

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
January 5, 2021

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller (arrived 6:14), Zona Tanner-Butler, Dr. Timothy Lepore, and Steve Sortevik. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Matt Pommerfret and presenters as guests Town Administrator Elizabeth Gibson, Town Finance Director Brian Turbitt, Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett, NPS Finance Director Martin Anguelov, Principals Vasil, Horton, McNeil, & Kubisch, NHS Alternative Program Teacher Andrew Viselli, NHS Students Mr. Cesear Lopez, Miss Eddie Scarlett, Master Shane Hanlon - Meeting is a Remote Participation Meeting via “ZOOM” in compliance with Governor Charles Baker’s mandate during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM, by Chair Pauline Proch who followed with reading into the Minutes, scripted instructions for procedure of this meeting under COVID requirements:

Read into the Meeting Minutes at the Start of the Meeting - Confirming Member Access:

This is Pauline Proch, Chair of the Nantucket School Committee. Permit me to confirm that all members and persons anticipated on the agenda are present and can hear me. Members, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative: Jennifer Iller, Vice Chair, Zona Butler (no response), Tim Lepore, Steve Sortevik, Secretary.

Staff, when I call your name, please respond in the affirmative: Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett; School Committee Clerk, Logan O’Connor; Director of Technology, Jennifer Erichsen

Good evening. This Open Meeting of Nantucket School Committee is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker’s Executive Order of March 12, 2020, due to the current State of Emergency in the Commonwealth due to the outbreak of the “COVID-19 Virus.” In order to mitigate the transmission of the COVID-19 Virus, we have been advised and directed by the Commonwealth to suspend public gatherings, and as such, the Governor’s Order suspends the requirement of the Open Meeting Law to have all meetings in a publicly accessible physical location. Further, all members of public bodies are allowed and encouraged to participate remotely.

The Order, which you can find posted with agenda materials for this meeting allows public bodies to meet entirely remotely so long as reasonable public access is afforded so that the public can follow along with the deliberations of the meeting. Ensuring public access does not ensure public participation unless such participation is required by law. This meeting will feature public comment. For this meeting, Nantucket School Committee is convening by video conference via Zoom Webinar App as posted on the Town’s Website identifying how the public may join.

Each vote taken in this meeting will be conducted by roll call vote.

The Chair called the meeting to order. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Tim Lepore and was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Comments from the Public

None.

Superintendent’s Report

COVID-19 Update

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett commented how and why we continue in remote learning. Based upon discussions with Health Officials at Nantucket Cottage Hospital, Board of Health Director Roberto Santamaria, School Committee Chair and Vice Chair along with NTA Co-Presidents, we remain in a remote learning situation due to holiday travel, health metrics, and trying to make the best possible decisions regarding health and safety. While the education models have been “rollercoastering” this academic year, the hope is to come back to Hybrid as soon as possible.

With the help of School Committee Secretary, COVID Liaison Sara Brooks and School Committee Clerk Logan O’Connor, we have put up on our website, a COVID-19 one page data sheet (Dashboard) to offer statistics of school community numbers, positivity rates, community at large numbers and data of interest concerning the health metrics and percentages. Mr. Sortevik spearheaded this effort. As this data is a daily moving target, the sheet will be updated once per week (Mondays) to offer the public information.

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Enrollment

Superintendent Hallett gave the enrollment update for the month of December which represents student enrollment numbers as of January 4, 2021. The district is down nineteen students with a total district number currently at 1,642. Dr. Hallett commented this downward trend is a normal pattern for this time of year despite the pandemic.

Student Opportunity Plan

In 2019, the Department of Education put an initiative through to help close the achievement gaps in some areas of the student population and asked districts to make a commitment to focus on one select area. At that time, sitting Superintendent W. Michael Cozort and Deputy Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett put together information based on Chapter 70 monies allotted to the district and targeted PreK in this plan. Nantucket was to be awarded \$30/per pupil as the formula allowed and which approximated a total of \$49,000. At the end of the year, DESE pushed the SOA forward (in response to the pandemic) and asked for districts to present their plans for this year. With regulation, being level funded, and what we have been given via Chapter 70 funding, Nantucket no longer qualifies for any monies aligned with this formula and will be awarded zero dollars. Despite no money being given to the district, DESE still requires plan submission and requires the plan to be voted by the School Committee. Dr. Hallett explained she will share notes and documentation with the Committee and will ask for a vote at the January 21 meeting.

Thank You

Dr. Hallett publicly thanked John & Caroline Keane and the staff of Kitty Murtaugh restaurant/pub for jumping to the rescue and providing lunch to students for two days in December, when our kitchen staff was required to quarantine due to COVID 19. Dr. Hallett also thanked the Nantucket Golf Club Foundation, Barry Lipp Foundation and Tommy Bresette for funding and providing the opportunity to watch the New York City Ballet/George Balanchine's *The Nutcracker* over the Christmas holiday weekend.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Town of Nantucket Budget Presentation – Town Administrator, Libby Gibson & Town Municipal Finance Director, Brian Turbitt

Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt presented the General Fund Budget recommendations to the School Committee and announced this would be an abbreviated version of the same presentation, done on December 9, 2020 for the Board of Selectman. Mrs. Gibson reviewed their process and timeline dictated by the Town Charter: starting September 21st, reviewing preliminary numbers and creating budget projections; in October and through December, there was further review with key staff members (meeting with the school multiple times, including Ad Hoc); and the recent final presentation made to the Board of Selectman. Mrs. Gibson was positive about the preliminary meetings with the Superintendent, as they move forward with the upcoming presentation(s) to the Capital Committee and Finance Committee. Despite the pandemic and dramatic revenue stream impact during this time, the increase for this year is consistent with previous years, with instructions to support a Level Funded budget while following specific mandates and cost savings where possible.

Reviewing the current and new initiatives, priorities include housing issues, transportation issues, service and seasonal demands in response to our growing community and 'bigger city' issues that we are facing in our small Town, the Strategic Plan, Town Operations, COVID-19 Response issues, PFAS, as well as capital investment in infrastructure/facilities. Details of what has been undertaken in FY21 and continues in FY22 along with efforts to reduce expenses and increase efficiency and transparency are the overall focus. There was some conversation about the possibility of the Community School morphing under the auspices of Town vs. school in an effort to possibly pool resources and utilize similar programming without duplicating efforts (more to come on that topic as they explore options). Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt unveiled the projected total revenue at \$111,746,172 with the projected total expenses of \$110,746,540. The projected FY2021 unused levy capacity is \$635,632 and the hope is not to tap into these funds. Mr. Turbitt reviewed the major revenue categories: Property Tax, local revenue, motor vehicle tax, license and permits, rooms/meals tax, allowance for abatements, and state aid, noting that state aid is always a difficult calculation, because we never know what we are going to receive until very last minute. He then outlined the general fund expenses of which the school is steady at 30.2% of the overall budget. Expenses include operational expenses, and salaries. The fixed costs associated include health insurance, general insurance, debt service, retirement costs and enterprise fund subsidies. The Town Expense increase requests show FY22 totaling \$4,281,246 in submitted requests, \$3,098,553 to be recommended and which includes a one-time of \$1,265,000 and on-going as an

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amount of \$1,833,533, funded through available tax levy, budget adjustments/reallocations, alternate funding sources, free cash, and potential revenue increases.

There are Special Appropriations to consider and unknowns such as the Strategic Plan impact, the implications of future budget forecasts, the ongoing staffing study, commuter shuttle system, the update of the five-year forecasting, Solid Waste contract costs, Open Space and recreation Plan, and possible necessary tax overrides to fund, including OIH, Additional unknowns continue to comprise of federal tax reform or legislative changes, State Aid impacts, the Harbor Place Project (the tank farm opportunity for redevelopment), Citizen warrant articles, Fee Increases, Steamship Authority Deficit (which was resolved in FY20, but not for FY21 or FY22 where Nantucket is responsible for 35% of this debt), NRTA deficit, PFAS Costs, the impact costs of COVID-19, Diversity Equity Inclusion Office, Short Term Rentals, new growth “Bubble Burst”, Potential Airport Deficit due to the COVID -19, Police Reform Bill (signed into law, but associated costs are unknown at this time) and impacts of Coastal Resilience Advisory Committee recommendation).

The Preliminary Free Cash General Fund is estimated at \$9,655,001 and breaks down into categories of Town Expense requests of \$925,000, a one-time School expense request of \$150,000, Town and School Capital Projects of \$4,992,254, Town Unpaid Bills of \$20,000, Our Island Home \$3,500,000, leaving unallocated Free Cash at \$67,747. Town will recommend an operational override of \$5,000,000 for OIH which will impact Free Cash movement. There is a fair number of unknowns in this budget including: the OIH override, State Aid impact, Harbor Place. 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, therefore, remaining preliminary. Mrs. Gibson and Mr. Turbitt wrapped up their comments, focusing on the additional material provided, the Budget Message Appendix offered to illustrate the finer details of the budget in a narrative form. They also reviewed the timeline of presentations and the changed date of Annual Town Meeting, from April 5 to June 5, 2021.

The School Committee thanked the Town Administrators for the presentation, and had relatively few questions. Steve Sortevik asked about the timing of the override for OIH and it needing to be on the Town warrant. Mrs Gibson explained how the timeline of last year’s ATM changing due to the pandemic had a ricochet effect causing some standard procedures to stall. Therefore, this override would need to be voted all over again in order to be approved and on the ballot. Mr. Sortevik pressed about securing more money for the school in addition to what was already presented. He was also curious about the conversation of Community School moving from the umbrella of the School to Town and wanted confirmation this move would have to be voted by the School Committee. Mrs. Gibson reiterated this is an **exploration possibility** of combining Park & Rec but thought aloud it might alleviate some pressure from the school. Chair Proch asked about the Diversity department and the status of the candidates to which Mrs. Gibson stated the Town is interviewing finalists.

NHS Alternative Program – Principal Mandy Vasil, Alternative Program Teacher Andrew Viselli, Students Cesar Lopez, Yvonne Scarlett and Shane Hanlon

NHS Principal Mandy Vasil introduced Andrew Viselli, NHS Teacher for the Alternative Program. Mrs Vasil bragged how passionate and devoted Mr. Viselli is to the students who participate and how the school and students benefit. Mr. Viselli addressed the School Committee by stating the students drive the program, they are the “truth tellers” and outline what works for them. The overarching mission is about relationship building, focus and attention on passing grades of 85%, and collaboration with family and community members creating the platform for student success. There are behavioral expectations about participation, being respectful to staff and peers and learning to be a positive role model. Mr. Viselli outlined the program beliefs, how the referral process works and thanked Principal Vasil and Assistant Principal Jennifer Psaradelis for being important gate keepers. He reviewed class options: traditional classrooms, APEX Online working towards credit recovery, blended learning and talked about the 45 students in 21 separate classrooms making up the diverse group as a whole. The quarterly performance figures hit the target rate at 86% for the first quarter but only 66.6% for the second and explained not only is this a typical dip during the holiday break but rather offered his target of the fourth quarter aiming towards 90% passing rates.

Mr. Viselli was joined by three students, Cesar Lopez, Yvonne “Yvie” Scarlett and Shane Hanlon, who all shared their stories with the School Committee. Mr. Lopez had dropped out of school last year but wanted to finish school and had a Goal to earn his degree. He determined his route was going to be through Credit Recovery and which has enabled him to focus and work toward graduating. He is very thankful for this program and had many praises for Mr. Viselli and the support

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M of the staff in helping him attain his wish. Miss Yvonne Scarlett talked about enrolling in some high-level classes, how she struggles with staying on task and focusing on her own goals. She said she needed help advocating for herself and finds working with Mr. Viselli has helped her tremendously. Master Shane Hanlon who had trouble with his microphone asked Mr. Viselli to read his notes. He talked about how this program offers a safe and friendly environment for learning. He is taking a School to Career class for Electrician vocational work and said early on in his high school career, he did not do much to achieve high marks in school, but now he works hard to be a 'better student and better me.' Mr. Viselli, emotional, thanked Dr. Hallett for being supportive to this program and appreciates the continued opportunity. He outlined some Goals for the future including adding designated teachers, establishing a CPS transition program, offering student internships with more island business' and reaching a passing rate of 95-100%. Mrs. Butler thanked him for his efforts and fervor to making this program what it is today.

Budget Development FY22: Nantucket Elementary School, Principal Kimberly Kubisch

Mrs. Kubisch addressed her budget needs citing the need to have hired more staff this year to help during the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated she is starting from this point because she would like to roll forward with the current staffing numbers despite the hope of the pandemic waning and the return to regular programming. While enrollment numbers have not modified greatly, it is always hard to predict the Kindergarten entrance numbers. Nantucket Elementary is 17% of the overall School Committee budget at \$5,292,827 with 97% at payroll. With the addition of multiple Teaching Assistants hired last year, and while she would like to have them cover General Education classes, she finds these positions slated mainly to address IEPs who often call for the most support. With significant numbers of IEPs entering Kindergarten she is requesting two (2) additional TAs for the upcoming year. Mrs. Kubisch is also asking for a .5 Interventionist which she will split with Nantucket Intermediate School. In years past NES had a math interventionist and she is requesting filling this position again to help support students who need to master the standards.

Budget Development FY22: Nantucket Intermediate School, Principal Evemarie McNeil

Mrs. McNeil detailed the pictures on the front of her budget presentation, praising both staff and students and then turned to fiscal information. Nantucket Intermediate School is \$4,573,797, 15% of the total budget, of which 96% covers payroll obligations. She reviewed her requests and followed up with her narrative to support these needs. NIS has determined the interrupted learning due to the pandemic has shaped the need in closing gaps and differentiating instruction mostly in Tier II and Tier III instruction. An additional 1.0 Special Education Teacher to help support transitional students and the .05 Interventionist (shared with NES) will help to provide targeted and specific in areas of reading and math. Both positions will benefit by addressing varying levels of need within each classroom.

Budget Development FY22: Cyrus Peirce Middle School, Principal Michael Horton

Mr. Horton talked about the pictures on the front of his budget presentation, describing how the social distancing is looking from different teaching situations and then stated he is happy not to be cutting anywhere in the budget. Cyrus Peirce Middle School is \$4,755,280, 15% of the total budget, of which 97% covers payroll obligations. Mr. Horton spoke to the pandemic and its' impact and our student and teacher needs. For this coming year he feels there is only one main request: to increase the Encore staff; at the moment he is keeping the specific focus of that teacher yet to be determined as Tech, Art, Music, Spanish and Wellness. With six Encore options to coincide with sections and based upon the middle school model built last year, an extra Encore teacher will be needed to have the equal working six core and six Encore for common planning time.

Budget Development FY22: Nantucket High School, Principal Mandy Vasil

Principal Mandy Vasil delivered her budget and prompted everything they reviewed was based on the needs of the students. NHS is 20% of the total budget at \$6,367,078, with 97% in payroll role forward. She talked about moving some line items around to better support needs and determined first science textbooks for online resources is very necessary upgrade as ours are outdated. She also is adding a 1.0 Special Education Teaching Assistant due to enrollment numbers and students transitioning into high school in the IDSC.

Budget Development FY22: Special Education Department, Director Debra Gately

Ms. Gately, new to our district, began her preamble that she has been on a fact-finding mission from her start date in July and is discerning what is needed, what works and what does not. She hopes to make informed decisions and will consider some reorganization and how that may impact the Special Education Department. Of most importance to her is to find

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equitable support. She stated the Special Education Department is \$6,670,732, 21% of the total budget, with 85% for payroll. She is asking for a total increase of \$136,852, which comprises requests already embedded in school budgets, but also includes a 0.8 FTE SPED Interpreter. She did a quick review of what was included throughout the four schools and discussed her one additional request and the rationale to support the Interpreter position to offset higher costs for outside contracting services. Ms. Gately also offered some future considerations and how strengthening the infrastructure can contribute to substantial cost savings in multiple areas.

Budget Development FY22: English Language Learners, Director Kelly Ann Cooney

Director Kelly Cooney said ELL budget is \$1,361,653, which represents 4% of the total budget and payroll obligations equate to 96%. Ms. Cooney emphasized the need of multilingual students and recovery from the COVID pandemic supports the funding increase requests. The ELL department is looking to add a 1.0 SEI Coach to help academic literacy areas. The department is also asking for additional money of \$5,000 for funding to the Technology line to utilize Imagine Learning, a program that offers lessons, assessments and data information to help drive instruction.

Budget Development FY22: Central Office, Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett

Dr. Hallett offered one request to add an Education Technology Specialist who would assist and support the district with online curriculum platforms. This request is approximately \$80,000.

The Chair asked the Committee if they had comments or questions concerning any of the budgets presented. Dr. Lepore was curious about Enrollment and the overall budget impact if we drop 100 students. Dr. Hallett did not think we would see this dip, but if so, the district would look carefully at class sizes and making the best decisions for students and staff. Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov felt that without any conditions attached to our budget, it would not be hard to tweak the numbers if needed. Steve Sortevik asked the NES Principal how much staff had been added thus far to her team. Mrs. Kubisch reviewed the add-ons/remote teachers based on class sizes and the additional TA's to help with support. She approximated four additional staff members but said she would confirm the number. Mr. Sortevik was pleased to hear about additional staff and responded we need to add even more.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Donation from Liz Holland & Hyline Cruises for Adopt-A-Lunch Program, \$215.00 Zona Butler made a motion to approve the donation, Jennifer Iller seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Trustees of Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin's Lancasterian School to NHS Class of 2021, \$5,000.00 Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve the donation, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Egan Maritime Institute to CPS Gift Account/Maritime Studies, \$19,298.00 Pauline Proch recused herself, Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Jennifer Iller seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from St. Paul's Mission Committee Healthy Snack Donation to NCS Extended Day Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved

Vote to Approve Donation from Jean F. & David G. Nathan Fund to NCS Community Pool, \$250.00. Zona Butler made a motion to approve the donation, Steve Sortevik seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from First Congregational Church to NCS, recognition of service \$500.00. Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the donation, Steve Sortevik seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Amendment to Policy IJNDD, Social Media The current social media policy has been reviewed regularly and was brought forth for a vote of approval at the December 1, 2020 meeting. It was previously brought forward for a vote and was requested by the School Committee to review it again, have it vetted by MASC, legal counsel and the Policy Subcommittee and bring it forth for a vote of affirmation at the January 5 meeting. Tim Lepore approved, Zona Butler seconded, but Steve Sortevik asked to make an Amendment removing a section regarding disciplinary actions based on posts and to have discussion. He disagrees with some of the wording, feeling it "sends the wrong message to staff." With the amendment

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made by Mr. Sortevik, Dr. Lepore seconded, discussion transpired. Dr. Hallett offered that both the Policy Subcommittee and legal counsel have ‘re-looked’ at the policy, and the Policy Subcommittee determined to move forward as penned. Mrs. Butler provided some context to the language that says “may” when referring to disciplinary action, meaning persons should think before they speak or post. She furthered everyone is entitled their opinion, but when referencing the school district, one must consider what they put out into the airwaves through the social media platform. It is Mrs. Butler’s feeling the policy should be approved as it stands without revisions, that it is an important policy and it needs to be put in place now. Chair Proch asked for a vote to the amended motion made by Mr. Sortevik. The Amendment was not approved by roll call vote, Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Iller, Mrs. Proch, Dr. Lepore all voting NO, Mr. Sortevik voting YES. Going back to the original vote on the table approving Policy IJNDD as presented, a roll call vote landed Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Iller, Mrs. Proch and Dr. Lepore voting YES, Mr. Sortevik voting NO. The policy carried approval.

Vote to Approve November 24, 2020 Workshop Meeting Minutes Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve December 1, 2020 Workshop Meeting Minutes Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices Tim Lepore made a motion to approve, Zona Butler seconded, the motion was approved.

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Negotiations: Not reported

Cape Cod Collaborative: Zona Butler mentioned there will be a legislative breakfast via Zoom.

The School Committee wanted to know if anyone knew the December Delight profits, who was in charge and was it successful considering the pandemic and the fact that it was mainly virtual shopping, virtual raffles, virtual auctions, etc... Mrs. O’Connor shared the Chairpersons’ names: Mrs Eleanor Antonietti, Mrs. Tracy Halik, Mrs. Rebecca Miller, and Mrs. Rebecca Hickman. The total profit, with numbers still coming in was approximately \$30,000+. Mr. Anguelov said he would query the final tally and report back to the Committee. Mr. Sortevik was completely impressed by the Auction and the efforts made by all.

Horizon

January 15, 2021 at 6:00 pm is the Public Hearing for NPS.

At 8:34pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Zona Butler, seconded by Steve Sortevik, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk