

## MINUTES OF THE OUTREACH MEETING OF THE NORWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

January 27, 2025

The Norwell School Committee met in the Meeting Room at Norwell Public Library on Monday, January 27, 2025. Chair Christina Kane called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. Present were Ms. Kane, Clerk Patrick Reed, Vice Chair Kristin McEachern, Alison Link, Lisa DiFrisco, and Superintendent Matthew Keegan.

At 6:36 p.m., Mr. Reed moved that the meeting go into Executive Session for purposes of discussion of non-union personnel negotiations strategy and collective bargaining strategy, and to return to open session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Link 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 6:59 p.m., and the Committee returned to the Meeting Room for Open Session.

Superintendent Keegan introduced Principal Nathan Thorsteinson to commence the *Celebrating Excellence* portion of the meeting. Mr. Thorsteinson put up a PowerPoint Presentation on the screen which was included in agenda packets. Assistant Principal Katie Egan introduced Special Education Teacher Alexa Flynn who spearheaded the *Celebrating Differences* activity in September. The whole school celebrated the neurodiverse community at Vinal School. Two 5<sup>th</sup> grade students joined Ms. Flynn at the podium displaying a multi colored zebra drawing, and shared their thoughts on building a stronger inclusive community through activities. To discuss the 5<sup>th</sup> grade workshop which focuses on inclusion and community building, School psychologist Kimberlee LaSalle and two 5<sup>th</sup> grade student representatives provided their experiences and thoughts on what makes them unique.

PTO President Susan Davis was invited to the podium to share the PTO's successes this year. A new gift giving collection held for one month was a success where the students shopped for free for gifts for their families. Ms. Davis invited two students to the podium to speak about the dads' hockey event. The Cole vs. Vinal event was started by parent Bob Perniola in 2023-2024, and raised \$19,000 this year. Ms. Davis then invited two students to the podium to communicate what they experienced with recent in-school enrichment programs. Ms. Davis recognized and thanked Ms. Erin Griffith, who was in attendance, who heads the PTO enrichment activities.

On behalf of the School Improvement Council and using a PowerPoint slide, Mr. Thorsteinson highlighted and discussed the results of Panorama surveys from 2023 and 2024 regarding school climate, fit and safety. A mid-year survey will be going out in February. The School Improvement Plan, membership, bylaws, and meeting dates were included in agenda packets.

Presentations for the outreach portion of the meeting concluded at 7:24 p.m. Chair Kane thanked each student individually. Superintendent Keegan thanked everyone for their support for the Vinal School.

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the minutes of the Regular and Executive Sessions of the Norwell School Committee Meeting on December 16, 2024, accounts payable warrants 25 and 29 signed by Mr. Reed, accounts payable warrants 26, 28, and refund warrants 26, 28 and 30 signed by Ms. McEachern, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye and Reed, Aye.

Mr. Keegan highlighted various conference and early release days for next year's calendar, and Mr. Reed moved to approve the 2025-2026 School Calendar for second and final reading, as proposed. The motion was seconded by Ms. Link, and the motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve Policies EFC and EFD for second and final reading, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

A Legal Education Alert from Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane regarding Question #2 addressing High School Graduation requirements and a revised and a new School Committee policy was included in agenda packets. Districts have been asked to clarify and publish their graduation policies and competency determination requirements for the graduating class of 2025. Administrators have worked on Policies IKF: Graduation Requirements and IKFB: Competency Determination Requirements. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve Policies IKF and IKFB for first reading, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

Enclosed in agenda packets was a request from Athletic Director JJ Niamkey for an eighth-grade waiver on behalf of the girls' JV softball team for the spring of 2025. A blanket eighth grade waiver has been approved by the South Shore League for its member schools. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the eighth-grade waiver for Girls' JV Softball Team for the spring 2025 season, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

Also enclosed in agenda packets was a request from Mr. Niamkey for a two-year co-op waiver for a rugby program starting in the spring of 2025. The Rugby Program will be held at Hingham High School, and will be a pilot program this season. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve a two-year cooperative waiver for a Rugby Program starting in the spring of 2025, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: DiFrisco, Aye, McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

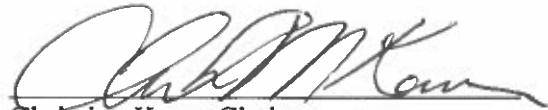
The *FY'26 Executive Budget* PowerPoint was included in agenda packets. The executive budget addresses contractual increases and real run rates. Mr. Keegan put the PowerPoint on the screen and reviewed each slide. The executive budget includes a 5<sup>th</sup> nurse and an Assistant Special Education Director. The needs for these positions have been presented to the School Committee by the nurses and through the Special Education Program review. The executive budget also addresses articles that have been created in Technology and Out-of-District Special Education tuitions to reduce the operating budget. The executive budget will require a 7.36% increase over the 2025 executive budget. This request will require an override to address the executive budget. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the *FY'26 Executive Budget* to prepare materials for the Budget Workshop on January 29 at 6:30 p.m. in the Norwell Middle School Community Room. Comments were heard from the floor from Town Administrator Darleen Sullivan and Advisory Board Chair John McGrath.

Superintendent Keegan noted the final *Capital, Article and Other Requests* which was included in agenda packets. Mr. MacCallum stated the pricing for the Vinal School lift will be forthcoming. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the FY'26 Capital, Article and Other Requests, as proposed. The motion passed unanimously: McEachern, Aye, DiFrisco, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, and Reed, Aye.

The Chair provided time for School Committee member reports. Ms. McEachern noted that 30 students have signed up for the newly formed dance team. They perform every Friday night at basketball games. The Annual Chamber of Commerce State of the Town breakfast will be held at the Norwell Public Library on January 30 at 7:00 a.m., and it was decided that Mr. Keegan will speak on behalf of Norwell Public Schools.

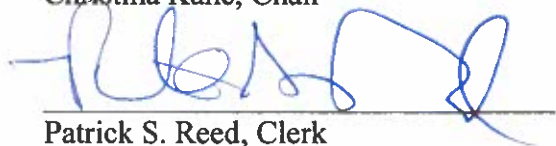
Mr. Keegan updated the Committee on items in the Google folder including: January 3 Enrollment and Average Class Size Reports; acknowledgement of retirement letters; Superintendent's letter to the Cole School community; and schools' newsletters published in December and January. The next regular School Committee meeting is scheduled for February 10, 2025 and a Middle School Outreach meeting on March 10, 2025 at Norwell Public Library. The Budget Workshop will be at the Middle School on January 29, 2025 at 6:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Ms. Kane moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:45 p.m.



Christina Kane, Chair

February 10, 2025



Patrick S. Reed, Clerk

February 10, 2025