

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
May 21, 2018*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, May 21, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. in the School Committee Room, Third Floor, Town Hall. Chair Tabenkin called the meeting to order and took roll call at 6:33 p.m.

Members Present: Matt Brand, Paul Laurent, Donna McKenzie, Hayley Sonneborn, Lisa Tabenkin

Members Absent: David Mangan

Julie McDonough arrived at 7:15 p.m.

Others Present: Anna Nolin
Timothy Luff
Sharon Reilly

Interim Superintendent
Assistant Superintendent
Recording Secretary

At 6:36 p.m., Chair Tabenkin moved approval for the School Committee to enter into Executive Session:

1. to discuss complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual (open meeting law complaints filed: (5/7/18, 5/7/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/8/18, 5/9/18, 5/9/18, 5/9/18, 5/9/18,) in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) of the Massachusetts General Laws.
2. To discuss strategy with respect to litigation (Superior Court Civil Action No. 2018-1115 - Corey Spaulding and Karin Sutter V. Town of Natick School Committee, Lisa Tabenkin, in her capacity as Chair of the Natick School Committee, and Anna Nolin, in her capacity as Interim Superintendent of Natick Public Schools) in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Ms. Sonneborn seconded. Chair Tabenkin called for a roll call vote. All in favor of entering into Executive Session for these purposes:

Mr. Brand-Yes
Mr. Laurent-Yes
Ms. Sonneborn-Yes
Dr. McKenzie-Yes
Chair Tabenkin-Yes

The motion passed unanimously by those present 5-0-0.

Chair Tabenkin stated that the Committee will return to open session at approximately 7:15 p.m. The School Committee proceeded to the Training Room, 3rd Floor, Town Hall to hold this session.

At 7:15 p.m., the School Committee returned to open session in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall.

Others who joined at this time:

Julie McDonough
Jefferson Wood

School Committee Member
Teacher Representative

Public Speak

Chair Tabenkin began with Public Speak. She stated that public speak is a period not exceeding 15 minutes during which time any individual may voice an opinion or concern on any school-related issue that is not on the agenda and during public speak there will not be an opportunity for debate of issues raised. Three minutes per person will be allotted. She asked if anyone was here for Public Speak.

Mr. Ron Alexander, Wellesley resident came forward. He referenced a newspaper article that was published in the Metrowest News titled "Resident Takes on Natick Police." Mr. Alexander stated that his issue is not with the police but with the way in which Natick Public Schools uses the police to harass and intimidate people. He spoke of inaccuracies in the news article and his efforts to reach reporters have been unsuccessful. The reporter had also stated that attempts to reach Mr. Alexander were unsuccessful and Mr. Alexander has no record of that happening. Mr. Alexander also spoke to some inaccuracies in the newspaper article or that the Milford police are giving out incorrect information regarding the time frame in which Officer John Sanchioni, Milford police, was parked at the end of Ms. Sutter's driveway in Sherborn on February 21. He referenced a copy of the police log. He also stated that on April 11th, Millis police parked at the end of Ms. Sutter's driveway and when she drove in they followed her up to her house and asked for her license and registration for no particular reason. He stated that the former Superintendent lives in Millis and that the connections here are getting "very scary. Mr. Alexander also spoke of the intimidation of himself when Natick Police Officer Dimodica was called after he spoke at the School Committee meeting on March 12th.

After 3 minutes of speaking, Chair Tabenkin indicated that Mr. Alexander's time for public speak was up.

No one else came forward for public speak.

To Confirm Appointment of Kirk Downing as Interim Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Nolin introduced Kirk Downing, principal of Brown School, who was recommended to be appointed to the position of Interim Assistant Superintendent for the 2018-2019 school year, effective July 1, 2018. Dr. Nolin requested the School Committee's approval to appoint Mr. Downing. Mr. Laurent moved to approve the appointment of Mr. Kirk Downing as the Interim Assistant Superintendent for the 2018-2019 school year, effective July 1, 2018. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved by those present. 6-0-0.

Mr. Downing came forward and stated that he looks forward to this opportunity and looks forward to moving the district's initiatives forward.

Dr. Nolin introduced Mr. Ben Gatto, Assistant Principal of the Bennett-Hemenway School who will be appointed Interim Principal of the Brown School who came forward to express his gratitude for having this opportunity.

Approval of Out of State Travel

Ms. Kate Burns, NHS Choral Teacher, came before the School Committee to request approval of out of state travel for the NHS Choir to travel to Walt Disney World, Orlando, FL on February 14-20, 2019 to

perform in the parks and participate in a Disney Sings Workshop. Mr. Laurent moved to approve this trip. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was unanimously approved by those present by a vote of 6-0-0.

Walnut Hill Arts/YMCA After School Program

Dr. Nolin introduced Jeanne Sherlock, Chief Operating Officer of the Metrowest YMCA and Natick mom, Beth Canterbury, Natick mom, professional singer, voice teacher and arts administrator and Antonia Viva, Head of Walnut Hill School who came forward to discuss an after school program they are working on in collaboration with Natick Public Schools which will focus on the Arts. This collaboration is coming together as a result of the recent Arts Audit where it was determined that additional after school care is needed and interdisciplinary arts programming is an area of opportunity. Dr. Nolin indicated that work will continue on this pilot to bring it to fruition, however, one of the biggest hurdles is transportation.

It was pointed out that the YMCA after school program which is located at the East School currently has openings in its after school program. The YMCA program currently serves Lilja, Brown, Ben-Hem & Wilson.

Update of Ring of Honor

Mr. Dick Cugini came before the School Committee and presented a photo of what the Ring of Honor Plaque will look like. This plaque will be placed on the Field House at Memorial Field with its first honoree, Mr. Jim Argir. The School Committee gave its approval to establish the Ring of Honor. and its first honoree, Mr. Jim Argir at its meeting of November 6th. Mr. Argir's sister and brother in-law were present and expressed their gratitude. Mr. Cugini stated that the Argir family has offered to pay for this plaque. Chair Tabenkin expressed her gratitude to the family for this gift.

Update on Public Records Requests and Open Meeting Law Complaints

Mr. Luff reported that we have received three more Public Records requests since we last met and are up to 79 Open Meeting Law complaints from Mr. Ron Alexander. Mr. Luff pointed out that these are complaints and not violations. The Attorney General's office will decide if they are violations. Mr. Luff is working with the Attorney General's office to schedule a mediation session to resolve these matters with Mr. Alexander. The Attorney General's office has relieved us to respond to any complaint until a mediation session is held. The Attorney General's office has appointed an agency, Consensus Building Institute (CBI), Tobias Berkman to assist us to try to work with Mr. Alexander to come to an understanding and agreement to resolve our differences. This mediation comes with a cost to our district in the amount of \$2,502 borne by the Natick taxpayers. In addition, of the 79 complaints received thus far, Mr. Alexander is seeking the Attorney General's office to impose fines up to \$1,000 per complaint. Mr. Luff stated that we are willing and wanting to work with Mr. Alexander to hopefully resolve our differences.

Marti Neugarten, Natick resident, employee of Natick Public Schools and parent of three children who went through the Natick school system came forward. She sees the school system getting better and better every year and is concerned that the lawsuits and fees paid to attorneys takes away from the services to our children. Ms. Neugarten stated that we live in a community that is very supportive and she is not sure everyone knows what this is costing the district in money and time. She would like to have Dr. Nolin and Mr. Luff available to help her with student issues and not focusing on looking up records.

Mr. Ron Alexander, Wellesley resident, came forward and stated the following:

- the Attorney General's office relieved you of responding to complaints until mediation is scheduled but did not relieve you of reviewing the complaints in a timely manner which is 14 days. The School Committee has not done what they are supposed to do.
- Neither Ms. Tabenkin nor Dr. Nolin appeared at the hearing where they are named defendants in a civil rights lawsuit so they clearly have no respect for the law or for our justice system
- Previous speaker spoke to the fact that this will cost the town a lot of money. This is because you people cannot behave yourselves and follow a few simple rules. The rules are very simple and easy to follow.
- You have made 3 Open Meeting Law violations tonight which you will be hearing about.
- It is your irresponsibility that will cost the town a lot of money – he estimates well over \$1M due to settlement costs, legal fees, complaints and fines.

Natick Public Schools Solar Portfolio

Ms. Jillian Wilson-Martin, Town of Natick Sustainability Coordinator, along with Kleo Taliadouros and Nabih Younis from Ameresco came before the School Committee to provide an overview of the Natick Public Schools current and proposed solar projects including the plans for the new Kennedy Middle School. They responded to questions from Committee members. Ms. Wilson-Martin will be looking for the School Committee's authorization for Dr. Nolin to execute the contracts at the next meeting.

Enrollment Projections 2018-2019

Dr. Nolin reviewed the projected enrollments for the 2018-2019 school year. These numbers will be monitored closely to ensure reasonable class sizes are maintained.

Kennedy Middle School Building Project Update

Dr. Nolin reported that she attended a meeting with Ai3 architect team, the Compass Project Management team and MSBA representatives to go through the various modules on reimbursements and reimbursement rates for the project.

To Award Bid for In-Town Special Education Transportation

Mr. Luff requested the School Committee's approval to award the bid for in-town Special Education transportation to JFK Transportation who was determined to be a responsible and responsive bidder in the amount of \$1,689,170.80. Mr. Laurent moved to award the bid to JFK. Dr. McKenzie seconded. It was unanimously approved.

Approval of Kennedy Middle School Building Project Invoices

Dr. Nolin requested the School Committee's approval of the following invoices for the Kennedy Building Project for the month of April 2018 which have been approved by the Kennedy Middle School Building Committee.

Invoice no.	Vendor	\$Amount
CPM 61-15	Compass	26,977.00
0012B-1605.00	Ai3	312,704.08
Total		339,681.08

Mr. Laurent moved to approve these invoices. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. They were approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Laurent moved to approve the School Committee meeting minutes of May 7, 2018 and the Executive Session minutes of May 7, 2018. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. They were unanimously approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Approval to Refer Policies to Policy Subcommittee

Chair Tabenkin indicated the need to refer the following policies to the Policy Subcommittee for review and revision as needed:

- Public Speak Policy
- Medication Administration Policy
- Staff Responsible Use Policy

Dr. McKenzie stated that she is glad that the Public Speak Policy is being reexamined which will be a long and difficult process. In talking with members of the community, many feel Natick residents and parents should be given the first right of speaking, not to say others can't speak. She suggested that Brookline's Public Speak Policy be reviewed along with others.

Dr. Nolin indicated that in addition to looking at the Public Speak Policy there are some time sensitive changes that the need to be made to the Medication Administration Policy and the Staff Responsible Use policy as it relates to social media and messaging. She will be seeking dates for the Subcommittee to meet, and will be looking to review many different models of these policies. Mr. Laurent moved for approval to refer these policies to Policy Subcommittee. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Report on warrants signed

In accordance with School Committee procedures, Dr. Nolin reviewed the following warrants signed by the Chairperson:

Warrant Type	Warrant Number	Date Signed	Amount
Accounts Payable	2018-46S	05/07/2018	\$ 492,306.70
Accounts Payable	2018-46SB	05/07/2018	\$ 103,997.82
Payroll	22	05/07/2018	\$ 2,112,529.92

If anyone wishes to review the details regarding any of these warrants, please feel free to contact Dr. Gray in the Business office.

Members Concerns

Chair Tabenkin asked Dr. Nolin to provide a brief update on school safety given the recent tragedy in Texas and concerns raised. Dr. Nolin stated the following:

- we do employ the best multi-pronged approach to addressing school safety
- there are many resources on our website that we are happy to share
- we are thinking of doing a short TV segment overviews all of our safety procedures and training programs so our community can have a more in-depth understanding of what we do
- our schools since Newtown tragedy several years ago are quite different from years ago , there is no open campus for the majority of the day, generally only one door for entrance and exits with buzzer system
- custodians lock and check doors throughout the day
- a lot of questions have been received about metal detectors – we have not made this choice as a community – do not stand alone in this decision – collaborate with our town partners of fire, police & DPW at our safety meetings for the town
- are in partnership with Homeland Security and look at what other school districts are doing
- are in constant dialogue with our security professionals to ensure we employ the best practices that are out there
- are listening and hearing comments and will come back with an in-depth overview.

Mr. Luff added that our preventative methods are the ones that create the best avenue to take care of these issues. We make sure our students feel connected and safe and have all the supports there for them every day when they are in school so that these things never do happen. He stated that we do have a district wide safety initiative team made up of school personnel, police, fire, first responders and other community members. They meet monthly and will be meeting this Wednesday where they will debrief the issues at Santa Fe High School.

Chair Tabenkin reiterated that in addition to security measures, a mental health initiative is in the forefront as one of our district goals because if our students are not healthy and feeling accepted nothing can prevent these tragedies. She is proud of our district for not waiting for a tragedy to happen. This initiative was taken on a few years ago which has been expanded and improved upon over the years.

Mr. Jefferson Wood, Teacher Representative, requested that while looking into measures to keep schools safe, please keep in mind that it is important to keep the school culture in mind. Look at common sense processes and security measures that will keep our students safe but also remind them they are coming to school each day and not to something that resembles a prison facility or is so secure that we lose the culture of what a school is meant to be. His heart goes out to his colleagues in Santa Fe.

Mr. Wood is also pleased with the excellent choices of Mr. Kirk Downing as Interim Assistant Superintendent and Mr. Ben Gatto as Interim Principal of Brown School and looks forward to working with them.

Dr. McKenzie reported that the NHS prom is this Friday, May 25. She stated that the After Prom Party is a wonderful event to keep our kids safe on prom night, however, they are still in need of funds. A go fund me page has been set up for this event. She encouraged anyone who can, to contribute to this worthy cause. Chair Tabenkin concurred. She stated that 580 students attended last year and hopes more attend this year.

Mr. Luff reported that Dr. Lori Peterson will be speaking at NHS lecture hall tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m. on “Increasing your Child’s Positive Outcomes”.

Ms. McDonough stated that she is very troubled by all of the Open Meeting Law complaints and Public Record requests being filed and the amount of time which is being taken away from Mr. Luff, the person

that deals with our most vulnerable children. She hopes we can find a resolution and get back to what is really important to our district.

At 9:05 p.m., Mr. Laurent moved to adjourn. Mr. Brand seconded. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 6-0-0.

Anna Nolin
Interim Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Attest: _____

Sharon Reilly
Recording Secretary

Documents provided in Novus Agenda

Out of State Travel Request – NHS Choir to Orlando, FL
Memorandum requesting to award bid for In-Town Special Education Transportation
Draft School Committee Minutes – May 7, 2018
Warrant Report
Solar Portfolio Presentation
Ring of Honor Rendition
Enrollment Projections 2018-2019

Agenda and materials used at this meeting can be found here: [Agenda & Materials](#)