



Programs & Services Committee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, December 6, 2017

Present: Councilors Rice (Chair), Leary, Kalis, Sangiolo, Schwartz, Auchincloss, Hess-Mahan and Baker

Also Present: Councilors Lappin, Crossley and Harney

City Staff Present: Quinn Etchie (Director, Youth Services), Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Chair's Note: The Committee began the meeting by thanking and honoring Councilors Sangiolo and Hess-Mahan for their many years serving on the Programs & Services Committee. They will be missed.

#389-17 Re-Appointment of David A. Olson as City Clerk

PRESIDENT LENNON AND VICE PRESIDENT LAPPIN, pursuant to Section 2-7 of the City Charter, recommending that the City Council re-appoint David A. Olson as City Clerk; said term will begin on January 1, 2018 for a term of two years or until a successor is duly qualified.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Note: Vice President Lappin joined the Committee. She explained that this item is to recommend the re-appointment of David Olson as City Clerk. His salary discussion will take place after January 1st. She went on to say the Mr. Olson has been an incredible City Clerk and always has an answer and does his job with professionalism, patience and good humor. He has also taken over the Elections Department, which was done seamlessly, and recently oversaw the election re-count for Ward 4 ward Councilor. That too, was done with great ability. She heartily recommended that the Committee approve this re-appointment.

Councilor Sangiolo asked about Mr. Olson's salary. As she recalled the City Council recommended a salary but the Executive Department was not in agreement, therefore a compromise was made. Councilor Lennon said the decision was to make Mr. Olson's salary comparable to an H grade salary of similar responsibility. She believed that it was Bob DeRubeis's salary that was used as a comparable.

Councilor Hess-Mahan stated that Mr. Olson has been a fantastic City Clerk. When he was first hired, some people were not sure he was the right choice because he had never been in a Clerk's role before. He has far exceeded expectations and he hired a wonderful staff. He happily supported his re-appointment.

Councilor Sangiolo moved approval and the Committee voted in favor 7-0.

#244-17 Mayor's appointment of Donna Murphy to the Council on Aging

DONNA MURPHY, 496 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, appointed as a COMMISSIONER of the NEWTON COUNCIL ON AGING for a term to expire September 30, 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0

Note: Ms. Murphy joined the Committee. She stated that she has been a part of the Council on Aging Advisory Council for three years. She was motivated to join the Advisory Council because she was interested in the issues affecting seniors in Newton. The City had just passed the shoveling ordinance which was significant in her neighborhood and many of her neighbors would seniors. She would like to help determine what the City can do to help seniors in recognition of the fact that there are significant problems.

A Committee member noted that he was quite interested in having Newton become an official Age-Friendly City. At a recent community meeting, almost half the questions were about making the City more navigable for seniors in terms of sidewalks, transportation, infrastructure as well as other issues. Ms. Murphy responded that she was very pleased with the Age-Friendly City initiative. She would like to see seniors more involved in the school system. Seniors are a wonderful resource and would be a wonderful resource to students in schools. This could include homework sessions, living history sessions, tutoring and any other opportunities for intergenerational learning.

Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval and the Committee voted in favor.

#370-17 Mayor's appointment of Julia Geller to the Youth Commission

JULIA GELLER, 1274 Beacon Street, Newton, appointed as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire October 31, 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: All four Youth Commission appointments were discussed together. Quinn Etchie, Director of Youth Services, joined the four appointees to the Youth Commission. She explained that the City has a very robust group of students who are working to make positive changes. They all work so well together. The Youth Commission is youth-run and youth-led. Her role is to provide support and guidance when needed. There will be a North/South Unity Event to bring the schools together. The sense of separation had been identified as something that needed to be addressed so that is the focus of the event.

The Commission held an event at Newton North – Lets Inspire Students to Engage and Educate Newton. All students were invited to discuss politics as well as other issues and it was very successful. The appointees explained that because the schools are separated, they do not have much opportunity to mix. Bringing the schools together provides a larger network of support and friends and in the end is a healthier environment. The Commission is made up of students from both North and South, but these events help other students as well who do not have that

opportunity on a regular basis. The theatre production of Shakespeare is something that the two high schools participate in. There was also a jazz production that involved both schools. The plan is to organize more events for both schools together. There are currently more students from Newton North on the Youth Commission than from Newton South, but it has been steadily moving to a more even composition.

Ms. Etchie noted that the Youth Commission is also working on issues of mental health to make sure students know the resources available at each school and how to exchange ideas on dealing with mental health issues.

A Councilor felt that there are certain course offerings which are more diverse at North than at South. South students can take classes at North that are not offered at South, but they do have to travel there. Ms. Etchie said those issues to come up with the expanded exposure, but the Commission has not really gotten involved with curriculum. It was suggested that the appointees could advocate for more diverse offerings.

A Councilor said that the appointees written statements, which were provided with the agenda, were wonderful and passionate. He noticed a concern about deep issues and asked how they deal with people in the community that disagree with their viewpoints. An appointee explained that they discussed at the Inspire event how to listen respectfully and converse without getting angry or disrespectful. Issues of race and politics can lead to a combative tone, but learning how to communicate can prevent or explain misunderstandings and better understand other points of view.

A couple of years ago, there was a community meeting with members of a group that turned quite ugly. There were issues of race and anti-Semitism and many adults were not conducting themselves very well. Mayor Warren was at that meeting and afterwards commented that the students were the ones who communicated so well and were the most thoughtful contributors to the discussion. Students were open to others points of view and demonstrated how to react to those who many not agree with their opinions.

Ms. Etchie explained that the Youth Commission was at the Student Involvement Fair which was encouraged more students to get involved. Once they see a few meetings in action, they understand what the Commission is doing. An appointee explained that he is now on his third year in the Youth Commission and he has seen more kids join in since there has been more outreach. This year has been much more student organized and run and that appeals to other kids.

Councilor Rice suggested that the Youth Commission come back to Committee after the new term starts to share what they are doing with the new Councilors. The appointees were thanked for being willing to serve and doing such great work.

Councilor Sangiolo moved approval of all four appointments and the Committee voted in favor unanimously.

#371-17 Mayor's appointment of Aneel Chittilappilly to the Youth Commission
ANEEL CHITTILAPPILLY, 32 Charlotte Road, Newton, appointed as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire October 31, 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: See note above.

#372-17 Mayor's appointment of Maya Gomberg to the Youth Commission
MAYA GOMBERG, 290 Islington Road, Auburndale, appointed as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire October 31, 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: See note above.

#373-17 Mayor's appointment of Myles Hoffman to the Youth Commission
MYLES HOFFMAN, 33 Blake Street, Newtonville, appointed as a member of the YOUTH COMMISSION for a term to expire October 31, 2020.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 8-0

Note: See note above.

#374-17 Mayor's appointment of Michelle Drolsbaugh to Advisory Council of Health
MICHELLE DROLSBAUGH, ~~6 Jaffrey Circle, Waban~~, 49 Summit Street, Newton, appointed as a member of the ADVISORY COUNCIL OF HEALTH for a term to expire January 1, 2021.

Action: Programs & Services Approved 7-0 (Councilor Baker not voting)

Note: Ms. Drolsbaugh joined the Committee and provided a corrected address, as noted above. She explained that she is a social worker and runs a foster care program in Cambridge. She wanted to share her knowledge and skills in the City she lives in. Her specialty is with children and family and she serves the most vulnerable children who have been in foster care and have experienced trauma. She believes her experience can bring a diverse perspective to the Advisory Council of Health.

A Councilor asked if Mr. Drolsbaugh had interest in making Newton more walkable and accessible to all residents - age-friendly means that a City works for all age groups. Mr. Drolsbaugh said her focus has been centered pm children's mental health but she agrees that outdoor engagement is extremely important. Families that do not have that opportunity do suffer from long-term health issues.

A Committee member noted that there have been issues of depression and, unfortunately, suicide with students in Newton. He was pleased that her experience could help in that area. Ms. Drolsbaugh explained that this is not a Newton-centered problem and has become an issue

everywhere. Destigmatizing therapy and seeking help can be key. She has been thinking about how she can use her marketing skills towards that end. The PATH program in Newton has been helpful and she thinks Newton is on the right path in supporting students who are wrestling with depression and other mental health issues.

Councilor Hess-Mahan noted that the opioid issue is something Newton has been focusing on through the Health Department. Ms. Drolsbaugh said she has many more infants coming into foster care at day 5 or 6 of their life due to the opioid crisis. They are also seeing many more cases of neglect due to this as well. Early interventionists and other providers are now being taxed because of the crisis so there is delay for services; therefore, some children are languishing in foster care because it is taking longer for parents to be evaluated to determine if they are ready and able to be reunited with their children. She has also seen friends and family who have struggled or passed away from opioids.

Councilor Hess-Mahan said that he heard a radio report about Gloucester, which has seen an inordinate number of opioid overdoses. The City has offered access to help without fear of being arrested. Unfortunately, not many have taken up that offer and that is in large part due to the stigma and lack of education on the issue. Ms. Drolsbaugh noted that people will go outside their own towns in order to get help so they will not be seen by anyone they know.

The Committee thanked Ms. Drolsbaugh for her willingness to serve and approved her appointment unanimously.

#375-17 **Mayor's re-appointment of Richard Kronish to the Newton Housing Authority**
RICHARD KRONISH, 22 Chestnut Terrace, Newton Centre, re-appointed as a member of the NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY for a term to expire December 31, 2022.
Action: **Programs & Services Approved 6-0-1 (Councilor Sangiolo abstaining; Councilor Baker not voting)**

Note: Councilor Sangiolo stated that she has received two complaints over the past month about how the Newton Housing Authority was dealing with tenant issues. She reported that Councilor Harney also recently received a call from someone who had been evicted. She was hoping someone from the Housing Authority would be at this meeting to discuss this.

Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval and the Committee voted in favor 6-0-1 with Councilor Sangiolo abstaining.

#376-17 **Mayor's re-appointment of Thomas Turner to the Newton Housing Authority**
THOMAS TURNER, 60 Wyoming Road, Newtonville, re-appointed as a member of the NEWTON HOUSING AUTHORITY for a term to expire December 31, 2022.
Action: **Programs & Services Approved 6-0-1 (Councilor Sangiolo abstaining; Councilor Baker not voting)**

Note: Councilor Hess-Mahan moved approval with Councilor Sangiolo abstaining for reasons stated above.

#247-17 **Citizens Petition requesting measures limiting City Council action to city issues**
JANET STERMAN ET AL. submitting a petition, pursuant to Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter, for the City to adopt measures so that all new matters taken under discussion by the City Council pertain solely to the operation of the City; that all matters presented to the City Council pertaining to the operation of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts be referred to state Representatives and Senators representing the City of Newton; and that all matters pertaining to the operation of the United States federal government be referred to the United States Representatives and Senators representing Massachusetts. (90 days: 11/12/17) [07/31/17 @ 10:10 AM]

Action: **Public Hearing Closed; Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 7-0-1**

Note: Councilor Rice explained that this item was submitted to the City Council as a 50-citizens petition per Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter. Any 50-citizens petition submitted in this manner requires a public hearing.

Councilor Rice opened the public hearing. Janet Sterman and Tom Mountain presented the item to Committee. Ms. Sterman explained that earlier this year she was getting signatures to run for City Council and during that time, had conversations with residents who mentioned there were many matters taken up by the City Council that do not pertain to the operation of the City. As a result, she created this petition to address the issue.

Earlier this year, another 50-citizen petition was submitted asking the City Council to support a resolution requesting that the House of Representatives open an impeachment investigation against the President. Because Section 2 requires a public hearing within 90 days, these petitions can sometimes take priority over other issues. The resolution request had neither grounds for impeachment nor would it have any direct impact on the operation of the City, the Programs & Services Committee voted to move forward with the request, regardless of its relevance to the operation of Newton. It took up Committee time as well as City Council time. Over the years, this was just one of several items that have been taken up by the City Council that have no foundation for discussion by local legislators. She would like the Committee and City Council to refer those types of items to the US Senators and Congressmen/women elected by the residents of Newton instead of setting a precedent of moving forward with their personal bias.

The City Council is elected locally to enact laws to improve the safety and quality of life of Newton residents and taxpayers. Having discussions pertaining to the Commonwealth or the federal government are above the pay grade of the City Council. Otherwise, it takes time away from the City Council to discuss economic operation of the City and that develop ordinances that encourage growth and commerce.

She asked the Committee to vote with humility and limit conversations and docket items to only those that pertain to the operation of the City of Newton.

Mr. Mountain said that he lives on Truman Road and there is a stretch of it that needs repair. He has to go out of his way to avoid it. Also Truman Road is listed as a flood zone even though there has not been a flood there in decades. There should also be a stop sign at the junction of Parker Street and Truman Road despite repeated requests to put one there. He is speaking to the City Council about these local issues because that is what they are elected to do – repair roads and flood zones reviewed and stop signs installed. The lights at Parker Street should be removed as well because they cause traffic to back up. His suggestion is that if the Councilors would like to be Congressmen or state senators then they should run for those offices. Focus on the items that pertain to the City of Newton and local issues only. Other discussions are a waste of time and are counterproductive. It gets the public that the City Council has so much time of their hands that they can spend time on non-local issues.

Public Comment

Susan Mirsky, 68 Hyde Street said she understands the need to address public safety and quality of life in Newton. She is very aware that Newton does not exist in isolation – this City lives in a State, within a Country, within the world. The Biolab in Boston, while not in Newton, posed danger to Newton due to proximity and needed to be addressed. Similarly, the Pilgrim Nuclear Plant is within a danger range. She urged the Committee to take up issues in Newton that affect the rest of the world and come from the rest of the world.

Jim Frances, 108 Adena Road said he came of age in journalism during the tenure of Tip O'Neill and he was famous for saying "All politics is local". It speaks to the fact that politics is the interconnectedness of everyone, and all of it whether, national, international or local, becomes local when it comes to us and our families. When the residents elect any official, they are looking for someone with insight to all sorts of issues and have the insight to prioritize them. That includes looking at issues that may go beyond the City's borders, but still affect the City and its residents. Examples of this are how we treat undocumented residents and how to deal with greenhouse gases. These types of issues are just as much on the shoulders of the local city council as they are on the state and federal representatives. It is NOT above the paygrade of the City Council.

Committee Questions/Comments

Hearing no more requests to speak, Chair Rice closed the public hearing with a unanimous vote of the Committee.

Councilor Leary was unsure how the decision could be made relative to what items could or could not come before the City Council. The petitions that are brought to the City Council by residents who want to be heard were also important to her. Limiting the City Council and limiting the citizens' petitions would be difficult. She wants to hear what the residents have to say. It was asked if a Rules change would be necessary if this were to happen. Councilor Baker noted that the citizens' petitions come through the Section 2 of the City Charter. The City Council does

not have the authority to limit those petitions or their topics. The Charter Commission reviewed this section, as they did all sections, and made no changes. The only area they discussed relative to this section was how many signatures should be required to submit the petitions. He did understand the concerns that citizens have relevant to the Council spending its time on local issues. However, as was mentioned, there are broader items that turn out to have local impact. He would support a motion for No Action Necessary.

Councilor Kalis said he understood both sides of this concept and would like to have some more information. While broader issues can affect the City, much time is spent on state or federal issues where not all the information is available in Committee and he does not always feel informed enough to vote on those matters.

Councilor Sangiolo noted that most of the resolutions that have come before them are brought forward by citizen petitions on issues such as environmental regulations or other issues that do affect Newton's citizenry. Those do not require expertise, instead they require the City Council to represent the citizens and show support for those critically important issues.

Councilor Rice explained that because this is the end of the term, there is no opportunity to bring this item back for discussion. The Committee will ask the Law Department if there would be any way to implement such a limitation in case this item is re-docketed in the new term.

Councilor Leary moved No Action Necessary and the Committee voted in favor 7-0-1 with Councilor Kalis abstaining.

#337-17 **Citizens Petition requesting an ordinance mandating NPS curriculum transparency**
CHARLES JACOBS ET AL. submitting a petition, pursuant to Section 10, Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter, requesting an ordinance mandating the Newton Public School system to publicize on the internet all curricular materials, sources, syllabi, teacher and student workshops, as well as school calendars publicizing invited guest speakers and/or organizations and designated student field trips in each of the grades from K-12. [10/31/17 @ 11:34 AM]

Action: **Public Hearing Closed; Programs & Services voted No Action Necessary 8-0**

Note: Councilor Rice explained that this item was submitted to the City Council as a 50-citizens petition per Section 2 of the City of Newton Charter. Any 50-citizens petition submitted in this manner requires a public hearing.

Councilor Rice opened the public hearing. He explained that the City Council has no authority, whatsoever, to enact an ordinance pertaining to the Newton Public School system's policies. The power to establish policies is reserved only to the School Committee pursuant to MGL c.71, Section 37. The only possible votes that the City Council could take on this petition would be either Denial or No Action Necessary. This information was presented to the Mr. Jacobs when he submitted this petition, and he chose to move forward nonetheless. Mr. Jacobs then sought to amend his petition

to a Resolution, which the City Council could vote on. The Committee Clerk was then informed that because the other residents who signed the petition did so under the original intent of a petition, Mr. Jacobs could not, on his own, amend the petition to a Resolution.

Matt Hills, member of the Newton School Committee, submitted a letter providing background and actions taken by the School Committee and Newton Public Schools on this topic. This letter was distributed to the City Council upon its receipt in the Clerk's Office. Please see attached.

Charles Jacobs, representing the petitioners, presented the petition to the Committee. His written, submitted comments are attached to this report.

Public Comment

Tom Mountain, 117 Truman Road said it was a magnificent day because the President announced that the United States would be moving its embassy to Jerusalem. The 80 teachers who attended the propaganda seminar at Harvard University and those administrators, are not happy about this at all because they are anti-Israel and do not like the Jewish state or anything about it. They are pro-PLO and pro-Hamas. Many like Antifa and are probably members of Antifa and these are teachers and administrators of Newton's children. The School Committee has been obstinate and have done nothing. The book which was written about this, which was provided to the City Council, cannot be refuted or otherwise the authors would be open to libel and they are not. Why isn't the Superintendent at this meeting? Is he a coward and does he not have the fortitude to meet his critics? Same for members of the School Committee? There is something monumentally inappropriate for a Jewish superintendent with a majority Jewish School Committee to allow this anti-Israel cabal to fester in our schools as long as it has. There is a left-wing cabal in the School Committee to condemn those on the far-Left as the problem in the school system and it will be a problem until they are recognized and dealt with.

Nathan Foster, 423B Dedham Street, said he is a recent graduate of Newton South High School. He is here to support his history teachers who are amazing, thoughtful and open-minded people. As a senior he wrote the following statement, which was signed by 478 fellow students, and published in the Newton Tab and Jewish Advocate: "We concerned Newton students, support the History Department in the face of allegations by the group Americans for Peace and Tolerance (APT) that Newton's curriculum is anti-Israel. Despite APT claims, we are not the victims of anti-Semitic, anti-Israel or "Pro-Arab" education." We recognize that history is often controversial and always subject to evaluation. Thoughtful, constructive criticism of how history is taught plays a vital role in the quality of a history education. The History Departments removal of Arab Studies book in response to a parent complaint, demonstrates its openness to criticism and commitment to constant improvement. APTs claims go beyond the pale of constructive criticism. Our history teachers are not anti-Israel. Unjustified allegations to that effect serve only to stifle classroom discourse. We asked APT to withdraw their attacks on our teachers. APT responded by questioning whether the request was written by students alone. A report by the Anti Defamation League reported that all of the concerns raised by APT to be either misleading or incorrect. A letter from 61 Boston-area rabbis was deemed "Soviet style mass signature denunciation letter." When

APT isn't busy attacking members of the Jewish community, they spend their time attacking Muslims. They have spent a lot of time and energy accusing the Islamic Society of Boston and the Muslim community at MIT of being terrorist fronts, with similarly flimsy evidence. To be clear, APT is the group pushing this request and paid for the big camera in the room. He reiterates his support for the teachers.

Susan Toochin, 98 Clifton Road asked why anyone would want to hide the curriculum and schoolbooks. She has lived in Newton for 36 years and it is her right as a taxpayer to go online to see what the curriculum is and what the students are being taught. She does not understand why the School Committee would not do what other cities and towns do. Anti-Semitism is real. She has been around college campuses for years and it is there. It is trickling down to public schools. There is no space for hate and bias in Newton schools and should not be tolerated for any religion or culture. Teachers should be teaching the truth with no bias towards any point of view. She no longer has faith in the schools or the School Committee.

Gabe Appelbaum, 205 Mill Street said he is a junior at Newton North. He does not recognize the school that these people are talking about. He has seen none of the examples this petition is referring to. He was born in Jerusalem and is very pro-Israel but these examples do not exist. The only reference in the CAMERA book he recognizes is one video of a pilgrimage to Mecca. The journalist who converted to Islam and stated that he was attracted to Islam because of its lack of clergy, specifically priests or rabbis. The booklet attacks this as an anti-Semitic statement. Newton North has been extremely welcoming and is opening to all ideas. It is certainly not anti-Israel and this attack embarrasses him.

Aviva Sapers, 115 Bellevue Street said she wants transparency in the curriculum and specifically what is being taught in high school. After listening to the meeting in City Hall two years ago and hearing that the Superintendent had no issues with the curriculum, she decided not to send her son to Newton North due to anti-Semitism. Her other children are reaching high school age and she is frustrated that no change has happened. Let us decide if what is being taught is appropriate or not. Mr. Jacobs was given Boston's freed award by Coretta Scott King. He is not anti-anything, he is trying to open up opportunities. Newton North retracted the statement that they stopped using certain texts. She would love to be able to send her kids to Newton Schools.

Susan Mirsky, 68 Hyde Street said her kids went to Newton schools and got a great education. She teaches history in Cambridge. She feels strongly that everything that is within the curriculum in Newton, after conversations with her son, is appropriate and teachers should be allowed to teach. Transparency is fine but this request for transparency is about limiting what children are allowed to hear and think about. Let the teachers teach.

Marshall Cohen, 68 Bennington Street said he is a former History Department head at Newton South and retired in 2010. Newton has had for many years a process for determine curriculum in Newton. People from the community, people from the schools and sometimes experts work on the curriculum. In 2011 they were giving a mandated curriculum to teach world history in 9th and

10th grade. Teachers would go to a resource room and choose materials that were appropriate for teaching and discussion. Islam was one of the topics they were supposed to teach. An article tries to debunk some of the myths of Islam and women. In the process, an exaggerated statement was made. It was described in a Tab article that Israeli forces were murdering people. He thinks they were killing people, but they were not killing women. It was an exaggeration to say hundreds. He looked into this see if there was truth to any of it. In truth, there were some deaths that occurred when buildings were bombed. He wanted to give context to all this.

Emen Ansari, 50 Dolphin Road said she agreed that it is a time of rising anti-Semitism but also rising racism and Islamophobia and anti-Arab sentiment – it is a time of rising bigotry. Bigotry and hate are unacceptable to any group, be it Jews, Arabs, Palestinians, Hispanic, African-Americans or any other group. We cannot ask for a pro-Jewish curriculum at the expense of facts and other groups rights. She is Arab, Muslim, Palestinian and a Newton community parent. She is there to support the teachers and her childrens education from any external forces including religious, political or other interest groups, however well-meaning they think they are. Our children have the right to access and to be exposed to available facts, opposing perspective to analyze and synthesis them and to develop their own opinions. Our children need to learn and form opinions pro and con in order to help them succeed in life, to compete in a world where different points of view are expressed towards path for peace. Teachers need to be able to do their jobs to teach facts and show all perspectives. This will allow students to respectfully form their own views. We cannot be crippled by censored curriculum. This request is a request to censor information. Our schools are not Saudi school, Israeli schools – our children deserve an education monitored by our high quality educators. She believes they can all work together as Newtoners to resolve bigotry against all groups. Bigotry starts at home.

Peter Silbertsein, 55 Woodlawn Ave. said he agreed that teachers should be able to teach impartially and well. However, the only way to know that is happening is through transparency and by making the curriculum available. The School Committee's response to these issues was embarrassing. What are they hiding? That was his reaction. It should be transparent – if there is a problem it can be addressed, and if not, the teachers can teach.

Yasmeen Kazimi, 16 Manamet Road said she went to Newton North and enjoyed high quality discussions in her history class with varying viewpoints and came out enriched by that. She wants to support the educators and asked for support for them. The Newton school system is one of the best in the state which allows the City to attract high level educators. They should not be muzzled or censored. Students need to be presented information to be able to form their opinions. It is worrisome that an openly political and discriminatory organization like CAMERA would create a booklet like this. CAMERA is an Islamophobic organization that stifles fact-based discussion of an internationally recognized illegal occupation, and that is a fact. We should not trust them to influence Newton's curriculum or cajole the City into policing our educators.

Gary Jacobson 90 Nashoba Road said that this is not about the teacher's integrity it's about their knowledge. (The remainder of the testimony is unintelligible due to microphone issues).

Dawn Davis, 12 Prentice Road said her 3 children are currently in Newton public schools. She has great respect for the teachers and the process by which they are vetted and hired. She has seen some of the curriculum coming home from Newton North and Bigelow. As a Palestinian, she feels it would be better if there were more information on the Palestinian people such as that which is documented by the United Nation and the World Health Organization. However, it is not up to her to judge whether it is appropriate or not and unless someone is part of the public schools, it is not up to them to judge whether the curriculum is aligned with our personal biases. It is up to the trained educators. They are funded by the city and state and she trusts that money will not be used to further the political agenda of any group. If they are instructed to teach to any particular ideology which is swayed by political beliefs, then we are lost as a community and city. The public schools can not cave to this propaganda. It would stop most of us in our tracks is someone proposed a Christian curriculum. And it should. This item is intended to gag our educators and is a stunning and dangerous step towards censorship and she is deeply opposed to silencing the teachers.

Lital Carmel, 55 Placid Road said her son is Newton South graduate and he is away so she is reading a statement for him. He said that as a Newton Public School student and as someone who was born in Israel, he is disturbed especially during early high school years due to the anti-Israel bias that persists in the community. I cannot say how teachers feel about Israel but I can remark on the actual material being taught in classes and its impact on students. The material is meant to maximize education, but it draws an equivalency between the PLO and other organizations that disagree with Israel. This issue is complex and the school system does not want to favor one side over another. It has distorted information in such a manner that he often did not feel comfortable he was from Israel because of some of the hatred towards his country. Israel has faltered and made mistakes, but it should be judged in the same way as every other country. Background information such as why Israel is so important to students need to be included because students do not know the challenges. They do not know that Palestinians use innocent people as human shields. Why are students not aware of the terror Israeli people feel every day as countries and organizations encourage their citizens to kill Jews. He wanted Israel to be treated fairly by Newton Public Schools and stop vilify Israel.

Marina Rakhilin, 6 Great Meadow Road is a graduate of Newton South and she supports the teachers. Framing this as an issue of transparency is misrepresenting the argument. There is clear evidence that APT is an Islamophobic group that seeks to harass and intimidate Newton teachers unfairly. Teachers do not promote anti-Israel views. They try to balance Israel and Palestine and ask students to read and write critically. Students know the context of their material. High School students are meant to learn all sides of issues. Let's engage in open conversation but stop harassing teachers.

Door Nadler, 11 Hargrave Circle said he has 3 children attending Newton schools. He believes everyone cares about the city and take pride in the school. It draws people to live her. Educating the next generation is the foundation of any civilized society. He wants his kids to become critica

thinkers and that they learn and hear different opinions. They should learn about history and get a fair and balanced view of events, their sequence and the context in which they occur. He trusts the educators but they do not trust the curriculum. For that reason, he is in favor of transparency as it will allow people to evaluate whether historical events are re-written. Transparency will drive justice and make society stronger. It is needed for any democratic society. Those who oppose it say that no allegations are true. If that is the case, why would they oppose transparency.

Maha Farhat, 127 Eastbourne Road said she has 3 kids in public school and she supports the teachers and opposing having the curriculum unduly censored. Facts do exist and the teachers are able to facilitate that especially in a digital age when information is everywhere. A step to adulthood is gathering all kinds of information and learning how to appraise it. History can sometimes be difficult to bear and even though I want to shield my children, that would be unfair and would not prepare them for the real world. There is a grave risk in censoring the curriculum in favor of one group and set a wrong precedent. It would endanger the schools values that we hold the most dear such as having a welcoming environment for students of all backgrounds.

Aley Koifman, 2300 Commonwealth Avenue said his son went to Newton High School. He is the president of the Russian Jewish Community Foundation, an all-volunteer organization in Massachusetts. He grew up the Soviet Union where anti-Israel propaganda was an everyday occurrence. They were taught to hate America and Israel, but we understood when they attack Israel they really meant Jews. He feels the same thing is happening in the US. Over 50% of all hate crimes on college campuses are against Jews in the past many years. Part of that is really bad education that our children are getting. Newton Schools do not tell students that Palestians schools indoctrinate children to hate Jews. PLO education glorifies suicide bombers and name schools and soccer institutions after them. This is the worst state-sponsored child abuse today. The Palestinians pay terrorists from taxpayer money. Make the curriculum public, fire Supt. Fleischman, appoint volunteer parent representatives to look over the curriculum. It is your duty to the children of the City. We will continue to press for this.

Lewis Pepper, 23 Omar Terrace said he is a retired professor of Public Health, lives in Newton, is Jewish and has 3 kids who all went through Newton Public Schools. He felt privileged that his children could attend schools whose core values championed, open-mindedness, creativity, critical thinking and collaborative problem-solving in the students and staff. He was dismayed when he heard of CAMERA's attempt to extinguish those same values through its poorly referenced and ill-guided resolution to interfere with educational autonomy. CAMERAs demand for so-called transparency is no more than their attempt to impose their opinion on the content on what and how our students learn and how our widely respected teachers conduct their work. Their proposal is bad for the schools and the City. Their desire to impose their standard of what should and should not be taught will not be limited to contentious issues like Palestine/Israel. It reminds me of similar attempts in our states to rid the curriculum of natural selection, global climate change and the like. We should be cautious when individual and groups decide they should be the arbiter of what is the truth and with whom truth resides.

Bruce Robman, Court Street said these issues never came up when his kids were in the Newton schools. He was struck when he heard his neighbors talk about the bias curriculum. There is bigotry and it is being taught in the Newton schools. We are not allowed to teach objective history so we have kids who are ignorant and do not know about the Holocaust, the '48 war, the history of Israel – they don't even know Israel is a democracy. Seven hundred thousand people came from Arab worlds that were kicked out and Israel was the only home for them. This issue of bigotry in the schools has been going on for 8 years. He recommended that the Council make clear that hate materials are unacceptable; we need transparency and it is not censorship; we need to see what kids are being taught and the material should be vetted to be sure Israel is being represented accurately. This is as important as Trump and power plants so we want a resolution from the Council.

Mark Golden, 671 Grove Street said he is Jewish and has traveled to Israel and the West Bank in 2013. He spent a lot of time talking with both Palestinians and Israelis. He could probably sign on to either side of this petition. The issue is whether the curriculum is fair and balanced. Given what he saw in 2013, his concern would be that the reality of the human rights abuses perpetrated upon the Palestinians would be neglected such as bulldozing homes and destroying olive groves and the indignity of the checkpoints. The key is to keep the curriculum true, fair and balanced.

Helga Lustig, 304 Greenwood Road said she is 90 years old. Her childhood was in Nazi Germany, Nazism took over overnight. Propaganda and getting at the children is what happens. Her father started a factory and she would walk to school and suddenly she saw newspapers, the propaganda was so outrageous. She could see people reading the papers saying horrible things about the Jews. The boy scouts in Germany were suddenly wearing uniforms and became the front soldiers for the Nazi regime. It can all happen very quickly and you could not think this could happen.

Leah Jacobson, 27 West Farm Road said that today is the passing of the Taylor Force Act, who was killed in Israel due to Palestinian terrorism. She was on Capitol Hill fighting for that bill. It shows us what goes on in the school system has a direct impact on society. The fact that we as parents do not have transparency as to what goes into our children's minds is opposite and antithetical to what democracy stands for. We all love our children and the fact that we would not have access is wrong. When people do not speak up for what is right, terrible things happen. There are enough people here telling the Council what is going on. It is a dangerous world with anti-Semitism and she is a mother. She moved here last year and has found it very different than what she thought it would be. The Jewish and the Muslim people's safety had to be taken care of. Transparency is a basic human right. We know what is going into the Palestinian children's minds. Transparency equals safety and justice.

Mohammad El-Zein, 21 Glenwood Road said what is going through the mind of Palestinian children is "when are the lights going to go on and when will I have water to drink." How do teachers feel about this discussion? You do not want to instill fear into the teachers. It is important for them to teach. In terms of transparency, it is something you will see in your children. If you are talking to your children, doing homework with them, listening to what they say when

they come home from school every day, that is the best form of transparency there is. We can talk about Israel, Palestine, Muslims and Jews, but it is all about being fair and balanced about the information in the schools. Many moved to Newton to be in this school system and by controlling it or wanting transparency so we can say what is right or wrong. If you do not like the schools in Newton, go to another town.

Jack Porter, Walnut Street said he remembered 20-30 years ago there was talk about sex education. People did not want sex education. He has been a Zionist his whole life and he understands the fear. There is some insensitivity to Jews in the curriculum – I've never heard anyone say let's do something for the Jews in a classroom. There is no sensitivity. He has tried to get a copy of the text book but the school would not give it to him so he had to buy it. Why are they hiding the curriculum. He did not find too much anti-Israel or anti-Semitic content in the book, but he believes there should be transparency and the school committee should not deny it.

Adam Chapnik, 30 Chask Avenue is a Newton North high school senior. He is taking a course in which this issue was brought to his attention. This is the only course that he is aware of that touches on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The teacher of the course is Jewish. He has learned how to analyze information and the framing is necessary to teach this issue. That cannot be accomplished by oversight, but by teachers. CAMERA has a pro-Israel agenda and they believe there is this objective way to look at the conflict. Ultimately, there is no objectivity in this issue because historically events are up for debate. When there are sides, the argument have to be framed. Petitioning for all materials one-by-one is a waste of time and money and it is itself undemocratic support for a pro-Israel view of the conflict. I voted for the City Council and School Committee and in that way I have control over the schools and the curriculum. I trust that they wouldn't force a teaching of the conflict that CAMERA supports. If they get oversight now, they will continue pushing for more.

Andrei Zovochenko 1942 Washington Street, said the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will not be solved today. People feel very strong about this, but that is not about the curriculum. This is about a group of people who care and can figure out what is going on. An open discussion is necessary and transparent curriculum. Then we can see what is really there and we can find common language. Otherwise it makes no sense and as a liberal I could ask why some schools are teaching that evolution is just a theory? He is an adjunct lecturer at Brandeis and Harvard Extension school and anyone who wants to see what I'm teaching my students, I can get them my proprietary information which I would do to defend what I teach. Most of us trust our teachers, but we should be able to have a discussion without harassing teachers.

Madeline Bowman, 23 Sterling Street said she stands in solidarity with her peers and her teachers. The Dalai Lama said that "Where ignorance is the master, there can never be a possibility of true peace." Education is the key to that. It is not up to us what we think is appropriate to teach – it is what needs to be taught – which is all sides. If parents or teachers limit a child's understanding of their environment, they will grow up to be bigoted. If they do not learn about history they will not learn how to live. She wants to be a history teacher and she wants people to learn to have

empathy for those they consider to be the enemy. It would mean so much to her and everyone in the world if empathy existed more. If you would like to know what is going on in your child's head – then ask them, look at their binders and books and talk to them. Respect the teachers.

Omar Millstein, 60 Rosalie Road said he is a senior at Newton South high school and he believes that transparency is important. His parents have the right to know what he is learning and is not an attack of the teachers or the curriculum. Instead is a chance to inform the Newton community on the education of their youth.

Resident of Somerville said that Louis Brandeis said that “Daylight is the best disinfectant.” He is an educator, now teaches at a Hebrew College and works as an educator with many high schools in Newton. As an educator he cannot imagine having an issue with transparency with anything he might be teaching. Parents care about their children's education and it is a reasonable request from parents.

Gregory Gittman, 20 Commonwealth Street said he came from the Soviet Union that children going to school belong to the school. The government decides what to do and tells the school what to do. If this country is free, that means children belong to parents and parents have rights to know what their children are taught. The school should not hide anything from parents. He does not understand why there should be any secrets about what children are taught in schools. He is not talking about Israel, Palestine or anything else, just that there should be no secrets from parents. Whether a teacher is the best or the worst, it should not be up to them. He asked some kids what Nazi's were. They said Nazi's were bad but they did not know they were socialists.

Michael Stellman, Westborough said he was born in the Soviet Union. Unlike many here, I knew who created the Palestinian narrative which is part of the curriculum now. It was the KGB and they were very good in propaganda. If tomorrow someone teaches something bad about you. You cannot just let teachers teach. That's how dictatorships come to power. People should know what their children are being taught.

Robert Meyer, Beverly Road said that his brother goes to Brookline High School. In a history class there was an incident of extreme bias against Israel. It is always the Israeli/Palestinian conflict that causes these issues. A parent approached the administration and they acknowledged the issue, took action and created a process of transparency between the school committee, high school administration and the parents in the community. They are working together on a balanced curriculum that is fair and balanced. The sensitivities are understood by everyone and there is no conflict anymore. He cannot understand how people are against transparency and there is proof of the lack of it. There were anti-Semitic events that were covered up in the middle school in Newton by the Supt and the School Committee. It finally was discovered by the Tab.

Rosalyn Barron, Puddingstone Lane said her son went through Newton South. Her parents were Holocaust survivors. Asking your children what is in their minds can sometimes be too late. Once the propaganda gets in their minds it is very difficult to reverse that. There is a lot of information

that Palestinian children are being taught that Jews are pigs and monkeys and ugly things and it is not their choice what they are being taught. It is not their choice to have a curriculum that teaches them to hate Jews and Israelis. This kind of thing can be changed with transparency.

Tal, 397 Linwood Road said he wanted to thank his Palestinian neighbors to discuss their view of this issue and he hopes to invite them to dinner for further discussions. He is happy to see kids who love their teachers – he is a volunteer teacher himself. Education is very important to him. He would like to help his Palestinian neighbors to make sure what is being taught in Newton about Jews and Palestinians are not lies. There are biases everywhere. There is truth and there isn't. If the PLO maps used in Newton schools are more honest to their truth on the PLO website than they are in the Newton schools, then there is a problem. This is about honesty in sourcing and about transparency. We wouldn't be here if this had been handled better over the past 6 years. Jews have been saying that Jerusalem is their capital through the ages. It is one of the least debatable facts in history and it took the US government 70 years to acknowledge that. How long will it take the City of Newton to acknowledge a problem in the way they are teaching history.

Councilor Rice closed the public hearing and reiterated that the City Council is unable to vote on this as they do not have authority over the public schools policies. Should this item be re-submitted as a resolution in the new term, the members of this Committee will have the benefit of this hearing and the comments made this evening. He thanked everyone for coming together to listen to each other.

Councilor Kalis moved No Action Necessary. The Committee voted in favor unanimously.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

John B. Rice, Chair

To: Newton City Council Programs & Services Committee
Councilors Rice, Leary, Auchincloss, Hess-Mahan, Sangiolo, Schwartz, Baker, Kalis
From: Matt Hills, Newton School Committee
Date: December 5, 2017

I am writing about an item on your December 6 agenda, namely the Citizen's Petition regarding the Newton Public Schools (#337-17). I have been involved with this issue for most of my years on the School Committee, and am writing within the scope of my official duties as a member of the Newton School Committee.

Background

A group began making allegations 5-6 years ago about the supposedly anti-Israel and anti-Semitic curriculum in Newton's schools. The allegations were described by supporters of the group in letters, op-eds, and Public Comments at School Committee meetings. The School Department, with School Committee members, investigated several rounds of allegations from this group over the course of approximately 1 ½ years.

Each investigation ended with the same determination: the allegations distorted the actual curriculum. The different allegations typically included words that had been inserted into or deleted from the actual curriculum, or had key context missing or fabricated in a way that changed the meaning. Some allegations referenced material not used by the NPS and events supposedly involving the School Department that never took place. My 2012 Tab op-ed provides additional background (<http://newton.wickedlocal.com/x1978602168/Matt-Hills-Defending-the-curriculum-in-our-schools>).

During this time we met with leaders of the four major Jewish organizations including the Anti-Defamation League, Jewish Community Relations Council, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, and American Jewish Committee. The ADL investigated the allegations and all four organizations wrote letters, publicly distributed and posted on their websites, critical of the attacks against the NPS and supportive of how the NPS handled and addressed the issues.

Continuing Allegations

Allegations continued to be made periodically over the next few years, often recycling the original allegations. The pattern repeated itself: the allegations were investigated and it was determined that the allegations distorted or fabricated the curriculum, context was distorted or missing, or materials identified were not in fact used by the NPS. We continued to speak with the ADL and the other major Jewish organizations as allegations were repeated.

The School Department received Public Records requests from outside organizations related to the curriculum, including one that involved producing many thousands of pages. Recently another group, using information received from a Public Records request, wrote about the Newton "controversy". We were in contact with the ADL, and in September 2017 a meeting took place that included Robert Trestan (New England ADL Director), an ADL Board member, an ADL analyst, David Fleishman, the History Department Chairs at Newton North and Newton South, and me. At the meeting we reviewed the "new" allegations (which again included material not used by the NPS), and discussed the same issues as with past similar allegations

including inserted and deleted words, and missing or distorted context. The ADL contacted us after the meeting and determined that no further conversations or actions were necessary.

Access to Curriculum

The School Department periodically receives questions or complaints about curriculum from students and parents, typically involving K-12 classes including math, English, science, social studies and history. There is an established process for students and parents to raise concerns with the teacher, department head, principal, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. It is the responsibility of the School Department to address every curriculum concern from students and parents, and each and every one is addressed (there are times when material is removed).

Any parent that wants to receive their child's class material, including all curriculum, can do so. In addition, outside groups can see curriculum subject to a Public Records request. Everything is transparent, and nothing is hidden. It was highly unusual in Newton until recently for outside groups to request curriculum, let alone thousands of pages of material. The outside groups received it from the NPS after submitting their Public Records request.

For several years some of the outside groups have repeatedly called for NPS to put all of its curriculum for all classes on-line so the public can view it, claiming that Brookline and other districts do so. We have not found this claim to be true. Copyright law would be violated, making such a post illegal. In addition to serious legal violations, it is unlikely that teachers would be required to regularly spend hours scanning hundreds or thousands of pages to post on-line when students already have the material. Newton has course descriptions and certain material available on-line, often to a greater extent than other districts.

Final Thoughts

Lisa and I have four children, all of whom have been educated K-12 in the NPS. We are deeply committed and active members of the Greater Boston Jewish community, and have held leadership roles with different Jewish organizations. Needless to say, our family would be very sensitive and alert to even subtle examples of the alleged curriculum biases raised by the groups.

Lisa and I know that we are very fortunate to have raised our family in Newton and for our children to have received such an outstanding NPS education from so many terrific and dedicated teachers. Newton's teachers have helped to shape our four children, and we are profoundly grateful for what our teachers have meant to our community and our family.

A few things can cause deep and lasting damage to a school system, and politicizing curriculum leads to the worst possible outcomes. There are communities in our country where groups influence curriculum to reflect their specific political agendas, and Newton must never become one of those compromised communities. It's critical for the future success of our school system that our teachers feel confident that they can continue to provide our students with a world-class education without ever being infected by political agendas.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further.



Speech by Charles Jacobs to City Councilors Dec 6, 2017

We are here because we care about the education of our children. For the past several years there have been documented incidences of biased and bigoted teaching materials being used in Newton High Schools.

We are here to ask you to listen to a matter that deeply disturbs us: This is a time of rising global anti-Semitism; a time of significant Jew-hatred in our colleges, and a time of increasing anti-Israel education in American High Schools. Newton is not immune to these trends. The city has experienced not just hateful teachings but also anti-Semitic incidents.

You have before you a draft resolution that we will be submitting in early January. You will have time after you hear us tonight – and read through our materials -- to consider the matter. We would like to meet with you, individually, at your convenience.

We want and need you to support what we think is a common sense and reasonable principle of public governance: that parents and tax payers should have the right to see what is being taught to children in our city's public schools.

Our newly elected mayor Ruthanne Fuller has agreed with this common sense approach to transparency in our schools.

We understand that you cannot mandate that the schools do this. But, we think it's important for you to go on the record – as soon as you can -- in support of the parents and taxpayers.

The reason for our concern is laid out in the Report and the video we have provided you. The film is a lesson-by-lesson analysis of stunningly blatant falsehoods about Israel and the Middle East conflict that were taught in Newton schools.

The book-length report by CAMERA is a sober, scholarly analysis of much more than we were able to do in the film. Much of it is based on data obtained by Judicial Watch which filed Freedom of Information Requests from the school department. The film and the book are circulating around the country. The issue has been covered in local and national news reports.

The central problem is that curriculum mills -- with political and ideological agendas hostile to Israel and the Jewish people -- are influencing what is taught in American classrooms. In Newton, many in the Jewish community are connecting the defamatory lessons in the school room with the rise of anti-Semitic incidents in and around the schools, which have been widely reported in the local media.

Indeed, after the publication of CAMERA's Report, the Anti-Defamation League of New England, has advised Newton school officials of its concerns about the curricula. And Hadassah, perhaps the largest Jewish organization in the country, has formed an entire unit, called Curriculum Watch, to address this problem. They were motivated to do this in great part by the data from Newton.

What upsets us most perhaps, is that when we brought examples of bias and bigotry to the attention of the school authorities, instead of dealing honestly with it, they engaged in what we think any fair person would characterize as a "cover up." They denied there was any problem and ever since have tried to sweep it under the rug.

Here is a brief account.

In 2011, Tony Pagliouso, a Newton father told us that his daughter asked him if it was true that Jews kill Arab women in Israeli jails.

Of course, Jews do NOT murder Arab women in Israeli jails. What Tony's daughter and her classmates -- and who knows how many more Newton students were taught -- is known as a blood libel. We found out that it came from the Arab World Studies Notebook, a Saudi-funded propaganda text that has been roundly condemned as such by the AJC and many others.

School Superintendent David Fleishman told us teaching that Jews kill Arab women was an exercise in "critical thinking." That is simply untrue: It WOULD be a critical thinking exercise if it were presented as Saudi propaganda, with information about how the Saudis were trying to defame Jews, and with a lesson on how to tell truth from propaganda. THAT would have been an exercise in critical thinking.

But that is NOT how it was used. Let us all here, councilors, now ask ourselves: would Newton teachers ever present as a critical thinking exercise the claim -- as though it just might be true --that blacks are lazy or that women are too emotional

to be given the vote, or that every Muslim beats his wife? Everyone in this room knows the answer. So then why the Jews?

And then, after months of protest by us, David Fleishman finally said he would remove the hateful text. Again, this could have been an important educational opportunity. He could have said: "We're sorry. Anti-Semitic lies slipped by us. We will now go back and find the children who were exposed and who were perhaps made more prone to dislike or hate their Jewish classmates, and we will tell them that Jews do not kill women in jails. And yes, my friends in the Jewish community, I will alert other school districts around the country that there are efforts to harm Jews through biased curricula.

If this had been his response, we would not be here tonight. We would have understood people of good will can make such an error. We would have trusted the system.

But instead, David Fleishman lied to us. He said he removed the Saudi funded Arab World Studies Notebook, not because it was hateful propaganda, but because it was outdated.

We were aghast: We asked him did that mean that he has recently learned that the Jews *Stopped* their practice of murdering women in Israeli jails? What was outdated? And to this day, the students don't know the truth.

This was just one incident. I elaborated it here because I wanted you to understand the dynamic we think are up against and why we have to fight to see what is being taught.

A few more examples:

In an effort to sway students against Israel, Primary source documents that were given to Newton students to study were falsified. The Hamas Charter is based on the notion that Jews, because they are Jews, cannot have a state on land that was once conquered by Islam. To Hamas, it is a religious issue, not one about border lines. The real Hamas Charter calls for the murder of every Jew on the planet. But Newton's Hamas Charter -- given to Newton students to study -- was doctored by anti-Israel educators to make it look like the conflict does not have a religious basis, but is only a conflict over borders. And the students didn't know.

Please turn to Page 39 to see the authentic Hamas Charter alongside Newton's doctored version where, among other things, the mandate to kill every Jew was erased. They whitewashed a document that calls for Jewish genocide. And the students never found out.

And now on P 96, see the teacher's note— which makes it clear that the object of the lesson is to have children think there is NO significant religious aspect to the conflict. That it is a land dispute, and therefore could be resolved with Israeli concessions.

Another altered document. On Page 80 you can see a set of maps produced by the PLO. This was given to the students. They Maps lie. In many ways. But the maps given to the students had the PLO imprimatur removed! So they would not know they were PLO maps and could think they were real. When queried, David Fleishman said, “no matter, there were maps with Israel's side of the story also being taught.” Ladies and Gentlemen, there were no such maps. Another lie. And the students don't know.

I could go on and on. In one class, students debated whether there should be a Jewish state.

No other people's right to national sovereignty has ever been questioned in the Newton schools. Not -- Should the Germans have a state? Not Should the Sudanese have a state?

At the same time Israel is denigrated, negative aspects of Arab culture are covered up, explained away or are simply absent.

There are many examples. Here are just two:

On P 45: a handout says: “all Muslims scholars agree on the fact that the first, greatest jihad is the personal-spirited struggle towards discipline.” Really!?

And then there's this: “many of the conquered regions welcomed the Arabs as liberators.” This is simply pro-Arab propaganda. Ask the Sudanese, the Mauritians, the Copts of Egypt?

I was in Sudan myself, where I witnessed the redemption of black slaves taken in jihad raids by Arabs from the north. Although, Massachusetts curriculum guidelines require that the Arab slave trade be taught, it is not.

So how did this happen in Newton?

There are several causes, but here's a stunner: On April 10, 2010, 80 Newton school teachers attended a workshop at Harvard on teaching the middle east.

Title 6 of the Higher Education Act mandates that graduate departments that receive federal funds share their research with the public in the form of outreach to public school teachers... This works out well for physics and chemistry and statistics, but it is a Trojan horse for the Saudis, who **have gifted over a billion dollars to American universities)**

Donations to American Universities:

Qatar	\$626 million
Saudi Arabia	\$439 million
United Arab Emirates	\$158 million

• Boston University	\$13 million
• Carnegie Mellon University	\$45 million
• George Mason University	\$48 million
• George Washington University	\$59 million
• Georgetown University	\$329 million
• Harvard University	\$38 million
• John Hopkins	\$38 million
• Massachusetts Institute of Technology	\$50 million
• New York University	\$83 million
• Northwestern University	\$205 million
• Purdue University	\$19 million
• Stanford University	\$28 million
• Tufts University	\$50 million
• University of California	\$26 million
• University of Kansas	\$31 million
• University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	\$13 million
• University of Southern California	\$16 million
• University of Washington, Seattle	\$10 million

It turned out that the person who ran the teacher outreach department for the Harvard Center for the Middle East studies and who taught Newton teachers was

Paul Beran – who turns out to be a leader of the anti-Israel BDS movement in Somerville. He gave them a load of propaganda. High school teachers are not Middle East experts. This was from Harvard, after all. He was subsequently let go.

But what a delicious opportunity this offered the enemies of the Jewish state. I want you to see just how the Newton school system and its teachers and its school board were bamboozled. At our expense.

Counselors, We, need to institutionalize a method to safeguard our community from these dangers.

We have tried to see what is being taught for almost 6 years. When we asked -- we were rebuffed.

Indeed, on P 19 you can see an email from Matt Hills, the school board chairman at the time, where he instructs teachers and board members NOT to collect and disseminate curriculum information, as a way, we imagined, to make the FOIA requests, very expensive.

On P 83 you can see that one parent, in order to see what the school teaches the city's children, was charged over 3,500 to compile the data.

Finally, we had to ask Judicial Watch to help us... they do the best FOIA's .

And we still don't know what is being taught. The latest data we have is from 2015.

So we, the citizens and parents of Newton cannot trust the School Committee. The Teachers are not M.E. experts. They are pulling down lesson plans from the internet..... Fake Lessons, we could say. Who is vetting this material?

So we turn to you and the Mayor to show us you understand -- and that you also don't want propaganda taught in the schools, and you don't want things that may increase antisemitism.

So we want to make sure this happens and one way is to get the elected leaders of our city on record.

We have been at this for almost 6 years. We are not going away. We think you should be on our side in this matter, on the side of truth and against hate.

We want to thank you for taking the time to hear us.

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The School Department periodically receives questions or complaints about curriculum from students and parents, typically involving K-12 classes including math, English, science, social studies and history. There is an established process for students and parents to raise concerns with the teacher, department head, principal, Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent. It is the responsibility of the School Department to address every curriculum concern from students and parents, and each and every one is addressed (there are times when material is removed).

Any parent that wants to receive their child's class material, including all curriculum, can do so. In addition, outside groups can see curriculum subject to a Public Records request. Everything is transparent, and nothing is hidden. It was highly unusual in Newton until recently for outside groups to request curriculum, let alone thousands of pages of material. The outside groups received it from the NPS after submitting their Public Records request.

For several years some of the outside groups have repeatedly called for NPS to put all of its curriculum for all classes on-line so the public can view it, claiming that Brookline and other districts do so. We have not found this claim to be true. Copyright law would be violated, making such a post illegal. In addition to serious legal violations, it is unlikely that teachers would be required to regularly spend hours scanning hundreds or thousands of pages to post on-line when students already have the material. Newton has course descriptions and certain material available on-line, often to a greater extent than other districts.

Final Thoughts

Lisa and I have four children, all of whom have been educated K-12 in the NPS. We are deeply committed and active members of the Greater Boston Jewish community, and have held leadership roles with different Jewish organizations. Needless to say, our family would be very sensitive and alert to even subtle examples of the alleged curriculum biases raised by the groups.

Lisa and I know that we are very fortunate to have raised our family in Newton and for our children to have received such an outstanding NPS education from so many terrific and dedicated teachers. Newton's teachers have helped to shape our four children, and we are profoundly grateful for what our teachers have meant to our community and our family.

A few things can cause deep and lasting damage to a school system, and politicizing curriculum leads to the worst possible outcomes. There are communities in our country where groups influence curriculum to reflect their specific political agendas, and Newton must never become one of those compromised communities. It's critical for the future success of our school system that our teachers feel confident that they can continue to provide our students with a world-class education without ever being infected by political agendas.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss this further.



Speech by Charles Jacobs to City Councilors Dec 6, 2017

We are here because we care about the education of our children. For the past several years there have been documented incidences of biased and bigoted teaching materials being used in Newton High Schools.

We are here to ask you to listen to a matter that deeply disturbs us: This is a time of rising global anti-Semitism; a time of significant Jew-hatred in our colleges, and a time of increasing anti-Israel education in American High Schools. Newton is not immune to these trends. The city has experienced not just hateful teachings but also anti-Semitic incidents.

You have before you a draft resolution that we will be submitting in early January. You will have time after you hear us tonight – and read through our materials -- to consider the matter. We would like to meet with you, individually, at your convenience.

We want and need you to support what we think is a common sense and reasonable principle of public governance: that parents and tax payers should have the right to see what is being taught to children in our city's public schools.

Our newly elected mayor Ruthanne Fuller has agreed with this common sense approach to transparency in our schools.

We understand that you cannot mandate that the schools do this. But, we think it's important for you to go on the record – as soon as you can -- in support of the parents and taxpayers.

The reason for our concern is laid out in the Report and the video we have provided you. The film is a lesson-by-lesson analysis of stunningly blatant falsehoods about Israel and the Middle East conflict that were taught in Newton schools.

The book-length report by CAMERA is a sober, scholarly analysis of much more than we were able to do in the film. Much of it is based on data obtained by Judicial Watch which filed Freedom of Information Requests from the school department. The film and the book are circulating around the country. The issue has been covered in local and national news reports.

The central problem is that curriculum mills -- with political and ideological agendas hostile to Israel and the Jewish people -- are influencing what is taught in American classrooms. In Newton, many in the Jewish community are connecting the defamatory lessons in the school room with the rise of anti-Semitic incidents in and around the schools, which have been widely reported in the local media.

Indeed, after the publication of CAMERA's Report, the Anti-Defamation League of New England, has advised Newton school officials of its concerns about the curricula. And Hadassah, perhaps the largest Jewish organization in the country, has formed an entire unit, called Curriculum Watch, to address this problem. They were motivated to do this in great part by the data from Newton.

What upsets us most perhaps, is that when we brought examples of bias and bigotry to the attention of the school authorities, instead of dealing honestly with it, they engaged in what we think any fair person would characterize as a "cover up." They denied there was any problem and ever since have tried to sweep it under the rug.

Here is a brief account.

In 2011, Tony Pagliouso, a Newton father told us that his daughter asked him if it was true that Jews kill Arab women in Israeli jails.

Of course, Jews do NOT murder Arab women in Israeli jails. What Tony's daughter and her classmates -- and who knows how many more Newton students were taught -- is known as a blood libel. We found out that it came from the Arab World Studies Notebook, a Saudi-funded propaganda text that has been roundly condemned as such by the AJC and many others.

School Superintendent David Fleishman told us teaching that Jews kill Arab women was an exercise in "critical thinking." That is simply untrue: It WOULD be a critical thinking exercise if it were presented as Saudi propaganda, with information about how the Saudis were trying to defame Jews, and with a lesson on how to tell truth from propaganda. THAT would have been an exercise in critical thinking.

But that is NOT how it was used. Let us all here, councilors, now ask ourselves: would Newton teachers ever present as a critical thinking exercise the claim -- as though it just might be true --that blacks are lazy or that women are too emotional

to be given the vote, or that every Muslim beats his wife? Everyone in this room knows the answer. So then why the Jews?

And then, after months of protest by us, David Fleishman finally said he would remove the hateful text. Again, this could have been an important educational opportunity. He could have said: "We're sorry. Anti-Semitic lies slipped by us. We will now go back and find the children who were exposed and who were perhaps made more prone to dislike or hate their Jewish classmates, and we will tell them that Jews do not kill women in jails. And yes, my friends in the Jewish community, I will alert other school districts around the country that there are efforts to harm Jews through biased curricula.

If this had been his response, we would not be here tonight. We would have understood people of good will can make such an error. We would have trusted the system.

But instead, David Fleishman lied to us. He said he removed the Saudi funded Arab World Studies Notebook, not because it was hateful propaganda, but because it was outdated.

We were aghast: We asked him did that mean that he has recently learned that the Jews *Stopped* their practice of murdering women in Israeli jails? What was outdated? And to this day, the students don't know the truth.

This was just one incident. I elaborated it here because I wanted you to understand the dynamic we think are up against and why we have to fight to see what is being taught.

A few more examples:

In an effort to sway students against Israel, Primary source documents that were given to Newton students to study were falsified. The Hamas Charter is based on the notion that Jews, because they are Jews, cannot have a state on land that was once conquered by Islam. To Hamas, it is a religious issue, not one about border lines. The real Hamas Charter calls for the murder of every Jew on the planet. But Newton's Hamas Charter -- given to Newton students to study -- was doctored by anti-Israel educators to make it look like the conflict does not have a religious basis, but is only a conflict over borders. And the students didn't know.

Please turn to Page 39 to see the authentic Hamas Charter alongside Newton's doctored version where, among other things, the mandate to kill every Jew was erased. They whitewashed a document that calls for Jewish genocide. And the students never found out.

And now on P 96, see the teacher's note— which makes it clear that the object of the lesson is to have children think there is NO significant religious aspect to the conflict. That it is a land dispute, and therefore could be resolved with Israeli concessions.

Another altered document. On Page 80 you can see a set of maps produced by the PLO. This was given to the students. They Maps lie. In many ways. But the maps given to the students had the PLO imprimatur removed! So they would not know they were PLO maps and could think they were real. When queried, David Fleishman said, “no matter, there were maps with Israel's side of the story also being taught.” Ladies and Gentlemen, there were no such maps. Another lie. And the students don't know.

I could go on and on. In one class, students debated whether there should be a Jewish state.

No other people's right to national sovereignty has ever been questioned in the Newton schools. Not -- Should the Germans have a state? Not Should the Sudanese have a state?

At the same time Israel is denigrated, negative aspects of Arab culture are covered up, explained away or are simply absent.

There are many examples. Here are just two:

On P 45: a handout says: “all Muslims scholars agree on the fact that the first, greatest jihad is the personal-spirited struggle towards discipline.” Really!?

And then there's this: “many of the conquered regions welcomed the Arabs as liberators.” This is simply pro-Arab propaganda. Ask the Sudanese, the Mauritians, the Copts of Egypt?

I was in Sudan myself, where I witnessed the redemption of black slaves taken in jihad raids by Arabs from the north. Although, Massachusetts curriculum guidelines require that the Arab slave trade be taught, it is not.

So how did this happen in Newton?

There are several causes, but here's a stunner: On April 10, 2010, 80 Newton school teachers attended a workshop at Harvard on teaching the middle east.

Title 6 of the Higher Education Act mandates that graduate departments that receive federal funds share their research with the public in the form of outreach to public school teachers... This works out well for physics and chemistry and statistics, but it is a Trojan horse for the Saudis, who **have gifted over a billion dollars to American universities)**

Donations to American Universities:

Qatar	\$626 million
Saudi Arabia	\$439 million
United Arab Emirates	\$158 million

• Boston University	\$13 million
• Carnegie Mellon University	\$45 million
• George Mason University	\$48 million
• George Washington University	\$59 million
• Georgetown University	\$329 million
• Harvard University	\$38 million
• John Hopkins	\$38 million
• Massachusetts Institute of Technology	\$50 million
• New York University	\$83 million
• Northwestern University	\$205 million
• Purdue University	\$19 million
• Stanford University	\$28 million
• Tufts University	\$50 million
• University of California	\$26 million
• University of Kansas	\$31 million
• University of Michigan, Ann Arbor	\$13 million
• University of Southern California	\$16 million
• University of Washington, Seattle	\$10 million

It turned out that the person who ran the teacher outreach department for the Harvard Center for the Middle East studies and who taught Newton teachers was

Paul Beran – who turns out to be a leader of the anti-Israel BDS movement in Somerville. He gave them a load of propaganda. High school teachers are not Middle East experts. This was from Harvard, after all. He was subsequently let go.

But what a delicious opportunity this offered the enemies of the Jewish state. I want you to see just how the Newton school system and its teachers and its school board were bamboozled. At our expense.

Counselors, We, need to institutionalize a method to safeguard our community from these dangers.

We have tried to see what is being taught for almost 6 years. When we asked -- we were rebuffed.

Indeed, on P 19 you can see an email from Matt Hills, the school board chairman at the time, where he instructs teachers and board members NOT to collect and disseminate curriculum information, as a way, we imagined, to make the FOIA requests, very expensive.

On P 83 you can see that one parent, in order to see what the school teaches the city's children, was charged over 3,500 to compile the data.

Finally, we had to ask Judicial Watch to help us... they do the best FOIA's .

And we still don't know what is being taught. The latest data we have is from 2015.

So we, the citizens and parents of Newton cannot trust the School Committee. The Teachers are not M.E. experts. They are pulling down lesson plans from the internet..... Fake Lessons, we could say. Who is vetting this material?

So we turn to you and the Mayor to show us you understand -- and that you also don't want propaganda taught in the schools, and you don't want things that may increase antisemitism.

So we want to make sure this happens and one way is to get the elected leaders of our city on record.

We have been at this for almost 6 years. We are not going away. We think you should be on our side in this matter, on the side of truth and against hate.

We want to thank you for taking the time to hear us.