



NORTHSHORE  
EDUCATION  
CONSORTIUM

**Board of Directors Minutes  
February 02,2022**

**PRESENT:**

Beverly:	Dr. Charochak
Danvers:	Mr. Keith Taverna (Interim, Non-Voting)
Ipswich:	Dr. Blake
Lynn:	Dr. Tutwiler
Lynnfield:	Ms. Vogel
Marblehead:	Dr. Buckey
Masconomet:	Dr. Harvey
North Reading:	Dr. Daly
Peabody:	Dr. Vadala
Pentucket:	Dr. Bartholomew
Reading:	Dr. Milaschewski
Rockport:	Mr. Liebow
Salem:	Dr. Zrike
Triton:	Mr. Forget
Tri-Town:	Dr. Morrison

**NEC:**

F. Rosenberg	G. Bergevin
K. Mahoney, NEC Treasurer	K. Mahoney
M. Bourgault, Facilities	J. Ziegler, NEC AFT president

**ABSENT:**

Gloucester:	Mr. Lummis
Hamilton Wenham:	Mr. Tracy
Manchester-Essex:	Ms. Beaudoin
Nahant:	Dr. Pierantozzi
Swampscott:	Ms. Angelakis

- I. **Call to Order:** Dr. Morrison called the meeting to order at 8:03 and read the following statement: "Open Meeting of the NEC Board of Directors is being conducted remotely consistent with Governor Baker's Executive Order of March 12, 2020, and the provisions extended by Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 signed by Governor Baker on June 16, 2021, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. The Meeting is being recorded. Members of the Public who would like access can join the Zoom Meeting. The matters listed below are those reasonably anticipated by the Chairperson that may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law."

**II. Approval of Consent Agenda**

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Dr. Morrison to accept the consent agenda. Roll call was done with 12 members present to approve the consent agenda including Dec 2021 BOD Minutes, February 2021 Appointments and warrants as presented. 12 voted to approve consent agenda.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved

Ms. Rosenberg welcomed Mr. Keith Taverna, Interim Superintendent, Danvers Public Schools to the meeting.

**III. Treasurer's report -Mr. Mahoney reviewed the November and December 2021 Treasurer's Report (attached). Our cash position remains consistent with sufficient funds on hand to meet cash requirement. There were no questions.**

**Financial Update FY2022 Year to Date—Proposal of Revised Budget**

Mr. Bergevin presented a revised budget, showing a deficit of \$91,000. This is due to fluctuations in enrollment, attributed to ongoing pandemic recovery. There were no questions from board regarding budget update

**Discussion of Financial Relief Options for FY22- Key Issues affecting NEC's Finances:**

Ms. Rosenberg summarized NEC's current financial situation. She reminded the Board that for several years, pre-pandemic, we had an end of year surplus, and were able to set money aside for future capital needs.

Last year, we needed to take \$1,098,000 from our surplus to meet operating costs. This year, our projection is slightly negative.

We have approximately \$103,000 in our Capital Fund. This will not be enough to fund the essential items in our Capital Plan for 2022-2025.

Total cash is currently \$3,700,000, which includes Board designated funds. We recently established an OPEB Trust but do not need to fund it right now.

There are several concerns about next year's budget and about urgent capital needs. The finance committee discussed some options to consider for long range stability.

The committee suggested that we consider asking districts for an additional spring 2022 payment utilizing ESSERS funds. Mr. Bergevin and Ms. Rosenberg presented several options:

- Option A: \$10,000 per district yields \$200,000.
- Option B: \$1,000 per member district student yields \$280,000. (Range of \$1,000 to \$50,000. Note: member districts save \$10,000 to \$20,000 per student by being a member)
- Option C: Tiered System = \$235,000 as follows:
  - 3 districts with >20 students: \$20,000 = \$60,000.
  - 9 districts with 10-20 students: \$15,000 = \$135,000.
  - 8 districts with <10 students: \$5,000 = \$40,000

- Option D: Hybrid System = \$239,500 –each district pays \$5,000 plus \$750 per student

Ms. Rosenberg also spoke about the process for developing next year's budget, and wanted to alert the board to the possibility that she might be asking for a larger than usual tuition increase given the ongoing volatility.

Mr. Forget stated that he had been the one to propose that perhaps the Board should address this deficit now, utilizing ESSERS funds intended for special education, rather than deal with a problem later on.

Dr. Vadala asked for clarification on the use of ESSERS funds. Mr. Forget stated that this would be an acceptable use of such funds.

Ms. Vogel expressed her concern that Lynnfield is struggling to find funding for programs within the district, and asked for more information about how the collaborative is supporting districts.

Ms. Rosenberg stated that the collaborative's financial stability assists districts as we continue to keep our doors open for the most complex students. She expressed her desire to respond to other district needs and her willingness to speak directly with school committees if they had concerns.

Mr. Liebow and Dr. Blake also expressed concerns about the financial situation in their districts and that it would be difficult to find additional funds, even if they supported the goals.

Dr. Charochak joined the meeting at 8:33 am

Mr. Forget acknowledged that every district had different concerns, and that there were differences between regions and cities. He stated that any solution needs to work for everyone, and that the goal was to help NEC get back to the strong position it was in prior to the pandemic.

Ms. Rosenberg stated that a decision was not needed immediately, and that she appreciated the thoughtful discussion.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Dr. Morrison and seconded by Mr. Forget to accept the FY22 Revised Budget, and to accept the November and December Treasurer's reports as presented. Roll call was done with 13 members present.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved

Ms. Rosenberg shared a letter from Department of Education stating that our audit had been reviewed and met all the requirements.

Dr. Harvey joined the meeting at 8:44 am

**IV. Facilities/Capital Planning Report**

**Extension of Lease for 126 Sohier Road:** Ms. Rosenberg reviewed the proposed lease extension which had been discussed at the last meeting. She indicated that Mr. Rockett had amended the LOI as requested by the Board, and that the committee felt comfortable with proceeding.

Dr. Blake asked about liability if, for some reason, circumstances changed prior to 2035. Ms. Rosenberg said that she would send Board Members information on the language of our Collaborative Agreement and more detail on our assets versus liabilities.

**MOTION:** A motion was made by Dr. Charochak and seconded by Mr. Forget for Executive Director/Chief Financial Officer to sign lease extension for 126 Sohier Road. Roll call was done with 14 members.

**VOTE:** The motion was approved

**RFQ for Architectural Services for HVAC Project –** Ms. Rosenberg stated that the committee had had a robust discussion about the pros and cons of a “house doctor” approach versus an RFQ just for the HVAC project. Dr. Harvey explained his thinking about the RFQ being the better option. Dr. Charochak agreed. Mr. Bergevin clarified that we had sufficient funds to cover this initial design phase.

Agreement that Mr. Bergevin and Ms. Bourgault should proceed with RFQ and that a Board vote was not needed at this time, but would be needed before funds could be moved out of the Capital Fund.

Dr. Tutwiler and Mr. Liebow left the meeting at 9:15 am

**V. Executive Director Report – Full Report Attached**

Ms. Rosenberg gave her report. There were no questions.

**VI. Adjournment**

**Motion:** A motion was made to adjourn the meeting by Dr. Blake and seconded by Dr. Bartholomew at 9:22 a.m. Roll call was done with 11 members present.

**VOTE:** The motion was moved unanimously

  
Kathy Mahoney, Administrative Assistant to Executive Director

  
Francine Rosenberg, NEC Executive Director

## **Executive Director's Report**

**January 2022**

### **General Update**

The past two months, once again, have been derailed by Covid, with high absentee rates, coverage issues, and leadership energy diverted to the implementation of mask wearing, vaccine compliance, and the distribution of rapid testing.

We are participating in the new At-Home Antigen Testing and are working to roll that out. We are also planning to host vaccine clinics in March.

As of January 1<sup>st</sup>, 98% of our staff had complied with our vaccine mandate by providing proof of vaccination (295 employees) or requesting an exemption (14 employees). Nancy and I have been meeting individually with the remaining 7 employees. Several of them have indicated that are in the process of getting vaccinated, but we may have 4 or 5 individuals who will not comply. I have conferred with counsel, and have informed these employees that their jobs are in jeopardy. At least one of these employees is in a specialized position and will be very difficult to replace.

### **Progress Toward Strategic Goals**

#### **Goal 1: Continue to Strengthen Quality of Programs and Services**

Despite the ongoing Covid disruptions, we have continued our DEI work. Our leadership team completed reading *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Our November 2<sup>nd</sup> PD day featured 5 excellent Zoom workshops, offered by MPY on a range of topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. And, our task force continues to produce monthly newsletters and host monthly drop in groups.

We have made a conscious decision to cancel some of our scheduled PD time, and delay the implementation of some initiatives related to curriculum and instruction. Educator "self-care" in the interest of morale and retention became a more critical priority for this winter.

#### **Goal 2: Maintain Financial and Leadership Stability for Long-Range Sustainability; Strengthen Supporting Infrastructure**

Our business office, technology and HR teams have been working diligently to implement the new Tyler Technologies/ Infinite Visions platform, which will improve the way we manage our financial and HR systems. The first payroll ran through the new system in January without a hitch, and employees are pleased to have access to the new "real time" HR portal.

Despite the volatility in enrollment, principals are working hard to manage admissions and staffing. The budget is tracking close to "break even" but there are concerns about capital needs that have been delayed. These issues have been discussed with the Finance and Facilities Committees and will be covered in other reports.

Friends of NEC continues to seek and successfully obtain philanthropic support, which has been enormously helpful in enabling us to continue with technology purchasing and student enrichment activities.

Finally, beloved principal of Topsfield Vocational Academy, Charlie LeBuff, will be retiring in August, and we have begun the search process for a new principal.

**Goal 3: Expand capacity to meet regional needs and advocacy for students with special educational, mental health, and substance use needs.**

Our Connections and Consultation services continue to expand to meet the needs of districts. We are providing wraparound supports in several new districts, as well as providing clinical supervision, program evaluation and consultation.

Michelle Lipinski, Recovery High School principal, is frequently asked to speak or consult to schools regarding adolescent substance use and/or positive alternatives to suspension. We are thrilled that a new residential treatment facility for teens with co-occurring mental health and substance use issues is opening in our region (Lowell House in Reading), and we have been meeting with them about how we can best collaborate.

I continue to be actively involved with MOEC and at the table for state-wide conversations about student mental health, recovery high schools, and the role that Collaboratives can play in supporting regional initiatives. I am participating in an ongoing discussion between MOEC and the Office of the Child Advocate regarding collaboration between the OCA and public schools. NEC continues to host very popular regional job-alike groups for special education administrators, special education team chair-people, and school psychologists.