

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
October 6, 2020

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller, Dr. Timothy Lepore, and Steve Sortevik. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Matt Nessroldt and presenters as guests: Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett and Finance Director, Martin Anguelov- 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, 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.

An announcement was made NCTV was having technical difficulties with their station and was off- line due to technology Comcast connectivity issues, therefore live coverage was available through the Nantucket Government access website. A request was made by the Chair to make a change in the agenda, moving the Superintendent’s Report to the beginning of the meeting. A motion to amend and approve the agenda was made by Steve Sortevik, seconded by Jennifer Iller and was approved unanimously by roll call vote. Chair Proch welcomed newly elected School Council Representative, Amanda Mack to her first meeting and also reminded the viewing public that Public Comment had a three minute time limit.

Comments from the Public

Chair Proch opened comments from the public. She waited a fair amount of time to offer opportunity for comment due to the connectivity and internet issues. Hearing none via the Zoom, she proceeded to the Agenda.

Presentations and Discussion of interest to the Committee

Transportation Numbers – Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov

Mr. Anguelov reported the two days of school have been successful for the busing but has included challenges. Three busses are currently running, and with required social distancing the district can only support 81 students in total on the big busses and 19 on the smaller bus. We are currently at our maximum with two buses at capacity inclusive of siblings sitting together and the third bus running close to the limit. Linda Bayard Barrett, Coordinator (currently not driving, due to the COVID - 19 pandemic) is monitoring all bus activity numbers and constantly reassessing the ridership and routes based upon actual numbers and new requests to ride the bus. Integrating Cohorts B&C will be an added challenge and we need to have another driver come back to driving. Mr. Anguelov and Cape Cod Collaborative are working together to create the best possible scenarios as we are lacking drivers (due to the pandemic) which equates to less buses. The district is asking parents to drive

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their children if at all possible. Jennifer Iller asked for a rundown of the safety protocols and wondered if seats are being disinfected, touch points cleaned continuously and in-between runs, are masks worn, etc...Mr. Anguelov commented how many of the drivers are over the age of 60 and ultimately, very conscious of ensuring the buses are routinely adhering to the cleaning and safety protocols. Mr. Sortevik was curious about the need for multiple runs to accommodate the number of riders. Mr. Anguelov says necessity for multiple runs due to increase numbers could possibly create the need for staggered class start times and it is too early to determine at this time.

At the end of the presentation, the Chair asked for a motion to re-open Public Comment due to a community member coming in late to the meeting. A motion was made by Steve Sortevik, second by Jennifer Iller, and voted for approval by the Committee. Mrs. Proch welcome Hadley Dutra, parent and community member who asked to read a letter:

"Dear School Committee members:

This week Principal Kubisch and Superintendent Hallett took time out of their busy schedules to meet with me about how they plan to return Cohorts B and C to in-person instruction. According to the Superintendent, 38% of the total student body is in Cohort A. The remaining 62% of students in NPS are learning at home. The younger grades have a higher percentage of children in Cohort A. We now have a district teeming with students, yet there is a significant number of students who have not yet been given the chance to return in-person. Commissioner Riley recommends we not start Cohorts B and C in-person while the island is in the red, thus creating an impossible situation for students in the last two Cohorts.

Cohort A is larger than it once was. Originally, only ELL students, students on an IEP, economically disadvantaged students, students whose parents are teachers and students who have been identified by school personnel as needing Cohort A for emotional or safety reasons were placed into Cohort A. Cohort A was then opened to children with a variety of needs outlined by the state, including being disengaged, struggling previously during remote periods, and early learners in grades PK-5. Parents who contacted the school to say their children fell into one of these categories in some cases had their students moved into Cohort A and the school in turn contacted parents and offered Cohort A in some instances. As a result, there are more children learning in-person than not in many classes and students yet students in Cohorts B and C are watching their classrooms from behind screens.

I am asking that our school district assert local control and return students in Cohorts B and C to in-person learning no later than October 19 and 22 respectfully. This is the only way we can maintain equality and fairness within our district. Our school leaders accepted these students into the first Cohort with the best intentions. Parents, we need to exhibit respect and kindness as we try to find a solution for Cohorts B and C. I respectfully ask that the School Committee and the Superintendent work together to assert local control over our district and return all students to in-person instruction. If we return these cohorts to school when Nantucket exits the red status, we run the risk of the remaining two Cohorts not having in-person instruction.

Nantucket is currently in the red, yet our metric isn't correct. Our metric is based on an 11,000 population. According to the Nantucket Database our year round population is 17,000. Island visitors and seasonal residents don't count towards our metric, yet their COVID tests do. Every positive test conducted at Nantucket Cottage Hospital counts against our metric of 11,000 people. Less than 12 positive COVID cases in two weeks are needed for Nantucket to get out of the red. We are in the red now while our students attend school because we are able to maintain correct social distancing. This same distancing would continue should Cohort B and C be admitted back into the school buildings.

Thank you to the Nantucket Boys and Girls Club for opening their doors to students in grades 1-3 during the school day. The Club has offered my first grader and other young students the opportunity to learn and enjoy themselves in a safe environment during this uncertain time."

Superintendent's Report – Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett
Hybrid Plan / First Day Opening Update

Dr. Elizabeth Hallett was happy to report having students in the school for the first day was terrific. She along with other administrators were there to greet students and despite rainy weather all students and staff were enthusiastic. She described the priority of Cohort A starting first and reaffirmed this was not a preference, but a mandate from the state. With red zone designation, the district could not invite all students in the Hybrid Model right away, and a slow progression would happen to bring the Hybrid Plan to fruition. Dr. Hallett talked about the decisions for Cohort A student selection is based on a number of directed qualifications, including special education students, students with connectivity issues, difficult homelife that creates safety issues for children, plus staff member children. Dr. Hallett invited each Principal to share a brief first day of school.

NES: Principal Kimberly Kubisch thanked the teachers and staff, the Assistant Principal Kimberly Albertson and stated almost everyone was in attendance in the morning to welcome students. The children were so excited to come into school and there were no first day jitters or inconsolable students, especially in PreK and K classes- Parents stayed outside, kids went inside. Everyone was adhering to mask wearing with a few of the little ones having some challenges - new Special Services Director, Debra Gately, has created programming to help support those 'little' struggling students. Mrs. Kubisch said the task at hand now is to beef up the online learning and remote instruction, but the start of school went very well.

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NIS: Principal Evemarie McNeil thanked her Assistant Principal Donna Johnson and all the staff and agreed the day went very well. It was smooth for all home and in-school, students were engaged and learning. Mrs McNeil furthered, students want to do what is expected. She agreed challenges lay ahead with the in/out simultaneous learning and navigating the hybrid model will take some extra focus, but she knows her staff can handle this.

CPS: Principal Michael Horton was happy to share the day was overall, a smooth experience also. He offered three thank yous: 1)Staff – even with the rain on the first day, kids were directed to the gym and the café as they entered school to start and then settled in their Homerooms. 2)Students – he declared students were amazing, zero mask issues, prepared for school, cleaned desks, helped where needed and there were no disciplinary issues. 3)Parents – he stated how it was evident students were prepared and parents were to thank.

NHS: Principal Mandy Vasil said the first day was a very successful day. There were zero mask issues, students seemed genuinely happy to be in the building, they were supportive and helpful to one another. She shared there was a small lunch order glitch but should be attended to and was not a major impact factor. Mrs. Vasil gave a shout out to the teaching staff.

Dr. Hallett commented on this very strange time and this type of learning situation will require lots of practice and “we will get better” as staff collaborates. She talked about how every district across the country is dealing with the pandemic. She was happy to confirm how well the safety protocols are going and as we take more students into the buildings, we will have to be vigilant and extra careful! She shared she speaks with Roberto Santamaria, Director of Department of Health, every single day and they assess the situation constantly. Dr. Hallett also noted a feel-good moment, commenting on watching a new staff member, the music teacher in NES, teaching her music class outside and how great it was to witness the class having a wonderful time. Jennifer Iller thanked everyone for their continued dedication and reinforced how much a task this whole new learning situation is presenting. Dr. Lepore also happy to see the progress, and Mrs. Proch shared a funny anecdotal story about one student being so excited about entering the school building for the first time.

Enrollment

Dr. Hallett shared enrollment numbers, citing less students right now despite the ‘scare’ of many summer families staying here and enrolling their children in our district who otherwise would have been in their own home districts/state. She discussed the numbers for year-end must be March 2020 numbers as those are the last official numbers the district has to offer because we closed our doors due to the pandemic in March. SIMS, the official enrollment count for that time was 1678 and now in October 2020 we have a total of 1673. Dr. Hallett thanked Sarah Erichsen, Central Registrar, who has been very busy navigating the enrollments/withdrawals. Mr. Sortevik was surprised by the number and said he has been using 1800 students as an enrollment number and will now use this lower number in his calculations.

School Committee Progress on Goals

Chair Pauline Proch and Secretary Steve Sortevik have been reevaluating and revising the Goals with Mr. Sortevik paying close attention to matching the goals with the agenda items. He agreed there are multiple areas share similar goals and it makes for dizzy comparison. The School Committee needs to set a meeting to go over each Goal. The School Committee agreed they would like to add a note, date and description of what each presentation, and when, so that they can be easily referred to in back tracking or moving forward. Mrs. Proch said a google document will be the most efficient way to structure the progress and because the Committee should report quarterly, this will be helpful for discussion. Mrs. Iller was curious who will keep track and asked how this template will be different than the Horizon. Mr. Sortevik said it will be more specific and will keep a running list of what has been done. This document will be a helpful share document with objectives and evidence.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Donation from EduKit to CPS Student Activities Account, \$470.81 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Joan Hochman to NCS for the Community Pool, \$100.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

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Vote to Approve Donation from Patricia Brill to NCS for the Community Pool, \$2,000.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from The ReMain Nantucket to NCS fro GED & Adult Ed Programs, \$32,000.00 Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve the donation, Steve Sortevik seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Nantucket Education Trust to NCS ACKVenture Camp, \$3,325.00 Jennifer Iller made a motion to approve the donation, Steve Sortevik seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from The Nantucket Fund to NCS Summer Boost Interpreter Training, Parenting Training Workshops & Multilingual Driver's Education programs, \$17,500.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the donation, Jennifer Iller seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve September 24, 2020 Meeting Minutes Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes, Jennifer Iller seconded, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve September 24, 2020 Executive Session Meeting Minutes Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve the minutes, Tim Lepore seconded, and the motion was approved.

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

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Chair Proch met with the newly formed Diversity sub-committee, via remote and in-person grouping. Mrs. Butler will join the Committee and Marita Scarlett, CPS Teachers reached out to connect the student members of the Nantucket Equity Act.

Student Council Representative

Newly elected Student Council Representative, Amanda Mack, was welcomed and jumped right in introducing herself as a Senior and had much to share on her first meeting.

- Cohort A students were excited to be back in the building.
- Student Council elections were that day during Advisory
- On October 13th the Club Fair for students will be held virtually for the first time and the fair is in the final planning and approval stage.
- Some Senior events will look different this year - how to handle December Delight
- The Senior Seminar will be October 9 during Advisory, through Zoom and recorded for absent students. Guidance Counselors will come into the virtual classroom and guide students on after high school plans and goals, work, college, a gap year, or the military
- Students will also learn about updating Naviance
- Senior Parent Night, October 13, also virtual and recorded, counselors will share with the parent/guardian how they can support their senior student in this different time due to COVID

Mrs. Proch empathized, expressing it is an interesting time to be a Senior in high school. She discussed the Agenda and Horizon and options for next School Committee meetings. The 2nd meeting for the month will still not be on a regular schedule Tuesday, but rather October 22, Thursday at 6pm. November 3rd will be the first November meeting and proposed November 24 as additional date. November is very difficult to schedule with two Federal Holidays and the Town & Zoom schedules dictating much of when the Committees can meet. A 12 Noon Workshop was proposed for November 24, and Mr. Sortevik agreed every meeting we can schedule should be kept on the calendar.

At 7:26pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Steve Sortevik and seconded by Jennifer Iller, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O'Connor, School Committee Clerk