

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
October 22, 2020

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Zona Tanner-Butler, Dr. Timothy Lepore, and Steve Sortevik. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Matt Pommfrets and presenters as guests: Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett and Finance Director, Martin Anguelov, Logan O’Connor as Records Access Officer- 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.

The Chair called the meeting to order. Secretary Steve Sortevik made a motion to make a permanent change for agenda(s), moving the Superintendent’s Report to the beginning of the meeting. 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

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett welcomed Cohorts B and C last Monday, October 19 for Prek-5 and said she is starting to feel the school is a ‘little more whole’ having those students come through the doors. She was excited describing how teachers and students knew each other from weeks of school already under their belt, even though it had been remote and was looking forward to welcoming grades 6-12 this upcoming Monday, October 26. While Nantucket is still in the red-zone designation, it was anticipated to move to yellow by this Thursday evening, and the school was ready to receive all students in Cohorts A, B, and C.

District Improvement Plan – Year 2

Superintendent Hallett presented the Draft DIP Action Plan, reminding the School Committee this is Year 2 of 3 and reviewed quickly, the four Strategic Objectives: Improve Student Learning and Achievement, Increase Support, Equity, and Access for All Students, Secure and Maximize Resources, and Champion a Culture of Inclusion, Collaboration and Communication. She described each Objective as an umbrella to the initiatives and selected a few from each category objective to review them with the School Committee. These initiatives were bolded for purposes of emphasis in discussion and important focus. Dr. Hallett stated it is essential to mention that the Action Plan for last year (first year of the plan) had

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to abruptly redirect when the COVID-19 pandemic washed over the country causing closures to the district in March of 2020. Dr. Hallett referenced the School Improvement Plans, the Administrator Goals, and the Educator Goals Cycles all tying in nicely with the DIP and how everything works in tandem. The School Committee was happy with the document, citing its comprehensive details and especially with the addition of new and unanticipated areas. The committee recognized how much work went into this document, appreciated the status column to help outline the progress and thanked all involved. Chair Proch asked if this document is discussed in staff meetings and Dr. Hallett talked about PLCs, Team and Grade Level meetings actively referring to the Objectives. NHS Principal Mandy Vasil and CPS Michael Horton agreed, the feedback is helpful and how the DIP can assist the shaping of Professional Practice Goals, particularly in correlation to hybrid and remote learning.

Negotiations

Dr. Hallett confirmed the start of the Teaching Assistant and Facility Unit negotiations is to begin in November. She had suggested a slightly delayed start, needing a bit of a breather for all involved after just completing the MOAs tackling hybrid and in-person learning. The Union representatives are hopefully in agreement. Mr. Sortevik was optimistic and hoped the Teaching Assistant CBA could be done by Christmas.

MASC/MASS

The Annual Joint Conference typically is scheduled for the Fall, this year was to be November 4-7. Last year, Dr. Hallett along with Pauline Proch and Logan O'Connor, attended the conference, participating in multiple programs, workshops and lectures. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the conference was cancelled for in-person, alternatively delivering online workshops and programs. Dr. Hallett encouraged the School Committee to take advantage of any of the offerings, they are no charge and open to any of the Committee members.

Steve Sortevik (at this point of the meeting) asked about our bussing situation. Dr. Hallett described Linda Bayard Barrett, Coordinator, frantically moving bus routes and ridership to accommodate as many students as possible. Still impacted because of less drivers, which equates to less busses and therefore, a reduced number of seats to offer to students. Martin Anguelov, Director of Finance, working with Cape Cod Collaborative, did hope to have an additional driver return to work, which would open more seats. Also, the NHS routes were going to attempt to drive double routes to increase capacity, and hope that students can manage the extra early pickups. Zona Butler, the School Committee sub-committee representative for CCC had heard we had many busses (10) and drivers (8), but this is not accurate and Mr. Anguelov confirmed we only have four busses and four drivers and we have waiting lists at every school for ridership.

Presentations and Discussion of interest to the Committee

1st Quarter Budget Update – Director of Finance, Martin Anguelov

Mr. Anguelov presented information for the first quarter, covering July 1 – September 30, 2020, showing a total of expenses and payroll at \$993,458 less than one year ago. Percentages show 21% funding already committed in comparison to 25% for last year. Payroll expenses decreased by \$776,288 compared to last year and which represents only 10% expended. The reason for these differences is not due to the pandemic, but rather the calendar and School Year/Fiscal Year not coinciding (payroll split into 27 pay periods last year versus this year at more typical 26 pay periods) along with summer accruals. Every seven years or so, is an 'odd' year for pay periods and by changing to 27, we prevent pre-paying salaries for work yet to be performed. There is also extensive savings thus far in Athletics commitments. With Interscholastic sports cancelled for Fall 2020 there is no travel and transportation contracts funded. Mr. Anguelov anticipates these expenses will kick back in and balance out as Interscholastic play hopefully resumes in Winter and Spring.

Mr. Anguelov delivered the Community School numbers which he said in contrast to last year, are “nonsensical.” Because the numbers do not make sense, they are hard to understand, and comparisons do not exist. Revenues for this quarter show a decline of \$298,557 with actual program revenues falling \$348,557, but with a Town contribution going up from last year's total of \$500,000 to this year total to \$550,000. Expenses and encumbrances decreased by \$223,887 mostly due to reduced staffing levels, decreased enrollment and cancellations of programs due to COVID-19. Mr. Anguelov commended the Director, Tracy Roberts and the staff for working so hard in a challenging situation to try and make any meaningful financial performance to get through the current crisis all while maintaining some programming and services essential to the

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community. The district will continue to support the NCS and with continued generous support from collaborators such as Nantucket Golf Club Foundation, Nantucket Education Trust, ReMain Nantucket and Community Foundation for Nantucket, everyone is committed to trying to help sustain the operations. Mr. Anguelov gave a few specifics of Driver's Ed, Swimming lessons and Adult Education not being able to continue as standard operations and are now trying to fill in some of the back log to generate anything possible. He did recognize the Recreation Revolver controlled in a separate fund through the Town of Nantucket, doing well because private club closures and shortages of court availability drove people to use the Town facilities therefore generating some income in this sector. Mrs. Butler brought up her idea again, of thinking "outside of the box" and trying to find some programming that fits inline with the remote learning strategies, hoping this might help offset some of the deficits.

The School Lunch program for the month of September 2020 operated at a deficit of \$30,695 versus a deficit of \$41,300 for the same period last year. With COVID impacting how lunch is delivered there were a total of 663 lunches and 644 breakfasts served through the Food truck we are leasing with Island Kitchen. All meals this year are served free to all students based upon a mandate from the Department of Education and Nantucket as a district will be reimbursed at the free rate for every meal, \$3.64 for lunch and \$1.89 for breakfast. The district hopes to remain within the subsidy (\$84,865 for this year compared to \$55,000 for last year) as we move through the next three quarters and continue to maintain the same positive trend as we have in the past three years. There are obviously, no numbers for comparison. Dr. Lepore asked about the subsidy going up, Mr. Anguelov said it is necessary to prepare for inflationary pressures, and while we cannot forecast sustainable information, he feels confident we will not go much beyond last year in terms of paying the subsidy amount.

Pauline Proch was very complimentary about the Community School work and thankful for the food service availability to the students. Steve Sortevik was curious about Special Education budget numbers and specifically, the impact of off-island placements and perhaps some that might not have been predicted. Mr. Anguelov deferred to Debra Gately, Director of Special Services, who verified, we are obligated to provide these options if the profiles are a match to off-island services that cannot be fulfilled on island. Mr. Anguelov reminded the School Committee about the Circuit Breaker funding, which is approximately \$360,000 this year, along with our Special Education Reserve Fund we started a few years ago, which has \$250,000 in a reserve account for exactly this purpose.

English Learner Update – Director of ESL, Kelly Cooney

Ms. Cooney offered a PowerPoint presentation and thanked her full staff of English Learner educators. With fourteen designated ESL staff, plus all the Core Content SEI Endorsed teachers, she is pleased at our ability to deliver appropriate support throughout our district. She highlighted with a few examples, a video and a poster illustration, citing "Bilingualism is an Asset", and a drawing for back to school addressing the topic of COVID, "Masks are a school tool." The EL population in each school continues to steadily grow and Ms. Cooney provided a breakdown of EL numbers of students by school over the years, affirming we are hovering at 265 students in our district for 2020. She showed percentages of a slight decline of 390% down from 589% yet trending high since 2006. Nantucket Elementary School has the largest number of EL students currently, with numbers inclusive of PreK. We currently have 38% of students that are multilingual - she provided percentages of students that have special needs, are in their first year of school with NPS, might additionally be considered SLIFE students (students with limited or interrupted education), and students who have FELPed, meaning they have advanced out of the program and mainstreamed into core classes. She gave a breakdown of the many different countries that now represent our ELL students (over twelve), Spanish speaking countries having the highest representation. It is important to recognize the district proportionality of Students with Disabilities 30%, ELs with disabilities 17% of the EL population and ELs with disabilities 16% of the Students with Disabilities, which significantly shows that we do not over or under identify. Additionally, the ELL students are faring well on our ACCESS tests, making progress demonstrating proficient scores and proven gains, often better than state comparisons. Unique to this population, teaching ELs in blended learning has offered an advantage that seems to have offset the stresses of hybrid learning because ACCESS testing is given on computer so many ELs are accustomed to online learning versus the transition for other students. Ms. Cooney finished up her presentation talking about professional development opportunities and two new initiatives to support the district in anti-racist education. The curriculum will shift a bit to focus on Anti-racism and an instructional leadership team is being created,

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encompassing representatives from each school. The timeline and objectives will be shaped this year with the established group of educators leading the work.

Mr. Sortevik commended the Director on the increased focus on ELL education and congratulated her on expanding the work that started ten years ago. Dr. Lepore asked about students in high school and helping them graduate or watching them drop out and how do we concentrate on these students. Ms. Cooney agreed this can be an issue and shared that DESE is more sensitive to this situation during the last few years, watching more carefully MCAS requirements, ACCESS testing, studies and trends, trying to give more supports from the state level for success. Ms. Cooney talked about our active Lasell program and Innovation Pathways and she is hoping to secure a Grant being offered for college credits which will no doubt entice more students to further their educational goals. Mrs. Proch asked for clarification of what causes a student to be a FEL and Ms. Cooney responded it is not a choice, it is based on certain scoring, team decisions and if a student can excel in core classes. Superintendent Hallett thanked the Director for her work, her success, and the challenges she faces, knowing from her own experience in the Quincy district how hard it is getting programs aligned.

Homeschooling Report – Records Access Officer, Logan O’Connor

Mrs. O’Connor reported the homeschooling acceptances has increased a bit this year, citing she was not surprised due to the current Hybrid and Remote learning. Offering a three-year comparison, this year there are 13 students, which is a total of 7 families. These families have all submitted their homeschool plans and have been approved and accepted by the Superintendent. Mrs. O’Connor stated there were four PreK parents who were very concerned about having their plans approved, but she assured them, PreK does not need to submit such plans. Working with the Central Registrar is key to in trying to ensure everyone is accounted for. Mrs Butler, always concerned with truancy issues, asked about what we do when we know students are out of school, but not homeschooling, and asked if we have a designated Truancy officer. Mrs. O’Connor said we do not have an actual titled officer, but we are fortunate being a small district in a small community with Student Resource Officers, who know everyone, and also social workers who reach out and work with families to ensure we have everyone in school. Dr. Lepore asked, what about the students we do not know. Mrs O’Connor hoped we are aware of all students and that no one would slip through the cracks, but we cannot be 100% sure.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve Donation from Robert J. Reid, Jr. to NCS, \$5,000.00 Zona Butler made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation from Nantucket Golf Club Foundation to NCS School Breakfast Buddies Program and partnership with Graceline Institute Grid21 Teen Program, \$18,000.00 Zona Butler made a motion to approve the donation, Tim Lepore seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve NPS School Handbooks: NES, NIS, CPS, NHS Tabled to next meeting, requested by Jennifer Iller prior to this Regular Session meeting.

Vote to Approve October 6, 2020 Meeting Minutes Tim Lepore made a motion to approve the minutes, Zona Butler seconded, the motion was approved.

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

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Mrs. Butler attended virtually, the Cape Cod Collaborative meeting. The group is diligently working on the bussing issues, as it is a factor for many districts.

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Student Council Representative

Student Council Representative, Amanda Mack, shared students from Cohort B and C are excited to come back. There was the Virtual Club Fair was held on October 20th, currently online offerings of 25 clubs. She talked about intramural sports starting and it is going well. As a field hockey player, she can attest to this excitement. There are a few Senior events, the Senior seminar where Guidance will come into Advisories and guide students on after high school plan information, and the Virtual Senior parent night to provide parents ways to support their Seniors.

Mrs. Proch told Miss Mack she would call on her in next meetings because she truly hopes for her to contribute her voice and opinions to presentations. Mrs. Butler was excited to personally welcome Miss Mack as they have a history from Girl Scouts together and she missed her in the first meeting. Steve Sortevik wanted to give a “shoutout” to Athletic Director, Christopher Maury, for all the work being done to make the Intramural sports happen this fall. He also wanted to ensure that he could come and watch (socially distanced) as well as parents, citing how much he loves to spectate at NPS activities.

Mrs. Proch reminded the committee the next meeting will be on November 3, 2020. She also reminded them this meeting would adjourn to Executive Session. At 8:13pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Steve Sortevik and seconded by Zona Butler, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk