



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

MEETING MINUTES – January 9, 2023

Virtual via Zoom

PRESENT

Chairperson	Craig Hansen	Member, Pepperell
Vice-Chairperson	Michael Morgan	Member, At Large ~ Absent
	Randee Rusch	Member, At Large
	Thomas Casey	Member, Pepperell ~ Arrived at 7:25 p.m.
	Lisa Martin	Member, At Large
	David Carney	Member, Pepperell
	June McNeil	Member, Ashby
	Jessica Funaiole	Member, Townsend
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend

ALSO PRESENT

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Gary Burboa-Reese	Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Nancy Haines	Business Manager
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary
*See attached	

1. Craig Hansen opened the meeting at 7:01 p.m. and informed the Committee and audience members that the meeting would be recorded.

Roll Call:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	-	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

2. Mr. Hansen informed the Committee and attendees that the North Middlesex Regional School Committee's next meeting would be at 7:00 pm on Monday, January 23, 2023.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Following review, Lisa Martin moved, and June McNeil seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

OUR MISSION: North Middlesex Regional School District is dedicated to providing a comprehensive educational experience focused on students becoming contributing members of society.

Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	-	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	-		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 6/0/0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

- Robin Eibye confirmed Melissa Boylan, Ashby parent requested to speak during Public Comment.
- Ms. Boylan thanked the Committee and Administration for their support in keeping Ashby Elementary School open.

REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Chairperson's Report – C. Hansen
 - Craig Hansen welcomed attendees to 2023 and wished everyone a happy new year.
2. Superintendent's Report – B. Morgan
 - None

OLD BUSINESS

1. None

NEW BUSINESS/GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. Dance Team Stipend Position – T. McMahon
 - Timothy McMahon provided a brief overview of the Dance Team stipend, and the Committee agreed additional information was needed.

Susan Robbins moved, and Randee Rusch seconded to continue the Dance Team stipend to the next meeting.

Roll Call Vote:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	-	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	Yes		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.

2. Kieve Wavus Education Camp – J. Webster & E. Worth

- Continued.

3. FC215: Genocide Education Grant – G. Burboa-Reese

Gary Burboa-Reese provided an update on the FC215: Genocide Education Grant, and a brief discussion ensued.

Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded to approve the FC215: Genocide Education Grant of \$40,000 from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Roll Call Vote:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	-	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	Yes		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.

4. FY23 Math Acceleration Academies Grant – G. Burboa-Reese

Gary Burboa-Reese provided an update on the FY23 Math Acceleration Academies Grant.

Following discussion, Lisa Martin moved, and Randee Rusch seconded to approve the FY23 Math Acceleration Academies Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Roll Call Vote:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	-	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	Yes		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 7/0/0.

5. Budget Message Update – B. Morgan

Superintendent Morgan presented his FY2024 Preliminary Budget Message and said NM continues to deal with the residual impact of COVID-19 and other challenges that impact the budget. These include, but are not limited to: move-ins, state mandates, an influx of pre-K students who are special education eligible, post-pandemic student needs, and district policy (class size limits) have resulted in the need for additional staffing (+7.0 FTE) in the FY2023 budget, which would likely carry into subsequent budget cycles. Mr. Morgan said these increases were currently being absorbed through temporary grants and revolving accounts, neither of which are sustainable.

Mr. Morgan said, like all districts, NM had experienced a significant increase in requests for special education eligibility testing, especially in Pre-K through grade 2 (students who struggled immensely during Covid-19), resulting in a strain on the testing capacity of evaluators (psychologists, SLP's, OT's, PT's and behavior specialists) and an increase in the number of special education students at these grade levels, especially students in Pre-K through grade 2. Students who qualify for special education services are placed on an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), which mandates the District to meet the student's needs.

Mr. Morgan went on to speak about the nationwide shortage of those going into teacher preparation programs and the increase in those leaving the profession, competition for recruiting qualified new candidates, and retaining current staff. In addition, he talked about Chapter 766 School Tuition, Special Education Tuition expenses, transportation costs, utility costs, potential AES and HBMS building projects, and student safety.

Mr. Morgan said the District continued hosting Budget Summits with the towns.

Mr. Morgan said the FY2024 budget development proposal represents a 6.34% increase over FY2023. The current FY2024 general fund budget estimate is \$65,002,893.

Mr. Morgan talked about how the 6.34% increase broke down into categories, the District's three overall principles, expenditures, staffing increases, consolidation, salaries, benefits, contractual increases for FY2024, professional development, utilities, Special Education tuitions, technology, and transportation.

A discussion ensued about District Revenue, Town Assessments, Federal and State Grants, and State funding.

Mr. Hansen encouraged community members to communicate their opinions to the Committee and to attend the Budget Hearing on February 6, 2023.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN

1. Accelerated Repair (L. Martin)
 - None
2. AES Building Committee (J. McNeil)

- June McNeil said Ashby would hold a special town meeting to vote on the feasibility study. Ms. McNeil said the committee was scheduled to meet again on January 11, 2023.

3. Building Committee (R. Templeton)

- None

4. Communications Committee (T. Casey)

- None

5. Finance (L. Martin)

1. FY23-1 Budget Transfer

Nancy Haines provided a brief update on the FY-23 Budget Transfer.

Following discussion, David Carney moved, and Thomas Casey seconded to approve the FY23-1 Budget Transfer of \$53,611.00 to be ADDED to Administration – Legal/Audits/Salary, \$706,227.00 to be ADDED to OOD Tuition and Assessments, \$306.00 to be transferred FROM Operations Maintenance Technology, \$100,689.50 to be transferred FROM Instructional Support, \$18,120.00 to be transferred FROM Pupil Services, \$640,523.00 to be transferred FROM Insurance, Retirement Programs, and \$200.00 FROM Debt Service for a total transfer of \$759,838.00.

Roll Call Vote:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	Yes		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 8/0/0.

2. Lisa Martin said on January 6, 2023, the subcommittee unanimously voted to recommend the district relocate AES students to address significant increases and unavoidable expenses.

June McNeil said she disagreed with the Finance Committee’s recommendation, and a discussion ensued.

Brad Morgan said two ongoing complaints were filed against the district regarding Ashby Elementary School. The first was filed with the Office of Civil Rights for an ADA compliance violation, and most recently, a complaint was filed with the Department of Public Health about poor air quality at the school.

The Committee discussed the challenges facing the District, Ashby Elementary School, and taxpayers.

2. Negotiation & Personnel (T. Casey)

- None

3. Policy (R. Rusch)

- None

ADJOURNMENT – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN

At 8:25 p.m., June McNeil moved, and Lisa Martin seconded to adjourn.

Roll Call Vote:			
Craig Hansen	Yes	Michael Morgan	-
June McNeil	Yes	Randee Rusch	Yes
Jessica Funaiole	Yes	Lisa Martin	Yes
Thomas Casey	Yes	Susan Robbins	Yes
David Carney	Yes		

Vote: The motion unanimously passed 8/0/0.

Documents Reviewed / Referred To:

- 2023 01-09 School Committee Agenda
- 2022 12-12 Minutes
- 2022 12-28 Minutes
- Accounts Payable Warrants
- Payroll Warrants
- FC215 Genocide Education Grant
- FY23 Math Acceleration Academies Grant
- FY24 Budget Summary 1-6-23
- FY24 Budget by Function 1-6-23
- FY2024 Preliminary Budget Message

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: January 30, 2023
