

North Shore Schools  
Board of Education  
Regular Meeting  
Minutes  
February 4, 2021

The meeting was called to order by President David Ludmar at 6:00 p.m. The meeting was held via *Zoom*. Present were Trustees Galati, Jones, Macari, Madden, Russo and Vizza. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Peter Giarrizzo and Assistant Superintendents Olivia Buatsi and Christopher Zublionis.

At 6:00 p.m. on motion of Trustee Vizza and seconded by Trustee Madden and all in favor, the Board moved to convene an executive session to consider discussions regarding collective negotiations pursuant to Article 14 of the Civil Service Law (the Taylor Law), proposed, pending or current litigation, and the employment of a particular person or corporation.

At 7:45 p.m. on motion of Trustee Galati and seconded by Trustee Macari and all in favor, the Board came out of executive session and resumed the regular meeting.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

President Ludmar led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes**

On motion of Trustee Macari and seconded by Trustee Jones and all in favor, the minutes of January 21, 2021 were approved.

**Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Giarrizzo reported that he will be presenting the 2021-2022 Proposed Budget later in the meeting. He reported that Phase 1 of the Bond is out to bid and they are collecting bid packets. Tours will be offered, and the bid opening is scheduled for early March. The EPC has been submitted to SED, and should be reviewed in early March with approval probably in late June. He reported that Dr. Zublionis, Mr. Contreras and their team at the high school have been working on the survey results around asynchronous learning. Parents are less satisfied with asynchronous days than students; in-person instruction is popular and screen time fatigue associated with Fridays has been reported. 49% of parents want a change and 41% want it to remain the same. 79% of students want it to remain the same and 12% of students want a change; two very different views of how to approach it. 603 students took the survey (it was not mandated) and 235 parents took the survey. Dr. Giarrizzo said he realizes it is a difficult discussion and he and Dr. Zublionis will continue to follow up with the high school.

Dr. Giarrizzo reported that he will present the draft 2021-2022 school calendar for approval. He explained that it is a very tight calendar which will bring students back before Labor Day for the first time in many years due to Labor Day landing on September 6<sup>th</sup> and Rosh Hashanah from the 6<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup>. He further explained that there are not enough days in the calendar to meet the contractual teacher days of 183 and 180 student days without starting school before Labor Day, therefore the first day of School will be on September 1 with the first Superintendent Conference Day falling on August 31<sup>st</sup>. In addition, in keeping with the suggestion of adding non-western holidays to the calendar, he has added February 1 for Lunar New Year which impacts the highest percentage of students, as well as Juneteenth, as per state law, this year celebrated on June 20; this compromised the day before Christmas Eve.

Dr. Giarrizzo reported that high risk sports was supposed to start on Monday but due to the snow days was delayed. The parent meeting was Tuesday Night. Mandatory COVID testing for high-risk athletes started on Saturday. The middle school will remain with the intramural approach for now. There will be no traveling and the athletes will be monitored very carefully. For wrestling, protocols will be put in place for cleaning of mats between matches. In early March and April the fall season will begin; this should be safer as athletes can be outside. Athletes are thrilled to be back.

Finally, Dr. Giarrizzo reported that they had their second COVID positive-free day. There is a contract for the Board's approval on the agenda to begin the process to provide eligible employees in group 1-B to receive the vaccine on site. This will enable the infrastructure to be set up now so once the physician has the doses, we will be ready to go.

### **Report from the SGO**

The SGO Co-presidents Ariadna Pavlidas-Sanchez and Michael Gimondo were not in attendance.

### **Regular Business. 8:00 p.m.**

#### **Superintendent's Budget Presentation**

Dr. Giarrizzo presented the 2021-2022 Preliminary Budget Preview and Comprehensive Overview to Support Teaching & Learning. He reviewed the District Priorities & Goals, the unknowns when building the budget, including the impact of the pandemic on district resources, that state aid is uncertain and the impact of the LIPA settlement. Dr. Giarrizzo reviewed the budget building process and explained that he and Ms. Buatsi built three budget scenarios: (1) *return to normal-pre pandemic*, (2) *return to normal with modifications*, (3) *should the pandemic extend into next year*.

Scenario 1-return to normal: the proposed budget is \$112,171,783.60 with a 1.683% budget-to-budget increase and a tax levy increase of .914% (less than 1%). Scenario 2-new normal with modifications: the proposed budget is \$112,644,864.95 with a 2.112% budget-to-budget increase and tax levy increase of 1.434% -- this is at the tax cap. The additional expenses of \$473,081.35 supports social & emotional learning of students, counseling for ENL students and social emotional support to students in their targeted language, new .4FTE MS, additional cleaning supplies, MERV 13 Filters, and security to supervise outdoor learning & district facilities. Scenario 3-pandemic extends into next year: the proposed budget is \$115,246,689.49 with a budget-to-budget increase of 4.470% and 4.292% tax levy increase exceeding the tax cap and needing a super majority approval. Dr. Giarrizzo does not feel that will be needed.

Dr. Giarrizzo reviewed the budget drivers which include employee benefits (increasing 2.51% from last year), bargaining agreements (increasing 2.44% from last year). He reviewed revenue sources and the impact the LIPA settlement will have as it is a key source of funding. Dr. Giarrizzo spoke about the Revenue Challenges including reduced interest income, inflation factor, continued reduction in assessment and shift of the tax burden from LIPA to residents, state aid has been difficult to predict and their continued dependence on fund balance and reserves. Dr. Giarrizzo reviewed the status of reserves and the plan for future use. Finally, Dr. Giarrizzo recommended the establishment of a new capital reserve to maintain the district's infrastructure with a focus on athletics.

### **8:40 pm**

Trustee Jones noted that the pie chart never before included a section for items such as filters and cleaning supplies. In addition, although the overall proposed budget increase is 2.1%, the major budget drivers, salaries, benefits, and special education related costs, exceed the overall increase of the proposed budget. This indicates cuts have occurred throughout the budget to make up the difference; she asked where these cuts came from. Dr. Giarrizzo explained there were no large cuts from one section of the budget, it happened in every department and to every section of the budget. He further

explained this is not a year for expansion. Many areas remained flat and there were a lot of competing pressures to keep schools open.

Trustee Russo asked Dr. Giarrizzo to explain what plan B is if they need to accommodate for the pandemic next year (scenario 3); how would they be able to remain under the cap. Dr. Giarrizzo suggested there may need to be a higher reliance on fund balance, similar to what was done this year. He went on to explain that he does not believe the needs will be as significant as they were this past September, and the Board will have that discussion together to find ways to fund that scenario.

The Board began their line-by-line review of the budget beginning with enrollment projections. Questions raised were on remote cohorts going forward and the challenge of keeping class sizes small as remote learners return to in-person instruction. Where incoming kindergarten enrollment is currently. Whether more families transitioning from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade left the district due to the pandemic or the lack of sports. Whether the enrollment projections from BOCES had been updated. Dr. Giarrizzo explained that if we are in pandemic mode in September, they may need to rethink cohorts across the district and figure out how to do remote instruction and how to pivot. He agreed it is getting difficult to accommodate 6 feet of distance as more remote learners come back to in-person instruction. Regarding kindergarten registration, he does not have accurate numbers yet, but parents are registering every day. He explained there has not been any more families leaving the district due to the pandemic, possibly less, and none have left due to sports. Regarding the enrollment projections from BOCES, we are waiting for them to set up a date for the update, however he explained that the first couple of years of a projection is usually accurate.

In the Board of Education section questions were raised about the increase to their budget line for meetings & consultants and why the Board is not a member of Nassau Suffolk School Board's Assn. Dr. Giarrizzo explained the increase to their meetings line is for the programs they discussed at their retreat. Regarding their membership to Nassau Suffolk School Board's Assn, Dr. Giarrizzo explained that in 2010 the Board at that time decided to withdraw their membership from that organization. He will research the cost and get information on their services. In the Central Administration Services section, questions raised were on the increase in employees to the Superintendent's Office from 1.5 to 2, and to the overtime for central office. Dr. Giarrizzo explained that the increase was for the receptionist at central office. Ms. Buatsi explained that the overtime was due to a staff member being out sick for an extended period, and due to the pandemic, leaving one staff member to handle a department usually covered by two employees. In the Transportation section questions raised were regarding the reduction in the field trips budget line. The Board expressed concern that the field trips budget line is down because students were unable to go on trips this year. They stressed that experiential learning is so important, and that line should not continue to be reflective of a year when students were unable to attend trips. Ms. Buatsi said this is not the intention. As they are unsure of what the coming year will bring, they kept the line low, however they do use the District's fleet for many trips. It was noted that the transportation depot is a source of revenue and that Ms. Buatsi was a leading proponent of bringing that to fruition. It was also noted that having total control over our own transportation fleet during the pandemic was so important, not only because we were not held to contracts with outside companies, but we were able to deliver food, Chromebooks and supplies to our students. Ms. Buatsi added that another district is interested in using the transportation depot for maintenance which will add another source of revenue. A question was raised in regard to transportation for students at St. Christopher. Ms. Buatsi explained that we are reimbursed from New York City for transportation costs, and monitors if required, for those students. The facilities budget was discussed, and it was noted how that budget is listed down to how many batteries are needed and that most items are bid out. Trustee Jones pointed out that the narratives for the Buildings & Grounds Department were beautifully worded. She thanked Mr. Hall for focusing his department's needs with concern about maintaining a safe learning environment. A question was raised around security needs and outdoor learning, considering increased

student exposure. Dr. Giarrizzo explained that principals are anxious with so many kids outside at once; teachers are focused on teaching and they need to know someone is managing the perimeter. He is not sure that can be reduced. A question was raised regarding when savings will be realized from the EPC. Ms. Buatsi said they should begin to see savings after the spring of 2022. Next the Board reviewed Debt Service. Finally, the Board discussed the proposed use of fund balance. The proposal is to use additional fund balance and more reserves to offset the tax levy in a year when the tax cap is so low. Trustees noted that with the impact of the LIPA settlement still uncertain it may not be time to use a significant amount of reserve funds. The Board asked for options in trimming the budget if they were to use less in reserves and fund balance to offset the levy. Dr. Giarrizzo and Ms. Buatsi will frame out several options for the Board to consider without piercing the tax cap.

#### **Comments from the Public - 10:12 p.m.**

The following comments/questions were received prior to the meeting:

Nancy Puskuldjian, Glen Head. Seethroughny.net publishes employee payroll data for governments and school districts. According to the data North Shores payroll cost is 40%-50% higher than surrounding districts. For example, North Shores employee payroll cost per student is \$22,466. Manhasset's payroll cost per student is \$15,809, Garden City's is \$14,691 and Port Washington's is \$15,101. North Shore's payroll cost is approximately \$6,000 higher per student. North Shore has 2,500 students with 730 employees while Manhasset has 3,200 students and 648 employees. Garden City has the same number of buildings as North Shore. The public can view the information at seethroughny.net.

Paul Puskuldjian, Glen Head. When presenting the North Shore budget in the past the administration and BOE have not provided the previous year's actual costs against what was budgeted. Please provide the public with last year's budget and the actual (2019-20) cost vs that budget. Please also provide a reason why the actual cost was above or below what was budgeted. Additionally, when presenting the 2020-21 budget please include the proposed budgeted amount verses last years (2019-20) actual cost and explain why there is an increase or decrease verses the new 2020-21 proposed budget. Please do not use the excuse that the 2019-20 actual cost numbers are not final, those actual costs were included as part of the district's annual independent auditors report in November 2020.

President Ludmar clarified that the 2019-2020 actual expense numbers were included in the budget being presented, which is the budget for the 2021-2022 school year. As we are currently in the 2020-2021 school year those expense figures are not yet complete. He further explained that budgets and expenditure reports from several years past are also posted on the website and can be printed out. Finally, he noted that when the Board receives comments from the public, they are read verbatim.

Melissa August, Glen Head. Over the past months I've seen many posts on our neighborhood Facebook pages from a group portraying itself as a school-sponsored, school-friendly, budget committee. This same group contacted me at my personal e-mail address, which I did not provide, during the last budget election, spreading misinformation about the district. As a Class of 2021 representative, I and others have put a great deal of time, energy and resources into trying to salvage whatever normalcy we can for our children in these unprecedented, incredibly difficult times. Our children have worked hard and deserve to make the memories we did when we were their age. This is one of the reasons I find it so upsetting to see these detractors, none of whom have children in our school, pretending to be "friends" of the schools, of our children and their well-being. It seems clear that their sole goal is to slash funding at all costs and weaken the high-quality education and extracurricular opportunities their children received when they were in North Shore. I find their data inaccurate and their motives not in the best

interest of our schools, our students, or this community. I haven't agreed with every decision our school has made, but even so, I know the administration and board are working hard, and honorably, to support our children and teachers, balancing their needs for social interaction, education and safety. By writing this, I hope I have helped to reduce the confusion and voice my support for your efforts.

Jerry Romano, Sea Cliff. You were incorrect when you said that the Tax Certiorari lawsuit decision was in 2017. The Court of Appeals of New York Decision was on February 18, 2014.

\$2,504,398.53 of taxes were collected in 2011, 2012, 2013 and North Shore is required by law to return it to the property owners no later than the fourth year it was collected.

A school district cannot hold our money in the general fund for expenses that might or might not happen in the future. North Shores financial stability scheme of releasing this money to the budget over 7 years is illegal and unnecessary.

Over the past 10 years enrollment at North Shore has declined more than 10% and the stock market has seen record increases. The unemployed people in the community need financial stability. Stop playing games with our money. The remaining \$1,154,398.53 must be returned to the property owners.

David Wiedmer. Glenwood Landing/Glen Head. The June 2020 external Auditor report makes a point of North Shore's mismanagement of capital funds and said, "*We noted that the capital projects fund has a number of capital projects which appear to be completed; those capital projects, which were not financed by debt, have no expenditures for several years and have unexpended balances*". In other words, you took money from the taxpayers, didn't spend it for years, raised the school budget and then asked the community for a \$39 million bond. Here we are a year later, and our money raised from taxes has not been used or returned to us. What is going on? How much money is unspent? When are we getting it back?

President Ludmar explained that while the quote from the District's auditor is correct, the word *mismanagement* was not included in that report. He said facts are important and it is important to share what is in the auditor's report. He further explained that what was shared in the report was a recommendation for the District to review the completed projects and decide if they want to fund supplemental projects, which were already voter approved, if there are funds left over. He went on to explain that until plans are written up, submitted, and ultimately approved by SED, and then bid out, the costs are projected. This is why supplemental projects are identified and approved at the same time. If there are funds left in the project after the initial projects are complete, the Board can decide to fund those supplemental projects. This is what they are deciding now. Finally, he noted words such as "mismanagement", "scheme" or "illegal" are opinions used in the previous comments and not opinions that the Board shares.

Roger Friedman, Sea Cliff. Hi Board of Trustees I wanted to say that I see all these comments and accusations on social media, all the misinformation... and I appreciate your measured words, clear/transparent presentation of the budgeting decisions you make on behalf of the kids, and thank you all for serving in the face of these criticisms. I know it comes with the territory, but wanted to send our support for all you do.

President Ludmar stated that all of the Trustees realize these types of comments come with the territory, and he thanked his fellow Trustees for serving.

**10:19 P.M.**

On motion of Trustee Russo and seconded by Trustee Jones and all in favor, it was:

Personnel

Increments for Advanced Study – Certified

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Kayleigh Escamilla, Special Education, on Step 2 of the BA+15 salary schedule to Step 2 of the BA+30 salary schedule, effective September 1, 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Sarah Stevens, Special Education, from Step 6 of the MA salary schedule to Step 6 of the MA+15 salary schedule, effective September 1, 2020

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Harrison Berglin, Physical Education, from Step 5 of the MA salary schedule to Step 5 of the MA+15 salary schedule, effective February 1, 2021

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Fabiana LoBrutto, LOTE, from Step 10 of the MA salary schedule to Step 10 of the MA+15 salary schedule, effective February 1, 2021

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Meredith O'Donnell, Elementary, from Step 8 of the MA+45 salary schedule to Step 8 of the MA+60 salary schedule, effective February 1, 2021

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Carmen Berg, Spanish, from Step 5 of the MA+15 salary schedule, to Step 5 of the MA+30 salary schedule, effective February 1, 2021

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an increment for advanced study for Ryan Bridgwood, Technology Education, from Step 2 of the MA salary schedule to Step 2 of the MA+15 salary schedule, effective February 1, 2021

Recall from Preferred Eligibility List (PEL) - Certified

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED That, there being a vacancy in the teacher assistant tenure area, pursuant to Education Law section 2510, the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District reappoints Nina Becker from the preferred eligibility list for tenure area teacher assistant to said vacant full-time probationary position, effective February 1, 2021 through January 31, 2023, on Step 2 of the Level 3 Teaching Assistant salary schedule

Part-time Appointment - Certified

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the part-time (.5) appointment of Lige Zhaomu, Foreign Languages (Mandarin), on Step 1 of the MA salary schedule, effective January 23, 2021 through June 30, 2021

Appointment – Non-Certified

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the appointment of James Aikman, Part-time Bus Driver, effective February 22, 2021

Teacher Overages

Eleni Mantikas (remote) .2 effective September 14, 2020 through March 26, 2021

Karin Demeo, Special Education (remote) .1 effective 2/1/21 through 3/26/21

Approval of Extra-Curricular Activity Advisors & Coach

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the following extra-curricular activity advisors & coach:

Middle School

Dramatics

Set & Construction	Benjamin Benfield	Step 2
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Elementary School

Club-Level 3

DW STEAM Fair	Darlene Skaee	Step 1
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Middle School Coach

Winter II

Boys & Girls Bowling	John Jackson*	Step 1
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\*replaces Jackie Muscarella

On motion of Trustee Jones and seconded by Trustee Macari and all in favor, it was:

Acceptance of a Donation from Betsy Knudsen to the Sea Cliff Elementary School

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby accepts the donation of ten (10) trees (saplings) from Betsy Knudsen to the Sea Cliff Elementary School at a value of \$150

On motion of Trustee Macari and seconded by Trustee Russo and all in favor, it was:

Adoption of Policies

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby adopts revised policy number 5152 (Non-Resident Students), and adopts policies number 8630 (Computer Resources & Data Management), 9630 (Sexual Misconduct) and 9645 (Disclosure of Wrongful Conduct) as reviewed by the Board at their meeting of January 21, 2021, effective February 4, 2021

On motion of Trustee Jones and seconded by Trustee Macari and all in favor, it was:

Approval of the 2021-2022 School Calendar

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the 2021-2022 school calendar

On motion of Trustee Vizza and seconded by Trustee Russo and all in favor, it was:

Approval of Claims Audit Report

BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby accepts the internal claims audit report for the period December 2020, as reviewed and submitted by the Internal Claims Auditor, Denise Longobardi

On motion of Trustee Russo and seconded by Trustee Macari and all in favor, it was:

Approval of Special Education Services Contract

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the Agreement between the School District and the Manhasset Union Free School District for Special Education Services for parentally placed students with disabilities attending non-public schools located

within the Manhasset Union Free School District and residing within the North Shore Central School District during the 2020-2021 school year

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves the Agreement between the School District and the Port Washington Union Free School District for Special Education Services for parentally placed students with disabilities attending non-public schools located within the Port Washington Union Free School District and residing within the North Shore Central School District during the 2020-2021 school year

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education.

On motion of Trustee Vizza and seconded by Trustee Macari and all in favor, it was:

Approval of Special Education Services (IEP)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves special education services (IEP) as per the recommendations of the Committee on Special Education (CSE)

On motion of Trustee Galati and seconded by Trustee Jones and all in favor, it was:

Approval of Budget Transfers

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves budget transfers in the amount of \$217,000 to cover workers compensation expenses, costs related to the LIPA matter, overtime due to the pandemic and clerical substitutes, effective February 4, 2021

On motion of Trustee Jones and seconded by Trustee Madden and all in favor, it was:

Approval of an Agreement Between the North Shore Central School District and North Coast Psychological Services, PLLC

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an Agreement between the School District and North Coast Psychological Services PLLC, to provide neuropsychological & psychoeducational evaluation services as per the terms and conditions set forth in the attached agreement during the period February 4, 2021 through June 30, 2021; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education

On motion of Trustee Jones and seconded by Trustee Vizza and all in favor, it was:

Approval of an Agreement Between the North Shore Central School District and Advanced Cardiovascular Diagnostics, PLLC

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the North Shore Central School District hereby approves an Agreement between the School District and Advanced Cardiovascular Diagnostics PLLC, to provide a program for Rapid Antigen COVID-19 Testing and the administration of the COVID-19 vaccinations to District employees as per the terms and conditions set forth in the attached agreement for a period of one-year, effective February 3, 2021, pending final review by counsel; and



BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby authorizes the President of the Board of Education to execute the necessary documents to effectuate said Agreement on behalf of the Board of Education

**Old Business 10:25 p.m.**

Trustee Madden wanted to come back to the ongoing discussion on asynchronous learning and where they are heading. He said he realizes it was important to survey everyone who is affected by the decision but feels it is ultimately a decision for the educators and not a referendum. He said while it is certainly important to get feedback from everyone, he asked that this be kept in mind when decisions are being made.

Trustee Vizza asked if the ventilation in the gym is adequate for high-risk sports. Dr. Giarrizzo said those spaces were evaluated by engineers over the summer and are used for physical education classes now, the doors remain open and he believes there is adequate ventilation. In addition, John Hall is looking into larger HEPA filtration units, or several smaller units, for those areas.

Trustee Vizza asked how the live streaming of sporting events is going. Dr. Giarrizzo said any contests coming plan to use it and he knows gymnastics is using it. Trustee Vizza asked if we are taking metrics of how many people are logging in to the Board Meetings. Dr. Zublionis said they can see how many people are viewing this meeting and Dr. Giarrizzo will check on previous meetings. Trustee Vizza asked that reminder emails go out before each Board meeting about the budget.

**New Business**

There was no new business discussed.

**Adjournment**

At 10:30 p.m. on motion of Trustee Madden and seconded by Trustee Jones and all in favor, the meeting was adjourned.

Elizabeth Ciampi  
District Clerk