

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
OF THE NORWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

March 31, 2025

A meeting of the Norwell School Committee was held on Monday, March 31, 2025 in the Meeting Room at Norwell Public Library. Chair Christina Kane called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were Chair Kane, Clerk Patrick Reed, Alison Link, Lisa DiFrisco, and Superintendent Matthew Keegan.

At 6:31 p.m., Mr. Reed moved that the meeting go into executive session for purposes of strategizing on collective bargaining negotiations and to return to open session at the conclusion of executive session. The motion was seconded by Ms. Link and passed unanimously on a roll-call vote: Kane, Aye, DiFrisco, Aye, Link, 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 open regular session in the Meeting Room.

Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to approve the minutes of the Regular and Executive Sessions of the Norwell School Committee Meeting on March 10, 2025, Meeting on March 6, 2025 with the Advisory Board, and accounts payable warrants 37, 38, 39 and refund warrants #37 and 38 signed by Ms. McEachern, as proposed. The motion was approved unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye.

Pursuant to MGL, Chapter 71, Section 38N, Chair Kane moved to open the Public Hearing on the School Committee's proposed annual budget at approximately 7:04 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Reed and passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Superintendent Keegan provided an overview of the proposed FY'26 School Committee budget, a copy of which was enclosed in the Google folder. Mr. Keegan noted where the information on the budget was located on the website. The proposed budget represents a 7.43% increase over the FY'25 budget. Mr. Keegan updated the Committee that all capital requests had been approved with the exception of the paving request. Chair Kane requested public comment. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Mr. Link, to adopt an FY'26 *Requested School Committee Operating Budget* of \$35,879,542 for insertion in the May 5, 2025 Annual Town Meeting Warrant. The motion passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye. At 7:25 p.m., Mr. Reed moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Link. The motion passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye.

Pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 76, Section 12B, Paragraph (d) a hearing on inter-district choice is to be held annually prior to June 1, before a district considers adopting a resolution withdrawing from said program for the subsequent school year. Accordingly, Ms. Kane moved to open the public hearing and vote, seconded by Mr. Reed. The motion passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye. Superintendent Keegan stated that given philosophical problems with school choice as currently structured in the Commonwealth, he recommended not to participate. Chair Kane requested comment, and hearing none, requested a motion. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. DiFrisco, that the Norwell School Committee resolves not to participate in the inter-district choice program for the 2025-2026 school year. The motion passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye. Mr. Reed moved to close the public hearing, seconded by Ms. Link. The motion passed unanimously: Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye.

Enclosed in agenda packets was a copy of the MSBA Initial Compliance Certificate from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (the "MSBA"). On December 13, 2024, the MSBA voted to authorize the Town of Norwell (the "District") into a 270-day Eligibility Period for Norwell High School.

The completion of all activities in the Eligibility Period will allow the district to be eligible for an MSBA invitation into Feasibility Study. The certificate will be signed by the Town and returned to the MSBA to demonstrate the district's understanding of the MSBA's grant program rules by May 1, 2025. Discussion ensued regarding timelines and understanding of the project. Mr. Reed moved, seconded by Ms. Link, to accept the MSBA Initial Compliance Certificate for the understanding of the MSBA's grant program rules, as presented, and to authorize the Superintendent and School Committee Chair to execute the Certificate. The motion passed unanimously: McEachern, Aye, Link, Aye, Kane, Aye, Reed, Aye, and DiFrisco, Aye.

In the absence of Student Government Representative Holly Panttila, Ms. DiFrisco shared an update on happenings at the High School which Ms. Panttila had provided previously.

Superintendent Keegan updated the Committee on the budget override providing a recap on the Select Board meeting on March 26 and Advisory Board meeting on March 27. Mr. Keegan reviewed the posted website information regarding the FY'26 Budget. Upcoming PTO budget outreach meetings and scheduled public forums dates were provided and can be found on the website.

A draft of the *Town Meeting Information Guide May 5, 2025 and 2024-2025 Annual Report* was distributed at the meeting for the Committee's review. Enclosed in agenda packets was last year's letter posted by the School Committee and the postcard that was mailed informing the community about the location of the *Annual Report* and School Committee letter on the website. Members commented on their preference on communicating their budget letter. This year's mailing will be a brief letter with bulleted information and a QR code to obtain additional information including a letter from the Committee on the FY'26 budget, budget presentation and annual report.


Ms. Kane thanked School Committee member Kristin McEachern for all of her recent help and attendance at various meetings in the community.

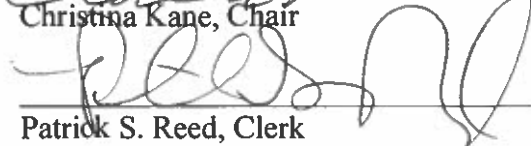
Chair Kane opened the meeting for public comment on agenda and non-agenda items, and hearing none, proceeded with the agenda.

Mr. Keegan noted the updates and correspondence included in the Google folder – NESDEC Spring Enrollment update; March 7 Enrollment and Average Class Size reports; recent schools' newsletters. Spring Salary Scale Movement; and Application for and Permit to Use NPS Buildings for the May 5 Town Meeting and May 17 Town Election;

Regular meetings on April 28 and May 19, 2025 will be held at the Public Library, and a special meeting is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. on May 5, 2025 at the Norwell Middle School Community Room prior to the Town Hall meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Committee in open session, at 8:14 p.m., Ms. Kane moved to adjourn the meeting.


Christina Kane, Chair


Patrick S. Reed, Clerk

April 28, 2025

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