

**Nantucket School Committee
Workshop Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2024**

Present Members: Chair Pauline Proch, Laura Gallagher-Byrne, Timothy Lepore, Esmeralda Martinez, and Shantaw Bloise-Murphy.

The October 29, 2024, School Committee meeting was called to order at 12:10 PM in the Nantucket Public Schools Central Office Conference room by Chair Pauline Proch with a motion made to approve the agenda by Timothy Lepore, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez and approved unanimously.

School Committee Vacancy Interview

Kathleen Richen

Kathleen Richen, the fourth candidate for the open school committee seat, shared her background and perspectives, reflecting a long-standing connection to the Nantucket school community. She has a son who graduated from Nantucket High School, two grandchildren one who graduated and one currently in the district, and a stepdaughter who joined the schools at age eight. Kathy expressed her deep appreciation for the support her family had received from the school's administrators and teachers when her stepdaughter arrived..

In response to Shantaw Bloise-Murphy's question on handling difficult decisions, Kathy referenced her experience as an operations coordinator in the town's finance department, where she navigated insurance claims and advocated for both citizens and the town's interests. Laura Gallagher Byrne asked about her core values, and Kathy responded with strong support for the district's work with students, underscoring her belief in the school system's mission.

Addressing Esmeralda Martinez's question on educational challenges, Kathy highlighted the absence of Hispanic students at a recent National Honor Society ceremony and wondered if this might indicate an achievement gap. She told Pauline Proch that her top priority would be ensuring equality for all students, including considerations for sexual identity and parental roles. On the budget, Kathy noted that while she hadn't reviewed the specifics, she believed the school could benefit from an enterprise fund similar to those in other town departments. Regarding strengths and areas for improvement, she pointed out that the close-knit community allows teachers to have strong relationships with parents, which she sees as a valuable asset. Dr. Tim Lepore inquired about her views on MCAS, and Kathy acknowledged hearing that some teachers feel restricted by the focus on testing. As a former teacher, she said she might have found it similarly limiting. Responding to Laura Gallagher Byrne's question about student challenges, Kathy emphasized that many students struggle with adapting to life off-island after graduation.

When asked by Esmeralda Martinez about handling criticism, Kathy expressed a willingness to listen to differing opinions and adjust her perspective if needed. For evaluating the superintendent, she suggested setting clear expectations based on the superintendent's initial potential and considering specific questions to guide the process. In her closing comments, Kathy noted the importance of administrators being mindful of cultural changes and listening to students, especially regarding new technological influences like AI. Kathy expressed her love for Nantucket and pride in her grandchildren's success in the school system and would like to be part of the school committee.

The committee thanked Kathy and Chair Proch reported the committee would be deliberating at the next open meeting tonight.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 12:35 PM by Laura Gallagher Byrne, seconded by Esmeralda Martinez, and with no opposed, the motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Katie Bedell
School Committee Clerk