

The Business Meeting of the New London Board of Education was held on September 23, 2024 in the New London Public Schools' Welcome Center and via Zoom Webinars.

DRAFT

1. Call to Order

President Elaine Maynard-Adams called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Present for the Board of Education: President – Elaine Maynard-Adams
Secretary – Nathan Caron

Board Members Present: Karen Bergin
Alisha Blake
Danni Cruz
Susan Hambey

Board Members Absent: Vice-President – Bianca Alexis-Sylvain

Present for the administration: Dr. Cynthia Ritchie, Superintendent of Schools

2. Public Comment

Vicy Giordani, New London – Ms. Giordani stated that she was the previous Library Media Technician at Winthrop, and that she retired at the end of 2023. She stated that there were additional technicians prior to her that held the role and did work that included automating the library system and hooking up the Follett system. She stated that there were also middle and high school librarians. She stated that after a while, the middle school closed their library. It was previously stated at a Board meeting that secretary had volunteered to take on the duty of the library. Ms. Giordani expanded that she was hired in 1994 and was the third of five LMTs to be hired. They were not hired as secretaries, and it had nothing to do with being a secretary other than they were a part of the secretarial union. She stated that at the time the admin did not know what to do, and so it became a part of the union. The Library Media Technician position is in the current secretarial contract that expires in 2025. She stated that when the Library Media Specialist was hired at Jennings, they had a lot of questions that she was able to answer. She continued that her two children went to New London schools and has heard often about fostering the love of reading, but over the years the first position to be put up is always the library. She had previously had to sit in meetings and say to not cut the libraries. It is important for kids to be exposed to the physical touch of a book. A lot is now digital with everything online and kids having computers, but it is not the same as a student going into the room with volumes of books, browsing the shelves and picking something to their liking. This is a magnet district, and with activities after school, or factoring in the time it takes for some students to get home, it is likely that students do not have an opportunity to go to the public

libraries. She stated that she loved working here, and didn't willingly retire, but had family obligations that took her away. She is hopeful that the grant the Dr. Ritchie spoke about could be used to reopen the library.

Mary-Kate Caruso, New London – Ms. Caruso shared that literacy development is significant, and it is imperative that Winthrop has the adequate resources to reflect the importance. Student success relies upon it.

Katherine Trejo-Thorpe, New London – Ms. Trejo-Thorpe shared that Winthrop had previously had a Library Media Technician that was part of the Secretaries Union who worked in the space for 29 years. It has been mentioned that the library is running and classes can access the space. While this is a step in the right direction, it still does not address all of the issues. Without a dedicated position in the library, students cannot check out books or learn library skills. There is a library full of books, but it is not enough if students do not have access. The person in the library role builds relationships with students and can provide personalized support. She is not asking for the position to be one that is fully certified, but she is asking that the role of the Library Media Technician be restored to support the students. While she appreciates that there may be grant opportunities that may open up, there needs to be an actionable plan to reinstate the position, ensuring that teachers and students have the support that is needed.

3. Reports and Communications

- Board Chairperson's Report

Ms. Maynard-Adams reported that she attended multiple open houses including the ones at Nathan Hale, Jennings, and Winthrop. She stated that they seemed to be pretty well attended and that she is looking forward to attending the open houses at the middle school and high school this week, and B.P. next week. She stated that she attended the We Are New London parade that occurred over the weekend and was happy to see all of the NLPS participants, though she would like to see green and yellow shirts for B.P. in the future. Ms. Maynard-Adams shared that she would be joining the Superintendent and other City Leaders at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy this week regarding engaging and encouraging the Coast Guard to be more engaged at NLPS.

4. Information and Reports

- i. Superintendent's Report

- NLPS Strategic Plan and Data Report

- Dr. Ritchie provided an overview of the new NLPS Strategic Plan Design, as well as the Beginning of the Year Fall Data report.

A copy of these documents are available upon request.

- ii. Board Committee and Representative Updates

- Finance & Audit Committee
 - Ms. Maynard-Adams reported that the committee met prior to this meeting and discussed line item transfers that will be on this agenda, as well as the monthly financial report for the district.
- Policy Committee
 - Mr. Caron shared that the committee met and that there are some policies on the agenda this evening for approval. The preliminary discussions have begun regarding the individual technology device policy to ensure that it meets both the needs of the district and the students.

5. Approval of the Minutes

- September 9, 2024 – Business Meeting

Motion by Ms. Bergin, seconded by Ms. Blake, to approve the September 9, 2024 Business Meeting Minutes.

Motion carried, 6-0

6. Approval of the Consent Agenda

Motion by Ms. Maynard-Adams, seconded by Ms. Blake, that the following items, as set forth on the Consent Agenda for the Business Meeting of September 23, 2024 be approved unless removed by a Board member or the Superintendent of Schools:

A. Action Items

- I. Approve Line Item Transfers as Recommended by the Finance & Audit Committee
- II. Approve Policy 6115 – Pledge of Allegiance, School Ceremonies and Observances for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- III. Approve Policy 5141.22 – Communicable and Infectious Diseases for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee
- IV. Rescind Policy Series 5000 – Pledge of Allegiance for its First Reading as Recommended by the Policy Committee.

Motion carried, 6-0

7. Board Comments, Questions

Ms. Blake thanked those who came to speak during public comment this evening.

Mr. Cruz thanked the parents and former staff who came to the meeting this evening.

Mr. Caron stated that he was able to attend some of the open houses, and at one school was proud to find that a former student is now teaching in a classroom. He shared that this was a beautiful full-circle moment, and wished Ms. Robinson a wonderful school year.

Ms. Hambey stated that she had a wonderful time and felt quite welcome while visiting Winthrop.

Ms. Maynard-Adams stated that for the next Policy Committee meeting she would like to have the committee look at the language for a recent legislative change regarding non-lapsing funds. The language has changed, and it is her understanding that the Board can now draw on the non-lapsing fund in an easier manner, rather than needing to go to the City to do so.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Ms. Blake, seconded by Mr. Cruz, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried, 6-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Caron
Secretary, Board of Education