

Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes – Remote Participation via ZOOM and Youtube
April 15, 2021

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Jennifer Iller, Secretary Steve Sortevis, Dr. Tim Lepore, and Zona Tanner Butler. Also present from the Studio, NCTV Representative Matt Pommerfret and presenters as guests: Principals Mandy Vasil & Michael Horton, Veritas Advisor Page Martineau, Veritas Co-Chairs Maisie Cocker & JohnCarl McGrady, ELPAC President Doris Avelar and members Kaeyllane DeLima Dias, Maryia Rubina, Director of EL Kelly Cooney, and SNAC President Laura Steele. This 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 6:30 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, Zona Butler, Steve Sortevis, 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 at 6:30pm. A motion was made to approve the agenda by Steve Sortevis, seconded by Tim Lepore, and which was then approved unanimously by roll call vote. Mrs. Proch welcomed everyone to the Nantucket School Committee meeting and opened Public Comment.

Comments from the Public

None

Superintendent’s Report

**Middle & High School Return to In-Person Learning Update – Principals Mandy Vasil & Michael Horton
District Report Card**

On behalf of Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett (not present) high school Principal Mandy Vasil & middle school Principal Michael Horton shared their rollout ahead as the district begins its return to school process. With Nantucket Elementary and Nantucket Intermediate Schools already back in full person on April 5, the middle school is set to return on April 28 and the high school anticipates the first week in May. The two principals said the resuming for students is an optional selection for parents and they can indeed choose to stay remote. However, both are happy to report most students wish to be in person full time - this does put pressure on schedules, lunch, and bussing. Over the last month both principals have been working on their schedules and how things will roll forward with the least disruption. In CPS, most students will stay in their “pods” and remain in their Encore classes. Those students who were in the hybrid sections of B & C are the most challenging to schedule because they were in school or remote for school depending on which cohort they were in. A and D Cohorts largely stay status quo, either all in school or all remote, therefore the B and C students will be sprinkled into the A and D established groupings. Bringing the students into school can now be achieved because the COVID protocol distance is now 3 feet, and

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this can accommodate more students in the classrooms. However, lunch needing to remain at a 6ft distance does present some creative thinking. For lunch periods, students will be spread out either in the classroom, in the café (previously not used for lunch but rather desk storage) or outside. Mr. Horton likes that the spring break vacation has happened prior to their return on April 28th because it has given him time to outline and perfect the patterns of movement and the schedules. It has also given the administrators a chance to reach out to those families of children who are remoting that the principals feel would benefit more from in person instruction.

Principal Mandy Vasil reiterated much of what Mr. Horton shared. For her, 85% of high school families answered her survey to determine back to school interest versus remote. She said this response was very helpful for planning and over half of her classrooms will not need extra desks. Working with facilities to set up classrooms and areas to accommodate lunch was valuable, and she confirmed approximately only 14% of her students will remain in remote. She reassured the School Committee priorities will remain to review and strengthen the absolute necessities to adhere to the safety protocols, especially with more students in the building. When Principal Vasil finished about returning to school, she wanted to circle back to a request made by the School Committee at the prior meeting. They had asked for further details about Senior Class information and their next year plans. Mrs. Vasil reported of the 109 Seniors, 69 have applied to college or post-secondary school, 40 of those reported being accepted to one of their choices. She gave a demographic percentage breakdown of the Class of 2021 as a whole and additionally, a demographic percentage breakdown of the 69 students who applied for some kind of additional education.

Chair Pauline Proch thanked the principals and especially Principal Vasil for the Senior Class data; for her edification, the numbers define a clearer story. Mrs. Proch feels it would be most strategic to start conversations with students earlier about their thoughts for future planning, feeling these discussions would be beneficial. She would also like to hear more about the 40 students who seem not to have definitive direction and asked for that information - Principal Vasil said she would reach to the guidance department for more detail. Dr. Tim Lepore is happy to have the students returning to school, it is important to get them back into reality. Steve Sortevik agreed, and emphasized the need to keep sight of the safety protocols. He is specifically worried about the variants coming to light on the island and cited Health Department's Roberto Santamaria sharing information about the sewer numbers and the variants. Mr. Sortevik also was pleased to hear about reaching out to those students who 'should be' in and recognizing areas that need performance increase. He directly asked Principal Vasil about senior numbers headed into technology, trades, or alternative vocational areas, with her responding two confirmed seniors are headed into the tech field and two are headed directly into the military. Zona Butler was appreciative of the information regarding the senior data and asked for numbers instead of percentages. She also was curious about the survey results and if parents responded with questions and/or comments. Mrs. Vasil said the survey was made up of a fair amount of questions and most of the feedback received was regarding positive trends to all in person selections. Jennifer Iller thought aloud the district could do more for seniors and would like to see a specific position created in the guidance department dedicated just for seniors.

Superintendent Evaluation Timeline

Pauline Proch appreciated the document that Dr. Hallett shared with the Committee, providing a timeline for her Evaluation.

1. On April 15, 2021:

At the School Committee public meeting, a sub-committee will be chosen to compile and draft the Superintendent's evaluation.

2. By April 30, 2021:

- a. The Superintendent will complete a full self-evaluation of 2020-2021 goals and Standards I-IV (I: Instructional Leadership, II: Management and Operations, Family and Community Engagement, Professional Culture) using the "End-of-Cycle Summative Report" form and the "Focus Indicators for Leading in 2020-21" document that is specific to pandemic learning.
- b. The District Leadership Team will provide feedback to the School Committee using the "End-of-Cycle Summative Report" form and the "Focus Indicators for Leading in 2020-21" document.

3. By TBD

- a. The sub-committee will draft and share the Superintendent's evaluation with all committee members.
- b. The School Committee will individually review the Superintendent's self-evaluation and feedback from the DLT to assist in rating the Superintendent's performance on 2020-21 goals and Standards I-IV.
- c. The sub-committee will compose the final evaluation.

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4. On June 1, 2021:

- a. At the School Committee public meeting, the Committee will share their completed evaluation with the Superintendent and members of the public.

Chair Proch reminded the Superintendent is the only town figure to be evaluated publicly. She asked for two committee members to volunteer to be on the Sub Committee for this evaluation. There was much conversation regarding the timing and interest for members and Jennifer Iller suggested those interested should email the Chair. It was determined the Administrators completing their portion of the rubric evaluation will turn those in, directly to the Chair.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Veritas – NHS Teacher/Advisor Page Martineau & Co-Editors Maisie Cocker & JohnCarl McGrady

Mrs. Page Martineau stated running a newspaper in a global pandemic presents multiple challenges and complimented Miss Cocker and Master McGrady on having done an amazing job, sharing they have been ‘incredibly impressive’. She said Veritas has continued to be successful despite COVID. JohnCarl said this was his second year as Co-Editor and much of the allure of belonging to this club is how the paper is put together, being in the building, bonding together working on deadlines and getting the newspaper to print. With school going virtual and moving the process out of the building, it was a challenge, but it also propelled the group to revamp and revitalize the Veritas website. Not only did they manage to get a print version, they increased their website viewership by 2000%! Miss Cocker added it was difficult to garner the interest for new students to join, but they have luckily gotten some very good writers. She feels the Co-Editors are passing it off to capable hands. Mrs. Martineau described press week being an important experience and also payed tribute to Mrs. Anne Phaneuf, English teacher in NHS, for her journalism class being a good feeder ground for writers.

English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) Presentation – President Doris Avelar & Kaellayne DeLima Dias & Mariya Rubina

The President, Doris Avelar along with bilingual support liaisons gave a presentation for the English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC), delivering it in Spanish with Mrs. Dias translating into English. Mrs. Avelar thanked the Superintendent and the Director of EL Kellyanne Cooney for supporting this effort. The idea of ELPAC is to provide advice to the district regarding the delivery of English Learner Education programs. The group meets regularly with school officials, participates in the review of school improvement plans as they relate to ELs and reviews proposals by the district in offering improved or new instructional programs and educational opportunities for ELs. Massachusetts Department of Early and Secondary Education (DESE) has provided guidance as this group is now mandated by the state for public school districts. Mrs. Avelar reviewed the ELPAC timeline from its inception in 2014 through the present. With an average of 20 families participating routinely, they met every five weeks until COVID-19 changed this, and they developed remote meeting opportunities which is now every six weeks. Online meetings are a new format that is seemingly successful because many people feel more comfortable to speak, but they hope to resume in person meetings. Recently, because of their successful model for this group, they were invited to present at the Department of Education. Mrs. Avelar offered their future plan for 2021 and beyond, stating they were going to approve by-laws, explore Dual Language programming, resume in-person meetings, and hold elections in May 2021. Their hope is to develop a Dual Language Steering Committee, see a Bilingual Counselor join the district, and see more after school programming geared toward ELs. Mr. Sortevik was curious if 20 families is a good turnout and it sounded like online had less numbers and also wanted to know how the contacts are made to connect with families. Ms. Cooney said when ELPAC first started it was just a few and then rose to over 50, thanking Mrs. Avelar for her outreach. Backpack flyers, Facebook, WhatsApp, Remind, and Aspen are all sources of communication and information. Mrs. Iller asked if the district can identify families not necessarily participating, and Ms. Cooney assured the School Committee they have a good process in place, they routinely invite multilingual families, but the mandate from the state is specific to EL students and families (referencing the Baker law put into place in 2016). Chair Proch mentioned the statistic of our district where 40% of the population English is not the first language and she invited ELPAC to come present more than once per year.

Special Needs Advisory Council (SNAC) – President Laura Steele

SNAC is a council created to provide collaboration with the school district and special needs families to share information and discuss matters of common concern and interest. SNAC offers speakers, events, programs, and workshops for families covering all age levels and including all four schools. Mrs. Laura Steele indicated she had just given her presentation last year to the School Committee, when COVID-19 became a reality. In April 2020 she had met with island groups for summer

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Programming, and then the quarantine changed everything. She talked about how navigating summer and then entering into school in Fall for remote learning was extremely challenging for Special Needs families. She was very appreciative of Cohort A offering an opportunity for most special needs students to be in person because language and social skills are/were lagging and schools supporting the decision for as much in person connection is important! She talked about SNAC being reactive versus proactive this year but yet, they have still made great gains. She said Zoom has allowed for even more parent participation and more school personnel to join in meetings and specifically thanked Kathy Hackett from Martha's Vineyard and CPS Principal Michael Horton. Recently, SNAC had a presentation/meeting by Patti Menzel called *Ausome Connections – Understanding Relationships on the Autism Spectrum* about her experiences as a person with autism. Mrs. Steele said it was informative and eye opening, as did Director of Special Services Debra Gately, and hopes this can be offered to the whole district. Mrs. Steele publicly exclaimed her enthusiasm for the new Director of Special Services and how proactive she is in connections with families and school, how she has assisted with the SNAC webpage and is looking forward to Zoom meeting links being shared with School Committee members. The overall 'it takes a village' motto works for SNAC, and spreading the word for families to know they have supports is one of the main initiatives.

School Committee Self Evaluation – Chair Pauline Proch

Mrs. Proch asked if there were any comments from committee members. She cited the lengthy evaluation tool from Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) that outlines the benefits of this kind of assessment. She noted the collated document of all five members illustrates some different responses from each member and thanked everyone for their answers. This is a good way to have insight on how the board is trying to work effectively as a committee and can also highlight areas that can show needed areas of improvement or that they think are working well. She reviewed each section (Governance, Operations, Member Relations, Committee/Superintendent Relations, Strategic Planning, Fiscal Management, Community Relations, Conduct of Meetings) and keyed into where the answers were different among committee members: a 3 or 4 which was either 'disagreeing' with the statement or 'not knowing' and sometimes where a 2 and 3 were together indicating not necessarily agreeing or disagreeing. Both Mr. Sortevik and Mrs. Iller thought having a number option to represent 'partially agree' would be beneficial. Mrs. Proch went through random selections of answers addressing the difference using Zoom meetings and calendar challenges with scheduling the regular meetings. With some discussion, the School Committee collectively feels the agendas and meetings are too lengthy and should move along more quickly. Mr. Sortevik admitted with the changing meeting dates and information coming in at different times, he does not always have the ability to read through all of the information. There were no additional comments or questions.

School Committee Vacancy

Chair Pauline Proch confirmed Mrs. Zona Tanner Butler's letter of resignation read the letter into the minutes:

Dear Mrs. Proch: It is with regret that I tender my resignation as a member of the Nantucket School Committee, effective June 30, 2021 (or election day). I am grateful for relationships developed and having had the opportunity to serve the Nantucket community in this capacity for the past five (5) years, and I offer my sincerest wishes for its continued success.

Sincerely, yours, Zona V. Tanner-Butler

Mrs. Proch reviewed the process for the School Committee to fill this open seat, which is a one-year seat, effective June 15 through Annual Town Meeting 2022. She gave the overview of procedure to fill the seat and made the point to recognize this vacancy is different than those the School Committee had previously experienced: this is a resignation, not an unplanned passing of a sitting member. The School Committee discussed the process back and forth, and Steve Sortevik focused on Mass General Law 41.11 specifically, expressing that with confirmation from Erika Mooney, Town Administrator, the School Committee was within their legal right and could/should be posting the open vacancy immediately. The Chair shared information from counsel and from MASC, sharing best practices for governing bodies and recommendations on how to best move forward. Both assented the appropriate way to move forward is to wait until Mrs. Butler's resignation is effective. Mr. Sortevik asked Mrs. Butler directly to confirm her resignation date which she verified is Annual Town Election day, June 15, and she "promised" she will remain until that date and not change her mind to rescind her resignation. There was much discussion and disagreement among committee members regarding the timeline, how best to proceed with advertising the open seat vacancy, and Mr. Sortevik emphatically stating he agrees with neither counsel nor MASC. He further questioned and took issue with obtaining counsel, asking whether we are represented by our own counsel or the Town Counsel. Chair Proch responded this is the School Committee counsel, utilized to support our committee in matters where needed. Mr. Sortevik lectured that the Committee is legally within their rights to move forward now and advertise to fill the

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seat prior to Mrs. Butler’s effective date and made a motion, “... to begin the search, seeking replacement and requesting applicants by placing notice of application due date on website and in the Inquirer & Mirror by next Thursday, April 22. Further, there will be a three-week timetable to apply at which time we can begin the interviews.” Jennifer Iller seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, Jennifer Iller YES, Zona Butler YES, Steve Sortevik YES, Tim Lepore NO, Pauline Proch NO, the motion was carried 3-2. Mrs. O’Connor did not think she could successfully secure ad space and have information ready the following morning in order to make the deadlines for the advertisement, but could work to secure the space for Thursday, April 29th. Mr. Sortevik assented it was a head start and was satisfied.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve NO/YES to the Selection of School Choice Participation for the Academic Year 2021-2022 Steve Sortevik again asked for clarification regarding this vote and who notifies the state of the vote. Mrs. O’Connor reminded the School Committee she will submit a letter based upon the School Committees decision. Steve Sortevik made a motion of NO, Jennifer Iller seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve Donation to NHS from Karp Family Foundation for Establishment of a Scholarship Fund for AP Exams (specifically providing those students who need assistance to help pay for exam fees) \$5,000.00 Steve Sortevik made a motion to approve, Jennifer Iller seconded, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve April 1, 2021 Meeting Minutes Jennifer Iller made a to approve the minutes, Steve Sortevik seconded, with no one opposed, the motion was approved.

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

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Negotiations: Steve Sortevik reported agreement has been made with the Teaching Assistant Contract. Dr. Hallett and NTA Co-President Page Martineau are bringing the written draft to its final. He also reported the Custodial Contract has a date proposal to start negotiations.

Policy: Jennifer Iller said there is a meeting soon to review J Policies

Pauline Proch shared about the Behavioral Health group meeting with good discussion on the needs of students. She also attended the Legislative Breakfast where much conversation was about the ESSER III grant funds and she was happy to report it sounded as though Nantucket would be recipients of substantial funding, focusing on back to school funding requirements.

Horizon

The next meeting will be May 4 at 6pm and will include Enrollment, Facilities Update, Campus Wide Master Plan Presentation, 3rd Quarter Budget Update.

Mr. Sortevik asked the Chair to speak to the Superintendent urging Dr. Hallett to include School Committee members on the Search Committees for the Director positions for Athletics and ELL. He stated it is important enough for them to be involved and he reiterated his request.

At 9:27pm the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Jennifer Iller, seconded by Steve Sortevik and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Logan O’Connor, School Committee Clerk