

Newton School Committee
Meeting Minutes
Education Center, Frazier Room (#210)
January 12, 2015
8:35 a.m.

Present: Chairperson Matt Hills, Vice-Chairperson Margie Ross Decter, Margaret Albright, Diana Fisher Gomberg, Ellen Gibson, Ruth Goldman, Angela Pitter-Wright, Steven Siegel, Mayor Setti Warren

Call to Order

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Superintendent's Report

School Visits

Superintendent David Fleishman noted that last week he and the School Committee visited Cabot and Underwood schools and this week they will be at Ward, Oak Hill and Zervas. The visits have been excellent opportunities to engage with staff and to see student engagement firsthand.

Principal Search Meeting

A principal search meeting for parents and guardians will be held tomorrow evening at Newton North, where they will give an overview of the process and how people can get involved.

Athletics

The Superintendent acknowledged the Newton North/Newton South second annual basketball game at TD Bank North Garden, with an excellent crowd and a lot of spirit. Congratulations to the winners (Newton North) and everyone looks forward to next year.

Modulars

In terms of the four Zervas modulars that will be moved, they have done some rethinking due to enrollment projections and additional information. Two of the modulars will definitely go to Newton South in place of the tin building. A slightly revised recommendation on the others will be presented at the next meeting.

Fiscal & Operations Update

The year-end projected balance is nearly exactly the same as last month and they continue to carry forward the \$577,000 reserve. Savings in the utilities accounts occurred this month, while the special education tuition account saw an increase. They will continue to focus on this area, as it is one of the most difficult to project.

Discussion: Cabot Education Program

Diana, as the School Committee's coordinator of the Facilities Liaison to Cabot (which also include Angela and Margaret) outlined the process and listed upcoming public meetings.

Sandy Guryan, Deputy Superintendent/Chief Administrative Officer introduced the team; From DiNisco Design Partnership, Donna DiNisco, Partner and Leno Filipi, Lead Architect; From Joslin Lesser & Association, Tom Murphy, Project Manager. They reviewed the components of the educational program, including comparisons with Angier and Zervas, as well as the MSBA Guidelines. Following the presentation, there was a Q & A with the School Committee. It is anticipated that the Committee will vote on this at the next meeting.

Discussion: PARCC Update & MCAS Follow Up

Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning Mary Eich, along with Data Manager Tessa Bridge, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education Cindy Bergan, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education Cynthia Paris Jeffries, and Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Judy Levin-Charns presented a Frequently Asked Questions Report on the upcoming PARCC assessment based on questions the Committee had at their November meeting. More detail and information is available in the report.

The Superintendent noted that at the end of the month he is going to send a letter to the community about PARCC and will include the Q & A from this presentation.

Discussion re: Format for Mid-Year Superintendent Assessment

The Chair noted that he spoke with several other districts regarding how they handle this topic and the majority agreed that they are not too structured and tie them with evidence on the Systemwide Goals. He suggested Newton do the same and the Committee agreed. The topic will be taken up at the first meeting in February along with the Mid-Year Report on Systemwide Goals.

Mid-Year School Committee Calendar/Agenda Review

This item will be taken up at next meeting.

Vote re: Amendment to EDCO's Articles of Agreement

Diana provided a brief synopsis of this topic having to do with the capital assessment portion of the articles. A motion was made (Ross Decter), seconded (Gibson) and accepted 8-1 (absent Siegel) to approve to amend the articles.

Vote re: One Day Liquor License – Creative Arts & Sciences Committee (CASC)

Director of CASC, Stacey Moriarty addressed the Committee. CASC is planning to host a fundraising event for enrichment programs that support the curriculum in elementary and middle schools. Proceeds will be equally distributed amongst all participating schools grades K-8. Although all Committee members support the program and will vote in favor, it was noted that it has been raised as an equity cap issue, which will have to be reviewed by the equity committee. A motion was made (Albright), seconded (Pitter-Wright) and accepted 8-1 (absent Siegel), to approve the One Day Liquor License for CASC.

Vote to Accept Donation – Lueders

A motion was made (Albright), seconded (Gibson) and approved 7-2 (absent Siegel, Mayor Warren) to accept the \$125 donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc.

Vote to Accept Donation – Bigelow

A motion was made (Goldman), seconded (Gibson) and approved 7-2 (absent Siegel, Mayor Warren) to accept the grant request donation of \$600 from the Foundation for Racial, Ethnic & Religious harmony to be used for 8th grade language and cultural trips.

Vote to Accept Donation – NNHS Career & Tech Ed – Carpentry

A motion was made (Gibson), seconded (Fisher Gomberg) and approved 7-2 (absent Siegel, Mayor Warren) to accept wood from a tree house valued at approximately \$800 for the Greengineering classrooms.

Vote to Accept Grants

Several Committee members engaged with Grants Manager Elaine Sterzin in a Q & A around some of the grants. Following the discussion, a motion was made (Hills), seconded (Ross-Decter) and approved 7-2 (absent Siegel, Mayor Warren) to accept the grants: (Special Education Early Childhood, Coordinated Family & Community Engagement, Special Education Program Improvement, School Safety & Security), STARS Program, ELL Resource Fair, The Examined Life: Greek Studies in the Schools (total \$222,015).

Vote to Approve Minutes

A motion was made (Gibson), seconded (Fisher Gomberg) and accepted 7-2 (absent Siegel, Mayor Warren) to approve the special meeting minutes of 12/2/14 and regular meeting minutes of 12/15/14, with the following changes: a spelling correction, rewording a sentence in the Discussion Start Time topic, and specifying the changes made in the Finger Printing Policy.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.