

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 13, 2020*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, January 13, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 7:15 p.m.

Members Present: Matt Brand, Julie McDonough, Cathi Collins, Henry Haugland, Shai Fuxman, and Donna McKenzie via conference call

Members Missing: Hayley Sonneborn

Others Present:	Anna Nolin	Superintendent
	Mr. Tim Luff	Assistant Superintendent
	Mr. Kirk Downing	Assistant Superintendent
	Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
	Rose McDermott	Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Mr. Jefferson Wood, Teacher Representative joined the meeting at this time.

Announcements

Dr. Nolin read a note from Kelsey Hampton from the Natick Service Council. Ms. Hampton thanked the Natick Public Schools community for their continued support. Over the last year, students and teachers have volunteered for over 600 hours in an effort to help our neighbors in need.

Dr. Nolin informed the community that our Parent Academy Town Hall will be hosted on January 28, 2020. This is an opportunity for families to interact on targeted focus groups related to the strategic plan.

Lastly, Dr. Nolin announced that in the last email blast, there was a call for people interested in serving on a committee focused around issues of equities, diversion and inclusion. Please apply directly to Dr. Nolin, with a letter of interest and she will share them with the School Committee.

Public Speak

Chair McDonough asked if anyone wished to come forward for Public Speak. No one came forward.

Review of Updated Agenda Format

Chair McDonough discussed the revision of the agenda format which will provide the School Committee as well as the community with more specific time frames and will be discussed in the order that items are listed. Dr. Nolin also reviewed a change to the cover page for each agenda item that will give more information to the School Committee regarding the item being discussed. The School Committee will do it's best to stick to the timelines.

Natick Net Zero Plan by Jillian Wilson-Martin

Jillian Wilson-Martin, Sustainability Coordinator for the Town of Natick along with a member of the Sustainability Committee, David Migaloff. Together they gave a presentation of the Net Zero planning process that the Town is embarking on for the community. There was a 2018 fall Town Meeting non-binding resolution, supported by a significant majority of the members, and the intent of the resolution is

for the town to develop a plan to eliminate or offset all greenhouse gas emissions that originate in Natick by 2050. Almost all of the communities in our area are working on this.

KMS Building Project Update

Dr Nolin gave an update as well as supporting materials that we have finalized and given over a bid savings of \$4,376,043.00 on the Kennedy Middle School project. The funds were voted to be partially put into reserves for additional contingencies and the rest to be returned back to the project. We continue to be under budget and on time and in some cases accelerated. We are still on track for a January 2021 opening. We are about to go into a heavy season of procurement and purchasing for the furniture, fixtures and equipment portion of this project. We are starting to go out to bid. We are looking at suitability and durability in this process and teacher voices are at the center of ordering materials. There has been collaboration across all sectors. Dr. Nolin feels confident surrounding the procurement and purchasing surrounding all items. We have to set up all the back-end infrastructure by May 2020. We have put together a professional development plan throughout the fall that ensures that by January we are ready for our opening.

First Budget Overview - Personnel & Operating

Dr. Nolin and Dr. Gray gave a budget power point presentation for the FY21 proposed budget. Dr. Nolin discussed the main drivers which is managing complexities. Dr. Nolin reviewed the FY21 budget themes - managing complexity and return on investment. She reviewed the hierarchy of needs regarding school's support of all levels. We continue to change and diversify. Complexity of student and services are greater than we have seen in the past. Dr. Nolin shared our great successes and Natick High School growth in enrollment. Strategic investments in RTI and elementary reading curriculum and instruction, have yielded students achieving at higher levels. Natick Public Schools continues to be at the top of the state in terms of ranking despite the fact that the per pupil expenditure compared to other towns is below the state average. Dr. Gray discussed was something we pursued as a district, was to determine what would be an appropriate format to present our financial information. A reformatted budget book was presented. He reviewed single family values and parcels as well as tax bill in comparison to other towns in the state that closely resemble the Natick community. Some enrollment factors are that the previous formulas were outdated - we are in the process of an enrollment and space study. While enrollment is leveling out, these estimates don't take into other factors that come in to play. We have a lull of retirements and have had to adjust that number. We have added more historical data. Dr. Gray explained that we have reviewed personnel requests, 3 positions will be transferred to the new Kennedy Middle School. Dr. Gray addressed FY21 budget assumptions which included limited spending requests, additional funding for utilities for the new Kennedy Middle School. The difference between the Town Administration proposed budget and our proposed budget is \$1,218,113.00. The Town Administrator's budget means we do not hire new positions and we would have to eliminate 8 teaching positions or programs. The School Committee discussed the proposed budget and many scenarios in detail. Dr. Nolin reminded all that we are at a sensitive time. We are going to have to make some decisions within the eco system. An investment in schools is an investment in economic development and real estate. She asked that we all remain open.

Overview of ACCEPT Transportation Assessment

Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent reviewed ACCEPT Transportation's assessment. They provide us out of district special education transportation for our students. Mr. Luff explained the matrix behind the nineteen percent of all the assessed districts that belongs to Natick. Our percentage is higher because of the distance between Natick and the schools that the students are being driven to. Mr. Luff informed the School Committee that the cost will be less for Natick Public Schools next year.

Lilja Principal Search, Process and Timeline

Dr. Nolin updated the School Committee as to the Lilja principal search. There are 23 strong applicants as of today. Dr. Nolin and Ms. Davis, Director of Human Resources have met with Lilja staff and parents for focus groups and got broad themes for what they were looking for in terms of the next leader for their community. Dr. Nolin is thrilled and confident that we will find the next Principal for Lilja. Dr. Nolin asked for a School Committee member to participate in the interview process. Mr. Haugland expressed an interest and will be representing the School Committee.

Update on the Use of William James Interface

Dr. Nolin reminded the School Committee that William James College is a professional development provider for Natick Public Schools. They are also a referral agency for connecting our students and families to mental health resources in an accelerated way. We pay a subscription for these services. Dr. Nolin reviewed the structured interview phone screening done with students in 7th and 9th grade. This protocol helps determine students who may be silently struggling with mental illness. She provided the return on investment via documentation with a table that indicated number of referrals since 2016. Last year we were up 20 referrals. This program is working and is well used.

Proposed Elementary School Lunch Price Increase

Dr. Gray revealed that the MA DESE Federal School Lunch program indicated we are out of compliance for our meal price. In order to comply, we will need to increase school lunches to \$3 per meal effective March 1, 2020. We haven't had an increase in the last 6 years. Members of the School Committee felt the date was not giving parents enough notice about this increase. We will address and vote on the date at the next meeting.

Proposed Athletic Late Registration Fee

Dr. Nolin proposed an athletic late registration fee. This fee does not need to affect anyone. Hundreds of families fail to register in time. It hogs the athletic office and creates a lot of pressure for the office. There are families coming in during the day and students leaving classes to try to register. Most pressing is the medical clearance. We hope to encourage better behavior. There is ample time for registration and no reason for late registrations. The School Committee agrees and will discuss the amount as well as vote on the late fee at the next meeting.

Update on Parent Academy Town Hall Night on January 28, 2020 and Upcoming Thought Exchange with Parent Community

Dr. Nolin discussed the survey sent out to parents regarding what do modern parents want in regards to engagement in the school system. We want to get as much feedback from the community. Parents have the capacity and the opportunity to help us design the new parent portal for the PowerSchool student information system.

Enrollment Update

Mr. Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent reviewed current enrollment numbers. There has been an increase in preschool enrollments. We are currently stable and are working on incoming Kindergarten registration.

Consent Agenda

Chair McDonough pulled out the approval of Dr. Peter Gray as the alternate Finance Planning Committee member. Ms. Collins moved approval of the remaining consent agenda. Mr. Haugland seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present, 6-0-0.

Action Items

Approval of Dr. Peter Gray as the Alternate Finance Planning Committee Member: Chair McDonough discussed problems with the Financial Planning Committee having difficulty maintaining a quorum. Appointing an alternate member could alleviate this problem. There is some confusion surrounding what actual role will they play. There was an understanding from one of the School Committee members that it should be a School Committee member vs. Administration. Dr. Gray's understanding is that the person that cannot attend the meeting, would name someone to attend in her place. Chair McDonough would like to get further clarity.

Vote to Allow Surplus at Current Kennedy Middle School to be Open for Public Surplus and Auction: Dr. Nolin explained to the School Committee that we need to make accommodations and arrangements for some of the furniture, fixtures and equipment from the old Kennedy Middle School. This has been done previously with the Natick High School build. Dr. Nolin asked for permission to go ahead and donate and/or auction any surplus materials that are no longer usable. Ms. Collins motioned to authorize administration to determine what FF&E from the current Kennedy Middle School is surplus and either repurpose to nonprofits or other municipalities or auction items in a public fashion or forum. Mr. Haugland seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present, 6-0-0.

Update on Purchase Order Process

Dr. Gray informed the School Committee that there was no update on purchase order process. He spoke with Mr. Townsend and they are meeting is this Wednesday. There had been no update at their last meeting. Due to budget preparations, he was unable to accomplish anything since the last update. Dr. Gray was happy to report that all of our elementary schools have been trained and are doing electronic purchase order requisitions. We have begun to institute this at the middle schools and at the high school. Dr. Gray discussed working through issues with the town that we didn't anticipate. Dr. Gray will relay the urgency in moving forward. Chair McDonough will be requesting a written update for the School Committee and the Board Select after Dr. Gray and Mr. Townsend have met. Dr. Gray will welcome Mr. Townsend to a School Committee meeting to explain the issues.

Update on Sleep Working Group

Chair McDonough gave an update. They have had 2 meetings. The next meeting at end of January. We have divided into sub working groups. Next meeting the working groups will be sharing back the progress they are making. Working on having this spring a community education night.

School Committee Concerns

Dr. McKenzie encouraged the community to run for Town Meeting. She encouraged as many people as possible to run for these town meeting member positions.

At approximately, 9:33pm, Ms. Collins moved to adjourn. Mr. Brand seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present, 6-0-0.

Anna Nolin
Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Rose McDermott
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Attest: _____

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