

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS MEETING**  
**Senior/Community Center, 331 High Street, Newburyport, MA 01950**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2026**

**CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Mayor Sean Reardon called the School Committee Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee to order at 6:31 PM. Roll call found all members present.

**Public Comments:**

Kate Suchecki, 8 Toppans Lane – school choice  
Cara Ripley, 40 Phillips Drive – school choice

**Warrant**

On a motion by Andrew Boger and seconded by Mayor Sean Reardon it was

**VOTED:** to approve the Warrant in the amount of \$546,397.96 as presented.

Warrant 8175 (FY26)	\$542,194.95
A-Warrant	<u>\$ 4,203.01</u>
	\$546,397.96

**Motion Passed**

**Minutes**

**Motion:**

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

**VOTED:** to adopt the minutes for the February 25, 2026 School Committee meeting.

**Motion Passed**

**Student Representative Report**

Maddie Jackman provided the student report which included the kick off for the District Art Show at the Senior Center, Molin's *James and the Giant Peach* performance and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade MA Arbor Day Poster contest, March Madness at the Nock, and the high school's participation in the semifinals of Dramafest with their show, *You Can't Take It With You*. (details attached)

**Appoint Newburyport Representatives to the Whittier Regional School Committee**

There are two Newburyport representative openings on the Whittier Regional School Committee due to the recent resignation of Mary DeLai, whose term expires on March 31, 2027, as well as Brett Murphy, who is not seeking reappointment when his term expires on March 31, 2026. Two Newburyport residents, Erin Fenn and Stephanie Kalina, addressed the School Committee regarding their interest in the positions. School Committee members had an opportunity to ask questions of both candidates. (note: Candidate Max Cattan withdrew.)

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Juliet Walker and seconded by Lauren Eramo it was

**VOTED:** to appoint both Erin Fenn and Stephanie Kalina to 3-year terms as Newburyport representatives on the Whittier Regional Vo-Tech School Committee from April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2029.

### **Motion Passed**

### **FY27 Updated Draft Budget**

Superintendent Sean Gallagher and Finance Director Ethan Manning presented an updated draft of the FY27 Budget. Ethan explained this version shows a reduced City Appropriation of 5.2% compared to 6.4% presented previously on February 25<sup>th</sup>. Ethan also reviewed various reductions / adjustments made, as well as City Appropriation trends, and next steps in the budget process. The FY27 Preliminary Budget will be presented on March 25, 2026.

### **School Choice Overview**

Superintendent Sean Gallagher presented a Frequently Asked Questions chart outlining how school funding flows in Massachusetts. Ethan Manning defined Chapter 70 and summarized how Chapter 70 funds are calculated for Newburyport. He also reviewed school choice base tuition and how school choice funding flows, as well as benefits of school choice.

### **Potentially reschedule May 27<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting**

Juliet Walker stated that the May 27<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting is in conflict with the High School's Scholarship Awards Night. The meeting potentially could be moved to Tuesday, May 26<sup>th</sup> or another night. Juliet asked all SC members to be prepared for further discussion at a future meeting.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**

### **Finance Subcommittee**

Andrew Boger stated the next meeting will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM. A Joint Budget meeting between City Budget & Finance Committee and the Finance Subcommittee of the Whole will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00PM in the Nock library.

### **Policy Subcommittee**

Kathleen Shaw will schedule the next meeting in May. At their last meeting, policy changes were voted on and will be presented at the next school committee meeting.

### **Teaching & Learning Subcommittee**

Breanna Higgins stated they will meet next week.

## **SEPAC**

Kathleen Shaw stated the next meeting will be held virtually on Monday, March 16<sup>th</sup>. There is also an in-person meeting scheduled for May 7<sup>th</sup> with school adjustment counselors. Anyone interested in a leadership role for this committee is encouraged to attend the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **NEF**

Lauren Eramo was unable to attend the NEF Board of Directors meeting. Sean Gallagher attended the NEF Allocations meeting that was held earlier today.

### **Superintendent's Report**

**NHS Theatre Advances to Semi-Finals:** The Superintendent congratulated the NHS Theatre students for advancing to the METG High School Drama Festival Semifinals with their production of *You Can't Take It With You*.

**Organizational Development Case Study:** Linda Tate of Essential Partners is working on a case study, which will include Newburyport Public Schools due to our successful use of constructive dialogue to navigate challenging topics over the past few years. The Superintendent thanked the staff and students in the district for all their hard work.

**MSBA Project Approval:** Superintendent Gallagher and Finance Director Ethan Manning spoke at the February 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, and is pleased to report the Nock/Molin and High School roof projects have been approved by MSBA. The district has been cleared for a 43% reimbursement rate from the state.

**Superintendent's Advisory Council:** The SAC met on February 26<sup>th</sup>. The agenda focused on Chapter 74 Programming & College Career Pathways at the high school, and FY27 budget development.

**Immigration Policy and Student Support:** Superintendent Gallagher and district leadership team members participated in the State's recent "Know Your Rights" webinar to obtain updates to current policies for supporting immigrant student populations.

**Collins Center Operational Efficiency Study:** The interview phase of the Collins Center study will begin next week. Various school staff members and union leadership will participate in the study.

**Wellness Advisory Committee Update:** The Advisory Committee met to debrief on results of the iDecide/SURF study. The district is currently in year three of a 5-year study.

**Principal Leadership Meeting:** Superintendent Gallagher will meet with building principals next week to discuss summer programming, school choice and preparations for the FY27 budget presentation.

### **New Business:**

- Andy Boger want SC members to be aware that a "No Work, No School" protest is planned for May 1<sup>st</sup> nationally.
- Mayor Reardon shared the following:
  - ❖ The Molin's production of *James & the Giant Peach* was awesome!
  - ❖ Auditions for *Mama Mia* are happening now at the high school.
  - ❖ A Community Iftar will take place tonight at the high school beginning at 5:30PM.
  - ❖ Interviews for the study with the Collins Center are also kicking off at the City.
  - ❖ The new Chief of Staff is Shawn Fenn, who also used to work at the Collins Center.

- The Mayor attended a regional Whittier meeting last week. Discussions focused on the regional agreement and capital costs, of which Newburyport currently pays 11.4% of the capital cost. The Mayor will continue to advocate for a % based on “per pupil attending the school”.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Motion:**

On a motion by Mayor Sean Reardon and seconded by Andrew Boger it was

**VOTED:** to adjourn the Business meeting of the Newburyport School Committee at 8:33PM.

**Motion Passed**

Submitted by: Maddie Jackman

Location: Senior Center

**Bresnahan News:**

Bresnahan students are excited to display their artwork in the District Art Show at the Senior Center! The event kicks off this Thursday, with Bresnahan students gathering at 4:30 PM. A big thank you to our art teacher, Mrs. Jost, for organizing and facilitating this wonderful opportunity for our students to share their creativity with the community.

We've also been enjoying the recent stretch of great weather. PE classes have been getting outside and students have been participating in a fun jump rope challenge.

In other news, our 3rd graders are getting ready for MCAS and have been working hard in preparation for their very first MCAS test in April. We're proud of their effort and focus.

The preschool lottery has also been completed, and we're excited for the next generation of Clippers who will be registering and joining our school community next year!

**Molin News:**

The Molin students' performance of James and the Giant Peach Jr. was amazing! Congratulations to all the Molin participants!

The 5th grade is participating in the Massachusetts Arbor Day Poster Contest. This year's theme is "If Trees Could Talk"! Two posters from each 5th-grade class will be entered in the school-wide vote.

Molin students at both grade levels are participating in varied math and literacy versions of March Madness.

The PTO-sponsored Readathon begins next week!

**Nock Middle School News:**

March Madness is well underway at Nock, and many of the activities are being led by our students. Last week we kicked things off with our first spirit day, Monochromatic Day, where students dressed in a single color. This week's theme is "Rhyme Without a Reason," which will bring out a lot creativity and energy throughout the school.

In addition, our weekly trivia has been a big hit, and homerooms are earning points by meeting school expectations and demonstrating strong school spirit. It has been great to see students engaged, participating, and building a positive school culture together.

**High School News:**

For the the first time in 13 years, the theater program has moved on to the semi-finals of the state's Dramafest competition. This Saturday our students will give it their all in Framingham to earn a spot in the finals. If you want to check out the 38 minute show, they will have their final rehearsal open to the public tomorrow night at 6:00 PM here at NHS. The show, *You Can't Take It With You*, is absolutely hilarious.