



# Northbridge Public Schools

## Northbridge School Committee

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Allan Richards, [aerichards@nps.org](mailto:aerichards@nps.org), Heather Alden, [halden@nps.org](mailto:halden@nps.org), Rebecca Johnson, [rjohnson@nps.org](mailto:rjohnson@nps.org)

### Northbridge Public Schools School Committee Meeting Minutes Tuesday, December 13th, 2022 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 7:01PM

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Attendance

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

Also in attendance was 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 spoke about funding a teachers aid position with a grant, he doesn't think that is a great idea especially since there is an abundance of staff funding. He doesn't see the good of funding with a grant because when the money runs out the position will be cut. The aid positions are needed so he would like to see a more permanent funding for that position. Especially since there is a surplus of staff funding being that we're currently under staffed. He's heard of an account of the new suspension policy being inappropriately applied in the high school. A student with an IEP was suspended for nonviolent behavior. It was previously stated not to suspend students unless they were violent. He wanted to bring that to the school committee's attention to be looked into by someone.

VII. Student Representative Report: Congratulations to our newly announced October Students of the Month! Our freshman was Jacoby Gallerani, our sophomore was Isabelle Lomonaco, our junior was Shelby Cannon, and our senior was Caroline O'Brien. Great job to these NHS students in their amazing efforts. Students from the Northbridge High School Rise program have generously been working on no sew blankets to donate to local

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shelters for the holidays. They have already donated to a women's shelter and hope to donate to shelters closer to the Northbridge community. Students from Law and American Studies classes just recently attended a presentation by Justice Melia, Stephanie Fattman, Andrea Thompson, and Michael Luby, who are all members of the Worcester courthouse staff. There they discussed their personal education, training, and work in serving the public at the Worcester County Courthouse. The students who attended this presentation were very appreciative of all they learned about pursuing a career in law.

Students from the Nichols Honors Academy attended their November conference of the year. There, underclassmen participated in a variety of activities designed to help them get acquainted with students from other schools such as Bartlett and Douglas. Our upperclassmen also attended workshops where they learned about internship opportunities and how to present yourself in front of potential employers. They then crafted Elevator Pitches to judges from Nichols and later enjoyed a meal in the school's dining area. The conference was a great success and further helped NHS students gain insight to becoming successful.

Winter sports are off and running as the season starts with its first few weeks filled with practices and games. Our varsity boys' basketball team has already had a win over Hudson with a score of 66-58 and our girls' basketball team has already participated in the Marlborough Tip-Off Tournament. We wish the best of luck to our winter sports teams in the beginning of their seasons. The NHS Hockey Team is playing against Hudson this Saturday, December 17th at the DCU Center at 2:30pm. This past Saturday, the Northbridge High School put on the production of Peter Pan with a matinee at 2pm and an evening show at 6pm. As one of Captain Hook's pirates, I can say that Peter Pan was a huge success and a great time was had by all.

Erin Donahue said she heard the drama club faced some adversity due to illness and the other members stepped up to make sure the show went on. They did an excellent job.

## VIII. Superintendent's Report

### IX. Presentations:

#### A. John and Abigail Adams Scholars - Spring 2022 MCAS

Students are compared to other students in their town and those that have the highest or top tier MCAS scores are eligible to receive this scholarship. The scholarships are good towards tuition at Massachusetts State Colleges. Thirty seven Northbridge students were eligible to receive the scholarship. Nine of those students attended the school committee meeting and received a certificate from Principal Dawn Stockwell.

#### B. NHS – Building Update – Dawn Stockwell, the High School Principal, gave an update. The high school was able to fill some open positions, including a special education instructional assistant and a building substitute. They have offers out for

a behavior technician and a school adjustment counselor and hope to have them start in January. There are a few open positions, including a special education teacher, behavior technician and an instructional assistant. There are two new coaches, Jeff Kozik for Girls' Varsity Basketball and Arianna Dolock as the JV Girl's Basketball coach.

PBIS is in full swing. All teachers were asked to set up an acknowledgement system. The freshman academy has specific types of awards programs. For older students, an acknowledgement system is being used. Positive praise affects a student's behavior in the classroom by acknowledging what they do on a daily basis. In January, the principals will be going into the classrooms to see how things are going and to solicit feedback. Kudos is up and running. Students will be receiving certifications via email. This goes along with our Rams core values and beliefs for responsibility, achievement and mutual respect and service. There is also recognition through Student of the Month program. The SADD group and advisor Mr. Finkel have created a program on dating violence. The goal of the program is to help students foster safe and healthy environments. The group wants staff and students to pledge to follow the 8 steps to promote safety and wellness within themselves and the community. The group created a Mental Health and Wellness Guidebook as a resource for students if they feel they need help and/or to talk with someone.

The high school is in the process of updating their program of studies. The guidance department sent out a survey to the students as to what type of interests they have that could become electives. Honor Roll has been completed for term 1. The high school is looking to increase student academic recognition through national organizations, bring the French and Spanish national honor societies on campus and establishing the Rho Kappa with the history department. The music department is reestablishing the Tri M. The high school is researching the Seal of Biliteracy, which recognizes graduates who can speak, read and write proficiently in another language in addition to English. The seal would go on their diploma.

Jill Leonard was impressed with the number of honors students. Job well done to students and the teachers. Heather Alden thinks it's a great idea to have the Seal of Biliteracy for getting into college and giving a competitive edge. Will help students stand out even more. Erin Donahue said she loves all the positive things we're moving towards. She likes that the school is reinvigorating the PBIS program at the high school.

Kerry Alexander-Guertin worked in the RISE program for four years as a 1 to 1. In the RISE program where she is teaching, the students receive academics all day. She teaches five classes and then the students go to elective classes. Sometimes they take the same electives more than once. The post grad students opened a café three days a week and their job duties entail running the desk, ringing up customers, and placing orders. There is a cook, sorter, and a delivery person. They opened a bakery and there is a standing monthly order to deliver desserts to the police and fire stations. Next week, they have an order for 40 cookie trays so the students will spend two days making all the cookies. Today the students rang bells for the Salvation Army at Market 32. They went to Michaels to pick out an ornament to make for the ornament swap next week. When they work, they fill

out a time sheet and earn money, a dollar an hour. Each class has a goal sheet, the students went apple picking, bowling, and next week they're going to see A Christmas Carol. Kerry's class is reading and talking about the book A Christmas Carol. The students are very capable of talking about the book. They compared Scrooge to the Grinch. They are going to NES every week and follow a teacher. Hopefully in the spring the students will work with DECA on their advertising. They are planning on working with Harry's and the Green Plate to start a delivery service where the teachers can order lunch on Fridays and the students go pick it up for them and then deliver it to them.

Erin Donahue said she heard the RISE program has a great curriculum and asked Kerry to speak about it. Kerry explained that it's a unique curriculum, the idea is to start at the preschool level. Each unit is prepared ahead for each specific class. Even though students are on different levels of learning, they are all given the same material but catered to how they are learning, via pictures or words to answer questions. When Kerry presents on the board, she presents the hardest material so they are all learning up. Units are pretested and at the end of the unit the students are retested to see how much they've learned.

Erin Donahue said she also heard that the students made blankets. Kerry said she is teaching them to learn to sew. They donated the blankets to a women's shelter and the Worcester Police Department took some and donated them to a children's organization. This is teaching them to give back to the community. The student's have taken the proceeds from the Coffee Café to buy gift cards for a school in Florida hit by a hurricane and also to buy toys for the Toys for Tots program. Kerry sends home a weekly update to parents as to what is going on and what the students are doing.

Dawn Stockwell said that there is so much positivity, happiness, joy and engagement in Kerry's classroom. It makes the students want to do more and the fact that Kerry also wants to do more makes it infectious. The students are getting positive responses from people that they love coming back to the classroom and sharing. Heather Alden said Kerry's passion is very clear. As someone who worked with kids with different abilities for many years tapping into what their interests are to teach them life skills is challenging and so rewarding. They are so lucky to have you and your passion. She sees great things moving forward. Becky Jackson said everything Kerry is doing requires so much teamwork from the students. The class culture must be very tight knit and positive. She's really impressed. Kerry said the staff is fabulous and she couldn't do it without them. Erin said again how amazing she thinks the program is and to have you as their teacher. She thanked Kerry for all she's doing for the district.

## X. Consent Agenda

### A. Joint BOS/School Committee Meeting Minutes from 11-22-22

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the Joint BOS/School Committee Minutes from November 22, 2022. 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.

**B. School Committee Meeting Minutes from 11-22-22**

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve the School Committee Minutes from November 22, 2022. 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 43-22s 11/24/2022 \$477,770.52**

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-22s 11/24/2022 for \$447,770.52. 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. Warrant 43-24s 12/08/2022 \$214,709.08**

A motion was made by Heather Alden to approve Warrant 43-24s 12/08/2022 for \$214,709.08. 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. Hockey Donation

A motion was made by Becky Johnson to accept the hockey 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. Additional Instructional Assistant Positions - Grant Funded

Greg Rosenthal spoke about adding four additional Instructional Assistants to NES; they would be grant funded positions. He said grant funded positions are not guaranteed year to year so we will be looking to the general fund budget in the future. Two of the IA's we had already dedicated funds. Some of the grants are coming from previous years and have to be used. Melissa Walker said that while there are saving in current operational budget within the salary lines which we could allocate to cover these positions, the majority of the grant funding that instead will be used is coming from fiscal 22 grants that end on June 30, 2023 so if we don't spend that grant money we would have to return it to the state. The actual cost will vary on when the IA's are hired and if they have a degree or don't have a degree. The approximate cost for the remainder of the year it would be between \$41,000 and \$49,000 for four salaries. Erin Donahue asked if we end up on the high end of salaries do we have enough in granted funded, Melissa said that we do. Heather Alden asked if they can be built into next year's budget, Melissa said that they would, if necessary, after evaluating the total number of IA positions needed next year.

A motion was made by Jill Leonard to move the Additional Instructional Assistant Positions - Grant Funded discussion to an action item. 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.

## XII. Action

### Additional Instructional Assistant Positions - Grant Funded

A motion was made by Jill Leonard to approve adding four Instructional Assistant Positions, to be funded by grant funds. 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.

## I. Information

### A. Staffing update

Melissa Walker said there is a list of open positions in the committee's packet that are currently still open. Some positions have been recently filled, and as Dawn Stockwell mentioned, a Behavior Technician and Adjustment Councilor were offered and we're waiting for the paperwork to be completed.

### B. YTD Budget Report 12-1-22

Melissa Walker talked about the information item in the committee's packet which was a year to date breakdown of all the line items in the operational budget. It shows what was originally budgeted and what the line item updates have been so far. It captures transfers between line items, what the updated budgeted amount held in that line is right now, and then what is encumbered or expended from that line. If we have full time employees, we project what their salaries will be for the remainder of the

year. Some salary lines may show funds available. That may be because the position is vacant and payroll isn't hitting it right now or it could be because of time slip positions. As time slips come in over the coming weeks, the payrolls will hit and the expended funds will show. Any increases or decreases are reflected in the line items. Regarding transportation, fuel escalation wasn't budgeted because we didn't have the high fuel prices when we built the budget. Our prices for out of district transportation have increased because the cost of the runs has gone up and we have more runs we are providing. We aren't far enough into the winter season to gauge what the utility costs transfers will be. Right now it shows a \$525,000 decrease in anticipated expenses, but we may need a transfer of funds into the out of district tuition and transportation line items to cover the out of district increase. The available shows funds that haven't been committed but they're intended to be used for the remainder of the year. Erin Donahue asked about some of the snow machines being delivered to NES but not all of them, do we have an idea of what we will be spending on snow removal? Melissa said there haven't been conversations of contracting out for snow removal so she thinks the equipment will be delivered in time. Not all the attachments for the snow blower arrived but hopefully we have enough pieces to do the clearing. Erin suggested talking to George Simmons to make sure we have what we need and aren't scrambling last minute.

II. Adjournment: The Meeting of the Northbridge School Committee was called to adjourn by Jill Leonard 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.