

**NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Ashby, Pepperell, and Townsend, Massachusetts
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 6, 2017**

PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT

Joan Landers	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Milligan	Assistant Superintendent
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
NMRSD Staff	
Parents and Community Members	

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 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, December 4, 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 23, 2017, School Committee Meeting
 - Approval of Past Executive Session Minutes
2. Acceptance of Donations
 - Donation in the amount of \$385.83 to Ashby Elementary School through DonorsChoose.org
 - Donation in the amount of \$2,500.00 to Nissitissit Middle School from the 3M Foundation
 - Donation in the amount of \$300.00 to Nissitissit Middle School from the Girls Who Code program
3. Approval of Out-of-State/Country Field Trips
 - North Middlesex Regional High School: Girls Varsity Basketball team will travel to Bristol Eastern High School in Bristol, CT, from December 1-3, 2017, to participate in a jamboree
 - Nissitissit Middle School: Grades 6-8 band & chorus students will travel to Manchester, NH on June 8, 2018, to perform at a baseball game

A motion was made by William Hackler and seconded by Anne Adams to approve the consent agenda.

Vote: Unanimously passed

PRESENTATION

1. Gateway Program Fundraiser ~ Dan Dickhaut

Mr. Lavoie informed the committee that the Gateway program is celebrating its fifth year. The Gateway program focuses on functional academics, vocational development, and community engagement. Dan Dickhaut asked if the school committee would allow the Gateway program to host their annual fundraiser. Mr. Lavoie stated that he will provide more details to the committee once the hall is reserved.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by William Hackler to approve the Gateway program's spring 2018 fundraiser to be held at the Pepperell VFW.

Vote: Unanimously passed

2. Footsteps2Brilliance ~ Maribeth Janssens, Director of Community Impact, United Way of North Central

Superintendent Landers introduced Ms. Janssens stating that they had a meeting regarding a program offered by United Way as part of the Early Literacy Innovation Zone project. The superintendent was interested in this literacy program as it is designed to reach students who have yet to enter school. United Way is proposing to fund 50% of the program's annual cost for the first five years and there is the potential of an anonymous donor contributing the remaining cost of the program on behalf of the school district.

Ms. Janssens explained that Footsteps2Brilliance is a pre-K through 3rd grade literacy program that uses mobile technology to access online reading apps from any device. She currently has eight other districts in the area using the program. The school district would serve as the administrator on record, and a community liaison would also be on hand to facilitate community outreach. Ms. Janssens is looking for a vote from the school committee at the meeting on December 4, 2017, as the deadline to sign up for the 2017-2018 program is December 15th. Mrs. Janssens explained that if the anonymous donor is unable to donate for any reason within the five-year contract, there is a non-appropriation clause that will allow the district to void the five-year contract.

Superintendent Landers recapped the next steps for the school committee. The matter will be put to a vote at the December 4th school committee meeting and she will review the contract and the MOU that Ms. Janssens will be providing for the district with our legal counsel.

The chair asked if the committee had any concerns regarding the program, or whether the superintendent could move forward to start to review of the paperwork and financials.

The committee members agreed to start the review process at this time.

REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Student Representative Report -

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that the New Orleans Service Learning Group at the high school is hosting a spaghetti supper and silent auction on Wednesday, November 15th, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. in order to raise money for their trip. She congratulated all athletes who competed this fall. The superintendent stated that students and staff continue to positively represent the district through their hard work, determination, and leadership.

2. Superintendent's Report

a. Ashby Well Update

Mr. Hills provided an update on the Ashby well progress; he said that the district received its first notification of the bacteria concern in June of 2017. In July, R.A. Hammond repaired a

hole in the broken pipe, which was covered under the existing warranty. At that time, the valves were replaced, and we had the tank washed and cleaned out. Skillings & Sons, Inc. replaced another set of pipes and valves. The August testing results from Small Waters came back clean. In September, the DEP mandated that we install a chlorination port into the system at a cost of approximately \$20,000.00. Mr. Hills explained that the valves between the well and the tank now need to be replaced; we are getting bids on the contract to replace these valves, which will hopefully result in the discontinuation of the chlorination treatments. The DEP is monitoring the monthly tests provided by Small Waters, and the water has not at any time been found to be unsafe to drink.

Mrs. Adams asked what the overall cost has been for these procedures.

Mr. Hills stated that the total cost of the work to date and expected future projects may cost up to \$40,000.00.

Superintendent Landers thanked Mr. Hills and asked that he extend her thanks to Mr. Dan Johnson, the lead custodian, who has been in constant contact with central office administration regarding this matter.

b. Accelerated Repair Project ~ Update

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that a meeting is being held for the Accelerated Repair Project subcommittee tomorrow at the Squannacook building. She provided the following update:

Varnum and Hawthorne Window/Door Package: 60% CD was submitted to the MSBA and the Commissioning Agent on 10/31/17 per schedule. 100% CD is underway with bidding anticipated in January 2018 per the schedule.

Varnum and Hawthorne HVAC/ADA Package: 60% CD documents are anticipated to be complete after Thanksgiving per the schedule.

Varnum Roof Package: 60% CD documents are anticipated to be complete after Thanksgiving per the schedule.

Squannacook Full Package: The 60% CD estimate is higher than the SD estimate due to some scope changes. The Project Team met with District and are reviewing several options including the use of ADD alternates that would allow the flexibility in evaluating the bids. The 60% CD scheduled for submission to the MSBA on 10/24/17 will be delayed by about one month so that the project elements can be further evaluated. However, the 60% roof design was submitted to the Commissioning Agent last week. The Design team anticipates the bid documents maybe delayed by about one to two weeks (from 12/27/17 to 01/03/18 or 01/10/18.)

c. North Middlesex Education Foundation

Superintendent Landers will be hosting a meeting the week of November 13, 2017.

d. NEASC Special Progress Report Submittal

Agenda item was moved to the December school committee meeting.

3. Superintendent Search – Update

a. Review Request for Proposal (RFP) for Executive Search Consultant

Mrs. Haines provided information on the request for proposal detailing what services the district would like to include in the RFP for the search consultant. Mrs. Rusch reminded the committee that during the last search NESDEC arranged focus groups which included the school committee, administration, students, parents, and community members; they compiled all the relevant information. NESDEC then presented that information to the school committee, organized a timeline, and created a screening committee made up of the school committee members, parents, and administrators. The consulting firm vetted all resumes that had been received, narrowed down the applications before interviewing, and then narrowed down the list of finalists. Mrs. Rusch believes that the school committee already has a solid understanding of the compensation and benefits involved, and do not need to include those services at this time.

Mrs. Robbins suggested that the committee start thinking of how exactly it would like to advertise for the job posting. She asked if the district could contact potential vendors who might have interest in the Request for Proposal (RFP).

Mrs. Haines stated that the Request for Proposal would be advertised in COMMBUYS and can be notified of the availability of the RFP.

Mrs. Rusch offered to work with Mrs. Haines to finalize the advertisement before it is posted.

4. Building Committee Report – Update

Superintendent Landers stated that the general contractor is working with the subcontractors on the outstanding punch list items. She explained that several subcontractors are working second shift to minimize disruption to the school day.

5. Public Communications – No one approached the committee for comment.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Warrant Subcommittee

Available for committee review are accounts payable warrants 18-1019 and 18-1026, and the payroll warrant for October 26, 2017. The warrants have been reviewed and signed by the warrant subcommittee.

2. NMRSD Regional Agreement Subcommittee

Lisa Martin and Susan Robbins stated that the subcommittee is following the outline provided by Christine Lynch of the Department of Education and have completed the first two sections of the framework.

3. Finance Subcommittee

Superintendent Landers informed the committee that the finance subcommittee is meeting tomorrow at 7:30 a.m.

4. Photovoltaic Subcommittee

Mrs. Rusch let the committee know that the Solect Energy contracts for both the high school and Ashby Elementary School have been signed. Solect has already sent in the application for interconnect connectivity. Superintendent Landers stated that the original signed documents were received in the district office today.

OLD BUSINESS

1. MASC/MASS Conference Report/Resolutions Discussion

a. Vote on MASC Resolutions

Resolution 1: Mrs. Martin shared that the discussion on this resolution lasted approximately 45 minutes. The delegation agreed to move the Chapter 70 funding enrollment date to January 31.

Resolutions 2-7: Mrs. Martin stated that all remaining resolutions passed.

Mrs. Rusch asked if any amendments were proposed while the resolutions were discussed.

Mrs. Martin stated that resolution 7 had an amendment proposed which would strike the first sentence of the resolution. The vote on the amendment failed, and the original resolution passed.

Mrs. Martin stated there were a number of sessions pertaining to the social and emotional needs of school districts. Many school districts are dealing with instances of substance abuse and suicide.

Mrs. Martin attended a session on free and reduced lunch and learned that school districts with over 60% of free and reduced lunch are also able to provide breakfast for all students.

At the division meeting, a discussion was held regarding Blue Hills Vocational School District, which was hit with a cyberattack. The school district went without internet for six weeks and incurred a cost of over \$100,000.00 to resolve the issues brought on by this attack. In order to help other school districts prepare for similar attacks, the vocational school will be hosting a workshop to share what they learned from this ordeal in January 2018, at Assabet Vocational School.

On the topic of social-emotional learning and building a workforce for tomorrow, Mrs. Adams stated that with the focus on building the workforce, that she hoped it would not diminish the value of music and arts in students' education.

Mrs. Adams attended a session discussing the millionaire's tax led by school board members who are skeptical about whether money raised through the millionaires tax, will end up going to education. Many feel that proceeds from the Massachusetts lottery were supposed to go to schools, yet have not.

Mrs. Adams attended a session on animal therapy and she spoke with Superintendent Andre Ravenelle from Fitchburg Public Schools about an animal therapy program that is currently running in Fitchburg. Sally Currin, a Fitchburg school committee member, researched the best way to bring such a program to their district. They chose to collaborate with an organization that brings therapeutic pets to hospitals and schools.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Superintendent District Goals Update

Superintendent Landers reviewed the goals based on our district's strategic plan.

A motion was made by Susan Robbins and seconded by William Hackler to accept the Superintendent 2017/2018 SMART goals as read.

Vote: Unanimously passed

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Susan Robbins motioned 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.

The motion was seconded by Anne Adams.

Roll Call Vote: Anne Adams yes; William Hackler yes; Lisa Martin yes; Susan Robbins yes; Randee Rusch yes.

Vote: Unanimously passed

(School Committee 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 will not reconvene in open session.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:24 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanna Bilotta-Simeone, Recording Secretary