

ORIGINAL LETTER SENT VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED  
COPY OF LETTER SENT VIA FIRST CLASS U.S. MAIL, POSTAGE PREPAID

April 3, 2017

Ms. Corey Spaulding  
230 Prospect Street  
Framingham, MA 01701

Dear Ms. Spaulding,

I am writing in response to your numerous emails in which you begin, on February 20, 2017, by wondering “why non-profits (Parent Teacher Organizations) are donating (\$160,000 to \$200,00) to the school committee and the finance committee is not aware?” to asserting on March 14, 2017 (email to Joshua Varon, et. al.) that “the Natick School Committee was embezzling funds, falsely claiming they were donations from the PTOs” and that that the current and prior Chair of the Finance Committee – and by extension the entire Finance Committee - “had no idea of the donations of \$290,000” to finally, on March 19, 2017, that I and others “are aware of the embezzlement by the school committee” (email to Patrick Hayes et. al.).

The Finance Committee considers “all matters of business included within the articles of any warrant for a Town Meeting, and shall, after due consideration, report thereon, in print, its recommendation as to each article.” (Town of Natick Bylaws, Article 23, section 4)

Accordingly, as Chair of the Finance Committee’s Education & Learning Subcommittee for most of the last decade, my subcommittee and I have primary responsibility for reviewing the Natick Public School (NPS) budget request as well as any other funds requested from Town Meeting for the support of the schools. This annual review involves numerous meetings over several months to understand both the sources (including funds from the State/Federal/Local government, grants, and revolving accounts) and the uses of funds necessary to educate the children of Natick.

Based on over 10 years of experience examining the NPS budget I can confidently state:

- 1) I was fully aware of these “donations” however, because they do not represent monies used (or even available) to fund the NPS budget and are therefore not within any Town Meeting article, other members of the Finance Committee may or may not have been aware of this process because any Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) expenditures were not germane to any recommendation by the Finance Committee to Town Meeting.
- 2) The School Committee formally votes to accept any and all donations made to the NPS and to acknowledge all education-related funds expended by PTOs for the benefit of Natick’s students.
- 3) All donations appear as a School Committee agenda item and are approved in a public meeting. Likewise, all planned expenditures by PTOs (labeled, perhaps

imperfectly, as “PTO Donations”) appear as an agenda item and are considered in a public meeting of the School Committee. Any vote of the School Committee is recorded in the minutes of the specific meeting.

- 4) To be very clear - this acknowledgement by the School Committee does not involve any transfer of monies from the PTO to NPS. In other words, no money is donated, transferred, or otherwise provided by any PTO to NPS.
- 5) As stated in the minutes of the November 30, 2015 School Committee meeting, for example, the vote to accept “donations” from PTOs actually just acknowledges and approves, at a system-wide level, how the PTOs expect to use their monies to benefit students.
- 6) The PTOs planned budgets of expected spending are determined by the PTOs, not by the School Committee or the NPS Administration.
- 7) As a result, the PTOs retain all control over these funds and spend them for the benefit of students for things of the PTOs’ choosing such as Cultural Arts programs, Field Trips, and Scholarships. More specifically, in most if not all cases the PTO Board for each building votes to support a specific event or program. Following that the PTO treasurer will issue a check from the PTO bank account payable to the 3<sup>rd</sup> party providing the services. PTO treasurers provide the appropriate accounting back to their respective PTO membership.
- 8) There are eight (8) PTOs in Natick – one for each school building – to support events and programs for the students of the school building.
- 9) That the PTO monies remain with the individual PTOs (and are not transferred to NPS) had been previously confirmed to you by the Principal of Wilson Middle School as evidenced in your original email to Patrick Hayes (February 21, 2017).
- 10) A search of the Massachusetts Attorney General’s Public Charities Annual Filings website indicates that 7 of 8 PTOs (Lilja) have filed Form-PC annually as required since at least 2011. However, any exceptions are an issue for the Attorney General’s Public Charities Division and the individual PTO. It is neither within the purview of the Finance Committee or the responsibility of the School Committee to ensure compliance.

In addition, despite your repeated claims to numerous people over several weeks, there is not only no investigation/audit currently underway by the Natick Finance Committee, no such investigation is anticipated at this time because none is needed. Furthermore, Mr. Hayes never stated that the Finance Committee was investigating/auditing either the Natick School Department or the Natick School Committee nor did he state that he believed there was any wrongdoing – and certainly no embezzlement – in this case.

Because no monies are/were actually transferred to the Natick School Committee, the NPS Superintendent or any other member of the NPS District Administration, there is absolutely no possibility that these funds either have been or could have been embezzled by any of those parties. Furthermore, since the funds never left the control of the PTOs neither could the monies have been applied for any purpose other than one authorized and voted by the PTO. Therefore, any assertion of “retaliation” against you or your family members by the Natick Public Schools is clearly baseless as it is impossible to retaliate against you for questioning the propriety of something that never occurred in the first place.

I trust that my explanation will answer any concerns you have had on this issue and that you will no longer represent to anyone in Natick or elsewhere that there was/is any actual or potential misappropriation, embezzlement, fraud or any other like activity.

Sincerely,

***Cathleen Collins***

Cathleen Collins  
Natick Finance Committee, Vice-Chair  
Education & Learning Subcommittee, Chair  
13 East Central Street  
Natick, MA 01760

cc:

**DELIVERED VIA HAND & EMAIL:**

Patrick Hayes, Chair, Natick Finance Committee  
Natick Finance Committee, individual members  
Lisa Tabenkin, Chair, Natick School Committee  
Natick School Committee and individual members  
Dr. Peter Sanchioni, Superintendent, Natick Public Schools  
Dr. Anna Nolin, Assistant Superintendent, Natick Public Schools  
Timothy Luff, Assistant Superintendent, Natick Public Schools  
Peter Gray, Director of Finance, Natick Public Schools  
Teresa Carney, Principal, Wilson Middle School, Natick  
Elizabeth Heffler, School Resource Officer, Natick Police  
Martha White, Town Administrator, Town of Natick  
Diane Packer, Town Clerk, Town of Natick  
James Hicks, Chief of Police, Town of Natick  
Jonathan Freedman, Chair, Natick Board of Selectmen & Natick Audit Advisory Committee  
Natick Audit Advisory Committee, individual members  
Paul Griesmer, Former Chair, Natick Finance Committee  
Amy Mistrot, Former Chair, Natick School Committee

**DELIVERED VIA FIRST CLASS U.S. MAIL & EMAIL:**

Hon. Charles Baker, Governor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Hon. Maura Healy, Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Philip Schreiber, Esq., Assistant Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Jonathan Miller, Chief, Civil Rights Division, Office of the Attorney General,  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Bryan Bertram, Esq., Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Daniel Ferullo, Investigator, Office of the Attorney General, Commonwealth of  
Massachusetts  
Hon. Suzanne Bump, Auditor, Commonwealth of Massachusetts

William T. Keefe, Director, Audit Planning and Review, Office of the State Auditor  
James Peyser, Secretary of Education, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Joshua Varon, Esq., General Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education  
Alexis Glickman, Office of Public School Monitoring, Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education  
Reece Erlichman, Director, Bureau of Special Education Appeals  
Maria Mossaides, Child Advocate, Office of Child Advocates  
Hon. David P. Linsky, Representative, 5<sup>th</sup> Middlesex, Massachusetts General Court  
Hon. Marian Ryan, District Attorney, Office of the Middlesex District Attorney  
Katherine Folger, Chief, Child Protection Unit, Office of the Middlesex District Attorney  
Will Freeman, Acting Chief, Special Investigations Unit, Office of the Middlesex District Attorney  
Margie Daniels, Executive Director, Middlesex Partnerships for Youth, Office of the Middlesex District Attorney  
Hon. Linda Spears, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Children & Families  
Andrew Rome, Esq., General Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Children & Families  
Thomas Malone, Esq., Regional General Counsel, Massachusetts Department of Children & Families  
Robert McArdle, Executive Director, The Gifford School  
Ann Fry, The Gifford School  
Robert J. Halpin, Town Manager, Town of Framingham  
Kenneth Ferguson, Chief of Police, Town of Framingham  
Edward Gotgart, Interim Superintendent, Framingham Public Schools  
Dr. Frank Tiano, Assistant Superintendent, Framingham Public Schools  
Bernadette Noel, Framingham Public Schools  
Laura Spear, Director, Special Education Department, Framingham Public Schools  
Philip B. Benjamin, Esq., Framingham Schools Counsel, Bikofsky, White & Benjamin  
Framingham School Committee  
Richard J. Weader II, Framingham School Committee  
Heather A. Connolly Chair, Framingham School Committee  
Donald C. Taggart, III, Framingham School Committee  
Jim Stockless, Framingham School Committee  
Bev Hugo, Framingham School Committee  
Richard A. Finlay, Framingham School Committee  
Michelle Brosnahan, Framingham School Committee  
Jim Kelly, Framingham School Committee  
James Pillsbury, Framingham Town Meeting Standing Committee for Education  
John P. Flynn, Esq. Town Counsel, Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehan, LLP  
Sara Cheek, LICSW, Boston Children's Hospital  
John Spaulding

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL ONLY:

Patricia Rastellini  
Elizabeth Conroy  
Joyce Nardine