



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

87 Linwood Avenue, Whitinsville, Massachusetts 01588 (508) 234-8156 FAX (508) 234-8469 www.nps.org

Steven Falconer, Chairperson, stfalconer@nps.org
Brian Paulhus, Kathryn Atchue, Allan Richards, Erin Donahue

Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 9, 2021 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order (7:00)
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance

Steven Falconer	Present
Brian Paulhus	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Kathryn Atchue	Present
Erin Donahue	Present

Also in attendance were Superintendent Amy McKinstry and Director of Business and Finance Melissa Walker

- IV. Statement of Audio and Video Recording
- V. Statement of Mission
- VI. Public Comment

Beth Dumouchel of 34 Willow Street spoke and advised that parents have come before the committee and begged for them to advocate for their kids but noticed complacency. She wants the district to start standing up to the state and advocating. She also noted that after the last School Committee meeting, there was the Fall Town meeting where they allowed freedom of choice when it came to wearing masks. She noted the hypocrisy of attendees in those meetings. She stated that people have forgotten what it is like to advocate for positive change and went over her experience in meetings with many groups of individuals such as special needs children, Worcester, different towns, and schools. She has never experienced a School Committee that has one spokesperson or has not returned emails. She asked what is holding the committee back. Beth also touched upon concerns regarding the pick-up and drop-off at the elementary school. She is concerned that the school may need to be opened earlier or the engineering of building and grounds may need to be revisited. She said she has removed 2 of her students from the district and will be removing a third.

Brandon King of 57 Sheryl Drive continued off of what Beth mentioned regarding the masks at the town meeting and advised it felt silly as there were 90 people there. He also noted that there was an alarming trend in special needs teachers and assistants leaving the district and he knows that children are not receiving grid services and are being just pushed through. He also noted that during the meeting, the public comment is always first, and he wonders if it could be moved to the end to make sure everyone has all of the information. Steven Falconer mentioned that all of the information is posted online ahead of time and emphasized that nothing is voted on until first bringing it up for discussion during the meeting before. Brandon also spoke on the budget and spoke on the budgeted amount for lawyers. He would like to see a comparison on how much money is actually being spent on these services to send a kid out of the district.

- VII. Presentation
 - A. Go Guardian Internet Filter – Tiago Vital

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Director of Educational Technology, Tiago Vital provided a presentation on Go Guardian, a program that helps the district block inappropriate sites before they reach devices using a content filter. Tiago cleared up misconceptions and advised the times in which this is actually tracking the sites and when it is not. He provided information on how to make sure this is not running on a personal computer, and how to see if it is. He provided visuals on what he sees on his end, what they use it for, how it works, and why they need it. For the full, detailed presentation with visuals, please refer to recording of the meeting [here](#) at 21:40.

B. MS Update – John Diorio

Northbridge Middle School principal John Diorio provided an update. The middle school has held 3 community events this year including a family fun run, a movie night, and a Halloween battle between houses in the school that was covered on the news. The school put out Veteran flags in the front yard and included photos of veterans that staff and students contributed. They also wore red on Friday in honor of the veterans. The middle school has been holding weekly assemblies to address social emotional needs of all students. He referenced the “be a light” theme assembly based on the Thomas Rhett song, and the topic was about making a difference. The assemblies have been talking to students about challenges and changes due to the pandemic, and how they can work together to build a strong school culture. The 11/22/21 assembly hosted Officer Dejordy and the DA to address internet and social media safety. John went over some of the new clubs and committees including student advisory club, student voice committee, LGBTQ club, community building committee, gaming club, art club, broadcast club, international club, and Ski club. They started the NMS 5 news channel which is broadcasted on Rams TV Jr. They have also started a tutoring program running after school in all 4 content areas on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and it is open to all students. They reduced the number of students failing courses from 205 to 64, and students failing two or more courses from 51 to 15. Ms. Palme Howes and Mr. Stien met with students failing at least one class to discuss their academic achievement plan.

VIII. Student Representative Report

Student Representative, Christopher Rivelli, provided a report on the schools. He started his report by going over the athletics records for each sport including JV boys soccer, Varsity boys soccer, Varsity field hockey, football, and the cheer team. He advised that all varsity sports programs at NHS made the playoffs and that winter sports information night would take place on 11/17/21 at 6:00 PM in the high school auditorium. Christopher read off the September Students of the Month including Jesse Perron, Damian Munhall, Matthew Oosterman, and Matthew Wildman. Next, he went over the current events in the high school. He started by noting the music department hosting their annual Fall concert, the guidance department hosting college representatives daily, the Student Council attending a leadership conference, students participating in the WGBH Quiz Show qualification process, and the school food pantry progressing. He ended with a reminder that first quarter grades have been posted on IPass.

IX. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Amy McKinstry provided a report. She started with the news that the NES preschool parking lot has been completed and they have started to divert the pick-up and drop-off lines, which has helped with timing issues. They look forward to seeing this process get smoother. In addition to that the playground is scheduled to be completed this week. On 11/17/21 registration will be open for the joint workshop between the Rockdale Youth Center and Family Continuity for parents of students in grades 2-12. They will be providing a shuttle for families who may need transportation to attend. These workshops will be provided monthly and are based off of topics parents advised they wanted to learn about. They are currently working on a vaccine clinic for students in grades 5-12 that will most likely be the same day as parent teacher conferences. On 11/20/21 there will be a vaccine clinic for all eligible individuals 12 and up from 1:00-3:00 PM. Amy advised they have received generous donations from food pantries and have been working on getting them stocked and ready. If anyone knows a family in need, please reach out to Mrs. Ross at NES. The community closet has been very busy. Amy volunteered last week and had a great experience. They could use gently used winter shoes, boots, and other items, as things go quickly. The district received approval for the ESSER III grant last week in the amount of 2.1 million dollars. They need to provide DESE with a spending plan 30 days from the date of approval. Most of the funding will be spent on positions and staffing, programming, and transportation costs. Amy provided a clarification of the gas leak in the high school and discussed and answered questions from the committee regarding the traffic pattern for pick-up and drop-off at NES.

X. Consent Agenda

It is the policy of the Northbridge Public Schools not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, age, or homelessness in its educational programs, services, activities, or employment.

- A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from October 26, 2021
- B. Warrant 42-18s 10/28/2021 \$519,517.56
- C. HS Food Pantry Donations

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 5-0.

XI. Action Items

- A. Approve additional grant funded positions

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to approve the additional grant funded positions. The motion was seconded by Allan Richards.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 5-0.

XII. Discussion

- A. FY21 Budget Recap

Director of Business and Finance, Melissa Walker, provided a recap of the fiscal year 2021 budget. The original amount budgeted for the year was \$28,851,528 and actual expenses came in at \$26,684,388, meaning that the district came in under budget by \$2,167,140 or -7.5%. While operating budget expenses were under budget, there was an additional amount of \$1,318,915 spent utilizing the Covid-19 grants, which were not reflected in the operating budget. The categories of expenses that came in under budget included Salaries by \$979,142; Transportation by \$454,915; Out-of-District Tuition by \$189,486; Utilities by \$123,535; and others by \$430,480. Melissa provided a detailed account as to what caused each category to come in under budget, as well as explained the impact on the district revolver accounts. For a more detailed look at the fiscal year 2021 budget recap, please refer to the [packet](#).

- B. FY23 Budget Parameters/Timeline

Melissa Walker provided an estimated timeline in which the budget will be developed for fiscal year 2023. The outlined schedule can be found on page 39 of the [packet](#).

XIII. Information

- A. Family Survey Data

XIV. School Committee Individual Comments

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XV. Adjournment (8:51)

A motion was made by Erin Donahue to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Allan Richards.

Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	Yes
Erin Donahue	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

The motion was accepted with a roll call vote of 5-0.

Note: The listings of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. Also, the timeframe for each topic is a general guideline and may not be strictly adhered to.