

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2018

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2 Present Members: Zona Butler, Jennifer Iller, Tim Lepore, Pauline Proch, Steve Sortevik & Henry Dupont
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4 The meeting was called to order by Chair, Tim Lepore, at 6:00 PM in the Large Group Instruction room at NHS.
5 Dr. Lepore welcomed Mrs. Libby Gibson, Town Administrator and Mr. Brian Turbitt, Town Finance Manager, to the
6 meeting, presenting the Town of Nantucket Budget for Fiscal Year 2020. Steve Sortevik made the motion to approve
7 the agenda, and Jennifer Iller seconded, the motion was approved.
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9 **Comments from the Public**

10 None
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12 **Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee**

13 **Town of Nantucket Budget Presentation Fiscal Year 2020 – Libby Gibson and Brian Turbitt**

14 Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt presented the General Fund Budget recommendations to the School Committee and
15 pointed out that this would be an abbreviated version of the same presentation made days before to the Board of
16 Selectman. A quick review of their timeline: they started in September reviewing preliminary numbers; in October
17 and through December, there was further review with key staff members; and then a final presentation made to the
18 Board of Selectman. Dr. Lepore asked about the other Town branches and how they are faring with their budgets and
19 he specifically asked about the Airport. Mr. Turbitt responded the airport is moving in a positive direction, not
20 needing a subsidy and that they (airport) are on better footing than in the past. Mr. Turbitt also wanted to mention an
21 unresolved area of possible funding, approximately \$750,000 has been budgeted for landfill mining, but Town is not
22 sure what is happening with this project and if Town does not move forward with the plan, that could possibly be a
23 pool of extra funds. Steve Sortevik asked when is this resolved, Mr. Turbitt hoped for March.
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25 With this information, they turned to their Budget presentation. Both reviewed the current and new initiatives and
26 unveiled the projected total revenue is \$101,476,558 and the projected total expenses are \$101,474,236. The
27 projected FY2020 unused levy capacity is the smallest number most likely, ever. It was discussed that some funds in
28 the tax levy could generate a little more than the original number and Mrs. Gibson reviewed the process and the
29 timelines. She was positive about her preliminary meetings with the Superintendent, as they move forward with the
30 upcoming presentation(s) to the Board of Selectman, the Capital Committee and Finance Committee. The increase
31 for this year is consistent with previous years, with instructions in the Town Charter to support a Level Funded
32 budget while following specific mandates and cost savings where possible. Mr. Turbitt reviewed the major revenue
33 categories: Property Tax, local revenue, motor vehicle tax, license and permits, rooms/meals tax, allowance for
34 abatements, and state aid, noting that state aid is always a difficult calculation because we never know what we are
35 going to receive until very last minute. He then outlined the general fund expenses of which the school is 30.4% of
36 the overall budget. Expenses include operational expenses, salaries, and the fixed costs associated which include
37 health insurance, general insurance, debt service, retirement costs and enterprise fund subsidies which includes the
38 solid waste facilities, Our Island Home and the land fill. The Town Expense increase requests show a total sum of
39 \$6,209,782 in submitted requests, with \$5,14,533 to be recommended and which includes one time and on-going,
40 with a portion of the one time, the affordable housing trust fund of \$3,000,000. These can be funded through
41 available tax levy, budget adjustments/reallocations, alternate funding sources, free cash, and potential revenue. Mrs.
42 Gibson and Mr. Turbitt discussed the goals for Fiscal Year 2020, with the primary goal of a balanced budget within
43 projected revenues. Additional priorities include legal mandates, a staffing study to meet service and seasonal
44 demands that are needed in response to our growing community and ‘bigger city’ issues that we are facing in our
45 small Town, a Strategic Plan, the capital and operational investment plans for infrastructure and facilities due to the
46 growth, project management and housing issues. Mrs. Gibson briefly went through the list of expense increase
47 requests broken down as personnel and operating.
48

49 There are unknowns such as the Strategic Plan impact which is updated annually, the staffing study which will be a
50 tool to use for future budget forecasts, the update of the five year forecasting, possible necessary tax overrides to fund
51 which includes OIH, Solid Waste and NRTA, federal tax reform or legislative changes, State Aid impacts, the Harbor

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Place Project (the tank farm opportunity for redevelopment), Citizen warrant articles, Open Space and Recreation Plan and new revenue options which could include property tax and non-property tax “short term rental bill” which is not locked in.

The Preliminary Free Cash estimated at \$9,593,691, breaks down into categories of Town Expense requests of \$885,000, Town and School Capital Projects of \$5,000,000, debt service of \$300,000, and unallocated Free Cash of a unusually high number (for now) of \$3,408,671. Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt reminded everyone these numbers are still fluid and subject to change and recommendations until approved by the Board of Selectman, remain preliminary. As Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt wrapped up their comments, they offered an opportunity for questions and reiterated the date of the Public Hearing for January 9. Steve Sortevik queried the percentage split for funding between the Town at 7.7% and the School at 4.7% and commented he felt it was not equitable. Mrs. Gibson responded that she feels confident the Town budget covers a good portion for the school. Mr. Sortevik furthered asked about the total dollar figure of \$1.8 million and does it include the roll forward numbers, which Mrs. Gibson stated in the affirmative. Mrs. Proch asked about the nine new hires outlined and does it have an impact for insurance for the school.

E-Sports Initiative – Dr. John Buckley, Principal & John McGuinness, Teacher at NHS

The Nantucket High School Game Club was founded in September 2017 by three students from the Class of 2018. The focus is primarily to provide an opportunity for students to play casual tabletop games and computer games, to connect with one another, promote the gaming hobby and offer something for many students who are not interested in athletics or the music opportunities and potentially could get “lost in the shuffle”. The club has grown to include all types of games, the membership is up to approximately 40 students, and they have additionally engaged in many community services opportunities such as Family Game Night at NES, and International Table Top Day which is connected to Extra Life Day and raises money for Boston Children’s Hospital. The group has exponentially grown in such a short time, paralleling the national growth of similar clubs and the trend toward E-Sports. E-Sports is a form of competition using video games and has become so widely popular there are now scholarships to colleges, professional leagues, and employment opportunities in design, advertising, among others. This type of competition works well for our district because we live on an island and the participants can play against teams near and far without travel. Nantucket has connected with two large outside developments: *PlayVS*, in its first season where students in Massachusetts compete against high schools across the state. Nantucket has done so well and made playoffs which are happening this evening as the presentation is being given to the School Committee. The second is *TESPA*, the leading collegiate esports organization in the country, located in California and responsible for promoting equality, openness and fairness in the gaming world by supporting local clubs and offering merchandise and tech support. Nantucket was one of 15 clubs selected to participate in a test run of *TESPA*’s high school gaming partnership. School Council Representative, Henry Dupont thought this concept was refreshing. He feels high school experiences are often determined by athletics and this is a good alternative. Mrs. Proch was appreciative of this experience for students. She first encountered Esports when the Nantucket Project introduced this to the community at large. Mrs. Butler expressed concern for this club moving too fast with the gaming piece and hoped the academic grades would be monitored just like regular athletics. Mr. McGuinness assured they are and rounded back that not all gaming is computer gaming, the table top games are still a large part of the club. Superintendent Cozort offered he is very much in favor of this alternative opportunity, but he posed the question, how much screen time is detrimental? Mr. McGuinness agreed this in an area to monitor and be cognizant. Steve Sortevik asked about a Stipend, and appreciated the amount of time the Advisor is giving to the Club. Dr. Lepore added, when he sees the students in a patient setting, he always reminds them to read a book.

District Report Card – Mr. Michael Horton, Director of Curriculum & Assessment, STEM

Mr. Horton introduced the District Report Card and that this was the 3rd year we have provided it. Mr. Horton noted much of the information is available on the DESE website, but this format makes it easier to access such data. The School Committee was appreciative to see the numbers in such an easy to read format and like the comparisons of historical data. Mr. Sortevik focused on the percentages of unlicensed teachers and asked about Waivers for them and

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104 if it is hard to be granted those waivers. Mr. Horton mentioned how hard many teachers are working toward proper
105 licensure and thanked Jean Witt, Director of C&A – Humanities for helping staff through steps to achieve the
106 licensure. For some staff it is merely a question of gaining MA licensure, because they already hold a different
107 state’s credentials, for others it is a question of proper paperwork and for young and new teachers it is often a
108 question of passing the MTEL exams which can be harder for some and easier for others depending upon the area of
109 program and study. Superintendent Cozort added waivers are not easy to obtain and we try hard to accommodate all
110 the requirements put forth by DESE. The island is indeed a factor, because it is more difficult in terms of recruitment
111 and retention, and he also noted how helpful the Community School now is by adding the opportunity for some
112 MTEL exams to be given here on island, eliminating all day travel. Mrs. Proch changed the subject and requested
113 the ACT scores to be put into the Report Card just the SAT scores listed. Mr. Horton agreed to make those revisions.
114

115 **Budget Discussion**

116 Steve Sortevik began by asking that the School Committee double check the figures offered by Town and proposed
117 by School. It is his opinion that School should ask for the full \$1.9 million that includes all of the wish list items and
118 not limit themselves by asking for the \$1.4 million which is the School’s present request. Mr. Sortevik is more
119 interested in “putting the total proposal on the table” based on Mrs. Gibson’s mention of Town Override and other
120 potential areas of available cash. Mr. Sortevik is very concerned of the specific percentages that depict the School
121 getting less than the Town and he has strongly emphasized he is not comfortable moving forward with the current
122 numbers. Superintendent Cozort shared that the appropriation on the table is more than we have ever been given and
123 the percentage of the TON budget for the school is higher than the percentage for the Municipal departments. He
124 reminded the Committee how staffing positions were added to the district just this year that were not in the budget
125 for the previous year. He stated that talking about Overrides is shortsighted in his opinion and his experience. The
126 School is not cutting staff or programming, the economy is not having tremendous struggles and an override would
127 be more appropriate when and if we were in a negative situation and the economy were dipping southward. He also
128 stressed the strong and positive working relationship between Town and School and how this is key to our process.
129 The Superintendent also stated he can report to FinCom and show the needs that remain unbudgeted. He illustrated
130 with the Key to Proposed Changes, where the recommendations and cuts are suggested and that this was discussed
131 with the Principal and Department Heads. The Chair asked the entire Committee to share their thoughts and all
132 agreed that moving forward in asking for the prepared \$1.4 million budget for NPS was the thoughtful and correct
133 next step. Mr. Sortevik made it clear he is not in agreement, but understands the opinions expressed by others.
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135 **Committee discussion and votes to be taken**

136 Vote to Approve Donation to NHS from Snap-On Tools, Inc. for Auto Tech Program, \$14,993.10

137 Zona Butler made a motion, seconded by Jenn Iller, with none opposed, the motion was approved
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139 Vote to Approve Donation to NCS from Nantucket Community Park & Recreation, \$1,386.00

140 Steve Sortevik made a motion, seconded by Jenn Iller, with none opposed, the motion was approved
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142 Vote to Approve Donation to NCS from Community Foundation for Nantucket/NCH Community Health Fund,

143 \$3,400.00 Pauline Proch made a motion, seconded by Jenn Iller, with none opposed, the motion was approved
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145 Vote to Approve NHS Culinary Field Trip to Foxborough, MA for the State Culinary Competition Jenn Iller made a
146 motion, seconded by Zona Butler, with none opposed, the motion was approved.
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148 Vote to Approve the December 18, 2018, Meeting Minutes. Pauline Proch made a motion to approve the minutes,
149 Zona Butler seconded, and the motion was approved.
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151 Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices

152 Pauline Proch made a motion to approve the transfers and invoices, Jenn Iller seconded, the motion was approved.
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Superintendent’s Report–W. Michael Cozort

Enrollment

The enrollment numbers are down slightly and this is consistent with previous years. Mrs. Butler asked why and Peter Cohen and EveMarie McNeil both replied housing and job availability.

On the Horizon

The Budget Hearing will be on January 15, 2019. Kim Horyn and Smart Power will come the following meeting and the MOU with Park & Recreation will be presented at that meeting. Jenn Iller asked about adding Culinary to the Horizon and for a visit prior to their State competition. Mr. Cozort asked if Quiz Bowl is still a challenge the School Committee is ready to take on for another round of competition.

Subcommittees & Acknowledgements

Sub-Committees:

None

Student Council:

Mr. DuPont reported a quiet month with the Holiday vacation. Student Council had a good annual breakfast spread for the Staff the Friday before break. He also commented the sports teams are doing well. Mr. Cozort asked about swimming and Mr. Dupont was happy to share the recent win for Nantucket when we sponsored the Cape Cod Classic.

At 7:46pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Pauline Proch and seconded by Jennifer Iller, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk