

**NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE
PUBLIC HEARING
Monday, June 6, 2011**

**Newburyport City Hall
Meeting Convened at 7:03 PM**

**City Hall Auditorium
Mayor Donna Holaday/Bruce Menin Presided**

Present: Steve Cole, Cheryl Sweeney, Bruce Menin, Mayor Donna Holaday, Stephanie Weaver, Nick deKanter, Dan Koen

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:

Mayor Donna Holaday called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM. A Roll Call of members showed all members present. All those present stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

READING OF MISSION STATEMENT:

Mayor Holaday read the Newburyport School Committee Mission Statement.

Mayor Holaday offered a greeting to all those in attendance.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Marc Kerble offered remarks. He stated he was proud to be the Superintendent of Schools. This is such a great opportunity that is being presented to the community. He thanked all that were in attendance for being present.

Mayor Holaday introduced the Building Committee.

PRESENTATION OF POTENTIAL SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECTS AND PROCESS:

Assistant Superintendent Deirdre Farrell presented the following:

- Mass School Building Authority MSBA
 - History of submitting required information to MSBA
 - How is information submitted to MSBA generated
 - Bresnahan Elementary School Priority – overcrowding Building Issues (accompanied by photographs)
Health & Safety issues
 - Nock/Molin School Building Issues (accompanied by photographs)
Health & Safety issues
 - What was the result of SOI
 - Reimbursement
 - Model School Program
 - Feasibility Study & Schematic Design Process
 - Why 650K & 500K for Feasibility Study
 - MSBA Timeline
 - Community Outreach during Feasibility process
 - Student & Community Benefits

Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained that she toured the Bresnahan School with a contingent of senior citizens, who have put forth the idea of using the main portion of the old Bresnahan School, after

the building of the new school, as a senior center. Present in the audience were a number of seniors from this group who were here in support of the project.

Mayor Holaday presented a Financing Summary

- Bresnahan School: preferred new model school pre K – 3
- Nock/Molin School: renovation
- Both School Projects
 - Financing assumptions
 - Existing Debt: excluded debt service
 - Residential Property

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brenda Reffet, 3 Doe Run DR **CONCERN:** She asked what was the worst case scenario, what is the cost of a special election, what are the savings, tax dollars, what would Plan B be, why is the Feasibility Study so high.

?, 3 Caldwell Terrace **CONCERN:** Is there any studies that we know of to get existing buildings/facilities up to code?

Valerie Forti, Harrison St. **CONCERN:** What will happen to the Bresnahan School? Community pride for seniors. Friends of the Council on Aging will help raise money.

Debbie Andrews, 20 Auburn St. **CONCERN:** What will it cost if we don't do this for our kids?

Kristina Davis, Principal, Bresnahan School **CONCERN:** She stated this is a wonderful opportunity with the seniors in partnership at the Bresnahan School. She urged everyone to go in with an open mind.

Dominique Dear, 5 Warren St. **CONCERN:** She spoke in favor of both projects – the time is here and now and is a golden opportunity.

Dr. Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall DR. **CONCERN:** This is a community issue. He offered comments on how funding for schools comes about. He spoke about what would happen if we don't get this done now. He stated look at the harsh realities as to what you see.

Erin Dunphy, 31 Dove Street **CONCERN:** If election doesn't pass what happens.

Renee Ames, 17 Forrester St. **CONCERN:** She said she is a strong proponent and wants her children to be in a community where they are valued. She is in favor of the Senior Center at Bresnahan.

Mayor Holaday identified Jack Ronan in the audience as the person who came up with the idea of putting the Senior Center in the old Bresnahan School after the new school is built.

Zab Warren, Maple Street **CONCERN:** He stated he is in favor of new buildings. He asked, "what kind of community do you build in large schools?" Knowing people you teach is important. Start excellence in Elementary School.

Terry Marcille, 21 Harrison St. **CONCERN:** Schools have been neglected for a long time. We need 21st century learning, and we need to honor our Seniors.

Jill Gross **CONCERN:** She is in favor of these projects. When would it commence.

? **CONCERN:** If Brown School is sold, would the money offset the cost of the new school?

Tom Jones, 130 R. Low Street **CONCERN:** He spoke about inflation in construction/labor costs – this is a small window of opportunity.

Answers to questions:

- **Best case scenario/what is worst** Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained

- **Cost of election** Mayor Holaday/Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained
- **If neither passes Plan B** Assistant Superintendent Farrell said that if neither passes we will continue to submit in hopes of getting grant funding. She explained MSBA plans.
- **4th School** Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained
- **Why Feasibility Study so high** Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained
- **Were there any Studies to bring buildings up to code** Assistant Superintendent Farrell said, yes a study has been done. Mayor Holaday said every year we get building projects lists. Bruce Menin said '08 was the last year we invested money.
- **What will happen to the existing Bresnahan** Mayor Holaday said she supports the Senior Center – it is a perfect opportunity.
- **What would it cost if you don't do this for our kids** Mayor Holaday explained
- **Is Cherry Hill being considered** Assistant Superintendent Farrell explained that MSBA will look at this site. Mayor Holaday said there has been a tremendous investment by soccer groups in this site.
- **Footprint** Assistant Superintendent Farrell said that during the Feasibility Study MSBA will assess all components – fields are a top priority.
- **Configuration** Superintendent Dr. Kerble explained that adding other grades would make it too big a building. The baseball field is gone – will keep softball field. Fourth, fifth is working at Molin and is a nice campus now.
- **When would Bresnahan project start/completion date** Construction will start in late 2012 and be ready by mid-year 2014. Superintendent Dr. Kerble spoke of concerns of the Brown School.
- **If Brown School Sold would money offset cost of construction** Mayor Holaday said the Brown School worth is estimated around two million range – and yes, money brought forward would be put towards school projects/senior center.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

? CONCERN: What are our chances with the MSBA Program? - Mayor Holaday said we're in – that's where we need your help. Stephanie Weaver commented on other cities – school based.

Ralph Orlando, 4 Wm. Hall Dr. CONCERN: He stated he has heard good things about schools – stay together – come to school committee meetings. He explained the difference between override and debt exclusion. He spoke of the benefits of a Senior Center

Brenda Reffet CONCERN: She thanked the senior citizens for their support. She brought up the following concerns:

- **Caution – financial question that comes to you**
- **Need to come up with accurate figures**
- **People are on fixed incomes – not just senior citizens**
- **Square foot cost**
- **Feasibility Study – what percent would come back to us**
- **Real estate valuation on Brown School**
- **Feasibility study – where is info**

Dominique Dear CONCERN: She urged the Committee to engage the community.

This meeting terminated at 8:38 PM – the Committee began the Regular Meeting at 8:39 PM