

**North Adams Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
February 5, 2019**

MINUTES

The School Committee of the North Adams Public Schools met Tuesday, February 5, 2019, in the Office of the Superintendent, 37 Main Street, Suite 200, North Adams.

Members present

Mayor Thomas Bernard, chair
Heather Boulger, vice chair
Ian Bergeron
Nicholas Fahey
James Holmes
Tara Jacobs

Member not present

Karen Bond

Also attending

Dr. Barbara Malkas, Superintendent
Carrie Burnett, Business Administrator
Andrew Callahan, Student Representative
Timothy Callahan, Principal, Drury High School
Kimberlee Chappell, Literacy/Title 1 Coordinator
Sandra Cote, Principal, Greylock Elementary School
Amy Meehan, Principal, Colegrove Park Elementary School
Nancy Rauscher, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
Kimberly Roberts-Morandi, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Thomas Simon, Director of Student Support Services
Carolyn Wallace, Principal, Brayton Elementary School

Ross Betti, Teacher, Drury High School
Andrew Boudreau, Teacher, Drury High School
Josh Moran, Liaison to the School Committee, North Adams City Council

Press

Tammy Daniels, iBerkshires
Adam Shanks, Berkshire Eagle

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bernard called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

The mission of the North Adams Public Schools is to help every child learn every day and empower all students to recognize and optimize their full potential.

HEARING OF VISITORS

There were no visitors to be heard.

READING AND APPROVAL OF RECORDS

A. Minutes of January 8, 2019, School Committee meeting

The committee considered the minutes from the January 8, 2019 School Committee meeting.

It was **moved** by committee member Fahey and **seconded** by committee member Holmes to approve the minutes of January 8, 2019.

Action #6150: minutes	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

B. Balance sheet

Business Administrator Burnett handed out an amended balance sheet to correct a typo. The revised balance sheet correctly indicated “December expenses.” Committee member Bergeron asked for clarification on why the networking and communication budget line (4400) had a remaining balance of 90%. Business Administrator Burnett explained that the account is aligned with the e-rate and will change once that amount is received and reconciled. Given this recurring question, Chair Bernard asked if the e-rate reconciliation process worked for the district from a fiscal management perspective. Business Administrator Burnett confirmed that the e-rate processing system works well for the district. Committee member Jacobs asked if there were any concerns with the budget at this point in the fiscal year. Business Administrator Burnett explained that the overall spending to-date is consistent with the FY19 appropriated budget.

No action was required.

C. Personnel Report

Superintendent Malkas reviewed the personnel report. Vice chair Boulger asked if there were any open teaching positions. Superintendent Malkas explained that there are postings for substitute teachers in multiple areas. Additionally, several positions are currently filled by staff teaching under DESE granted waivers, including Special Education teaching positions. NAPS must keep those positions posted in case a highly qualified candidate applies.

It was **moved** by vice chair Boulger and **seconded** by committee member Jacobs to place the personnel report on file.

Action #6151: personnel report	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Budget timeline update

Superintendent Malkas, along with Business Administrator Burnett, provided an update of the FY20 budget timeline with a discussion of key milestones and next steps. Business Administrator Burnett indicated she had met with individual finance and facilities sub-committee members. She has also met with principals and curriculum leaders. Superintendent Malkas noted that the preliminary numbers from the governor’s budget had been released and very much remain a work-in-progress. Superintendent Malkas stated that the Massachusetts legislative bodies are reviewing what can be done to further impact Chapter 70 reimbursements to have an effect on the final budget.

No action was required.

B. Business Administrator appointment

Chair Bernard and Superintendent Malkas reviewed the hiring process for a full-time business administrator. Superintendent Malkas noted that the position had been posted as of January 14, 2019, and indicated the district had three applicants for this position, including the district’s current licensed business administrator. Based on qualifications and experience, the Chair and Superintendent elected to interview one applicant. For the School Committee’s consideration, Superintendent Malkas and Chair Bernard recommended the appointment of Carrie Burnett as the full-time business administrator for North Adams Public Schools, effective July 1, 2019. The committee reviewed the proposed Employment Agreement. Vice chair Boulger asked for clarification on the compensation and annual percentage increases as outlined in the Employment Agreement. Superintendent Malkas confirmed that the language in the Employment Agreement is consistent with other North Adams Public School administrator contracts.

Vice chair Boulger asked for confirmation of the effective date of the proposed employment agreement. Superintendent Malkas explained that the current shared services agreement with the North Berkshire School Union would remain in effect through June 30, 2019. The effective date for the full-time business administrator position is July 1, 2019.

It was **moved** by committee member Bergeron and **seconded** by committee member Jacobs to accept the recommended appointment of Carrie Burnett as the North Adams Public Schools business administrator, effective July 1, 2019.

Action #6152: appointment of Carrie Burnett as full-time business administrator	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

It was **moved** by vice chair Boulger and **seconded** by committee member Holmes to accept the Employment Agreement between the North Adams Public Schools and Business Administrator, Carrie Burnett, effective July 1, 2019.

Action #6153: Business Administrator Employment Agreement, Carrie Burnett, effective July 1, 2019	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

C. Federal government shutdown update

Superintendent Malkas indicated that the school district has been issued a reprieve with the re-opening of the federal government. Though there is the threat of a possible federal government shutdown as of February 15, 2019, Superintendent Malkas explained that the North Adams Public Schools’ food services program is in a very good place, as the second quarter reimbursement from the federal government has been filed and retained. The North Adams Public Schools currently has funding that would likely enable the district to maintain programming throughout the school year. If a government shutdown were to last through the next fiscal year, there could be implications for federal grants, as well as the food services program.

Superintendent Malkas noted that the district needs to remain diligent in watching for the potential impact of another federal government shutdown as it could be far reaching. Chair Bernard explained that the state is looking at bridge funding to offer assistance if there were another shutdown. In general, the state and municipalities continue to consider what the response would be if federal programs were threatened. Mayors throughout the Commonwealth are proactively contacting state and federal leaders to deliver a clear and consistent message in terms of the need to support local communities.

No action was required.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Substitute teacher pay rate financial impact

Business Administrator Burnett reported on the projected financial impact of increasing the substitute teacher daily pay rate from \$75/day to \$80/day. The projected impact for FY19 is approximately \$3,500 over the course of the year for daily substitute teaching positions.

No action was required.

B. Substitute teacher assistant pay rate and substitute paraprofessional pay rate

Superintendent Malkas noted that in many other districts the teacher assistant and paraprofessional positions are one in the same. This is not the case in the North Adams Public Schools. Within the North Adams Public Schools, the paraprofessional position is more clerical in nature. Given the different positions, Superintendent Malkas clarified that substitute teacher assistants and substitute paraprofessionals have two different pay rates. Superintendent Malkas and Business Administrator Burnett proposed adopting the current practice of paying substitute teacher assistants and substitute paraprofessionals at the same rates as the first step on the pay scale for the equivalent position's respective collective bargaining agreement. Superintendent Malkas explained that in keeping with this practice, the current hourly rate paid to substitute teacher assistants is \$12.75. The current hourly rate paid to substitute paraprofessionals is \$11.28.

Committee member Fahey asked if rates are automatically adjusted to reflect increases to the minimum wage. Superintendent Malkas and Chair Bernard confirmed that rate increases are subject to negotiation and wage increases are captured during collective bargaining and upon the execution of a new Agreement.

It was **moved** by committee member Jacobs and **seconded** by committee member Fahey to adopt the current practice of paying substitute teacher assistants and substitute paraprofessionals at the same rates as the first step on the pay scale for the equivalent position's respective Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Action #6154: adopt current practice for pay rate for substitute teacher assistants and substitute paras	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

A. \$500 gift from Stephen Green and Susanne Walker to help support student education

Chair Bernard presented a check in the amount of \$500 from Stephen Green and Susanne Walker to help support student education. Chair Bernard noted that Steven Green and Susan Walker have been active in the community and supporters of education for a long time.

B. \$200 gift from Joshua J. Mendel, Ed.D., in honor of Professor Phyllis Hakeem

Chair Bernard presented a check in the amount of \$200 from Joshua J. Mendel, Ed.D., in honor of Professor Phyllis Hakeem. Superintendent Malkas noted that Professor Phyllis Hakeem was a true champion and long-time friend of the North Adams Public Schools and this gift had special meaning as a way to acknowledge her service. Chair Bernard agreed and stated that the gift underscored the personal connection between the schools, the community, and MCLA.

C. \$1,000 gift from General Dynamics in support of STEAM activities

Chair Bernard presented a check from General Dynamics in the amount of \$1,000 in support of STEAM activities. Chair Bernard expressed his appreciation for the gift.

Vice chair Heather Boulger asked that thank you letters be sent to the donors. Superintendent Malkas confirmed that thank you letters would be sent.

It was **moved** by vice chair Boulger and **seconded** by committee member Fahey to accept the gift of \$500 from Steven Green and Susan Walker; the gift of \$200 from Joshua J. Mendel, Ed.D.; and the gift of \$1,000 from General Dynamics.

Action #6155: Gift Acceptances	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

D. Finance and facilities sub-committee update

Sub-committee chair Fahey reviewed the recent facilities and finance sub-committee meeting held on January 19, 2019. The meeting included tours of Greylock Elementary School and Brayton Elementary School. The committee discussed the need to look at long-term solutions for Greylock Elementary School which was built in 1954. The tour of Brayton revealed leaks in the roof, mold from drainage, and other needed repairs. While both schools need work, the sub-committee is recommending moving forward with a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Greylock Elementary School. Rather than combing the projects, or submitting two projects simultaneously, the recommendation from the sub-committee is to look for alternate funding to support repairs at Brayton Elementary School as it can be detrimental to have two projects submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) simultaneously. Superintendent Malkas stated that the goal would be to submit an SOI on behalf of Greylock Elementary School to the MSBA in the spring and she would plan on bringing a draft SOI to the full committee at the next meeting.

Chair Bernard offered thanks to everyone who participated in the sub-committee meeting on Saturday, January 19, 2019.

No action was required.

E. Policy sub-committee update

Sub-committee chair Bergeron noted that the January 30, 2019 policy sub-committee meeting had been cancelled due to inclement weather and school cancellations. A meeting will be scheduled for a future date.

No action was required.

F. Senior Class trip

Drury High School teachers Ross Betti and Andrew Boudreau presented the intended annual Senior Class field trip to High Meadow in North Granby, CT.

Committee member Holmes expressed his concern with regard to the ratio of chaperones to students. Committee member Holmes asked that the ratio of chaperones to students be increased to 1:10. Committee member Holmes suggested that a nurse serve as a chaperone on the trip. Mr. Betti confirmed that a nurse would be in attendance if a particular student need required a nurse's presence. Committee member Jacobs expressed concern about the option of horseback riding. Mr. Betti indicated that students would need to sign a waiver to participate in horseback riding. Principal Meehan shared that Drury seniors had done this trip for many years and it was something that the students really loved. Superintendent Malkas shared that High Meadow offered many fun-filled activities for the seniors to enjoy.

It was **moved** by committee member Bergeron and **seconded** by committee member Fahey to place the proposed plans for the senior class trip on file.

Action #6156: senior class trip	
Ayes	5
Nays	1
Result	Motion carried

G. \$400,000 gift, first distribution from the Albert T. Chenail Estate to establish a scholarship fund at Drury High School

Superintendent Malkas presented a letter detailing a gift of \$400,000 from the Albert T. Chenail Estate to Drury High School for purposes of the establishment of a scholarship fund. Per the letter, the gift is to be invested and reinvested by Drury High School. The income from the fund is to be awarded annually to a Drury High School student for the purpose of furthering his or her college or vocational school education. The award shall be made upon the recommendation of a committee consisting of the Superintendent, the Drury principal and guidance director (counselor), and given to a worthy student having financial need.

Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent Nancy Rauscher noted that the estate's attorney, James Sisto, has indicated that the estate has an approximate value of \$1.1 million. Drury High School is to receive 50% of the value of the estate. The \$400,000 represents the initial distribution. A second distribution will be made after final administrative fees and taxes are determined and settled by the estate. It was noted that the funds are currently invested in an estate account with Fidelity Investments and are managed locally by Atlas Private Wealth Management. Ms. Rauscher confirmed that once the gift had been accepted by the school committee, the school would have the option of leaving the assets at Atlas Private Wealth Management, transferring the assets to another broker, or receiving a check for future investment.

Chair Bernard expressed deep appreciation for this remarkable gift, indicating it would be acknowledged and celebrated on class night. Superintendent Malkas agreed that this significant gift reflected a deep commitment to be celebrated.

It was **moved** by committee member Boulger and **seconded** by committee member Jacobs to accept the gift of \$400,000, the first distribution from the Albert T. Chenail Estate to establish a scholarship fund at Drury High School

Action #6157: Gift Acceptance for Chenail Scholarship Fund	
Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

REMARKS FOR THE GOOD OF THE COMMITTEE

Vice chair Boulger recommended students and families attend the Adams Community Bank College senior night at the Williams Inn on February 11th at 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent Malkas and Principal Callahan congratulated the 2018-2019 John and Abigail Adams Scholarship winners, including Vincienza Alicandri, Casey Alvarez, Nea Bergendahl, Natasha Bohl, Sydney Boucher, Andrew Callahan, Abby-Kate Caproni, Corey Callander, Alana Gardner, Maya Giron, Kelsey Haley, Jenah Janz, Yvonne Koperek, Helen Lawson, Kelby Lesage, Cove Massey, Anthony Mitchell, Quinn O'Connor, Lauren Piekos, Reece Racette, Obilio Rodriguez, Corbin Rumbolt, Abigail Smith, Caitlin Tatro, and Laura Thomas.

Superintendent Malkas welcomed Joshua Moran as the City Council liaison to the North Adams School Committee.

Superintendent Malkas announced that the North Adams Public Schools, along with Childcare of the Berkshires, has been awarded the FY2019 Community Preschool Partnership Initiative Grant in the amount of \$285,549.

Chair Bernard thanked everyone involved with the E3 Academy event recently held at MASS MoCA and expressed his compliments to faculty, staff, and students for having done an incredible job. Vice chair Boulger agreed it was a phenomenal event.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bernard indicated that there was no more business to come before the committee.

It was **moved** by vice chair Boulger and **seconded** by committee member Holmes to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes	6
Nays	0
Result	Motion carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Rauscher
Administrative Assistant
/nr