



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

MINUTES – March 20, 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
	Lisa Martin	Member, At Large
	David Carney	Member, Pepperell
	June McNeil	Member, Ashby
	Jessica Funaiole	Member, Townsend
	Susan Robbins	Member, Townsend ~ Absent

ALSO PRESENT

Brad Morgan	Superintendent of Schools
Gary Burboa-Reese	Assistant Superintendent of Schools ~ Absent
Nancy Haines	Business Manager ~ Absent
Robin Eibye	Recording Secretary
Anne Marie Tuccirone-Mahan	Director, Human Resources
Brad Brooks	Director of Student Services

1. Chairperson, Craig Hansen, opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. and announced 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	Yes	Susan Robbins	-
David Carney	Yes		

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, April 10, 2023.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Following review, David Carney moved, and Randee Rusch seconded to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

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

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

REPORTS/INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Chairperson's Report – C. Hansen
 - None
2. Superintendent's Report – B. Morgan
 - None

NEW BUSINESS/GENERAL DISCUSSION

1. 2023 High School Graduation Rain Dates – L. Martin
 Lisa Martin asked that the Committee consider holding the 2023 graduation ceremony on Friday, June 2, 2023, rain or shine. Ms. Martin asked the Committee to consider doing away with the scheduled rain dates and moving the ceremony indoors in the event of stormy/rainy weather. Ms. Martin said one date would benefit the graduates and their caregivers.

Randee Rusch asked if there was enough room to move the ceremony inside. A discussion ensued about the logistics of moving the ceremony inside the high school.

The Committee discussed options and agreed to seek parent input before deciding.

Lisa Martin motioned, and David Carney seconded to continue the discussion to the next meeting on Monday, April 10, 2023.

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Karen Clement of 101 Main Street, Townsend, said the district had been a valuable source for distributing news for Townsend’s recreation and non-profit organizations and asked that the district reconsider the decision to discontinue sharing community flyers.
 - Superintendent Morgan said the decision was not made lightly and came following legal counsel’s advice.
 - Mr. Morgan clarified the district made the decision last year after a significant issue with a flyer which could have resulted in severe legal repercussions.
 - Mr. Hansen thanked Ms. Clement and said he did not believe this was within the Committee’s purview, but understood her concerns and wondered if there was an alternative solution.
 - Mr. Hansen said the Policy Committee would review the matter.
 - Randee Rusch said she would review the district’s policies around solicitations.

NEW BUSINESS/GENERAL DISCUSSION - CONTINUED

2. 2023-2024 School Calendar – B. Morgan

Superintendent Morgan provided an overview of the two explored calendar options. The March Vacation option would have allowed a one-week vacation in March with two long weekends in February and two long weekends in April. Mr. Morgan said he shared the proposed calendars with the Teachers’ Association. Mr. Morgan said there were too many obstacles with the March Vacation option, so he moved forward with the traditional choice, similar to past years. Mr. Morgan said there was one exception: the March caregiver conferences would be one week later than in previous years to avoid potential snow days.

Ms. Rusch thanked Superintendent Morgan. Ms. Rusch commended the Superintendent for thinking outside the box and presenting two calendar options. Mr. Morgan thanked Ms. Rusch and said, in the end, the more traditional calendar made the most sense.

Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded the School Committee to approve the 2023-2024 School Calendar as presented.

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

3. Travel Abroad – D. Chappell

High school students to travel to England and Scotland during April vacation 2024.

Dawn Chappell and Paul Thompson provided an overview of the “Let’s go to England & Scotland” presentation (see attached). Ms. Chappell talked about the itinerary, what’s included in the trip, EF Tours, safety and support, pricing, and enrollment.

A discussion ensued about the trip being unaffiliated with NM, safety concerns, chaperones, liability, pricing, equity, and EF Tours.

Superintendent Morgan said he reached out to the district’s legal counsel, and anything that is run in any way, shape, or form through the school district, the school district would share some level of liability. Mr. Morgan said the district would have liabilities if district email accounts, social media, and buildings were used to promote the trip.

Mr. Hansen thanked Dr. Chappell and Mr. Thompson and said he thought it was a great opportunity for NM students and would love to see as many students as possible take advantage of it. Mr. Hansen said he was also concerned with the liability risks.

June McNeil asked Mr. Morgan to go back to legal counsel for his thoughts on liability if the district shared trip information that specifically stated the trip was not affiliated with the district.

Mr. Hansen confirmed the committee agreed the trip would not be a district-sponsored activity. Mr. Hansen said clarification on how the district promotes the trip was needed, along with language that must be included to ensure the district is covered from a liability standpoint.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN

1. Accelerated Repair – L. Martin
 - None
2. AES Building Committee – J. McNeil
 - Ms. McNeil said the committee RECENTLY met in person at AES with the Ashby Building Inspector and the acting Administrator to identify action items.
3. Building Committee – C. Hansen
 - None
4. Communications – T. Casey
 - None
1. Finance (L. Martin)
 - Ms. Martin said the committee met last week and voted in favor of the Superintendent presenting three budget reduction options to the full School Committee.
 - Superintendent Morgan presented three FY2024 budget reductions for consideration.

1. Option 1: 4.77% budget increase
 - Reduce 9 FTEs
 - Savings total \$912,664
 - Ashby's increase: 10.20%
 - Pepperell's increase: 11.42%
 - Townsend's increase: 6.47%
2. Option 2: 3.54% budget increase
 - Reduce 16 FTEs
 - Savings total \$1,106,458
 - Ashby's increase: 6.60%
 - Pepperell's increase: 8.03%
 - Townsend's increase: 2.95%
3. Option 3: 2.96% budget increase
 - Reduce 16 FTEs
 - Savings total \$960,573
 - Ashby's increase: 3.31%
 - Pepperell's increase: 4.93%
 - Townsend's increase: -0.27%

Mr. Morgan said he spoke to Massachusetts State Representative Margaret Scarsdale about the budget and lack of state funding. Mr. Morgan said he called the Governor's office seven or eight times and had not heard back.

The committee discussed Chapter 70 funding, ESSER funds, Excess and Deficiency, out-of-district placements, reductions, and the impact reductions would have on the district.

Lisa Martin said the towns could not afford the approved budget.

Ms. Martin said although the Finance Committee recommended presenting three options, the committee did not want to consider Option #3. Mr. Morgan said he did not recommend Option #3.

A discussion ensued about town budgets and overrides.

5. Negotiation & Personnel (T. Casey)

- None

6. Policy (R. Rusch)

1. Regional Agreement

- Rande Rusch talked about the Regional Agreement updates, specifically the configuration of the School Committee and weighted voting.

2. CB Regional School Superintendent & CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent

- Ms. Rusch updated the Committee on the proposed changes to CB Regional School Superintendent and CBI Evaluation of the Superintendent, and a brief discussion ensued.

Randee Rusch moved, and June McNeil seconded that the School Committee approve policy CB Regional School Superintendent and policy CBI Regional School Superintendent for first readings as amended.

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

3. JQ-E Fees, Fines, and Charges (Admission Fees)

Randee Rusch moved, and Thomas Casey seconded the School Committee approve policy JQ-E Fees, Fines, and Charges (Admission Fees) for adoption.

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

4. IJOA – Field Trips

Randee Rusch moved, and Jessica Funaiole seconded the School Committee approve policy IJOA Field Trips for adoption.

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	-
David Carney	Yes		

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION – VOTES MAY BE TAKEN

Thomas Casey moved, and Lisa Martin seconded the School Committee meet in executive session pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A, sec. 21(a) for the following purpose:

- Purpose (2): To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel (Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Superintendent of Schools).
- Purpose (7): To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements.
 - Executive Session Minutes dated November 21, 2022

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	-		

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

The Committee did not reconvene in an open session due to a lack of quorum.

Documents Reviewed / Referred To

- 2023 03-06 Agenda
- FY24 Budget by Function
- FY24 Budget Summary
- 2023 02-02 Minutes
- 2023 02-06 Minutes
- Accounts Payable Warrants
- Payroll Warrants
- Donations
- FY24 Debt Service Estimate
- DESE Regional Enrollment Contributions by Town
- FY24 Budget by Function 3-6-23 6.27%
- FY24 Budget Detail 3-6-23 6.27%

- FY24 Budget Summary 3-6-23 6.27%
- FY24 Revenue Projection 3-6-23 6.27%
- Preliminary Regional School Cherry Sheet Estimates
- Policy IJOA
- Final Fees & Ticket Prices
- Policy JQ

Respectfully submitted,
Robin Eibye, Recording Secretary

APPROVED: April 10, 2023
