

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

NORTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES OF MEETING

Date of School Committee Meeting: Monday, October 20, 2008

Location: Norton Middle School Library

Attending: Committee Members: Chairman Thomas Golota, Vice Chairman Andrew Mackie, Mrs. Elizabeth McManus, Mr. Kevin O'Neil, and Mrs. Margaret Werner. Superintendent Patricia Ansay and Student Representative Emily Carmichael were also present.

Call to Order: Chairman Golota called the meeting to order at 6:30 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting:

Mrs. Werner made a motion, seconded by Mr. Mackie, to accept the minutes of the October 6, 2008 meeting. The vote was 5-0.

Opening of School Reports - Principal Christopher Baratta:

Chairman Golota turned the meeting over to Norton Middle School Principal Mr. Christopher Baratta for the opening of school reports. Mr. Baratta thanked everyone, especially Assistant Principal Mr. Michael O'Rourke, for helping him to make a very smooth transition into his new position. Mr. Baratta introduced several new staff members in attendance. There are 741 students currently enrolled, a 5.8 percent decrease from last June. Mr. Baratta is especially pleased with the daily attendance, which is at 97.45 percent.

Representatives from the Parent Advisory Board gave an overview of their accomplishments for the past school year, and outlined many of the activities planned for the 2008-2009 school year, such as fundraisers, Fall Book Fair, Grade 6 Social, and Grade 8 Dinner Dance. They also plan to sell the books on the summer reading list, for the convenience of parents and students. The board members expressed concern over reduced revenues from fundraisers, which are down approximately 50 percent.

Mr. Baratta and Mr. O'Rourke spoke about many activities that have already started, such as intramurals, clubs, and student council. A Bully Guard Program led by Personal Best Karate founder, Mr. Chris Rappold, is in its second year at the middle school. Incentives to reward positive behavior, such as "Caught Being Good" raffles, will help to provide a safe and healthy environment.

The middle school is preparing for a visit from the New England League of Middle Schools. Preparation covers all aspects of middle school life. A report will be issued approximately six weeks after the visit citing strengths and areas for improvement.

Mr. Baratta was asked about his personal reflections on the school year so far. He said he is extremely happy and complimented the staff, parents, and students.

The School Committee felt that the reward raffles for good behavior were a great idea. Mr. Golota thanked both Mr. Baratta and Mr. O'Rourke for their presentations.

Vote to Approve Tutoring Revolving Account:

This is to be a subaccount under the Athletics and Other Extra Curricular Activities Revolving Account for the purpose of providing fee-based homework/tutoring sessions at the Yelle School and Norton Middle School beyond the school day. On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. Werner, the vote was 5-0.

Vote to Approve Budget Transfer:

Dr. Ansay stated that a vote is required to transfer funds from the Norton High School Copy Machine Account for the purpose of purchasing a piece of equipment needed for a special education student. On a motion by Mr. Mackie, seconded by Mrs. McManus, the vote was 5-0.

BICO Collaborative Update:

Dr. Ansay provided information to the Committee on the progress of joining the Bi-County Collaborative. Previously, a letter was sent to the collaborative requesting to join. On October 8th the Board of Directors approved Norton's request, and the next step is approval by two-thirds of the member communities. Dr. Ansay stated that the advantage to joining BICO is to receive a wider range of services that would be more cost effective for the district.

Other:

The Committee discussed options for Grade 8 students visiting Norton High School in preparation of their choice of where to attend Grade 9. When the visit should take place and what should be presented to the students were discussed.

Mrs. McManus mentioned that Fox 25 coverage of the Norton High School football game was a great community activity for everyone.

Mr. Golota read a statement on the impact of Question 1.

Dr. Ansay mentioned that work has begun on the improvement of some of the science labs at the high school. Paint, electrical work, and new tables are some of the improvements

being done by school personnel and vendors. Some funds will be taken from the facility use rental fees and TPC fees. Much work still needs to be done.

Adjournment:

Mr. Mackie made a motion to adjourn and not return to regular session, seconded by Mrs. McManus. The vote was 5-0. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 P.M.

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, November 3, 2008, 6:30 P.M. at H. A. Yelle Elementary School.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D.
Secretary pro tem
