

MINUTES OF THE OUTREACH MEETING OF THE NORWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 16, 2024

The Norwell School Committee met in the Meeting Room at Norwell Public Library on Monday, December 16, 2024. Ms. Alison Link called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m. Present were Ms. Link, Clerk Patrick Reed, Chair Christina Kane, Vice Chair Kristin McEachern, Lisa DiFrisco, and Superintendent Matthew Keegan.

At 6:35 p.m., Ms. Link moved that the meeting go into Executive Session for purposes of non-union and collective bargaining negotiations, and to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Ms. DiFrisco and passed unanimously on a roll call vote: McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, DiFrisco, Aye and Reed, Aye. The Committee moved to Study Room 3. Executive Session concluded at 6:58 p.m., and the Committee returned to the Meeting Room for Open Session.

Superintendent Keegan introduced Principal Eliza Burns to commence the *Celebrating Excellence* portion of the meeting: *Building Resilience Through Play and Mindful Habits*. A PowerPoint presentation was included in agenda packets. Three parents, Colleen D'Andrea, Christine Sullivan, and Sonia Kaszuba shared their thoughts on the book The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness, and their household's personal use of technology. Utilizing the PowerPoint, Principal Eliza Burns shared the work Cole School has done this year to focus on the importance of play and develop habits of mind as an outcome of the parent book discussion this fall, which was attended by 45 parents. Ms. Burns offered copies of the book to the Committee for their review. Ms. Burns invited six student representatives to share their experiences. The students thanked the PTO and NEF for purchasing the new games they have been enjoying at recess.

Mrs. Elizabeth Bersell updated the Committee on this year's School Council successes and reported on progress related to school improvement plan goals. Ms. Bersell stated that the main responsibilities of the school council are current school improvement goals, participating in the next school improvement plan, and monitoring accountability with the budget and MCAS student data. The Council's current School Improvement Plan, membership, bylaws, and meeting dates and times were included in agenda packets.

PTO Co-President Anne Brennan updated the Committee on 2024-2025 PTO activities including various ways they have supported Cole School. Ms. Brennan presented a PowerPoint presentation to review the PTO past and future activities, enrichment, fundraisers and events. PTO dues have been paid by 53% of families.

Chair Kane, Superintendent Keegan and the Committee thanked Principal Burns, Cole School staff, students, parents and the PTO and Council representatives for their presentations. At 7:35 p.m., Ms. Kane announced the Committee would move on to regular business.

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the minutes of the Regular and Executive Sessions of the Norwell School Committee Meeting of November 18, 2024, accounts payable warrants #23 and 24, refund warrants #20, 23 and 24 signed by Ms. Kristin McEachern, the out of state trip request to Providence, RI on January 26, 2025, and the international excursion request to Italy on April 15 – 26, 2026, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Kane, Aye, McEachern, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

Director of Teaching, Learning & Technology Diane Provenzano with input from Food Service Director Judy Crooks presented suggested changes, deletions and an addition to policies resulting from the federal "Universal School Meals Program Act of 2023" and the MA supported universal free school meals signed in the FY'24 MA budget. Policies EF, EFA, EFB, EFC, EFD and EFDA were included in agenda packets

for review. Policy EF: Food Services has wording changes from lunches to meals and the current Policy EFC: Vending Machines is being changed to Policy EFA. A motion to delete Policies EFB and EFDA, and to adopt new Policies EFC and EFD for first reading, as proposed was made by Mr. Reed, and seconded by Ms. Link. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye McEachern, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

Enclosed in agenda packets was a draft of next year's school calendar for the Committee's thoughts and suggestions. The calendar will be discussed and reviewed further with the Leadership Team and EAN regarding conference days and timing. The Committee shared thoughts on the March conference date. The calendar will be brought back with everyone's input in January.

Included in the Google folder was a PowerPoint presentation from South Shore Vocation Technical High School's Town of Norwell Representative Dustin Reardon. Mr. Reardon distributed a brochure and discussed information and answered questions on funding and the January 25, 2025 election for the school building project. Additional media can be found from Norwell Spotlight TV. A community style forum will be held at the Public Library, and Mr. Reardon plans on meeting with the PTO's, Council on Aging and other Norwell stakeholders.

A Capital Budget items sheet was included in agenda packets. Director of Finance, Operations & Technology Warren MacCallum requested to add two additional items to the sheet – replacement of the Hatch Pond platform at Cole School and replacing carpet in the office at Cole School due to water damage. Facilities Manager John Maurice and Mr. MacCallum worked on how many large capital requests would come together in a strategic manner and included the MSBA Feasibility Study. Quotes on some of the projects will be forthcoming. Discussion ensued regarding the Middle School and Sparrell building parking lots and driveways and furniture replacement. The CPC request for bathrooms has been removed. The Middle School roof has been brought to a higher spot on the sheet. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the work regarding the High School and the MSBA's vote of approval. Mr. Keegan stated that the Committee will need to take a motion at the January meeting for Capital, Article and Other requests.

Time was provided to update the Committee on the strategic plan. A second meeting on district data was held on December 2. The three working groups were highly engaged and deeply involved in the process of identifying themes. The next meeting is scheduled for January 9, 2025.

The Chair provided time for School Committee member reports. Ms. McEachern attended the funeral of a student who lost a dad and noted the support given to the family by the community. Ms. Kane stated her appreciation for all the work the administration put into the MSBA project.

Mr. Keegan updated the Committee on a variety of items in the Google folder including the December 6, 2024 Enrollment and Average Class Size reports; letter to families regarding MBTA Adjacent Community Public Forum on December 9; acknowledgement letters of career exploration leave and retirement; and schools' newsletters since last NSC meeting. The Vinal School Presentations meeting is scheduled for January 27, 2025 at the Norwell Public Library. The budget workshop will be held on January 29, 2025. A regular meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2025.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Kane moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m.



Christina Kane, Chair

January 27, 2025



Patrick S. Reed, Clerk

January 27, 2025