



Northbridge Public Schools

Northbridge School Committee

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Erin Donahue, Chairperson, Edonahue@nps.org
Allan Richards, Jill Leonard, Heather Alden, Becky Jackson

Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, January 10, 2023 7:00PM Northbridge High School Media Center

- I. Call to Order: The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to order by Erin Donahue at 7:00 PM.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance
- III. Attendance

Erin Donahue	Present
Allan Richards	Present
Jill Leonard	Present
Heather Alden	Present
Becky Jackson	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 - Brandon King of 75 Sheryl Drive said that the School Committee Meeting agenda wasn't posted on the School Committee website and that it should have been to let the public know when the meeting will occur. The meeting was properly posted.
- VII. Student Representative Report - Our NHS Music Program put on its Winter Concert on December 21st at 7pm. The band, choir, and NHarmonics acapella group performed festive holiday songs to set the audience in the mood for Christmas break.

Members of the post-grad program raised money selling breakfast the week before Christmas Break and donated over \$200 dollars to the Toys for Tots program. They helped to organize the items that had been donated.

The winter sports teams are going strong and are well into their seasons. The Varsity Girls Basketball team has had a strong season so far with a recent win over David Prouty with a score of 52-25. The JV girls' team has also had two wins over Leicester and Quaboag. The boys Varsity and JV basketball teams have also been hard at work bringing home several wins over the past several weeks. The Varsity boys' hockey team

had great efforts in taking home four wins so far with their most recent against Littleton this past Saturday with a score of 5-3. The indoor track team has also been practicing hard and had a loss to Uxbridge High School, but are looking for wins in their next coming meets. Great work to all of our winter athletes.

Student Council is bringing back the annual Winter Ball after a two year delay due to Covid-19. The dance's theme this year is black and gold and will be held from 6:30-9:30 on January 20th. Tickets sales started last week and students are excited to attend and are looking forward to another dance this year.

The engineering students completed their first Computer Aided Design, or CAD project before the winter break. Students played roles of designers to create charms for clients based on their personality and interests. Nice work to all of these students.

VIII. Superintendent's Report – Mrs. McKinstry sent out updated contact information to families on Blackboard. The information included a flow chart of who to contact, with examples of different reasons why they might reach out to the schools. If concerns aren't being met, families can submit concerns through the What's On Your Mind survey and Mrs. McKinstry will get back to them the same day. Families can also call the superintendent's office.

NES is going to host a coffee with the principals on January 20th at 9:00AM in the cafeteria. The principals will review the Alice protocols and some way parents can become more involved in the school. They will also talk about SWIS, which is a data entry, decision making program for the schools. It helps them track behaviors that happen at different times during the day. They are able to look at trends and where needs are greatest during the day.

NES is starting an Art Club on January 26 for 4th and 5th graders after school. Also on January 26 at 3:00PM a school council meeting will be held.

NMS started Saturday school on January 7th, this will cut down on out of school suspensions. School is held from 8:00-11:00AM. It's for repeat offenders who may have multiple detentions during the week. Mr. Stein and Mr. Diorio will alternate weeks supervising. The students have packets of work that need to be completed while they are there. The first session went well.

On February 3rd NHS administration and guidance is going to NMS to talk about academic and extracurricular programs for 8th graders. During the whole month of February and the first week of March the 8th grade will attend step ups days at the high school.

The NMS weight room equipment has been assembled. Thank you to Adam Orm, a parent, came and helped assemble the equipment. It can be used during gym class and for athletes after school.

The Buddy Tutoring program has started. There are 27 buddy tutors and 32 students in grades 2-5 participating. All students couldn't be accommodated, the parents were told

about an afterschool program that is starting to tutor middle school students. An afterschool tutoring program is also being held for grades 4-5 and 6-8. The program starts January 18th to the end of March for the elementary students. The middle school program starts on January 19th.

Thursday, January 19th is the end of the second term. Reports cards will be available in the parent portal on Infinite Campus on January 26th. There are tutorials available on Infinite Campus for parents who might have difficulty getting into the program.

January 13th is a full day of Professional Development and no school will be held.

Jill Leonard asked a question about Saturday school, she wanted to know what happens if the student doesn't show up or doesn't do the work while in attendance. Mrs. McKinstry said if that happened, the student would be suspended.

Erin Donahue asked if the SWIS program running at NES can be run at the other schools. Mrs. McKinstry said once their PBIS programs are robust it could be implemented.

IX. Presentations:

A. Pupil Personal Services Update – Mr. Rosenthal

Mr. Rosenthal said that all the schools are working on becoming inclusive to all students. Northbridge High School had unified basketball in the fall and will have inclusive track beginning in March. The Middle School begins unified basketball in February. Mr. Diorio is working on the middle school becoming a host site for a jamboree in the spring. The Culture Club is planning a celebration of all cultures in March, including food, presentations and dances. They will be looking for families to participate. The Elementary School is holding a Culture Fair on March 2 and 9 from 6:00-7:30PM, attendance will be determined by last name. The nurse's office has begun an E-Ticket office visitation program. A teacher will submit an E-ticket to the nurse's office letting them know a student needs to go to see them. The nurse will then call the classroom for the student to visit the office. This allows the nurse to triage the cases. The administration said implementing an E-Ticket system will help avoid a line outside the nurse's office and keep the kids in a learning environment until they are called to the nurse's office.

LPAC has set up an online meeting system with the help of Tiago Vital. This will allow online meetings to be held in different languages for parents. The meeting host's talk will be translated by an interpreter so the parent can understand what is being discussed. The interpreter can ask questions on behalf of the parents. The first meeting will be held on January 31st at 6:00PM.

Mr. Rosenthal's office is in the process of the Civil Rights Tier Focus monitoring system, it's the Department of Education's audit on the district's policies, practices and procedures for civil rights.

Brandon King planned an outing for SEPACon January 15th to Urban Air in Bellingham. It's an indoor, inflatable park that is sensory friendly.

SEPAC is meeting twice a month. A parent's rights presentation was done at the January meeting and Mr. Rosenthal talked about the process of special education. In February, Mr. Rosenthal will do a presentation on IEP's for parents. The number of parents at the last SEPAC meeting had double from the previous meeting.

Heather Alden said it's great that Mr. Rosenthal is being so forthcoming to parents about the IEP process. She believes it a huge misconnection for parents that feel their child needs this service but doesn't know how to go about getting help for them. Ms. Alden also asked about the online ELPAC meeting with a live interpreter and if there is a problem how will it be addressed. Mr. Rosenthal said it is a huge concern, not using unreliable companies. The company that is currently being used has been very reliable. There are staff members that speak multiple languages that said they would help.

X. Consent Agenda

A. School Committee Meeting Minutes from 12-13-22

A motion was made by Jill Leonard to approve the School Committee Minutes from December 13, 2022. The motion was seconded by Heather Alden. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

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

B. Warrant 43-26s 12/22/2022 \$491,019.67

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-26s 12/22/2022 for \$491,019.67. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

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

C. Warrant 43-28s 01/05/2023 \$291,280.46

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-28s 01/05/2023 for \$291,280.46. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative
0 members having voted in the negative
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 5-0

D. Donation: CVS

A motion was made by Heather Alden to accept the CVS donation. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative
0 members having voted in the negative
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 5-0

E. Donation: Wrestling

A motion was made by Heather Alden to accept the Wrestling donation. The motion was seconded by Jill Leonard. The vote was taken by roll call and the following votes were recorded:

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative
0 members having voted in the negative
The motion was accepted with a roll call vote 5-0

XI. Discussion

A. Revise Policy DN - Disposal of Surplus School Property

Melissa Walker spoke about a new policy – Disposal of Surplus School Property. Although the process of disposing of surplus property is not new to us, a written policy is required when the value of what is being disposed of is less than \$10,000, so the proposed policy is a written policy to capture our current practice.

B. Revise Policy DJE - Bidding Requirements

Melissa Walker explained that on November 25th, Chapter 198 of the Acts of 2022 was passed and with that passing, the municipal school district threshold for what was required for a formal sealed invitation for bid changed from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Prior to this change, sealed IFBs were required for purchases over \$50,000 and if a purchase was between \$10,000 and \$50,000, three quotes were required. Now, three quotes would be required for purchases between \$10,000 and \$100,000 and sealed IFBs would be required for purchases over \$100,000. This would not change the fact that the district would still get multiple prices for purchases between \$50,000 and \$100,000, just instead of using a sealed IFB process, the district would get three quotes. Updating the policy will allow the policy to align with the current Massachusetts General Law.

C. Revise Policy BEDH - Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee will be open to the public. Members of the public who wish to be heard at the meeting will sign in and be provided instructions on how to proceed. The Public Comment portion of the meeting will be moved to after the Discussion portion and prior to the Action portion. Speakers will be allowed 3 minutes to present their material. The presiding Chairperson may permit the extension of the time limit. The public comments must pertain to matters on the agenda or matters within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. Written comments longer than 3 minutes should be presented to the School Committee before or after the meeting.

Jill Leonard likes the changes. Erin Donahue is concerned the policy won't be equal for everyone and that if it's not it may be open to legal interpretation or discrimination. If early speakers speak for only 3 minutes and later speakers are given an extension is that fair? Erin agreed that it's a good idea to move the public comments section of the meeting until after the discussion as it would allow attendees to speak to what was just discussed. Erin said that with the open meeting laws the committee can only discuss what is on the agenda. If there are other questions, concerns or issues that aren't on the agenda they should be emailed to the school committee. When an email is sent to the school committee it's not during the meeting so they can respond. Jill Leonard asked how the sign sheet will be utilized. Superintendent McKinstry said that Annmarie Decker will be tasked with calling up the speaker in the order they signed in. Becky Jackson asked a question regarding the 3 minute speaking time and providing extensions. If it's anticipated that a large group of people will attend the meeting can the chair say at the beginning of the meeting extensions will not be granted because of time constraints? Allan Richards said it the chair's decision if they wants to implement no extensions at a meeting.

A. Capital Plan Review

Melissa Walker reviewed the FY24 - FY28 capital plan. She reviewed the projects slated for FY24, which include replacing deteriorating doors and door frames at the Middle School, replacing the clocks at the Middle School, refinishing the gymnasium floors at the Middle School and High School, replacing the network switches at the High School, and replacing the ride-on scrubber machine at the Middle School. Additionally, she noted the new projects that were added to the capital plan in future years, which include replacing the classroom lock mechanisms at the Middle School, rekeying the interior doors at the High School, and replacing the wireless access points at the High School and Middle School. Heather Alden asked if once the floors are started to be redone an issue arises that the wood isn't as good as it was thought, has extra money been put aside? Melissa Walker said additional money had not been added to the quote received aside from a 5% buffer as the quote was received now, but the work would not be done until next year; however, with the additional components we were looking for it would be a good idea to add in some additional cushioning for the unknown issues that may come up. Melissa said she would update the number on the plan for the next meeting. Jill Leonard asked if the painting of the floor was included in the budget and Melissa said it was.

II. Action

A.

III. Information

A. Staffing update

Superintendent McKinstry said staffing is looking better. Special Education teachers are fully staffed. Most of the positions missing are support positions. The open math position is filled by a qualified teacher but we are keeping it open in case we can get her back into the instructional coach position. The open middle school science position is a recent resignation. Greg Rosenthal is continuing to look for a social worker.

IV. Adjournment: The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to adjourn by Allan Richards and seconded by Heather Alden at 8:00 PM.

Erin Donahue	Yes
Allan Richards	Yes
Jill Leonard	Yes
Heather Alden	Yes
Becky Jackson	Yes

5 members having voted in the affirmative

0 members having voted in the negative

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