

**Nashoba Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SEPAC)
Business Meeting
Tues. Oct. 26, 2021
7 p.m. (via Google Meet)**

PROPOSED NASHOBA SEPAC MEETING MINUTES FOR 10-26-21
Meeting Minutes (taken by Jenny Blounts/Alicia Frigon)

Present: Charlene Cabral, Michele Powell, Alicia Frigon, Jenny Blounts, Christine Collins, Pamela Duggan, Andrew Hilliger, Briar Biddle, C.F., Christa Nehil, Christine Rickard, Craig Goldstein, Elaine Carder, Emma Hudak, Eric Morgan, Christine Weeks, Frances Morgan, Heidi Griffin, Jackie Spataro, Joanna Miller, Judith Zmijak, Kaitlyn Smith, Kara Killough, Kat Copeland, Kate Rowan, Katherine Gianetti, Katherine Wang, Kathy Codianne, Kenneth Thomas, Lindsay Dyda, Malissa Miot, Marcie Giannatasio, Kelly Baldwin, Coll Fay, Matthew Baldwin, Maureen Mazzone, Megan Vargo, Melissa Carlson, Nicole Thomas, S. Winsor, Sara Salamone, Sra. Alano, Sue Bogdan, Dana Green

I. WELCOME CALL TO ORDER

II. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Minutes from September 28, 2021

- Clarification from Charlene
 - Marion King assists the group Nashoba Parents for Sped Change
 - When Pam asked if Frances wanted to share her referendum, Charlene said it was “out of order” and couldn’t be added to the 9/28 agenda; it could go on the next agenda

Jackie Spataro moves to approve minutes; Maureen Mazzone seconds
Minutes approved by majority

III. COMMUNICATIONS AND REQUESTS

- A) Time Keeper–no one volunteers to be timekeeper
- B) Meeting Norms–review of meeting norms from last meeting
Christine Collins moves to adopt norms; Alicia Frigon seconds it
Majority approves adopting norms
- C) Communication from other SEPACs
Maynard is co-sponsoring Kerrigan Classroom presentation
4 other SEPACs will be co-sponsoring Sarah Ward presentation in the spring

IV. REPORTS

- A) Report from the Rep from Stow – No Report
- B) Report from Stow PTO Rep –

Question about fundraising being shared between SEPAC and PTOs/PACS

- Charlene reports that other PTOs/PACs do give a certain amount of money (specified) to SEPACs; sometimes SEPACs and PTOs co-sponsor events. Nashoba should approach the PTOs/PAC in our district for funding and/or presentations.

- Alicia asks what we should share—presentations, schedule of events, socials, etc. Anything else?

- Alicia is the communication conduit between the Stow PTO and SEPAC

Christine (Lancaster PTO rep) is also considering ways of partnering with the Lancaster PTO

- Ideas from Alicia: scholarships, acknowledgement of paraprofessionals, forums for Stow parents, etc.

- Kat Copeland asked for Kate Kerrigan to partner with SEPAC in order to reach a larger audience; encourages SEPAC to reach out to PTO for funding

- Frances Morgan points out that Kathy Codianne is in charge of Friends of SEPAC, which can do its own fundraising; SEPAC can't fundraise because they get money from the federal government.

- Melissa Whalen wonders if people can donate funds to the SEPAC (ie, from Light it Up Blue). Charlene says we would have to "work out" what to do with donations.

- Kathy Codianne—point of information: the SEPAC does not receive any federal money directly; there is a line item in the district budget that is allocated for SEPAC; Kathy was involved as SC liaison for 3 years, but she took the Friends of SEPAC job without a job description; she would like to have that role defined.

C) Report from the Rep from Lancaster - No Report

D) Report from Lancaster PTO Rep – -Rep attended PTO meeting last week but nothing further to report.

- Virtual book fair in Lancaster

E) Report from the Rep from Bolton

- Pam is not the PTO/PAC representative, but she attended the PAC meeting in Bolton
- Lancaster and Stow have PTOs and Bolton has a PAC—for clarification—all serve the same function.

- Pam mentioned that perhaps the SEPAC could piggy back on teacher appreciation efforts so we can show appreciation for special education teachers

- They are open to working together to fundraise.

- Would like to work with SEPAC on inclusionary issues/concerns—want to make sure that any kids with special needs are included appropriately and that all events etc. are accessible.

F) Report from the High School Rep – No Report

G) Report from Social Media

- Pam is working on creating a FB page, which would include posts about FCSN presentations, informational stuff, etc.--> off of the page there would be private groups that could be places for discussion (around a particular issue, event, etc.--more active

place to get work done). Right now there are only two groups—an official and unofficial.

- Pam did list the current subcommittees that were approved at the last meeting on current page. Once people are assigned to committees, contact information could be included, etc.
- There was an email list in Constant Contact; Pam has access to email list in Google account and will see how we can utilize it.
- Also interested in looking into the emails that are sent out by the district—only goes to families that have an IEP or 504 in place; there may be people who are interested in our events, etc. who aren't in that position. Can we be sending information out district-wide?
- Melissa Whalen points out that previous SEPAC chairs would send out emails directly. It would be great to reach out to ALL families so that there are kids who can get involved in “unified” activities—sports, choir, etc.
- Dana Green asks if Facebook is the most efficient way to share information.
- Charlene says Facebook isn't used for sharing agendas, etc. You are supposed to officially get the agenda from Kathy Torilli and from the NRSD website.
- Pam agrees that we could use a platform so we are able to communicate. We don't have an active email list,, newsletter, etc. Send ideas to Pam (could form another committee).
- Colleen Goldstein (former social media manager) agrees that we need more than Facebook. It might help to have the building principals send out information in weekly newsletters. Charlene points out that that is the role of town reps to ask the principals to do this.
- Michelle Contey points out that her son is out of district and doesn't get emails from the district. She also asks to have the chat accessible.
 - Charlene points out that the District has a policy to shut off chats, so she has turned off the chat. The meeting is not being recorded and there is no way to save the chat.
 - Marion King asks where she can find the district policy regarding the chat. Charlene says she was told by Joan DeAngelis or someone at the district that this was the case. She will get more info.
- Michele Powell is interested in working on a newsletter.

H) Report from SEPAC Liaison to School Committee Brett Collins- no report

I) Report from Subcommittees:

a) Surveys and Data Requests - Requesting Community Input regarding Surveys and Data Requests. We have been asked to participate in the creation of two surveys – one for special ed in general and one as an IEP exit survey. Even if you are not on a subcommittee, please consider submitting your top two survey questions (for each survey) and two data points you would like know about Special Ed in the District by sending an email to SEPACchair@nrsd.net by Friday Nov 5, 2021 so that the committee can review member's feedback. Please type “Survey and Data” in the subject field. No date scheduled yet but meeting but will be posted.

b) Evidence Based Remediation For Specific Learning challenges – First Focus Literacy Instruction in the District

- Kelly Baldwin reports that this subcommittee would like more input from other parents.
- Very wide spectrum of topics.
- Kelly asks general question about subcommittees—can we use a meeting or social to ask people how they can get involved?
- Pam sent more information about “terms of reference” and states that subcommittees should be more well-defined

- c) Transitions – No report
- d) Bylaws – No report
- e) Unified Sports – No report
- f) Disability Awareness – No report

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. NRSD SEPAC Website - ALL schools in district now point back to NRSD SEPAC webpage which promotes uniformity. We continue to work on content and adjustments.

B. TOWN OF LANCASTER Commission on Disability has a survey online until Oct. 31, 2021. Please go to town website and complete it. It is aiming to make the town more disability friendly/accessible.

C. PRESENTATIONS:

- i) November 4, 2021 at 7:00PM: meet.google.com/exg-fqaf-mud
Reading comprehension strategies by Kate Kerrigan Wang of Kerrigan Classroom
- ii) November 17, 2021 at 7:00pm Anxiety Presentation by Dr. Cutillo of the Few Center
Virtual link TBD
- iii) December 1, 2021 at 7:00 Mediation and Appeals Virtual Presentation by the BSEA
- iv) Virtual Meet with SI Kirk Downing TBD
- v) Cognitive Connections: Executive Function virtual presentation by Sarah Ward March 28, 2022, at 7pm Save the Date
- vi) Neurology of Reading by Nancy Duggan of Decoding Dyslexia
- vii) NRSD Transitions Presentation by Cheryl Gallagher of NRSD
- viii) Working on “Ask the Advocate” program TBD

D. COMMENTS, CONCERNS, IDEAS email: SEPACchair@nrsd.net

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A) High School Build Project – request for information. The school committee is working on the new high school build project. As parents of children with special needs, we have a great opportunity to offer some suggestions. Please email SEPACchair@nrsd.net with your Sped building accommodation design thoughts by November 5, 2021. Please type “building accommodations” in the subject field.

B) Election of Vacant Offices

SEPAC PTO/PAC REP FOR BOLTON—no one is running

C) Referendum of Francis Morgan against the Chair & Referendum of Pamela Duggan against the Chair

Charlene: Michele I will hand this part to you about the referendum but I would like permission to speak to it as I have not had an opportunity.

Michele: Yes Charlene you have permission.

Pam: Point of order. I believe that the people who filed the referendum should speak.

Charlene: I would like to speak. There are two referenda against me. They must go by our bylaws all procedure are to be done under Roberts Rules of Order (RROO). By providing a confidential subcommittee

Pam: I suspend to remove the rules and consider

Charlene: under Roberts Rules. I was never given due process on these referenda. despite the fact that I sent an email to my entire committee.

Pam: I would like the reference the part of the by-law that she's referencing. I believe that Michele takes over.

Michele: can you repeat

Pam: I'm asking point of information where in the bylaws does it state that.

Michele: The bylaws are not meant to go into the nitty gritty procedural things. We will also read Roberts rules. It explains the process.

Francine: The bylaws trump the Roberts Rules

Gleason: It's article 9 of the bylaws

Michele: So we can go ahead and continue.

Pam: Where is this reference. What section in Roberts Rules? A referendum will be heard. It doesn't go into procedure.

Michele: That's the point. It doesn't describe any procedures. That's where you refer to Robert's Rules.

Francine: It's a referendum. It's a full referendum. It's put to a vote and it's discussed.

Charlene: The referendum is a vote of the executive body. The two provisions, you would understand that the subcommittee, the confidential subcommittee would need to review it.(people speak over) If I can finish?

Kathy: Point of Information. Any change to the bylaws would require a 2/3 vote, waiting to the next election. It is cited after careful review of chapter 20 of RROO.

Francine: I have a point of information. IT's been pointed out that the bylaws are bad. The bylaws supersede RROO. This is a separate bylaw for that specific reason.

Gleason: In regards to this discussion, the rules of order are now incorporated into the bylaws. When you incorporate robert rules in your bylaws it becomes your bylaws.

Those are your rules for procedure.

Frances: when you read RROO they supersede.

Gleason: You incorporated them and you shouldn't reference them. Any accused has due process

I agree the chair needs to go to the investigative committee. The accused is due to a

trial.

Frances: I wrote these bylaws.

Michele: please Frances. You keep interrupting

Gleason: I am done. I apologize Madam Chair.

Frances: I think, I understand why these things were written in order to be compliant. They were written without a lot of support. I understand what RROO are but they weren't referenced to be the full rules of SEPAC.

Michele: BC we put RROO for procedures. That's what we're trying to follow.

Charlene: When there In this case they harmonize, they state, it is not that bylaws trump RROO, all procedures will go through RROO. It's not a superseding issue. The actual bylaws state RROO is the procedure. I informed the referendum writers that there was a procedure for this and the warning was not heeded. It went to everyone.

Pam: This is out of order. Point of order - A warning? A threat?

Michele: I am allowing Charlene to speak. Charlene will finish. That'll be it.

Charlene: No this is a natural - A warning language that it would go to a subcommittee. I was not given the opportunity to finish.

Kaitlyn asks to hear the referendum and vote. Wants kindness and working together.

Colleen asks for clarification—if we suspend Robert's Rules, are we being asked to vote without any opportunity for anyone to speak?

Frances says there would be time for her and Pam to explain the referendum, and Charlene could speak, as well as anyone who would want to share.

Colleen asks if emails, text messages, etc. would be looked into in the subcommittee.

Michele explains process briefly: we would create a committee, which would take all information from Frances and Charlene, present it to the Executive Committee and a decision would be made. The EC would then put it on the record at the next agenda. Nothing would be disclosed from individual parties in a public meeting so we can make sure we are not harming someone. People in the committee would be impartial and would listen to both sides.

Mr. Gleason says you can't suspend a by-law unless it is stated in the by-laws that you can do it.

Coll Fay points out that Robert's Rules is the default, not the exclusive.

Melissa Miot asks why Charlene hasn't been able to speak since she was given permission by Michele. Charlene says she wasn't given any opportunity to speak because all are speaking over her.

Jackie Spataro calls the question—there is a motion to suspend Robert's Rules.

Michele states there is a parliamentary issue that she is not comfortable with because she is not an expert in Robert's Rules. She feels we need to get someone else involved who is an expert.

Frances says that Leslie Leslie and FCSN agree that the by-laws have been written in a way that the referendum should be considered.

Michele states that it should be someone else—someone who can moderate and give us a way to proceed.

Frances states that this should all have been addressed already. Why hasn't this been addressed when the referendum was provided a month ago?

Michele states that we shouldn't be hurrying through. Michele went through the book

(RROO) and talked to lots of people to try to find the right path. She is not trying to subvert anything, but is trying to figure out the right way to do it. Her belief is that we should form a committee and follow that procedure. She didn't think there would be disagreement because it seemed logical.

Kaitlyn appeals to the chair to put it to a vote and Jackie Spataro seconds it.

Sra. Alano doesn't understand why some people can speak and others can't. Why is everyone interrupting each other? Shouldn't everything be heard? A few angry people are lashing out at others, instead of creating a space in education that helps the most vulnerable.

Melissa Carlson wants to know Frances's position on the board; she doesn't think that Frances should be able to speak (or even vote) since she is not on the board.

Michele clarifies that the way our by-laws are written is that anyone who is a member can vote.

Maureen Mazzone seeks clarification; we are trying to decide if Charlene will continue with her volunteer position. She wants to know if anyone is willing to take on the role and, if not, what is the point?

Pam points out that we could vote on Charlene's position at the next meeting.

Pam points out that this isn't fair if Michele's decision-making is coming from guidance from Mr. Gleason, who is Charlene's husband. Is that an impartial reference to the rules?

Michele clarifies that she is following the rules, with no input from Charlene or Mr. Gleason. She does not intend to insult anyone and would love to be working as a group together, but this is where we are.

Rachel points out that someone made a motion to put it to a vote and someone seconded it. Why aren't we voting?

Michele is not proposing that we "keep Charlene;" she is proposing that we keep Roberts Rules, that's it.

Coll Fay points out that things should go to the majority vote to appeal the decision of the chair—we should take a vote on the appeal of the chair's decision. A majority vote would overrule the decision of the chair.

Kathy Codianne said the motion to appeal was retracted, but Pam clarifies that the motion she retracted was different.

Kaitlyn Smith says her motion is still on the table—we should be able to hear the referendum and be able to debate/discuss then vote.

Charlene points out that if we vote on this it will lead to more debate discussion. If we had continued the way the by-laws say it should happen, it would have been done confidentially. The subcommittee would have decided whether or not this rises to the level of public reprimand.

Marion King points out that there is a motion on the floor to vote and asks if we can go to vote.

Elaine Carder was part of SEPAC for a while and left when it became negative.

Outsider to SEPAC in a sense; there seems to be division among the leadership, but she does not feel that if Charlene goes it will be harmonious. In order to make this choice, we need to take time and shouldn't rush to a vote. People don't even know what the concerns are.

Sean Winsor speaking as a parent not a SC member; notes that there is disharmony in

the group that needs to be resolved. Everyone has a strong opinion, but we need to be cautious that we do it the right way.

Pam points out that the referendum was put on the agenda. Why was it put on the agenda if it wasn't going to be heard? Everyone came to the meeting assuming they would hear the referendum. The motion on the floor right now is to move it to a vote to hear the agenda. Why aren't we following procedures? The question is: The membership wants to agree to appeal the Chair's decision and move the referendum forward.

Kathy C. point of clarification: vote is to appeal the decision of the chair. If you vote YES what does it mean?

Rachel Balian says that the motion is to hear the referendum now and then vote. If you vote YES you are saying you want to move forward to hear the referendum and then vote.

Joseph Gleason says the referendum was published on the SEPAC Facebook page and wonders it was posted there without approval of this body. Did Charlene Cabral have the opportunity to share her own side? All of the people in this meeting had the chance to review the referendum, but she has had no opportunity to investigate the allegations and post her own response.

Coll Fay points out that no discussion outside of appealing the chair's position is appropriate at this time.

Michele P. says that the social media manager posted the referendum on the Facebook page. She is also one of the complainants in the referendum.

Lynn Hudak does not understand what the rush is. She is horrified that it seems personal.

Jackie Spataro points out that the authority of the body was given to the referendum at the last meeting. We need to vote.

Charlene—point of order. Jackie does not have all of the information. Charlene has been given no opportunity to speak because our FB page is official and we can't put whatever we want on it – its for events. Pam and Michelle Contey are admins for a FB page called Nashoba Parents for Sped Change where it is clear that there is an agenda against her. Charlene says that people have been aggravating her on purpose as the page states members should "apply pressure" on Charlene.

Michelle C states Charlene is public official so they can say whatever they want.

Coll Fay requests that Michele call the motion on the floor to a vote: to appeal the co-chair's decision on how to proceed. The vote is to overrule the decision of the chair. Voting yes on both items will bring the referendum to the floor tonight. Voting no on either item means the referendum does not come to the floor.

26 vote yes to appeal the chair's decision

22 vote no

2 abstentions.

Chair's decision is appealed by majority

Frances points out that the next motion on the floor is whether to move forward to hear/discuss the referendum.

Michele asks if there is a motion to suspend Robert's Rules.

Mr. Gleason asks for clarification; Frances clarifies that we are suspending Robert's Rules that specifically require the subcommittee.

Kathy Codianne points out that suspension of Robert's Rules requires 2/3 vote.

28 vote yes

22 vote no

2 abstentions

Motion fails. Does not reach $\frac{2}{3}$ vote. The referendum will go to a subcommittee.

Frances requests that if this gets on the agenda for the next meeting, it will be concluded by next month. Michele says, yes, she wants to do this as quickly as possible. She will immediately form the committee so it can be done as quickly as possible, but she can't make a promise that it will be posted for the next meeting, but she will try.

Marion King asks about the process of selecting members of the committee.

Michele says she would announce to everyone to email if they are interested in being on the committee. She is looking for impartial people to be on the committee. Anyone can request to be on the committee and Michele would talk to each person and try to get people who are impartial.

Marion King asks if it would be appropriate for it to be people outside of the district.

Frances asks that at least one member of the committee be from outside of the district.

Coll Fay points out that any investigation can make anyone vulnerable, and that those who put forward the referendums can change them to a vote of no confidence. Also cautions against bringing this to committee.

Michele says the committee would need to be made up of parents from the district who are impartial.

Frances will amend her referendum.

Nicole Tomas points out that her hand has been up for 15 minutes and hasn't been recognized. Asks for meeting norms for next meeting in which people cannot yell at other people or make threats against other people.

Rachel points out that we need to move forward in a way that we don't have finger pointing and hostility. The last few meetings have been disheartening.

Kelly Baldwin says she comes as a neutral party, coming to the SEPAC for support. She doesn't think that pulling this through another month or two will not be helping anyone. It's hard to know who will want to join this committee.

Charlene points out that she has worked very hard in this position and she doesn't think that people should want to remove her for her tone, etc. It's not fair. Motion to adjourn.

Kate Rowan points out that parents were frustrated with a lack of transparency in the district. There are obviously issues that need to be addressed in the SEPAC. She does not want to see these issues swept under the rug because people don't want to deal with them.

Pam points out that the problems are with the way the group is being led.

Colleen says that we are starting to debate the issue and we shouldn't be.

Alicia points out that this isn't a personal attack on Charlene; this is about leadership.

Charlene would like to have a conversation with the board, but there are concerns about open meeting law. If we could sit down and talk that would be fantastic. Michele says there is a way to do that, which will be a priority.

Marion King points out that it is hard for people to trust Charlene since she threatens to sue people.

Frances asks for permission to speak; we already voted not to have a committee; Frances and Pamela could amend their referendum to “concerns” which would allow the conversation to proceed. Frances is willing to amend her referendum if it will go on the agenda for the next meeting.

Charlene motioned to adjourn; Lynn Hudak seconded it; meeting adjourned by majority.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:41 PM