

NORTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Norton, Massachusetts

MEETING NOTES

TO: ALL STAFF MEMBERS
FROM: Patricia H. Ansay, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
DATE: April 26, 2007

Date of School Committee Meeting: April 9, 2007

Location:

Library, Norton Middle School

Attending:

Committee Members: Chairperson Donna Gradie, Vice Chairman Kevin O'Neil, Mr. Thomas Golota, Mr. Jonathan O'Reilly, Mrs. Margaret Werner and Student Representative Larissa Weiner.

Call to Order:

Chairperson Gradie called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting:

A motion was made by Mr. O'Reilly, seconded by Mrs. Werner, to approve the Regular Session Minutes of the prior meeting held on March 19, 2007. On a 5-0 vote, the committee unanimously voted to approve the Minutes.

Presentation of Gift to Mr. Jonathan O'Reilly:

Chairperson Gradie announced that Mr. O'Reilly would be attending his final meeting tonight as a member of the Norton School Committee, because he is not seeking re-election. She thanked Mr. O'Reilly for his nine years of service. Mr. O'Neil said it is truly commendable for Mr. O'Reilly to have served on the committee for so long. He pointed out that Mr. O'Reilly has no children of his own attending the Norton Public Schools. Mr. O'Neil said it is truly remarkable for Mr. O'Reilly to have served on the committee for so many years when he has no children of his own in the school system. Mr. O'Neil pointed out that Mr. O'Reilly has been tremendously diligent and helpful to the committee, and has contributed common sense. He also pointed out that Mr. O'Reilly was the deciding vote when the committee hired Dr. Patricia Ansay as Superintendent of Schools in 2004. He thanked Mr. O'Reilly for that, and pointed out that the school department has benefited from the hiring of Dr. Ansay.

Mrs. Werner mentioned that Mr. O'Reilly is very good at math, and this skill has been most helpful to the committee. She wished him the very best and invited him to stop by

and visit in the future. Mr. Golota commended Mr. O'Reilly for his memory of details from the past. He thanked him for all of his service to the town.

Dr. Ansay commended Mr. O'Reilly for his grace and style, and thanked him for all that he has done. Mr. O'Reilly wished the committee the best of luck in working to provide an outstanding education to the students of Norton.

DECA Students Presentations:

Mrs. Heather Albritton, Business Department Chairperson, was present at the meeting along with Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) students. DECA is a marketing education club at Norton High School. Three groups of students made short presentations regarding written projects which they recently prepared for the state competition. Several of these students will be attending the National competition as a result of achieving 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place finishes in the state competitions.

Dr. Ansay commended Mrs. Albritton and the DECA students for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments. Chairperson Gradie asked how the School Committee could further support their efforts. Mr. O'Neil expressed an interest in attending DECA events and asked if Mrs. Albritton would notify the committee when these events are scheduled to take place.

Update on Design Services For H.A. Yelle Masonry/Structural Repairs:

Dr. Ansay announced that the school department received bids from four vendors. They are: Eisenberg Haven Architects, Russo-Barr, D.M. Berg Consultants, and Baer Architecture Group. According to Dr. Ansay, the Design Selection Committee met on Thursday, April 5th to review the proposals and rank sheets, discuss criteria, and vote to interview the top two firms before recommending a firm to the School Committee. Dr. Ansay informed the committee that Russo-Barr clearly had the best presentation, and they will provide the committee with more information in a timely fashion.

Vote to Approve 2007-2008 School Calendar:

An updated calendar for the 2007-2008 school year was presented to the committee. Dr. Ansay urged the committee to accept this calendar outlining Early Release Days which will provide the school department with essential professional development time. She explained that one major change in the calendar is the decision to hold school for ½ day before Thanksgiving next year.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the school calendar for the 2007-2008 school year.

Vote to Approve the NPS Strategic Plan, 2006-2011:

Dr. Ansay announced that we are at the point where the School Committee should vote to approve the Strategic Plan for the next 5 years. She said the Strategic Plan is a quality document of great importance, and requested the committee to approve it. Mrs. Gradie pointed out that the Strategic Plan is a very commendable document. On a motion by Mr. Golota, seconded by Mr. O'Neil, the committee unanimously voted to approve the District Improvement Plan and the Strategic Plan.

Vote to Approve the Bus Transportation Bid:

Dr. Ansay presented a regular education transportation contract to the committee for approval. She explained that only one bid was received from H. & L. Bloom Bus Company. She explained that the contract allows for the addition or the deletion of the number of buses that we utilize at any time. The contract cost is based on unit prices for tiered buses and kindergarten buses. The cost for that service is \$720,045 for the next three years. She said the price would be decreased should we eliminate buses and/or tiers. Dr. Ansay explained that the unit price for athletic and field trips has experienced a cost of living increase. The contract requires the addition of swing arms, for safety purposes, on all buses and the opportunity to install a video camera if needed.

Dr. Ansay said she has surveyed other communities regarding their unit prices for all of these categories and have found our prices to be in the range of the other districts that use H. & L. Bloom Bus Company. She mentioned that she is exploring options for reducing our fleet of buses with Wendy Hampson, terminal manager for Bloom Bus Company. She said Mr. Bloom gave his approval for this. Dr. Ansay added that Mr. Bloom is a very nice individual and it is a pleasure doing business with him.

On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the regular education transportation contract with H. & L. Bloom Bus Company.

Policies:

a. Fiscal Accounting and Reporting:

Dr. Ansay presented the committee with a revision of the current policy on Fiscal Accounting and Reporting. She explained that Mr. Thomas Scanlon, the town auditor, suggested the changes. On a motion by Mr. O'Neil, seconded by Mr. Golota, the committee unanimously voted to approve the newly revised Fiscal Accounting and Reporting policy.

b. Physical Restraint:

Dr. Ansay then presented the committee with a new policy on Physical Restraint. She explained that we have been following state mandated procedures but did not have a

formal written policy describing our procedures. Ms. Joan Goggin, Director of Pupil Support Services, was present at the meeting to describe the new policy. A discussion ensued about the state and federal regulations regarding physical restraint. Ms. Goggin described that physical restraint is rarely required in the Norton Public Schools. She further explained that it is necessary to train all staff each year, and that very specific guidelines exist for this training. According to Ms. Goggin, each school has a "Crisis Team" and a specific procedure to follow in the event of such a crisis.

On a motion by Mrs. Werner, seconded by Mr. O'Neil, the committee unanimously voted to approve the new Physical Restraint policy.

HS Girls' Basketball Team Trip to Florida - Mr. Stephen Tessier:

The committee next considered a request by Mr. Stephen Tessier, Head Coach of the Norton High School Girls' Basketball Team. The members of the team, and many parents were present to speak to the committee about this request. Mr. Tessier requested permission from the School Committee to allow the team to participate in a Holiday Basketball Tournament at Walt Disney World in December of 2007. Chairperson Gradie pointed out that Mr. Dewar has written a letter stating he is not able to recommend the trip at this time. As a result, Mr. O'Reilly made a motion to table a decision on the request at this time. Mr. Andrew Mackie, former School Committee member, was present in the audience. He said the spirit of the Norton High School Girls' Basketball team is very inspiring. He said they just don't give up, and described the players as a shining light to Norton and a great example. Mrs. Gradie advised the players to never stop fighting for what they believe in.

Preliminary Discussion of Request to Purchase School Department Property:

The committee discussed a letter from Mrs. Lorraine Blake regarding the possibility of her acquiring land which is in the proximity of Norton High School. She suggested that a preliminary discussion of the situation would probably be the first step. Mrs. Gradie remarked that the committee would like to get more information. Mrs. Werner made a proposal to postpone the discussion until further information is obtained. Dr. Ansay mentioned that she would be in touch with the town and would then get back to the committee.

Personnel:

Resignation:

Mrs. Amy Wasnewski, LGN Grade 2 Teacher currently on a leave, effective June 2007.

Extended Leaves of Absence:

- a. Mrs. Michele Baeta, NMS Adjustment Counselor, effective through June, 2008.
- b. Mrs. Sharon Marble, JCS Speech Therapist, effective through June, 2008.

Other:

Dr. Ansay commended the students of Wheaton College who have prepared outstanding lessons in science based upon the state frameworks. She said these students have come into the Norton schools to teach these lessons. She remarked that this has been a wonderful example of our good relationship with Wheaton College. Mrs. Werner explained that it is a great “hands on” experience for the college students to work with the school children of Norton.

Mr. O’Reilly inquired about the possibility of raising the price of school lunch in order to help with the budget. Dr. Ansay said the school department would look into that suggestion. A discussion also ensued about the possibility of having a fruit and salad bar at Norton High School. Student Representative, Larissa Weiner, suggested that she could take a survey at the high school to determine if there would be an interest. Dr. Ansay said Mrs. Irene Stanovitch, Cafeteria Director, would get in touch with Miss Weiner about this survey.

Adjournment:

The committee unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:40 p.m.

Chairperson Gradie reminded everyone that Tuesday, April 24th is “*Election Day*” in Norton. She said, “Please don't forget to vote!”

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Monday, April 30, 2007, 6:30 P.M., Norton Middle School

Enjoy the season!



These Meeting Notes are intended to keep the school district and the community informed in a timely fashion following a meeting of the Norton School Committee. They have not been officially approved by the committee.

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