



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

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Michael LeBrasseur, Chairperson, mlebrasseur@nps.org,
Brian Paulhus, Steven Falconer, Allan Richards, Kathryn Atchue

Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday, August 6, 2020 7:00PM

Remote public attendance only via the Google Meet Link in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. c. 30A, Section 20

- I. Call to Order (7:00)
- II. Statement regarding Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law
- III. Attendance

Michael LeBrasseur	Present
Steven Falconer	Present
Brian Paulhus	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Kathryn Atchue	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 (7:05)

Comments for this meeting may be emailed in advance of the 7:00 p.m. start time to school_committee@nps.org. All comments will be recorded in the record, and all attempts will be made to mention them live during the meeting. Any emails received during the meeting before the public comment period ends will also be attempted to be mentioned.

Michael LeBrasseur read a public comment that was received by school committee via email.

They were in opposition for the remote learning plan.

The emails are as follows:

Email 1

Hello mlebrasseur,

Kevin (email address removed) has sent you a message via your contact form (<https://www.nps.org/user/2353/contact>) at Northbridge Public Schools.

If you don't want to receive such e-mails, you can change your settings at <https://www.nps.org/user/2353/edit>.

Message:

Good afternoon,

I am writing to express my displeasure with the full remote learning plan for the start of the 2020 school year.

I would like to know if there was any discussion of providing child care for families with 2 working parents. I have paid taxes to the town, a large portion of which goes to the schools that essentially provide childcare 5 days a week. Since you have decided to remote school what options have you explored for families in this situation?

Have there been and discussions with the town about a tax credit? Surely many of your operating costs went down this past spring and will this fall. Utilities, janitorial expenses, cafeteria staff to name a few. Then there is the bus fee, will families that paid for busing be credited?

Will you be sending any information about how remote learning will take place? I surely hope it will be better than last spring, I know it was last minute but it was pathetic. I spent many hours watching and helping a 4th and 7th grader with their work, little if anything was learned and basically nothing taught.

This is a horrible decision that will have major, long lasting effects on all of our children.

*This exact letter is being sent to all school committee members, school administration and teachers.

Thank you for your time.

Email 2

Dear Superintendent McKinstry and Members of the School Committee,

As a resident of Northbridge and a father of two current Northbridge High School students, I feel it is of utmost importance that I voice my grave concerns with Superintendent McKinstry's plan for 100% remote learning for school reopening this fall. My youngest daughter is due to start her high school career as a freshman, and my son is due to begin his senior year at Northbridge High School. I have two other children who have successfully moved on from the Northbridge Public Schools, one who is proudly serving our country as a United States Marine, and the other who is a Dean's list student returning to the University of New Hampshire for her sophomore year.

My understanding is that DESE is requiring schools across the Commonwealth to provide 3 models for reopening school this fall: in person, hybrid, and virtual. Furthermore, my understanding is that Northbridge school officials are recommending 100% virtual instruction upon school's reopening. I am confused, and as I previously stated, deeply concerned as to why this is the model that you are recommending.

According to the fall reopening guidance provided by DESE on June 25, Districts must focus "first and foremost on getting our students back into school buildings." DESE's guidance provides specific, thorough, and detailed information from medical literature regarding how to get students back into school safely. In addition, as I am sure you are aware, the CDC has released substantive and extensive information based upon the latest science to guide school leaders in preparing for a safe return to some form of in-person instruction.

On a more personal level, I can tell you that my two high-school aged children **absolutely** need to be provided with some form of in-person / hybrid instruction this fall. I was fortunate to have had the ability to work from home last spring and assist them with their school work as best I could. However, I am keenly aware of the educational losses and negative social/emotional impact my children experienced during that time. Remote learning was not successful for my children, and I am certain that they did not receive an appropriate education from the Northbridge Public Schools from March through June of last year. If remote learning continues this fall, I will be disappointed to say for the first time that the Northbridge Public Schools is **not** providing my children with a free, appropriate public education to which they are entitled to.

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.

I truly thank you for all the hard work you have done during this very challenging situation. I am hopeful that a thoughtful decision can be made that is based upon all available local health data and statistics which ensures the return to school in the safest manner possible. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,
Michael Morganelli

VII. Consent Agenda (7:10)

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from July 28, 2020

B. Warrant 41-02s 7/9/20 \$63,815.24

C. Warrant 41-04s 7/23/20 \$8,352.54

A motion was made by Steven Falconer to accept items from the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Allan Richards. The vote was taken by roll call vote and the following votes were recorded:

Michael LeBrasseur	Yes
Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	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.

VIII. Action Items (7:15)

A. Reopening Plan Submission to DESE

Superintendent, Amy McKinstry presented an update to the next round of submission to the state on the Proposed Reopening Plan for the Northbridge Public Schools to the School Committee. The committee asked several questions and shared concerns. DESE extended the deadline for submission given the short period of time expected to get a plan in place after receiving guidance. The Superintendent along with the Leadership Team will continue to work on details of the reopening plan after receiving feedback from the committee at this evenings meeting. The vote was postponed til review of the final plan at the next School Committee Meeting on Thursday, August 13, 2020. The presentation is available for viewing on the School Committee page on the district website under Public Presentations

B. Updated School Calendar

A motion was made by Brian Paulhus to approve the Updated School Calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue. The vote was taken by roll call vote and the following votes were recorded:

Michael LeBrasseur	Yes
Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	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.

IX. Discussion (7:20)

A. Lasell Field Rental/Usage Policy

Steve Falconer talked about looking at what other districts were doing. Steve and Brian reviewed material Melissa had supplied. Steve talked with various organizations that may possibly look at renting the fields to make sure we are covering all the needs/expenses. Steve mentioned they should be able to provide a document for the next school committee meeting and be ready for an action item. School Committee shared questions and comments regarding the plan discussed.

B. FY21 Budget

Melissa Walker talked about the Grants that we are in receipt of that are helping with the expenses related to the reopening and putting measures in place to deal with COVID. School committee members shared comments

X. School Committee Individual Comments

School Committee members shared individual comments.

Congratulations to the graduating Class of 2020.

Next Meeting: Thursday, August 13, 2020 at 7:00pm

XI. Adjournment (8:59PM)

A motion was made by Steve Falconer to adjourn the meeting at 9:18pm. The motion was seconded by Kathryn Atchue. The vote was taken by roll call vote and the following votes were recorded:

Michael LeBrasseur	Yes
Steven Falconer	Yes
Brian Paulhus	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Kathryn Atchue	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