

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 22, 2020

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2 Present Members: Chair Jennifer Iller, Zona Butler, Pauline Proch and Steve Sortevik
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4 The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM, by Chair Jennifer Iller, in the Nantucket High School LGI. Zona Butler made
5 a motion to approve the agenda, it was seconded by Steve Sortevik and was approved unanimously. On behalf of the
6 Committee, Mrs. Iller offered her congratulations to Dr. John Buckley who has accepted a position as the Superintendent
7 for Marblehead Public Schools. She wished him well and thanked him for his years of dedicated service to Nantucket.
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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 **Veritas – Advisor Page Martineau & Editor John Carl McGrady**

14 Mrs. Martineau (NHS Advisor to Veritas) and Editor John McGrady addressed the School Committee and shared how the
15 Veritas group is a relatively new crew and a young group. Both of the previous editors graduated, along with a handful of
16 key staff. She mentioned having Juniors and younger members of the club provides stability for the newspaper, but also a
17 challenge to have enough historic knowledge and seasoned writers to help from year to year and with transition. She
18 added how Veritas competes to attract staff to the paper, because they are often students who are involved in many
19 different clubs, sports and activities and they are stretched thin. She complimented the group as they continue to be a
20 student-run paper, and reminded the School Committee how she handles the editing, but is mostly hands-off as the
21 students make the decisions about each edition. Master McGrady stated he feels it is important to provide news for school,
22 provide opportunities for students to be a voice and express themselves, and a platform for all kinds of article topics. Mrs.
23 Butler said it must be great confirmation to see “your work in print” and asked how articles are assigned and Mrs. Proch
24 congratulated Veritas on being an award-winning paper and asked for a walkthrough of the process. Master McGrady
25 gave an overview of the three weeks of article selection, investigations, interviews, writing, and a final crush week of
26 layout and editing using Quark software. Dr. Buckley gets the final read for review and it goes to print. Mr. Sortevik
27 commented it is his favorite paper. Mrs. Butler asked about a digital version, which used to exist, but the domain name
28 was lost due to non-renewal. Superintendent Cozort said it is a delicate balance to give students freedom to do their own
29 work and impressive as they offer a newspaper such as Veritas.
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31 **Bullying Update**

32 **NHS Principal John Buckley & Assistant Principal Jennifer Psaradelis**

33 The Principal and Assistant Principal have one bullying report filed this year-to-date. With extensive investigation it has
34 been determined not a bullying case, but rather a relationship conflict/misunderstanding of two students. Ms. Psaradelis
35 described it is sometimes hard for parents to hear about situations concerning their children, but it is important to talk and
36 learn about unfriendly treatment, better options of handling tense circumstances and how to navigate issues as a teenager.
37 She talked about being socially unkind and the importance of learning the social skills (where there might be a deficit) of
38 how peers function together. Steve Sortevik remembered when the bullying protocols came into effect and how ‘Bullying’
39 became a buzz word that required education and understanding, and how far the district has come from that time.
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41 **CPS Principal Julie Lamoly**

42 Mrs. Lamoly reported one filed bullying report and currently she is wrapping up the investigation. She offered she has not
43 finished speaking with both sides. It happened prior to the holiday break, and the situation is still being vetted. She
44 described it involving two students and how the administration is monitoring them currently while the issue is sorted out to
45 a final determination. Jennifer Iller asked about a time frame to resolve that the provocation is bullying or not and wanted
46 to ensure the school is providing support to students, monitoring both the aggressor and the victim.
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48 **NIS Assistant Principal Donna Johnson**

49 Mrs. Johnson reported on behalf of Principal Evemarie McNeil and stated there have been three reports of bullying filed,
50 with two investigations confirming they are indeed, bullying. Mrs. Johnson reiterated how bullying is categorized as an
51 ‘imbalance of power’. She talked about support plans in place for both the aggressors and the victims and described how
52 yearly training (SEL) is done for staff with curriculum supporting the learning opportunities in all three years.
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NES Principal Kimberly Kubisch

Mrs. Kubisch shared there has been one confirmed bullying case in NES; two 1st graders who have what she described as a love/hate relationship. They made verbal comments to each other and could not sort out being friends and not friends, even at this young age. She described how the school has services in place and with ‘Lunch bunches’, guidance and social work where they work hard to teach how to be kind and appropriate. Their common practice is to use progressive discipline – they used half day suspensions, in this instance had the SRO present to help, and have separated the students. Mrs. Proch stated how bullying is a tag word and education is critical to help teach acceptable and kind behavior, and that we need to be vigilant to ensure negative behavior does not go undetected, especially with students who might be under the radar. Mr. Sortevik added how it is “good” that these incidents have happened, not in the good sense, but because it helps reinforce what is acceptable versus what is not, and that bullying is not taken lightly in our district. Mrs. Butler added this validates the existence.

2nd Quarter Budget Presentation – Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov

Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov presented the Second Quarter (October 1 – December 31) Budget. He said the number (expenses and payroll) for this quarter \$249,097, is an unusual number because it is under what was reported for last year due to splitting bi-weekly payrolls into 27 versus 26 and due to a few vacancies in positions still not filled. A slightly lower percentage of expenditure funding has been committed 45% for this year versus 48% a year ago and payroll expenses are increased slightly by \$61,699. These numbers continue to be in an acceptable range for year to year. Mrs. Proch asked about the vacancies and when do we stop looking to fill them with Superintendent Cozort responding, we do not often stop and cited the recent hire of a Bi-lingual Teaching Assistant in NES. He added that the search for the .4 CPS Technology teacher has stopped as that would impact the schedule and he also noted the large number of Long-Term Substitute openings that have plagued the district this year, making it sometimes hard to provide the services.

The Nantucket Community School shows another gain for this quarter with an increase of \$61,064. This number breaks down to program revenues increasing by \$11,064 added to the Town appropriation of \$50,000. The main reasons for the increase are Extended Day revenue increase of \$19,764 and Summer Camp revenue increase of \$2,513 offsetting a decrease seen in Adult Ed by \$9,105 and Drivers Ed by \$7,368. Mr. Anguelov added that expenses and encumbrance for the 2nd quarter decreased compared to last year and he is pleased with how programming is sustained in a fiscally responsible way. He is confident NCS is on solid ground financially. Mrs. Butler offered thanks to Director Tracy Roberts for providing programming clearly connecting with our community. A question arose regarding the decrease in Drivers’ Ed with Mrs. Roberts responding there have been more classes amortizing over a longer period and she would look further to offer some numbers to the Committee.

Mr. Anguelov reported the School Lunch Program operating at a deficit of \$36,733 which is a lower number than last year reported at \$39,172. He noted sales increasing this year by \$5,322 for 73 operating days compared to last year with 72 days. The Free & Reduced meals represent 42% which is up from last year at 37%. He believes we will stay within the budgeted \$55,436 subsidy and continue the trend of deficit reduction. Mrs. Proch queried about food product, commenting the quality is low in her opinion, and was interested about the current provider of the Food Services program. Mrs. Butler was curious about the possibility of switching from Chartwells to another provider. Superintendent Cozort talked about a Request for Proposal (RFP) and putting that out to other contractors of food programs if the School Committee so desired. Mr. Anguelov spoke about the past years and the process of putting the RFP out to bid to state providers receiving only two bids at that time for Nantucket and two years ago, when the contract was due for another revamp, only one, Chartwells, applied. He would like to see more bids come through to create competition. Mrs. Butler asked about the bidding process. The Superintendent and Director of Finance remarked how the challenge is running a food service program on an island and how it is a special niche to fill.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote Request to Authorize School Committee Fiscal year 2021 Budget Education Appropriation, Article Eight

“On Motion, duly made and seconded, IT WAS VOTED: to recommend \$32,346,642 for the FY2021 Nantucket Education Public Appropriation (Article Eight of the 2020 Annual Town Meeting of Taxpayers). The public-school total budget appropriation is recommended at \$31,796,642 - \$25,485,636 for payroll and \$5,311,006 for operating expenses; and an additional \$550,000 Community School appropriation for payroll. And to AUTHORIZE use of School Department accounts as listed.”

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Chair Jennifer Iller asked for a motion to accept the vote. With some back and forth, she accepted a motion by Steve Sortevik to amend this request, to specifically add one math teacher at CPS at a cost to increase the budget by \$70,000. The motion was seconded by Pauline Proch for the purpose of discussion. Mr. Sortevik offered his rationale for this motion and language for the addition of money, stating Math has continued to be a focus due to continual low scores. He continued, while there have been some improvements, he strongly feels students are not catching up to where they need to be and the prior actions taken by the district seem not to be making a successful impact. He articulated he is not sure what needs to change, not sure whether the teacher position is one of a Coach or Interventionist, and not sure if it needs to be for students or maybe for staff, but something to help via the addition of this position. He feels the cost can be covered by what remains in the excess levy. Mrs. Proch appreciated the passion of Mr. Sortevik, especially for Math, and concurs the School Committee agrees they want the math scores to show an increase. However, she feels there is a process in place for the budget appropriation and the job of the Committee is to vote on the overall amount, not line by line. She added the process needs to be respected, the work and preparation made by the staff, the administration and School Councils are prioritized, and a lot of work goes into the development of the final numbers. Chair Jennifer Iller agreed and reiterated respect for the process is imperative. Mr. Sortevik stated the School Committee does not have the opportunity to interact with the staff and admin in this sense and he feels it is their (School Committee) prerogative to set the budget. Mrs. Iller put the amended motion for a vote, which was 1 in Favor, 3 Opposed. She then opened the vote on the original motion, made by Pauline Proch, seconded by Zona Butler, opposed by Steve Sortevik and ultimately, approved with a vote of 3-1.

Vote to Approve Donation from Community Foundation for Nantucket on behalf of the Will Brown Fund to the Adopt a Lunch Tray Program, \$500.00 Zona Butler made a motion, seconded by Pauline Proch, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Island Lumber Company to the NHS Wood Shop, \$2,400.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion, seconded by Zona Butler, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Phil & Kim Marks to NHS Accidentals & Naturals, \$1,000.00 Zona Butler made a motion, seconded by Pauline Proch, with none opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve January 7, 2020 Meeting Minutes. Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, and the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve January 14, 2020 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes. Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, and the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices
Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the transfers and invoices, Zona Butler seconded, the motion was approved.

Superintendent’s Report – W. Michael Cozort
Draft Calendar 2020-2021

The Superintendent offered draft #9 that illustrated slight changes moving the Professional Development Day in October to provide a long weekend and consecutive days for PD and adding December 23 as a day off school. He pointed out if we have this day off in December it adds a day in school during June. He cautioned this may entice parents to take their children out of school for the whole week if there are only two days of school and it would likewise impact attendance. This happens when Labor Day is late on the calendar and it comes around every handful of years. He reported the NTA was in favor of this draft. Mrs. Proch commented community members, parents, staff have all reached out to her with their support of the 23rd and starting before Labor Day. The Superintendent reminded the Committee that some of the decisions are contract related and cannot move without reopening that negotiation. The NTA has clearly relayed they have no appetite for starting school for students before Labor Day. Mr. Sortevik asked about late openings/school delays due to inclement weather and how these count for days towards the 180 days of school attendance. The Superintendent responded he looks at delays purely for the safety of students and staff and two-hour delays often work well to keep the scheduling for buses running at a constant, allow for roads to clear (the sun to rise, added Mrs. Proch) and still gives four hours of a day, plus serving lunch to count for a whole day.

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Finance Committee Presentation

Superintendent Cozort offered his template of the Budget Presentation FY21 on January 21 to the Town Finance Committee. He feels FinCom received the information well and felt the presentation was successful. He appreciated their ‘softball’ question. i.e. if money were not an object, what else would you need.

Sub-Committees:

Nantucket Education Trust

Mrs. Proch confirmed the funding and support for the second annual informational college bound trip for 10th grade trip, this year to Bridgewater State and UMASS Dartmouth. She also noted the year end letter from NET receiving additional money to help make this important trip happen.

Negotiations

Mr. Sortevik said they are ongoing, not signed off on issues yet, but clarifications have been made

Cape Cod Collaborative

Mrs. Butler stated there will be a meeting next Friday regarding policy regulations, presented by MASC. She plans on attending.

On the Horizon

There was ample discussion about combining the two February meetings into one and which date to hold the meeting. Quiz Bowl will not be challenging the School Committee this year and the presentations are light during this month. It was decided to keep the fourth of February as a meeting to approve the District Improvement Plan and the Calendar.

At 7:18pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Pauline Proch and seconded by Zona Butler and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk