

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
January 27, 2020*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, January 27, 2020 at 7:21 p.m. in the School Committee Room, third floor, Town Hall. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 7:21 p.m.

Members Present: Julie McDonough, Haley Sonneborn, Henry Haugland, Shai Fuxman, and Donna McKenzie via conference call

Members Missing: Matthew Brand and Cathi Collins

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

Chair McDonough moved for approval for the School Committee to enter into Executive Session for this purpose:

1. To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining or Litigation (Title 1 Teachers) if an Open Meeting May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Bargaining or Litigating Position of the Public Body and the Chair So Declares;

Ms. Sonneborn seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. All in favor of entering into Executive Session for this purpose:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn – Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the five members present 5-0-0. Chair McDonough stated that the School Committee will be returning to open session at approximately 7:15pm. The School Committee proceeded to the Training Room to conduct this session.

At 7:34p.m., the Committee returned to open session. Mr. Jefferson Wood, Teacher Representative joined the meeting at this time.

Announcements

Dr. Nolin reminded everyone that this was National School Board month and she thanked the committee for all the time they volunteer for making sure the needs of our students are met. Dr. Nolin gave them all a small token of appreciation and thanked them for all they do for our school system.

Public Speak

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

Review of Newly Adopted Agenda Time Indicators

Mr. Tim Luff spoke to the Assistant Attorney General regarding the legality of commitment to times being listed on the agenda. The Assistant Attorney General informed Mr. Luff that failure to stay within the listed times on an agenda is not a violation of the Open Meeting Law and the Committee is free to keep the agenda items as they are.

Review of New Confidentiality Agreement

Dennis Roche, Director of Technology reviewed a new confidentiality agreement addressing a gap. The agreement has been reviewed by attorneys and the data privacy team. This document will be completed and signed by employees, volunteers, contractors that may be using private information. Moving forward it will be signed by any one new to the district and there will be a yearly reminder to current employees.

FY21 Title 1 Funding

Mr. Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent provided documentation as a resource to understanding the situation we are all in. We could receive a drastic reduction of up to 40% of our funding. Funding is based on census data and the poverty definition within the census data. He explained that we have been living on the cusp of this 5% benchmark which is critical. This is the federal definition of poverty. Massachusetts uses the state definition for free lunches and how it distributes its funds around the state. The critical fact is when you are within one category, we are at risk of qualifying under a different category. It's critical for our funding to come in at the 5% mark. Mr. Downing went on further to review previous years funding. Unfortunately, we won't be able to determine our funding until July 1, 2020. We will be doing some planning throughout the spring. Mr. Downing will give an update once we have an understanding of what our funding will be. Circuit breaker cannot fund this.

Update on Purchase Order Process

Dr. Gray reviewed that there is no update to the process and nothing has changed since mid-December. Mr. Townsend agreed to let school district to make and oversee our budget transfers but the Town Comptroller said this was up to her purview. Dr. Gray reinforced that we continue not to have our financial reports. Mr. Townsend would not be able to address the School Committee to answer questions per the Town Administrator. Chair McDonough would like a School Committee member to attend the Select Board meeting. Dr. Gray offered to attend and represent and Mr. Haugland will assist him and represent the School Committee.

Overview of Student Services FY21 Budget

Mr. Tim Luff, Assistant Superintendent presented an overview of the necessary Special Education budget. These are not choices but mandated by Federal and Massachusetts state law. Our duty under the Federal and State law is to provide services to students with disabilities. Mr. Luff continued by reinforcing that students aged 3-21 years old are our responsibility. Some items he reviewed were the major factors in the Student Services budget, Special Education offerings for our 859 students, programs and services, operating costs, out of district enrollment figures, staffing by building, legal requirements for preschool, and the Circuit Breaker account. Mr. Luff took questions from School Committee Members and answered them in complete detail.

At approximately 8:30pm Dr. McKenzie disconnected from the meeting. Dr. McKenzie returned to the meeting at approximately 8:56pm.

Overview of Technology FY21 Budget

Mr. Dennis Roche, Director of Technology gave a presentation regarding his FY21 budget request. Mr. Roche reviewed an inventory summary by location, goals for the technology budget, technology budget requests, equipment replacement, employee laptop age report, purchase of services, projected PowerSchool costs, software costs, copier meter reads, technician ratios and managing technology complexity challenges and risks. Mr. Roche took questions from the School Committee and answered them in complete detail.

Overview of Teaching, Learning & Innovation FY21 Budget

Mr. Kirk Downing, Assistant Superintendent gave an overview and presentation of his FY21 budget request. During his presentation he discussed the TLI vision and what mandates mean to Natick's vision. He reviewed the educational policy context and several TLI investments. Mr. Downing went on to describe and explain his expense drivers. He reviewed training and education as well as necessary text and software necessities. He also reviewed instructional materials, testing and assessment as well as current reductions. Due to Mr. Downing's details, the School Committee had no questions for him.

General FY21 Budget Update

Dr. Nolin gave some general updates. In an effort to keep people informed, she pointed out the role of the School Committee which is to bring forward the budget it sees fit to serve the students in Natick. Dr. Nolin discussed how important it is to keep transparency and dialogue open. She went over the budget timeline with a list of dates where the NPS budget will be discussed. Dr. Nolin invited the public to the Public Hearings on our budget. She also discussed the average rate of growth for student enrollment. It's difficult to predict enrollment for the future. We are still getting on average an additional 70 students per year. There's such volatility and we have closed school choice. Dr. Nolin reviewed how her office has tightened the residency policy in Natick. There are more students enrolling at Natick High School and less at private or vocational schools. She felt these contributing factors were important to share with everyone.

KMS Building Project Update

Dr. Nolin gave an update. She discussed due to the warm weather; we have had thawing of ground water which is flowing around the campus. We have employed engineers to access the situation. We continue with meetings regarding furniture, fixtures and equipment. This is requiring an inordinate amount of time. At approximately 10:00p.m., Dr. McKenzie left the meeting.

Action Items

Chari McDonough discussed the approval of the proposed elementary school lunch price increase. The School Committee discussed the start date and have decided to move the increase date from March 1, 2020 to July 1, 2020. Mr. Haugland moved to implement the elementary lunch increase for July. Dr. Fuxman seconded. It was unanimously approved by the members present 4-0-0.

Chair McDonough discussed the approval of the athletic late registration fee. One of the members felt we should follow the recommendation of Mr. Collins. Mr. Haugland moved to approve the late fee as suggested by Mr. Collins. Dr. Fuxman seconded. It was unanimously approved by the members present 4-0-0.

Consent Agenda

Chair McDonough moved out of consent agenda Ratification of Contract with Title 1 Teachers and moved it to the Chairmans Report. Dr. Fuxman motioned to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. It was unanimously approved by the members present 4-0-0.

1. Nature's Classroom Field Trip
2. Report on Warrants Signed

Approve Ratification of Contract with Title 1 Teachers

Chair McDonough discussed that earlier this evening, in executive session, the School Committee discussed the contract voted to approve it. There were a few housekeeping items but it was pretty straight forward.

Appoint Alternate to Financial Planning Committee

Chair McDonough discussed the need to have an alternate to guarantee we had an alternate in order to have a quorum. The alternate would participate if Chair McDonough or Ms. Collins couldn't attend. The alternate would then have voting rights. Mr. Haugland offered to be the alternate. However, he would like the Chair to ask the other members. Chair McDonough will check with the other two members that aren't present and we will revisit.

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, 10:25pm, Mr. Haugland moved to adjourn. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote. It was unanimously approved by a vote of the four members present, 4-0-0.

Anna Nolin
Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Attest: _____

Rose McDermott
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

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