

NORTH MIDDLESEX REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
Ashby - Pepperell - Townsend, Massachusetts

**MINUTES**

Monday, November 10, 2014

**PRESENT**

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

**Absent**                      Randee Rusch                      Member, At Large

**ALSO PRESENT**

Joan Landers	Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Parent/Community Members	
Press	

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:16 PM.
2. The Chairperson informed the Committee and audience members of the recording of the meeting.
3. The next regular meeting of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee will be held on Monday, November 24, 2014 at North Middlesex Regional High School at 7:00 PM.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. Approval of Minutes
  - October 27, 2014 Minutes
  - October 6, 2014 Minutes

Brian Edmonds requested that the Chair of the School Committee pull the minutes of the October 6, 2014 school committee work session from the consent agenda because he was not present at the meeting.

Susan Robbins asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 27, 2014 school committee meeting and for approval of Out-of- State Field Trips: NMRHS Choir to the Festival at Carnegie Hall, National Youth Choir Gold Showcase, New York, NY- March 20-22, 2015 and the NM Gateway, Achieve, STEPS annual shopping trip to Pheasant Lane Mall, Nashua, NH- December 18, 2014.

A motion was made by Brian Edmonds and seconded by Jonna Clermont to approve the October 27, 2014 minutes and Out-State-Field trips. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Approval of October 6, 2014 Minutes:

Susan asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the October 6, 2014 school committee work session. A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Epstein to approve the minutes. The vote passed 6 (yes) and (2) abstentions.

## REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Student Representative Report  
Susan Robbins introduced and welcomed student representative, Amber Edmonds.
2. Superintendent's Report  
The Superintendent requested that Chair Susan Robbins take agenda items out of order so Gateway student, Matt Richards, could present information about a fundraiser to the school committee.

Public Communications was moved up at this point in the agenda.

Matthew Richards informed the school committee that he was at the meeting to discuss a Gateway Program fundraiser. He informed the school committee that the program has tried to come up with ideas on how to raise funds. One idea was to hold a fundraiser at the VFW (band, raffles, and gift baskets). Student, Matthew Richards, reported that VFW has donated a hall for use by the Gateway Program.

Jonna Clermont commended Matthew Richards for his efforts and for all that he had already accomplished by getting the VFW to donate their hall for the fundraiser.

Susan Robbins stated that it was great that the students from the Gateway Program have taken the initiative to get the programs organized and to raise funds. She asked Matthew to remind the committee when the date of the fundraiser gets closer.

Susan Robbins asked the audience if there was a request for further Public Communications.

- a. October 1 Enrollment Class Size Report: Superintendent Landers reported on class sizes in the district. Jonna Clermont expressed concern about the class sizes at the high school level. Superintendent Landers informed the school committee that the high school will be facilitating the course selection earlier this year in hopes of alleviating this issue.
3. Building Committee Report: Update by Robert Templeton  
Robert Templeton informed the school committee that the next meeting of the NM Building Committee is being held on Monday, November 17, 2014 at 5:00 PM. He reported that sometime in January there will be a Joint Meeting of the FINCOM, Board of Selectmen and the North Middlesex Regional School Committee. He presented a slide show presentation to the school committee.

(The NEASC Process Update was moved to the Presentation Section).

## PRESENTATIONS

### 1. SEPAC ANNUAL PRESENTATION

Connie Menice, president of SEPAC, informed the committee that the main role of SEPAC is an advisory capacity. SEPAC does not offer extracurricular activities for special need students or facilitate support groups for parents. The SEPAC meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 PM at North Middlesex High School in room 1. On November 18, 2014, the SEPAC meeting agenda will be the Annual Basic Rights Training through The Federation of Children with Special Needs.

Mrs. Menice reported that at their last meeting parents expressed concerns in two categories. Parents want to see continued professional development for all staff on all disabilities to ensure that educators understand their students' needs. The second area of concern is on bullying prevention and the need to educate students about their peers with disabilities.

Mrs. Menice also expressed concern about the limited numbers of BCBA hours and the workload of the Director of Special Education. She would also like to see increased communication between parents and teachers, so they are informed about their child's education and special events in their lives.

Superintendent Landers thanked the SEPAC Board for their hard work.

Crystal Epstein commended Mrs. Menice for all that she does as both a parent and a teacher.

## **2. NMRSD AUDIT**

Dennis Keohane from Powers and Sullivan presented the 2013-2014 audit to the school committee. He commended the business office staff for their hard work and efficiency throughout the audit process.

The auditors reviewed balance sheets, journal entries, and financial documents. There were no issues reported. Mr. Keohane reported that the auditors reviewed the special education grants. Annual reports were filed late. There were no issues with the finances. There were no material weaknesses or deficiencies found in the audit.

Comments included the adoption of an informational technology disaster plan, student activities audit will be completed in the spring of 2018, and the fraud risk assessment needs to be completed.

Mr. Keohane informed the school committee about GASB 67 and 68 to give a heads up to GASB as it relates to OPEB. He commended the financial team for a great job.

Susan Robbins thanked Nancy Haines and commended her for a good audit report.

Superintendent Landers thanked Nancy and recognized her accomplishment in obtaining ASBO National Certification.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

Policy Subcommittee: Susan Robbins informed the school committee that the numbering in Policy JJF, Student Activity is off, but the language of the policy is correct. She reviewed the adoption of policy procedures.

a. Policy BEC, Executive Session

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Anne Adams to adopt Policy BEC. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Policy EBC, Emergency Plans

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Brian Edmonds to adopt Policy EBC. The motion passed unanimously.

c. Policy GBEC, Drug-Free Workplace

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Jonna Clermont to adopt Policy GBEC. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Policy JFBB School Choice

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Jonna Clermont.

Anne Adams made a recommendation that the policy be brought back to the policy subcommittee for further review. She would like the committee to address # 3 of the policy that states, "When slots are available, preference will be given to siblings of current school choice students." Anne Adams asked what happens if there are three sibling requests and only two slots available, how we would handle acceptance of students. Would the district conduct a lottery or would acceptance be based on when the current sibling became a member of the district? Anne Adams suggested that the policy subcommittee confer with other districts on how they handle these situations.

Jonna Clermont stated that the language needs to be clear so when parents are applying for school choice slots there is no confusion.

Susan Robbins provided clarification that if Anne Adams recommends that Policy JFBB be brought back to the policy subcommittee that she would need to make a motion to commit the main motion be brought back to the policy subcommittee for further research.

Anne Adams expressed concerns about the language in bulleted 6 pertaining to acceptance of students and the discrimination clause. She suggested that the committee use the following language, "The School Committee affirms its position that it shall not discriminate on the admission of any child." She wants time to research all the language in our policies because we should not have to keep amended policies based on classifications of students. She wants the school committee to come up with strong language around this issue. Anne Adams stated that North Middlesex should take the lead and develop a model policy because classification of students in itself could be discriminatory.

Susan Robbins explained the procedure to commit the motion back to the policy subcommittee. A motion to commit the main motion be brought back to the policy subcommittee for further research was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Brian Edmonds. The motion passed 6 (yes) and 1 (no) and 1(abstention).

e. Policy JJF, Student Activity

Susan Robbins reported that the formatting of the policy needs to be corrected, but the language in the policy would remain the same.

A motion was made by Anne Adams and seconded by Jonna Clermont to adopt Policy JJF. The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

f. Policy KHB Advertising

A motion was made by Brian Edmonds and seconded by Jonna Clermont to adopt Policy KHB.

Anne Adams stated that there needs to be a correction to the Order of Preference section of the policy. Number 1 should read, "Local companies (Ashby, Pepperell, and Townsend) awarded on a first come, first served basis."

The motion passed unanimously.

4. Finance Subcommittee – Update

Jonna Clermont reported there was no report for the school committee. Superintendent Landers spoke of impending 9C cuts due to decreases in tax revenue.

**PRESENTATIONS:**

**NEASC**

Superintendent Landers reported on the Phase I changes being made by the NEASC Commission during the period from July-December 31, 2014.

**District and School Accountability and Review Process**

Superintendent Landers reported on the Department of Elementary And Secondary review process that North Middlesex will be going through in December and January. She stated that this is another review process that will provide information to the administration and school committee to plan for the future of the school district.

**OLD BUSINESS**

Susan Robbins updated the school committee on the MASC/ MASS Conferences reporting on the MASC resolutions votes and workshops.

**FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

1. Food Service Audit
2. Maintenance Facility Workgroup

**REQUEST FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Susan Robbins read the motion; Tthe Superintendent recommends the school committee enter into Executive Session to discuss strategy relative to collective bargaining with the NMRSD Teachers’ Association (Unit A).”

The school committee will return to open session.

A motion was made by Jonna Clermont and seconded by Crystal Epstein to enter into Executive Session. Roll Call: Jonna Clermont (yes), Crystal Epstein (yes), Robert Templeton (yes), Anne Adams (yes), Mike Morgan (yes), William Hackler (yes), Brian Edmonds (yes), and Susan Robbins (yes).

Return to Open Session:

The purpose stated as the ratification of the Memorandum of Understanding with the NMRSD Teachers’ Association relative to stipend positions.

Robert Templeton made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the NMRSD Teachers’ Association relative to stipend positions for the 2014-2015 school year.

Motion was made and moved by Robert Templeton and seconded by Jonna Clermont

Roll Call: Jonna Clermont (yes), Crystal Epstein (yes), Robert Templeton (yes), Anne Adams (yes), Mike Morgan (yes), William Hackler (yes), Brian Edmonds (yes), and Susan Robbins (yes).

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion to adjourn was made by Brian Edmonds and seconded by William Hackler.  
The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Joan Landers  
Superintendent of Schools