

**Nantucket School Committee
Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2022**

Present Members: Chair Tim Lepore, Vice Chair Pauline Proch, Laura Gallagher Byrne and Anthony Fox. Also present from the Studio, a NCTV Representative. This meeting is an in-person participation meeting in compliance with Governor Charles Baker's statement allowing public bodies the ability to hold a meeting at a physical location that is open to the public, without requiring to provide alternative means of remote access. A motion was made by Pauline Proch, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, and approved unanimously, to open the Meeting, and which was called to order at 6:00 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI, by Chair Timothy Lepore. Dr. Lepore noted that Pauline Proch was attending via Google Meet phone.

Comments from the Public

None

**Superintendent's Report
COVID Updates**

Superintendent Elizabeth Hallett began with COVID updates, stating that COVID has hit the island hard with quite a few staff members and students out due to illness. The good news is that we have enough staff to cover classes of staff members that are out, with Central Office assisting where needed. She also shared that the CDC has changed their guidelines on isolation and quarantine, with the ability for individuals to return to work or school after 5 days with no fever or new symptoms. Dr. Hallett also shared that the Department of Education in collaboration with MA DPH procured a six-week supply of KN95 masks for each staff member in every school district across the Commonwealth. In addition, DESE/DPH provided rapid antigen test kits for staff to use at home prior to coming back to work. She thanked her colleague Meg Mayo-Brown, Superintendent of the Barnstable Schools, who helped coordinate the ferry shipment to Nantucket. She also recognized the District Leadership Team for their willingness to assist in handing out masks and test kits throughout the day on Sunday, January 2, 2022.

Dr. Hallett shared that the district would be hosting another mobile vaccine clinic on January 8 at the NES cafeteria from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm for the whole Nantucket community. Pfizer vaccines offered include first doses, second doses and boosters. She shared that the link to register for a vaccine appointment was located on the NPS website at the bottom right of the home page. There will be an additional vaccine clinic for second dose vaccines on January 29. Rocky Fox asked if any student who is absent due to COVID had their absences counted. Dr. Hallett answered that these students would be given excused absences due to medical reasons. Mr. Fox also asked about the necessity of a school closure due to lack of staff. Dr. Hallett answered that prior to a school closing, she is instructed to call Anne-Marie Stronach, point person at DESE, to put a plan in place. She reassured the Committee that the district was currently able to cover staff who were absent and school closings were not necessary at this time.

Enrollment

Superintendent Hallett reported a one less student from the month before, with 1,684 for a total district Enrollment. Enrollments and withdrawals have evened out, so the number is consistent.

Presentations and discussions of interest to the Committee

Budget Development FY23

Nantucket Elementary School – Principal Kim Kubisch

Principal Kubisch began her presentation sharing that the NES budget was 17% of the total district budget, with 98% going to staff salaries. She shared that staff and School Council are fully included in the budget process; they are asked to suggest, calculate, and prioritize budget requests. She shared that the requests that are submitted first to Dr. Hallett and Martin Anguelov, then the School Committee, and she and her NES colleagues are very grateful for the rollover of staff from this year to next year. She recognized that sharing NES budget needs in January is not always completely accurate, as it is hard to calculate with the unknown of student enrollment. Her first request was for additional Teaching Assistants (2) to provide support for Kindergarten classes. She acknowledged that often TAs that are originally allotted for Kindergarten are reassigned to children on IEPs needing 1:1 support, so it is always challenging to determine the true need for TAs at this time. Mrs. Kubisch also shared that the NES request for a behavior therapist was redirected to a district request for a new Board-Certified Behavior Analyst; the need for this position was explained in the presentation from the previous meeting

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given by Deb Gately, Director of Special Services. The request for a .5 ESL teacher at NES fell under the English Learner Department budget request, presented at the previous meeting by Patti Aube, Director of ELL. Mrs. Kubisch concluded her presentation by asking for support for her staff's request to bring a Masters' Degree program on-island for staff so that they were able to experience in-person instruction rather than remote classes for their Masters' work. Esmeralda Martinez commented that she is also in favor of the Masters' Degree program on-island. Laura Gallagher Byrne stated that she felt for Mrs. Kubisch and others around the challenges in finding qualified staff to fill positions and asked where the district was posting openings. Mrs. Kubisch explained that the district uses SchoolSpring.com and, more recently, Indeed.com, which has proved to be successful in finding qualified candidates. She also shared that she has had luck in getting subs lately from the pool of college students who are home over the holidays and looking for ways to increase their income, mentioning that two new subs are male. Rocky Fox echoed the other Committee members in supporting a Masters' program on-island for teachers. Dr. Hallett shared that she also fully supports this request but wants to be sure that the best quality program is available for Nantucket teachers. Pauline Proch also echoed her support for this program.

Nantucket Intermediate School – Assistant Principal Donna Johnson (on behalf of Principal Evemarie McNeil)

Assistant Principal Donna Johnson presented the NIS budget requests, starting with the explanation that NIS's budget makes up 15% of the total district budget, and 96% is spent on salaries. The only request at this time is for an additional 5th grade teacher to cover a larger 5th grade coming up from 4th grade. With six teachers in all three grades, NIS will have adequate support for all students in all grades. Mrs. Johnson also share that there is a request for two TAs for the IDSC and LBLD programs, but these are "budget neutral" since the IDSC students needing TA support are in 5th grade and will be moving up to CPS. Esmeralda Martinez asked what IDSC stood for: Intensive Developmental Support Center for students needing the maximum amount of special education support. Laura Gallagher Byrne asked why an additional 5th grade teacher is warranted. Mrs. Johnson explained that the current 5th grade class is quite small, but the current 4th grade class is larger and requires another teacher for coverage. Dr. Lepore asked if the TAs for the special education programs had to be specially trained; Mrs. Johnson shared that Ann Larsen from Landmark has been wonderful in training TAs working in these two programs to prepare them for working with these students.

Cyrus Peirce Middle School – Principal Michael Horton

Principal Horton began by sharing the photos of CPS events that depict the culture of the school. He then shared that the CPS budget represents 15% of the overall school budget. Of this, payroll accounts for 97%. He stated that with a smaller rising 6th grade class next year, CPS is in good shape staff-wise. However, what is needed is a new school counselor due to the nature of middle school social and emotional issues: the pandemic, social media, puberty, navigating peer relationships, for example. The counselor can assist with the TRAILS curriculum by delivering the more sensitive content for middle schoolers that trained and licensed counselors can assist with. Mr. Horton also requested a slight increase to the supply budget for teacher personal supplies; at this time, teachers are often paying out-of-pocket for additional supplies, such as snacks, fidget busters, or other non-academic supplies. He noted that it had been several years since this budget line was increased, and a small improvement would make a big difference. Rocky Fox asked how a teacher could submit requests for funds, to which Mr. Horton answered that there was a specific process for purchasing supplies through the P.O. process. Staff were actually reminded of this process earlier today. Mr. Fox asked if all schools may be needing an increase in their supply lines. Mr. Horton responded that each school deals with their supply budgets differently. Kathryn Kyomitmaitee asked about the assignment of students to the new counselor. Mr. Horton responded that most likely the students would be distributed by last name, but it could be done by grade instead. Miss Kyomitmaitee liked the idea of having the counselor that fits best with their students so that students can build trust with their counselor. Dr. Lepore asked if Mr. Horton thought of having the counselor stay with a class all the way through until 8th grade. Mr. Horton said that he has thought of that and agrees that it is an excellent idea, as he is employing this strategy with administrators at the middle school with each one taking a specific grade level. Pauline Proch said that she appreciated the ask for an additional counselor. She wanted to remind principals that Nantucket Education Trust (NET) has funding that can be utilized towards teacher requests for added non-educational supplies. She asked that teachers contact her directly so that NET can consider requests for reimbursement. Rocky Fox commented that NET has been mentioned several times and wondered how many teachers were making requests. Dr. Lepore suggested that he reach out to Pauline Proch for that information.

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Nantucket High School – Principal Mandy Vasil

Principal Vasil started by thanking Assistant Principal Jenn Psaradelis and the high school department leaders for their help and participation in putting together this budget proposal as well as praising teachers for their ability to utilize their allotment for resources and supplies appropriately. She shared that 19% of the district budget is for Nantucket High School, 97% of which goes towards staff salaries. She shared that the high school would like to bring back the Landscaping Program by adding a landscape environmental science teacher. She also stated that the visual arts program at NHS is thriving, and in order to fulfill the number of requests to take art and ceramics classes, another visual arts teacher is needed; she also added that art is an excellent outlet for students and can be very therapeutic. Mrs. Vasil then shared that they plan to make a slight reduction to the World Languages offerings for students due to very low enrollment in some courses. By doing so, she is able to offer a Portuguese class for students, which seems to be highly sought after. Miss Kyomitmaitee commented that the Portuguese class sounded like a great idea. Rocky Fox shared his support in bringing back any vocational program; he reminisced of the time when Mrs. Vasil was being interviewed and he was impressed by her background in vocational education. He also asked whether or not there was space for the landscaping program, to which Mrs. Vasil responded that there was space identified for the class, including the greenhouse outdoors. She is excited about the opportunity to teach sustainable and environmentally friendly landscaping. Laura Gallagher Byrne echoed her support for landscaping. Dr. Lepore asked for more information about the reduction in World Languages. Mrs. Vasil said that it was more of a reorganization and consolidation of classes that were not fully enrolled. A question came from the public about the intention of expanding the nursing program. Mrs. Vasil shared that the Innovation Pathways program has focused on how to expand and offer Nursing 2 next year with an additional course (Nursing 3) the year after.

Committee discussion and votes to be taken

Vote to Approve the 2022-23 School Calendar Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez seconded, with no opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve December 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez seconded, with no opposed, the motion was approved.

Vote to Approve the Transfers & Invoices December 21, 2021 Rocky Fox made a motion to approve, Esmeralda Martinez seconded, with no opposed, the motion was approved.

Sub-Committee/Work Group

Negotiations: Dr. Lepore stated the ESP Unit negotiations will begin again on January 13.

Student Council Representative Report: Miss Kyomitmaitee shared that Quarter 2 and the first semester will be ending on January 26 and Quarter 3 will begin on January 31.

Horizon

The next meeting will be January 18th with the Annual Report and the Town of Nantucket Administration who will come to present their General Fund Budget along with the 2nd Quarter Budget Updates. On January 19th there will be a public hearing to present the FY2023 NPS budget.

Laura Gallagher Byrne shared that she will be meeting with the Cape Cod Collaborative representative group next week and will report at the next meeting.

At 6:53 pm, the School Committee adjourned on a motion made by Rocky Fox, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted pro temp,
Beth Hallett, Superintendent of Schools