Jonna Clermont to support Resolution 4 after the removal of paragraph one, or if paragraph one is substantially altered within the resolution.

Vote on the amendment: Unanimously passed.

The vote to support Resolution 4 as amended.

Vote: Unanimously passed.

#### Resolution 5: Use of Federal Funds

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Anne Adams to support Resolution 5.

Mrs. Adams is concerned by the use of federal funds to cover the overhead of the DESE; she feels this money should be dispersed through schools and school districts. Mrs. Adams spoke with an administrator who was trying to get their certification and could not get in touch with DESE for weeks. Once the employee did reach someone at DESE, the employer stated that he or she only works part-time. Mrs. Adams is concerned that the money is not being properly allocated to DESE staff, which renders DESE unable to properly serve our teachers.

Mrs. Rusch voiced her support for the grant money.

Mrs. Adams stated that she has concerns over the administrative allowance within the grant, and feels that the resolution is not providing enough information on what the allowance covers.

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that any employees that encounter difficulty getting in touch with DESE should inform their superintendent or human resources director; they are able to contact DESE on their behalf.

The committee does not support resolution 5 as written.

Vote: Seven votes against ; the motion failed.

#### Resolution 6: Foundation Budget

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by Anne Adams to support Resolution 6.

Mrs. Robbins is concerned that our district could be negatively impacted because we have been held harmless for state aid for so long. Mrs. Robbins expressed we could lose funding due to our declining enrollment; this makes the matter a challenging one.

Mr. Templeton advised that he supports this type of resolution, but is unsure if the impact would make sense for our district.

Mrs. Rusch feels that the foundation's budget is not adequate and does not give enough money back to the towns. We need to vote or make other recommendations so that it can be fixed. Is this a reason to not vote on this resolution? The foundation review committee stated that we need to put more money into the foundation.

Vote: three yes ; three no, Anne Adams abstained. The motion failed. (tied vote)

Mrs. Haines stated that the Foundation Budget Review Commission has made recommendations to addressing the minimum local cost of education. The recommendations include increases to the cost of special education and employee benefits. It is unclear how the “hold harmless” provision may be addressed if the Foundation Budget Review Commission’s recommendations are implemented.

#### Resolution 7: Affordable Care Act & Medicaid

A motion was made by William Hackler and seconded by Anne Adams to support Resolution 7.

Mrs. Robbins stated that this resolution does not seem to pertain to regional school districts; the second half of the resolution is spent discussing the Affordable Care Act.

Mrs. Adams stated that the way this is presented is problematic; after the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, it had over 70 administrative changes at the Executive level and the Supreme Court. When they are speaking of preserving the Affordable Care Act, Mrs. Adams questioned exactly which content they are referencing. Even members that passed the Affordable Care Act have since admitted it needs fixing. The Affordable Care Act was intended to be a means to get to universal or single payer health care. For these reasons, Mrs. Adams cannot support Resolution 7.

Susan Robbin recommends amending Resolution 7 only to include the second half of the resolution.

Vote on the amendment: Unanimously passed.

Vote to support Resolution 7 as amended.

Vote: Six yes, one no, motion passed.

## 2. Superintendent’s Evaluation and Compilation Report

The chair provided the committee with the compilation report for the 2017 superintendent evaluation. It is an average of committee members’ ratings and comments.

Susan Robbins made a motion to support the 2017 superintendent’s evaluation. The motion was seconded by Anne Adams.

The chair provided an overview of the superintendent’s evaluation.

There are three categories regarding the district’s progress towards achieving specific goals:

Professional Practice Goal

Student Learning Goal

District Improvement Goal

The superintendent met all three Goals.

Performance on Standards  
 Instructional Leadership ~ Proficient  
 Management and Operations ~ Exemplary  
 Family and Community Engagement ~ Exemplary  
 Professional Culture ~ Exemplary

Overall Summative Performance ~ Exemplary  
 Rating on Student Learning ~ High

The chair added that this review obviously shows that the committee is very pleased with the performance of the superintendent, thank for a wonderful job.

Vote: Unanimously passed

3. Superintendent’s Letter

The Chair read a letter provided by the superintendent of schools. Superintendent Landers has let the school committee know that she will not be asking the committee to consider her for reappointment when her contract expires on June 30, 2017.

Mr. Templeton thanked the superintendent for all of her hard work, and he appreciates all she has achieved for the school district.

Superintendent Landers thanked Nancy Milligan, Nancy Haines, and the administrators that came out this evening to support her; she expressed that it means a great deal to her.

4. The superintendent is recommending an FY18-1 Budget transfer for FY18 for a total of \$50,000.00.

Date: 10/23/17	Description	Transfer Number	FY18-1
Appropriation Category		Transfer To	Transfer From
Administration	IT Network Administrator position	\$50,000.00	
Instructional Support	CIT Hardware NMS		\$10,941.00
Pupil Services			
Operations & Maintenance	N&T - Internet Services		\$30,000.00
Insurance, Retirement Programs	Employee exit costs (less retirees)		\$9,059.00
Debt			
Payments to Out of District Placements Including Special			

Transportation			
		\$50,000.00	\$50,00.00

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by William Hackler to approve the FY18-1 Budget transfer in the amount of \$50,000.00.

Roll Call Vote: Anne Adams yes; Robert Templeton yes; William Hackler yes; Jonna Clermont yes; Susan Robbins yes; Lisa Martin yes; Randee Rusch yes  
 Vote: Unanimously passed

The chair requested volunteers from the school committee to research superintendent search options for consideration to bring to the attention of the full committee at the November 6th school committee meeting. Susan Robbins volunteered to take on these duties.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Susan Robbins motion to convene in executive session pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws chapter 30A, section 21(a)

(2) to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

(3) to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the North Middlesex Regional School District Educational Support Personnel Unit, Nurses, Teachers Unit, and the Secretarial Unit.

(chair) The committee will now be meeting in executive session pursuant to MGL chapter 30A, section 21(a)

(2) to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

(3) to discuss strategy with respect to and in preparation for collective bargaining with the North Middlesex Regional School District Educational Support Personnel Unit, Nurses, Teachers Unit, and the Secretarial Unit because an open discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee.

The Committee may/may not reconvene in open session.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary