

Summary of the Northport Board of Education Meeting of
January 9, 2020.
By John Kobel

I first want to thank the retired teachers who came out to this meeting to show their support for me and to the parents and children who are suffering in that sick building as well as the current teachers and staff. They are Sharon Wolpert, Donna Gorelick, Donna McGinn and some others whose names I could not remember. There were current teachers in attendance as well. There was standing room only going down both sides of the room as well as the entire back wall. There was 100 or more in attendance. The meeting started just before 8:00 pm and ended at 1:00 am in the morning.

The meeting started with an introduction of three members of the new environmental testing company, PWGC Environmental Analysis Company or PW Groser Company. This company was recommended to the Board of Ed by the new committee that was formed last month. It consists of three Board members, teachers union president and another teacher, five or six parents and two environmental specialists. They recommended this company and the Board agreed to hire them. It was stated numerous times throughout the meeting, by both the Board of Ed and the Company, that there were no restrictions placed on the company about what kind of testing they could do or where in and around the building they could do testing. The company representatives gave a lengthy presentation on what types of testing they would be doing both inside and outside the building. After the presentation they explained that they had already completed some preliminary tests of the air in the classrooms and elsewhere in the building and soil testing outside of rooms G-51, 52 and 53. The air samples from inside show no mercury vapor at the present time. However, the soil samples showed something very different. The normal acceptable level of mercury in soil is 3.1 ppm (parts per million). The soil samples from five feet down in the cesspool/leaching field outside of room G-51 and 52 showed a reading of 631 ppm. That is 600 times higher than the acceptable level. They explained that they already contacted the Suffolk County Dept. of Health and will be meeting with them to discuss what remediation will be done to remove it. The company will be doing further soil samples all around the building and the playing fields and they will be doing ground water testing by drilling down 100 feet to get to the ground water.

When they finished their presentation the meeting was opened to questions from the public. I was the second person to speak. I explained the history of the building contamination to them and told them that I was the teacher in G-51 in the year 2000 when I was carried out of my room and taken to Huntington Hospital by ambulance and later diagnosed with mold poisoning, heavy metal

poisoning, memory loss and occupational asthma. I explained that G-51 was shut down then for months. The Suffolk County Dept. of Health was called in at that time and they ordered testing of the pre-cursor pool on my room as well as the cesspool/leaching field. They found contamination from mercury, silver and other heavy metals in both and they ordered remediation. I explained that many tons of contaminated soil was removed as well as all of the materials from the leaching field. I told them that the Health Department came back and tested again and then gave the okay to bring in clean fill and top soil and to build a new cesspool/leaching field. That was twenty years ago so my question to them was 'where did all of this mercury come from if there were no more labs done with mercury in that building for the last twenty years? They had NO answer to this question and when I was finished people were yelling out about the mercury and how high it was.

At least fifty other people got up to speak with all of them calling for the building to be closed. Many of them saying that their child gets sick in the building all the time and to close the building. By the end of the meeting at 1:00 am, the Board member in charge of the committee was heard saying "If the testing shows more problems which can cause harm then the building may be closed". I want to let you know that our list of sick teachers and staff is now up to 48 with 34 having some form of cancer and 20 of those with cancer have passed away.

Once again I want to thank all who came out to this important meeting.
John Kobel