

*Natick Public Schools
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 13, 2020*

The School Committee held a meeting on Monday, April 13, 2020 at 7:15 p.m. via a Virtual Meeting. Chair McDonough called the meeting to order and took roll call at 7:19 p.m.

Members Present: Julie McDonough, Haley Sonneborn, Henry Haugland, Shai Fuxman, Donna McKenzie, Matthew Brand

Members Missing: Cathi Collins – Ms. Collins entered the meeting at approximately 8:34 p.m.

Others Present:

Dr. Anna Nolin	Superintendent
Mr. Tim Luff	Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Kirk Downing	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Peter Gray	Assistant Superintendent
Rose McDermott	Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary
Mr. Jefferson Wood	Teacher Representative

Announcements

Dr. Nolin announced that the Natick Public School's music department K-12 was recently selected as one of the top music programs in the United States. We are very proud of our students, music staff and this committee for making the commitment to the arts.

Public Speak

Due to the nature of a virtual meeting, the instructions from the Attorney General were to submit public remarks via email to Chair McDonough. Chair McDonough received no emails.

Dr. Nolin reviewed the meeting norms and what action should be taken if we lose power.

Action Items

1. Approval of School Committee Minutes of March 23, 2020 and Executive Session Minutes of March 23, 2020 and March 30, 2020: Mr. Brand moved to approve. Dr. McKenzie seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Mr. Brand – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present 6-0-0.

2. & 4. Approval to Cancel April Break for the 2019/2020 School Year and Approval of the Last Day of School for the 2019-2020 School Year: Mr. Brand moved approval to cancel April break for the 2019/2020 school year and revise the end of school year to 6/17/2020. Ms. Sonneborn seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes
Mr. Haugland – Yes
Mr. Brand – Yes
Ms. Sonneborn - Yes
Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present 6-0-0.

3. Approval of the Newly Revised School Calendar for 2020/2021: Mr. Brand moved to approve. Dr. Fuxman seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes
Dr. Fuxman - Yes
Mr. Haugland – Yes
Mr. Brand – Yes
Ms. Sonneborn - Yes
Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present 6-0-0.

Introduction of Stefani Wasik, New Principal for Lilja School

Dr. Nolin introduced the newly selected Principal for Lilja Elementary School. Ms. Wasik is currently the principal of the Davis Thayer Elementary School in Franklin. Ms. Wasik also served the Franklin district for five years as an assistant principal. She began her career teaching second grade in Somerville, then fourth grade in Milford and Dover. She holds a Master of Educational Administration from the University of Massachusetts, Boston and a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education and Psychology from Saint Michael's College. In her tenure as principal at Davis Thayer, she moved the school to become an MCAS school of distinction and her building was honored by the Massachusetts's Department of Education for that work with her staff. Ms. Wasik greeted the Natick community and thanked everyone for the warm welcome and is honored as well as excited for this opportunity. Ms. Wasik will be hosting virtual meetings with the Lilja staff and is aspiring to have a virtual meet and greet with parents.

Aidan McCann, Brown School Principal, Entry Plan

Dr. Nolin introduced Mr. McCann, Principal of Brown School and he reviewed his entry plan via a presentation. Mr. McCann outlined his action steps, findings and goals. He went on to review some key findings which included areas for growth and strengths.

COVID-19 Closure, Employment Updates and Budget/Finance Issues

Dr. Nolin gave a presentation. She conveyed that this period has brought a lot of hard choices. Both for families and for us. There has been a furlough of employees. She discussed the fact that Natick Public Schools is no different than other entities across the United States. The School Committee authorized her to furlough staff that we aren't able to keep. There's a Massachusetts General Law statute that states that we can't pay for work not performed. There are 93 people that we didn't have work for - ASAP staff, cafeteria staff, a transportation nurse and piano accompanists. Unfortunately, as of April 8, 2020 these employees were furloughed and no longer able to communicate. Dr. Nolin reiterated that we want these staff members to come back to us. That's why we didn't layoff these individuals. Dr. Nolin and Chair McDonough attend daily meetings with all town emergency planners (Police, Town, Board of Health, personnel board, etc.), seven days per week. They have created rap around services, all sectors working together to support our residents. We are working to provide good services to our town.

The Natick Education Foundation has voted to move forward with the NEF hardship fund initiative. Dr. Nolin thanked them for creating this campaign to support those that are affected from Natick Public

Schools. The NEF board has voted to move forward with the NEF Hardship Fund initiative (name to be finalized). They are happy to provide the Natick community with the opportunity to help those in need from NPS. The donation site: <http://www.natickeducationfoundation.org/donate>

Dr. Nolin has received many emails regarding donations. Although greatly appreciated, laptops and other donations cannot be accepted at this time per Board of Health and town counsel. Dr. Nolin reviewed the COVID closure MCAS update: The Massachusetts's Commissioner of Education cancelled this spring's regular administration of grade-level MCAS tests for students in grades 3-10.

In addition, the legislation allows the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon Commissioner recommendation, to modify or waive the requirements of the competency determination for high school graduation in order to address disruptions caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 or the state of emergency. The Commissioner is considering various options; further guidance will be forthcoming. The Student Opportunity Act, which is the legislation that the Governor signed today, moved the deadline for the three-year plans required by the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) to May 15, 2020 or later. Dr. Nolin reviewed Federal Grant updates:

- The U.S. Department of Education has approved Massachusetts for the following waivers offered under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act):
- Extension for Use of FY19 ESSA and McKinney-Vento Funds until September 30, 2021.
- Title I: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education may waive the 15 percent limit on carryover for FY20, even if a district has been granted a waiver within the last three years.
- Title IVA: Restrictions Loosened to Allow Districts to Best Meet Current Needs:
- Needs assessments waived for all districts
- Content area spending requirements waived
- Cap on technology infrastructure lifted for FY19 and FY20 funds
- Title IIA: Professional Development Definition in ESSA Waived

Dr. Nolin reviewed recommendations from the Commissioner of Education who urged all districts to pay as much of contracts as possible and honor those contracts and to deploy resources to set up the FY21 school year wherever possible. Dr. Nolin informed the School Committee that our schools/custodians are in summer cleaning mode now while we have full personnel and capacity to do the work most quickly and efficiently.

FY 21 Budget Update

At this time, we are recording FY20 expenses and time under COVID-19 emergency documentation. We are in flux waiting to see what we are allowed to bill for Medicaid services. We may realize some savings this year which will fall to free cash and not be available to us for FY21: School districts under MGL have capacity to pre-pay tuitions and Out of District payments. If town meeting is not held in time to approve budgets, we will be forced to go to a 1/12 budget. Town Administration has indicated steep downturns in free cash. An FY21 hiring freeze was suggested by the Town Administrator but it is too early to make that determination. Ms. Malone also suggested reopening of contract negotiations with teachers, but it is too early to change the budget put forth last month. Ms. Collins called in to the meeting to review what was discussed at the Board of Selectman's meeting in regard to the budget. There were recommendations from Ms. North, Town's Attorney, is waiting for guidance if Town Meeting cannot be held. Ms. Collins noted that in the budget presentation made by Ms. Malone, she is proposing \$1,548,557.00 less than what was in the January proposal for the FY21 budget. That comes to \$3,188,086.00 less than what Natick Public Schools asked for in our budget. Ms. Malone indicated that Natick Public Schools was the largest budget and the cuts were proportional. However, public safety is 23% of the budget and only taking an 8.8% cut. Natick Public Schools is being asked to cover 103.45% of the reduction in our budget. If it was proportional, we would be bearing somewhere between 44% - 65% cuts instead of 86% - 104%. Dr. Nolin asked for the School Committee to look at the budget recommendations from Town Administrator, Ms. Malone, and allow the community to see what the school district gets for

that budget. We will be able to clearly show what the service reductions for students will be. The Town Administrator did not spend anytime having a discussion with anyone in our district as to the impact the budget reduction she was presenting this evening would have to the district. The School Committee would like to be able to have discussions and a collaborative effort with Town Administration.

Report on Remote Enrichment Program

Dr. Nolin discussed the launch of our new centralized district communication protocol. She would love feedback from the community through Speak Up!. There are a lot of opinions regarding our remote learning and a survey will be coming out next week for staff and families. We would like to let teachers and students settle in. Teachers are diving into learning new technologies and platforms. In the last 4 weeks, we have increased by over 400 google classrooms in the system. Teachers are doing a lot to engage in this new environment. This is a whole new world, and no one is an expert in this. Dr. Nolin thanked the School Committee and the community at large for their support.

At approximately, 9:02p.m., Mr. Brand left the meeting.

Update on KMS Building Project

Dr. Nolin gave an update. The Board of Health wrote a report of approval for the construction COVID-19 plan. The reason for construction workers not reporting now does not appear to be due to a lack of compliance with expected social distancing or issues with protocols. We are at the height of infections so we will need to be patient as each union digests the protocols and decides how they will proceed. The project is still ahead of schedule. Dr. Nolin also gave information to abutters that the new drainage issues that came up has been explored by the Town Engineer and there will be information forthcoming about what was found in the latest recommendation. We have approved signage and are in the final round of decision making with the staff. We have finalized key management and security camera placement recommendations. Transition and Training meetings are being revised in case of continue school closure.

At approximately, 9:30pm, Dr. Fuxman moved to adjourn. Dr. McKenzie seconded. Chair McDonough called for a roll call vote:

Dr. McKenzie – Yes

Dr. Fuxman - Yes

Mr. Haugland – Yes

Ms. Collins – Yes

Ms. Sonneborn - Yes

Chair McDonough – Yes

It was unanimously approved by a vote of the six members present, 6-0-0.

Anna Nolin
Superintendent
Executive Secretary to the School Committee

Rose McDermott
Executive Assistant/Recording Secretary

Attest: _____

Documents Provided in Novus Agenda and materials used at this meeting can be found here: [Agenda & Materials](#)