

**Nantucket School Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 4, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Vice Chair Laura Gallagher Byrne, Timothy Lepore, Esmeralda Martinez, and Shantaw Bloise-Murphy. Also present from the Studio, an NCTV Representative. This meeting is an in-person participation meeting in compliance with Governor Charlie 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.

Before the meeting was called to order Chair Proch requested that the technology update move up on the agenda following the high school presentation.

The June 4, 2024, School Committee meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM in the Nantucket High School LGI by Chair Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Laura Gallagher Byrne, seconded by Timothy Lepore and approved unanimously with the changes.

**Public Comment**

Dianne Flarehty asked how to get something added to the agenda. Chair Proch explained the purpose of public comment and suggested she send an email to the Superintendent and Chair.

**Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Hallett reported that the June 2024 student enrollment is 1,715, an increase of four students from May. Over the past several years, student enrollment has fluctuated between 1,650 and 1,750. A large kindergarten class is anticipated for the upcoming school year. In terms of recruiting and hiring, the district has been actively reviewing applications and conducting interviews for open positions. They began with 29 open teaching positions this month, hiring 10 so far, primarily for elementary and intermediate school classrooms. The hardest positions to fill are in special education, STEM, school psychology, and physical therapy. Despite these challenges, promising candidates are being found, and more positions are expected to be filled soon. Dr. Hallett announced the hiring of Stephanie Hoban as the new Director of Technology, starting July 1. Ms. Hoban comes from Lindfield Public Schools with significant experience in educational technology. Superintendent Hallett also expressed gratitude to Joanne Johnson, the acting Tech Director, for her outstanding service over the past six months and for hiring a new technician, Kevin Seranno. Additional updates include ongoing science MCAS testing at the high school, MAP testing at the elementary, intermediate, and middle schools, and various scheduling activities. The district is preparing for field days, transition events for students moving up grades, and end-of-year performances. Graduation is scheduled for next Friday. Regarding housing for new hires, the district is actively seeking housing solutions, as many new candidates will likely need assistance. Superintendent Hallett has reached out through various channels to find housing and is working with Kristie Ferrentella in the town. Mellisa Devitt, the Curriculum Director for Humanities, is the point person for housing inquiries. [devittm@npsk.org](mailto:devittm@npsk.org)

**Presentations and discussions of issues to the Committee**

**High School Student Presentation - Dalena Garcia Sosa**

High school student Dalena Garcia Sosa shared her volunteer research experience with the Maria Mitchell Association, where she discovered a parasite in the intestines of bay scallops. Working with Dr. Val Hall, they found the parasite seemed to affect the scallops' reproductive systems. To continue this research after Dr. Val's retirement, Dalena organized an independent study with support from her Marine Science teacher, and other faculty members. Dalena developed three hypotheses: the presence of a new parasite in scallop intestines, the impact of rising temperatures on parasite survival, and the combined effect of temperature and parasites on egg viability. Through histology methods taught by Dr. Val, Dalena collected data from scallops in different harbor locations, finding that only her hypothesis about the new parasite presence was correct.

Dalena suggested further research with larger sample sizes and focusing on the digestive tract rather than the reproductive system. She proposed creating a collaborative program between Nantucket High School, the Maria Mitchell Association, and Egan Maritime to engage students in marine biology research. She expressed gratitude to Dr. Val Hall, Jordan Bond, Tara Riley, Jonelle Gurley, Mandy Vasil, Kara Falck, and Heather MacDonald for their support.

Dr. Lepore and the committee members agreed on what a wonderful program. Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked what year Dalena was in and complimented her on how poised she was. Dalena replied that she was an upcoming Junior.

Dr. Hallett expressed pride in Dalena Garcia Sosa's achievements and supported continuing the program as an independent study in collaboration with the Maria Mitchell Association.

### **Technology Update - Joanne Johnsen, Acting Technology Director**

Mrs. Johnsen, the acting Tech Director, presented an overview of the last six months of the technology department's activities. The year started with full documentation by retired Technology Director Jennifer Erichsen, but the focus shifted to wireless issues and staffing changes. Initially, the department was fully staffed with a director and six team members, despite one staff member being on medical leave. Two interns were hired to fill the gap. Wireless network problems began with the new controller, which wasn't addressed due to the pandemic. Troubleshooting was delayed, and a cyber attack further complicated the network issues. Wireless connectivity became critical, but the increased load worsened the problem. Staffing issues persisted, with Mrs. Erichsen retiring, reducing the team. Mrs. Johnsen took over as interim Tech Director while maintaining her role as Database Administrator and Network Operations. Further staff reductions occurred, complicating the wireless problems. Efforts to manage wireless connectivity during access testing required limiting other wireless usage, leading to significant struggles. In March, a breakthrough with a technician from Cisco resolved the wireless issues, dramatically improving connectivity. Staffing levels stabilized with the hiring of a new tech director and a returning staff member. The team, including Dave Evans, Jason Campesi, Kevin Serrano, Jaime Saravia, and Morgan Smith-Jones, took on additional duties to maintain operations and implement new projects, such as a school-to-career course in network infrastructure. Since December, they resolved the wireless issue, managed staff transitions, installed new panels, improved communication, and implemented a new app request process. They also increased security measures and collaborated with other departments on joint projects. Upcoming initiatives include educational technology enhancement, cybersecurity training, and rolling out new software and network equipment replacements.

The committee praised Mrs. Johnsen for her leadership and the team's successful management of challenges, particularly resolving the wireless issues. They appreciated the detailed update and expressed gratitude for the department's efforts during a challenging period. Mrs. Proch asked if the school-to-career was the same as the Nan-Techies Mrs. Johnsen explained that career is a course.

### **Nantucket Educational Trust Update - Hadley Dutra, Meg Browsers, and Alicia Graziadei**

Hadley Dutra, President of the Nantucket Educational Trust (NET) started the presentation by explaining NET was founded in 1992, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization aimed at supplementing the Nantucket Public Schools' budget, providing additional resources such as books and program funding. Mrs. Dutra highlighted a significant initiative from the early 2000s when NET addressed a housing crisis by collaborating with the town of Nantucket to create the Cow Pond Lane housing units for teachers and staff. This project resulted in 12 apartments leased to NPS teachers, ensuring their ability to live on the island. She emphasized the importance of addressing NET's financial health, highlighting the contributions of board member John Riccio. She acknowledged Riccio's tireless dedication and extensive hours spent supporting the board, which has resulted in NET's strong fiscal position. He efficiently manages the investments and handles all tenant leases, working closely with the caretaker to ensure proper maintenance and upkeep of the property. Dutra expressed gratitude for Riccio's efforts, noting his attendance via remote tuning. She then turned the presentation over to Meg Browsers.

Ms. Browsers provided an overview of NET's activities and the current housing situation. She reiterated that NET leases the land for the Cow Pond Lane units, which are fully occupied by NPS staff except for

the caretaker's unit. The organization has undertaken several maintenance and improvement projects, including landscaping and installing a new HVAC system. Despite these efforts, the demand for housing for NPS staff exceeds the available units, with a waiting list of approximately 30 people. She announced that NET is conducting a feasibility study to explore building additional units in the Cow Pond area. While this is a long-term project, NET is also considering other avenues to support teacher housing, such as running ads for available housing and exploring other potential solutions. She encouraged attendees to share NET's housing ad on social media to help spread the word and support their efforts.

Alicia Graziadei highlighted NET's grant-giving activities. This year, NET has already distributed \$11,597 in grants to support Island public school students. Graziadei, along with Megan and John, created a Communications Committee, redesigned the website, and streamlined the application process for teachers to easily submit grant requests online. She then went through the grants NET has provided to all four public schools and the community school, as well as to Island nonprofits like the Dreamland, which hosted a Shakespeare company. Specific grants included funding for solar eclipse glasses, the fifth-grade Camp Borale trip, and the NKA Community School's Summer Boost kindergarten readiness program. NET also supported music students attending the All-State Music Festival and continued their signature Journey Across the Sound program, enabling high school students to visit college campuses. Mrs. Graziadei emphasized the importance of spreading the word about NET's grant opportunities. She encouraged everyone to use the new website to apply for grants and housing assistance, and to follow NET's active social media presence managed by Meg.

Mrs. Bloise-Murphy asked if NET is a separate non-profit. Mrs. Dutra replied she was correct. Chair Proch asked if there had been any conversation with FONPS. Mrs. Dutra responded yes, indicating the alignment of both non-profits. She noted recent changes with FONPS, but has been in touch with several women still serving on the board.

#### **Facilities Update/Year-End Utilities Usage - Chip Clunie, Director of Facilities**

Chip Clunie summarized his first year as the Director of Facilities, emphasizing gratitude to his team members: Michelle Kremer, Dimo Boychev, Barry Mailloux, Elita Tejada, Jorge Vivas, and Joe Perry. He highlighted the creation of a new custodian floater position, which has successfully addressed staffing shortages by rotating throughout the district. Clunie expressed satisfaction with the new elevator maintenance company, Associated Elevator, and the implementation of a retinal scan time clock, which has improved the tracking of hours and attendance. Michelle Kremer has started a quarterly newsletter, adding a touch of humor to the office. Custodial contract negotiations are progressing well. Regular maintenance of the wind turbine is complete, and additional painting work is scheduled for the summer. The annual town meeting was managed efficiently by Francisco Derras and Dimo Boychev. Pool upgrades include a new window and office improvements. AC upgrades with mini-splits at CPS and other district locations have been beneficial. Nine new cameras have been installed, receiving positive feedback from assistant principals. Panic hardware for lockdowns and a new log system are being explored. The design bid package for 24 Surf Side is open, with bids due on July 12th. Summer projects include exterior painting of school windows, field repairs, and maintenance. A new HVAC contract will open on July 1st, and 13 new copiers are being installed. Handicap accessibility equipment is being regularly checked for ADA compliance.

Lastly, Mr. Clunie announced the retirement of Maximo Tejada, a longtime district employee and nighttime supervisor at NIS, at the end of June, expressing gratitude for his service and best wishes for his retirement.

Mrs. Proch asked about announcements not being heard in high school. Mr. Clunie explained that the Technology department along with Brian Potter have been working on upgrading those systems.

### **Committee discussions and votes to be taken**

April 26, 2024 Diversity Subcommittee Meeting Minutes, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote No to the Selection of School Choice Participation, Academic Year 2024-2025, Policy JFBB, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Mrs. Gallagher Byrne questioned the No vote. Dr. Hallett explained that school choice applies to districts with multiple schools within the same grade bands, such as two elementary, two middle, or two high schools. However, Nantucket only has one school for each grade group: one for pre-K to 2, one for K to 5, one for 3 to 5, one middle school, and one high school. Consequently, there are no other public schools for students to choose from within the district, necessitating a "no" vote on school choice.

Vote to Approve the 2024-2027 Teaching Assistant Collective Bargaining Agreement, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the appointment of School Committee Clerk, Katie Bedell, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from the Jean F. and David G. Nathan Fund to the NCS Pool Programs for \$250.00, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve, seconded by Shantaw Bloise-Murphy, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from the Nantucket Education Trust to NCS Dads and Kids Playgroup for \$1480.00, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Vote to approve the donation from the Nantucket Cultural Council to the NCS Early Childhood Program, Little Art Explorers for \$1080.00, Esmeralda Martinez made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Timothy Lepore. Shantaw Bloise Murphy recused herself from the vote. The motion was approved by the remaining members

Vote to approve the donation from the Nantucket Cultural Council to the NCS Irish Step Dance program for \$4,995.00, Esmeralda Martinez made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne. Shantaw Bloise Murphy recused herself from the vote. The motion was approved by the remaining members

Vote to approve the donation from the Nantucket Cultural Council to the NCS Early Childhood Program, Little History Explorers for \$615.00, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez. Shantaw Bloise Murphy recused herself from the vote. The motion was approved by the remaining members

Vote to approve the donation from the Community Foundation for Nantucket Inc. to NCS programming for \$21,853.00, Timothy Lepore made a motion to approve the proposal, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

Transfers and Invoices, Laura Gallagher Byrne made a motion to approve, seconded by Timothy Lepore, and with no opposed vote, the motion was approved

**Agenda for the next meeting, June 18, 2024 - Graduation/End of the Year Celebration Report, MAP End-of-Year Data Presentation, Athletics Update**

Motion to adjourn at 7:08 PM by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Laura Gallagher Byrne, with none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katie Bedell  
School Committee Clerk