

Nantucket School Committee
Regular & Workshop Meeting Minutes
April 12, 2022

Present Members: Chair Timothy Lepore, Vice Chair Pauline Proch (via remote participation), Laura Gallagher Byrne (arrived 6:06pm), Anthony Fox, and Esmeralda Martinez. Also present from the Studio, a NCTV Representative. This meeting is an in-person participation meeting in compliance with Governor Charles Baker's statement allowing public bodies the ability to hold a meeting at a physical location that is open to the public, without requiring to provide alternative means of remote access. A motion was made by Esmeralda Martinez, seconded by Anthony Fox, and approved unanimously, to open the Meeting, and which was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI, by Chair Tim Lepore.

Comments from the Public

None

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Chartwells Contract

Chartwells is the only bidder for the Food Services Contract, which will be for one year, 2022-2023. The School Committee expressed their desire to make some modifications to the agreement before entering this contract. Dr. Elizabeth Hallett presented two specific additions, by paraphrase: Page 7, Section 2.4, Chartwells will allow the district to use funds for locally sourced farm products by purchase power with use of credit card (the district will seek partnerships with the local farms); Page 13, Section 13.2, An Advisory Committee will be set up comprising of students, parents, teachers or administrators and School Committee members to work with the Food Service Director, to provide input/feedback and review menu planning. Adding these two items will hopefully ensure that Chartwells upholds their agreement.

Dr. Hallett welcomed Linda Peterson, Food Services Director, to the meeting and extended the opportunity for her to offer comments and to answer any questions the School Committee might have regarding this upcoming Chartwells/NPS contract. Mrs. Peterson shared that she had collected comments and notes from the February 2022 meeting when Chartwells Regional Manager, Erin Long delivered her presentation to the School Committee. In response to some of the School Committee's concerns about the food and overall product, Mrs. Peterson reached out to Sid Wainer & Sons (who operates from May – October for Island business), to research the purchase possibilities from this vendor. She also contacted Gordon's, who is the contracted vendor with Chartwells. Locally sourced farm product through Sid Wainer as a distributor is from farms up to 150 miles away, which falls under their identification as "local". This limits what is considered truly "island local", and the district will have to determine if this is acceptable. Mrs. Peterson also shared that she meets with Sustainable Nantucket to coordinate efforts with local farms. Sustainable Nantucket announced they will write a grant to meet the dollar needs when a gap exists between produce costs and what the Food Services Director can afford to buy. She gave an example: if we buy apples from a local farm source and the cost is \$4/bag but she only has the funds per the contract allowance to pay \$2/bag, the grant will make up the difference. She talked about "Entitlement" monies dispersed by the State and reached out to the Department of Education to inquire about use of these funds when she can. She explained that the Pandemic put additional stress on obtaining good product, getting the food here to Nantucket, and maintaining a full staff. Mrs. Peterson has been understaffed for over two years, and she expressed if she were indeed able to maintain a full staff, she could utilize multiple creative ways to connect with students and staff; she could survey students for likes and dislikes, offer tastings, and be more innovative. A full staff is 12 people, and she typically has 7. Substitutes are also hard to maintain. She knows that part of the reason for her staffing issues is because the job only offers 30 hours per week and pays a lower hourly rate than other island employers. Laura Gallagher Byrne opined about the Food Service Program of years ago and how she missed the higher quality of food and the far more appealing meal offerings. Other members of the School Committee agreed. Mrs. Peterson agreed that the program is different, but DESE mandates have determined so many strict changes requiring formula-driven information, regulated amounts of food, specifics around what can be used, how much, menus to follow, all in order to comply with audits and directives. There were many questions from the School Committee to Mrs. Peterson about how she could get better product locally and how she will do this, and what can be done with unopened food being thrown away. Mr. Fox asked about seniors leaving for lunch and food truck options. Pauline Proch asked about substitutions for product that is not available and how this works, also thinking aloud about the collection bin of apples that exists and the NHS Culinary department could utilize this product. Mrs. Peterson responded that she keeps very specific records and daily/weekly logs accounting for every meal. The regulations are strict; once food leaves her kitchen, she cannot accept it back. If parents or volunteers wanted to utilize leftover food and reinvent product into something else, they could, but it could not be part of the regimented food program.

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As the conversation closed, feeling underwhelmed, a motion was made by Laura Gallagher Byrne to accept the Chartwells contract with the modifications, seconded by Anthony Fox. By roll call vote, Pauline Proch YES, Anthony Fox YES, Laura Gallagher Byrne YES, Esmeralda Martinez YES, and Tim Lepore YES, the motion was carried.

At 6:37 the School Committee ended their Regular meeting and adjourned to the Workshop session. Pauline Proch left the meeting, ending her remote participation.

District Report Card - Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, Directors of Curriculum & Assessment Dr. Amanda Bardsley & Dr. Jennifer Rabold

Dr. Elizabeth Hallett welcomed all the School Committee. Each member had their own Chromebook to follow along with the Superintendent's "Scavenger Hunt". She directed them to the Department of Education website and helped them move to Nantucket's page and then to the Report Card section. Dr. Hallett wanted the Committee to look specifically by subject, grades/schools, teachers, students, and also to see the different sub categories and how data is classified i.e. high needs, ELL, economically disadvantaged, demographic breakdowns, etc. Mr. Fox asked how students identify themselves by race; Dr. Lepore asked who decides the demographics reported. The Superintendent reminded them that parents/guardians select the options to report that information when they enroll their children. The School Committee asked additional questions: what does Mobility mean, what about the high ELL population, FELL data, what is an "experienced teacher", graduation rates, sports and arts participation, enrollment, attendance, suspensions, dropout rate, and more. The information in DESE is extensive and they can spend a lot of time searching for information. Dr. Bardsley generated a list of notes and questions as they came up in conversation, and Dr. Rabold attempted to answer some of the queries. Multiple side conversations were happening as the School Committee members were interested in many areas. Dr. Hallett felt this was a helpful way to glean some introductory data details and would provide perhaps some answers when the public asks questions directly to the School Committee.

Laura Gallagher Byrne asked aloud about space issues within the school and how teachers have come to her about finding spaces for students, specifically Veritas. There was some discussion about maximizing district space needs.

Dr. Lepore shared that Jim Hardy, Field Director from MASC, has agreed to come to a Workshop meeting to help the Committee learn about effective strategies to evaluate the Superintendent, which will be a good refresher for seasoned members and a good learning tool for new members. He asked them to consider a date, offered some options, and collectively they agreed to hold a Workshop on June 14th.

At 7:28 pm, the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Esmeralda Martinez, seconded by Anthony Fox, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Logan O'Connor
School Committee Clerk