

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950**

**Monday, March 18, 2024**

**Present:** Mayor Sean Reardon, Sarah Hall, Juliet Walker, Andrew Boger, Brian Callahan, Kathleen Shaw and Breanna Higgins

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Sean Reardon called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:31 PM. Roll call found all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance. At this point in the meeting, Sarah Hall took over.

**Public Comments**

John Gangemi, 27 Batts Road, Merrimac, MA  
Jen Hatch, 209 Low Street, Newburyport  
Chris Cunningham, 129 Low Street, Newburyport  
Robert Foster, 55 Jefferson Street, Newburyport

**Staff Recognitions**

Principal Nick Markos, Brenda Palmisano, and Eric Schildge were recognized for their work preparing and presenting a workshop entitled “*Amplifying Student Voice: A Workshop on Empowering Students through Effective Communication and Advocacy*” at a national conference sponsored by the NASSP to be held in Nashville, TN in July 2024.

Principals Tara Rossi and Jamie Sokolowski were recognized for their work preparing and presenting a workshop entitled “*Healing Classrooms, Nurturing Connections: Empowering Teachers for Trauma-Sensitive Success*” at a national conference sponsored by ASCD to be held in Washington, DC in March.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Warrants**

**Motion:**

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

**VOTED:** to approve, receive and forward to the City Auditor for payment the following Warrant:

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Warrant 8113  | \$662,949.12        |
| Warrant 8113A | \$ 61,228.30        |
| A-Warrant     | \$ <u>20,770.92</u> |
|               | \$744,948.34        |

**Motion Passed**

## **Minutes**

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

**VOTED:** to accept the minutes of the March 4, 2024 School Committee Special Business meeting as presented.

### **Motion Passed**

**Breanna Higgins abstain**

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Brian Callahan and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

**VOTED:** to accept the minutes of the March 4, 2024 School Committee Business meeting as presented.

### **Motion Passed**

**Breanna Higgins abstain**

## **Student Representative Report**

Lizzy Homer presented the student report which included the PTO's Clipper Readathon at the Bresnahan and Molin, Nock college trips and the high school theatre's show, *Legally Blonde*. (attached)

## **Newburyport Reps – Whittier School Committee Check-in**

Donna Holaday and Brett Murphy provided an update of recent activities:

- Two students were recognized as candidates for the U.S. Presidential Scholars.
- The 8-week exploratory started; one Newburyport student is participating.
- A \$23K donation was made to Whittier by Pat Leavitt in memory of her son.
- The online newsletter, *The Whittier Wire*, is being emailed to Newburyport SC members.
- The budget process was explained. A public hearing on the budget will be on April 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Brett reported several building concerns (i.e. roof leak, heating issue, broken water heater, fallen tree, circulator pump failure etc)

## **2023-2024 Data Review**

- Assistant Superintendent LisaMarie Ippolito presented 2023-2024 Data Review that included beginning of year & end of year DIBELS comparison data for grades K thru 3, as well as iReady Diagnostic Data for reading in grades 4 thru 8, and math for grades K thru 8.
- Data teams, data meetings, Google Analytics and classroom interventions were also discussed.

## **2024 Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Plan and Presentation**

- Assistant Superintendent LisaMarie Ippolito presented the district's three year SOA plan for the school committee's approval.
- The SOA goals, key components, 3-year target areas, types of family/caregiver engagements, and district supports were reviewed.

**Motion:**

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Breanna Higgins it was

**VOTED:** to approve the 2024-2027 SOA Plan as presented, for submission to the state.

**Motion Passed**

**2024-2025 School Choice**

- Superintendent Sean Gallagher recommended School Choice openings in the following grades:

| <b>Grade Level</b> | <b>Recommended Max Seats</b> |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| 2                  | 10                           |
| 4                  | 3                            |
| 5                  | 3                            |
| 6                  | 15                           |
| 7                  | 10                           |
| 8                  | 10                           |
| 9                  | 20                           |
| 10                 | 10                           |

**Motion:**

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Juliet Walker it was

**VOTED:** to approve 2024-2025 School Choice openings as presented (see table above), in accordance to Policy JFBB - School Choice.

**Motion Passed**

**Job Descriptions for Restructuring**

- Superintendent Sean Gallagher briefly reviewed the restructuring plan that was originally presented at the February 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Discussion included clarification of the Teacher Facilitator Leader position, estimated restructuring savings, and the job advertising/posting process.

**Motion:**

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Breanna Higgins it was

**VOTED:** to approve the proposed restructuring plan that includes the new and modified professional staff positions consistent with Policy GCA - Professional Staff Positions.

**Motion Passed**

**Appoint Newburyport Representative to the Whittier Regional School Committee**

- Vice Chair Sarah Hall reviewed the appointment process, stated 4 community members have expressed an interest in serving, and invited School Committee members to suggest nominations.
- Upon closing nominations, school committee members that made nominations were offered an opportunity to speak first, followed by an open discussion.
- Two roll call votes were taken. As the first roll call vote was not a two-thirds majority, a second roll call vote was necessary.

- Mary DeLai was appointed to be the Whittier School Committee Rep with 5 votes.

**NOMINATIONS:**      1<sup>st</sup>: Brian Callahan nominated Owen Smith  
                                  2<sup>nd</sup>: Breanna Higgins nominated Mary DeLai  
                                  3<sup>rd</sup>: Kathleen Shaw nominated Donna Holaday

**Roll Call Vote #1**

| <b>School Committee Member</b> | <b>Voted For</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Andrew Boger                   | Mary DeLai       |
| Brian Callahan                 | Owen Smith       |
| Breanna Higgins                | Mary DeLai       |
| Kathleen Shaw                  | Donna Holaday    |
| Juliet Walker                  | Donna Holaday    |
| Vice Chair Sarah Hall          | Donna Holaday    |
| Chair Mayor Sean Reardon       | Owen Smith       |

**RESULTS VOTE # 1**  
 Mary DeLai = 2 votes  
 Owen Smith = 2 votes  
 Donna Holaday = 3 votes

*\*\* 2/3's Vote required - additional roll call vote required \*\**

**Roll Call Vote # 2**

| <b>School Committee Member</b> | <b>Voted For</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Andrew Boger                   | Mary DeLai       |
| Brian Callahan                 | Owen Smith       |
| Breanna Higgins                | Mary DeLai       |
| Kathleen Shaw                  | Donna Holaday    |
| Juliet Walker                  | Mary DeLai       |
| Vice Chair Sarah Hall          | Mary DeLai       |
| Chair Mayor Sean Reardon       | Mary DeLai       |

**RESULTS VOTE # 2**  
 Mary DeLai = 5 votes  
 Owen Smith = 1 vote  
 Donna Holaday = 1 vote

**SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

**Finance Subcommittee**

- A joint meeting was held with FINCOM and the City Council Budget & Finance Committee on March 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The next meeting will be at 9:30AM on Thursday, March 21, 2024 at Central office.
- There are a few budget related policies to be reviewed.

**Policy Subcommittee**

- They started reviewing policies that were “on hold”. Policy sections “K” and “L” are ready to be reviewed at the next school committee meeting.

**Fundraising Advisory Committee** – no update

**CISL Subcommittee**

- A meeting was held on March 12<sup>th</sup>; the focus was on the SOA.

## **Superintendent's Report**

- **Budget Update:** The Superintendent stated the proposed FY25 budget has been revised since the last meeting. City appropriation is currently 5.8% (down from 7.05% and the school department overall budget is 3.69% (down from 4.57%). Work on the budget will continue and several areas are being reviewed for possible additional savings.
- **Transportation Bid Update:** Two proposals were received. The business office will share the information in the upcoming FINCOM meeting, and hopes to announce a company by the next School Committee meeting.

## **New Business**

- Mayor Reardon shared that the first meeting of the Whittier Task force went well, and was attended by all but Merrimac. The next meeting will be held in Amesbury on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Brian Callahan it was

**VOTED:** to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 9:37 PM.

### **Motion Passed**

## Student Report for School Committee

March 18, 2024

Submitted by: Lizzy Homer  
Location – Senior Center

### **Bresnahan News:**

**The Clipper Readathon at the Bresnahan has begun!** The goal of the Clipper Readathon is to support our district's literacy initiative and to raise funds for field trip buses, cultural enrichment activities, and library books. The Readathon is a school-wide activity and ALL students are expected to be registered and participate in reading. Collecting pledges and fundraising is an optional component that parents and families can participate in if they wish. The focus at school will solely be READING - but we are so grateful for the PTO and parent community for supporting this initiative.

### **Youth Art Exhibit featuring Bresnahan Students**

Bresnahan students are proudly participating in the Youth Art Exhibit! Thank you to the NEF for their continued support of the Newburyport Schools Youth Art Exhibit. The artwork will be on display at the Senior Center for the month of March. The closing reception is on April 4th from 4:00-6:30.

### **Clipper Courses**

Our third session will begin the week of April 1st and end the week of May 27th. Registration was sent out today to parents. Thank you to our teachers for creating and sustaining this vibrant after-school opportunity.

### **Molin News:**

PTO Sponsored Clipper Readathon has begun and with that we have fun events like Molin Medieval Library, character parades, and Newburyport Reads!

Molin School will be rocking our mismatched socks to celebrate World Down Syndrome Day this Thursday!

### **Nock News:**

**Nock College Trips** - We are thrilled to announce our ongoing commitment to our strategic plan and our dedication to the portrait of a graduate. We are excited to facilitate college visits for our students, forging connections with esteemed institutions. Our 6th-grade students will explore the University of New England, while 7th-grade students will embark on an enlightening journey to Curry College. Finally, our 8th-grade students will have the privilege of visiting Merrimack College, enriching their educational

experiences and broadening their horizons. We look forward to fostering these partnerships and exposing our students to possibilities after high school.

**March Madness Update-** As March Madness unfolds, the excitement mounts! As a reminder, the Clipper Cup Finale is just around the corner, only two weeks away. Our staff and student's active participation and enthusiasm play a vital role in driving our school spirit. With the competition nearing its climax, we eagerly anticipate discovering which advisories will clinch a coveted spot in the top 4! It's clear the students are relishing the challenge to make the final four and compete for the Clipper Cup.

### **NHS News:**

This weekend NHS student musicians Cedar Schumacher and Evan Lageuex will rehearse and perform with the Massachusetts All State Honors Jazz Band and Chorus. They will rehearse on Friday at the state music teachers conference in Worcester, and perform on Saturday at Boston's Symphony Hall. Everyone is so very proud of these students, from their parents to the NHS admin team, to Mr. Cohen and the entire NPS music teaching staff who have ever worked with them in their journey. Congratulations on this rare achievement!

Thanks to the generosity of the NEF our students and staff will have access to Solar glasses to view this rare astronomical event. In our area, the eclipse is scheduled for April 8th starting at approximately 2:15 and peaking at 3:30. Also NYS is hold an event for the eclipse as well.

Congratulations to **Priya Kaur and Michelle Seznec** who both received this year's High School Student Peace Prize award. Both students have made tremendous contributions to help the high school increase a sense of belonging and inclusivity across the building.

The Global Citizenship Certification Program is completing its first year and the following seniors are the trailblazers for this program and will be recognized at graduation for successful competition of all program's requirements.

**Shannon Brock, Sophia Franco, Zoe Kakuba, Bridgette Mellet, Brela Paveo, and Alex Sullivan.**

The Spittin' CWANS (pronounced "swans"), the NHS Slam Team, made it to the Finals at the Free Verse Youth Poetry Slam in Lowell this weekend, but met defeat in the final round.

Don't forget to check out Legally Blonde if you haven't already done so. Shows are this Thursday and Friday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 2:00 PM.