

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 24, 2020

School Department Conference Room, 220 Central Street, Hingham, MA 02043

1. **Call to Order** The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Michelle Ayer. She announced that the meeting is being recorded.

Members Present: Michelle Ayer, Nes Correnti, Carlos Da Silva, Libby Lewiecki, Kerry Ni, Liza O'Reilly and Ed Schreier.

Central Office Present: Paul Austin, James LaBillois, Suzanne Vinnes and John Ferris.

Visitors Present: June Gustafson, George Danis, Jackie Sansone, Stephanie Gertz, Paul Pawlowski, Mary Power

2. **Approval of Minutes**

2.1 On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on January 23, 2020 with one correction: replace "vocational" with "out of district" in the first paragraph of the section title "Review FY'21 Budget Proposals for Functions."

2.2 On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting with the Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee held on January 26, 2020.

2.3 On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on February 3, 2020.

3. **Questions and Comments** None

4. **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Austin reported that he has completed a draft of his mid-year goals summary. He explained what the "proficient" rating is for each indicator and read the steps he has taken to date on each. His goal is to reach the exemplary rating on each. He welcomes questions from the Committee, and asked that the members give feedback about what evidence demonstrating progress towards his annual goals that they would like to see. Dr. Austin has visited each school and has met with all of the principals. He has discussed the observation process and best practices for providing feedback with them.

5. **Communications**

5.1 Communications Received by the Superintendent: Dr. Austin noted that he has received some community input on the School Department's use of single-use plastics. He will continue the discussion with Kim Smyth and John Ferris to evaluate the issue, as well as with the PTOs. Liza O'Reilly suggested working with the Cleaner Greener Committee to encourage community support for reusable water bottles. Discussion ensued about the best way to encourage students to bring in reusable bottles. Dr. Austin will work with the Food Services department to gather data to track trends of the purchase of bottled water. This will allow the development of goals to reduce the use of plastics in schools.

5.2 Student Communications: None.

5.3 Other Communications: None.

6. Unfinished Business

- 6.1 John Ferris reviewed a slight revision to the proposed FY'21 Operating Budget that shows a reduction of \$123,828 by allocating funds from the revolving accounts to cover the costs of additional pre-K and Special Education staff at East. The Pre-K program is out of compliance with MA regulations because there are not enough typically developing students in the program and that must be remedied. Providing a full day Pre-K program should attract more neurotypical children to that program, and that requires an additional teacher. Liza O'Reilly asked about the use of revolving funds for one-time costs. Dr. Austin stated that the committee could potentially use revolving accounts to cover one time costs like STAR 360 Professional Development and the public relations contract. Liza O'Reilly asked if we should look at tuitions and fees. Michelle Ayer suggested establishing an ad hoc fees committee. Carlos Da Silva inquired about when we could hear from teacher retirements and leaves of absence. John Ferris replied that teachers on full year leaves have until March 1, 2020 to notify the district of their intentions for next year but cautioned that teachers can retire or resign at any time.
- 6.2 The Committee continued discussion of the proposed FY'21 Operating Budget. They discussed whether to vote on the budget now or wait until a later meeting. There will be a March 2, 2020 forecast meeting and an Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee meeting tomorrow night. Kerry Ni will attend that ACES meeting. The Committee decided to defer their vote until after the Forecast meeting and the votes of the Advisory Committee and Board of Selectmen, noting that it makes more sense to prioritize budget items when the actual budget amount is known. Chair Ayer acknowledged Mary Power, Board of Selectmen, who expressed her disappointment that the Committee is not making further reductions to the budget and voting on a lower number before the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee vote on a recommended budget. She stated that in her experience, the School Committee has always voted on a budget before the Board of Selectmen and Advisory Committee voted. Members of the Committee noted that this had not been the case in recent years and that they were unaware of this supposed tradition. Mary Power asked the School Committee to consider reducing the amount of the School Department budget request. Chair Ayer replied that the job of the committee is to advocate for all students and present a budget that meets their educational needs. Nes Correnti inquired if the town is being too conservative in its forecasting process, we may continue to have a surplus each year; 2019 surplus amounted to \$2.8 million which then reverted to fund balance. Mary Power stated that fund balance money should not be used for or ongoing expenses but should be saved for big ticket items. She stated that excess fund balance money could potentially be used to provide tax relief to citizens when Foster is renovated or rebuilt. Nes Correnti noted that the Town's fund balance is at close to 30% even though the Town's own financial policy proscribes carrying 16-20% fund balance. Dr. Austin stated that the school department did not build a budget based on per pupil spending but on real needs of students. Dr. LaBillois stated that the schools have a responsibility to educate all of our students, so if budget cuts are required, the administration will recommend cuts to non-academic areas because there are significant achievement gaps for students of color and economically disadvantaged youth which must be addressed. Carlos Da Silva encouraged the Board of Selectmen to find ways to raise more revenue. Michelle Ayer stated that Dr. Austin and his team did a very thoughtful job developing the budget and that the Committee and Administration made many difficult decisions in the process of keeping the budget as low as possible. Liza O'Reilly noted that if the process is frustrating, it might be a good idea for all of the Boards to work together to re-examine the process. There are many budget items required to meet the needs of our

students that have been deferred multiple years, and every year it gets more frustrating.

- 6.3 The Committee received a draft of the 2019 Annual Report. Carlos asked for a revision to his middle initials. Liza O'Reilly noted that Carlos Da Silva's re-election needs to be added. The Committee will look at it this week and get back to Dr. Austin with recommended revisions. It is due to the Town Manager on February 28, 2020.
- 6.4 The Committee heard an update on the TRACES program. Paul Pawlowski spoke and thanked the School Committee and administration for their support. The leased facility will undergo an electrical inspection today and hopefully, the students will start there tomorrow. Dr. Austin told the Committee that the Town Administrator asked that Warrant Article T (to fund renovations to Building 179) be withdrawn because a different location (the old light plant on Cushing Street) would be renovated to house the students next year. Ed Schreier asked how long the program could use the building and was told at least five years. HHS Rowing Association will also use the site. Libby Lewiecki asked about Building 179. John Ferris stated that it will be used as a warehouse for now and will stay on our five-year plan for possible future use.

On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Kerry Ni,

It was

Voted: To withdraw Warrant Article T for the renovation of Building 179 with the understanding that the Town Administrator will submit an article for renovation of the old light plant or any other structure to house TRACES.

- 6.5 The Committee discussed proposed new Policy 6.5.1 Administering Medicines to Children. Libby Lewiecki asked for clarification on the third sentence. Discussion ensued about students administering their own medications and what types of medications this would apply to.

On a motion by Kerry Ni and seconded by Ed Schreier,

It was

Voted: To adopt new policy 6.5.1 Administering Medicines to Children. The vote was 6 in favor and Libby Lewiecki abstained.

7. New Business

- 7.1 The Committee received a bid for a 2020 7D van. John Ferris described the bid process and mentioned that this was the only bid received and since it is a new vendor, all references were checked. He recommends awarding the van bid for \$44,966 and using the budgeted amount of \$40,173 plus revolving account funds if needed at the end of the fiscal year.

On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Ed Schreier,

It was

Voted: To authorize the Director of Business & Support Services to award the bid for a 2020 7D transportation van to Quality Van Sales, Inc. at a price of \$44,966.

- 7.2 The Committee received notification of the overnight field trip of the HHS Quiz Bowl team to Crystal City, VA and Washington, DC on April 24 to April 26, 2020.
- 7.3 The Committee received notification of the appointment of Michael Gorman, a district custodian.

8. 48 Hour Items: None.

9. Subcommittee reports:

- Nes Correnti reported that East School PTO met with Dr. Austin on February 12, 2020. They discussed the proposed FY'12 budget. She also attended the All Town PTO in February.
- Libby Lewiecki reported that the Community Outreach Subcommittee met and has completed a FAQ for Foster School. There was a coffee with the Superintendent at the Senior Center and another is scheduled for Linden Ponds. The senior center attendees discussed a possible collaboration with students to raise money for the schools. They will meet with Fusion Academy. The South School Council will meet on February 26th and the Hingham Education Foundation will meet on March 17th. The HEF Spring fundraiser will take place on April 3rd at Paragon in Hull.
- Liza O'Reilly reported that the Master Plan Committee will be discussing facilities in March and will receive the results of Visioning Sessions and surveys from the consultants.
- Ed Schreier attended the PRS School Council meeting and reported that their celebration of 50 years is going well with many activities planned.
- Kerry Ni reported that the Policy Subcommittee will meet with Jim Hardy of MASC tomorrow. She attended the HMS School Council and learned that Grade 5 teachers met at HMS to discuss the transition to middle school and move up day. Grade 5 Special Ed teachers will also meet at HMS. The HMS Art Club will paint windows at the library. SNAP Summer Program registration is now open. Pizza Palooza will be on March 25, 2020. Sunset Point Buddy Week will be held August 10 to 14, 2020.
- Carlos DaSilva will schedule a Long Range Planning meeting. The next meeting of the HHS School Council will be on March 4, 2020.
- Michelle Ayer stated that Arts Emerson selected Hingham through a METCO grant to host a show called "Mr. Joy." That will be at Hingham High School on March 12, 2020. It's a terrific show that addresses race. All are welcome. She will schedule a Special Education Subcommittee meeting after the budget votes.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Carlos Da Silva,

It was

Voted: To adjourn to Executive Session at 9:20PM, not to return to Open Session, for the purpose of:

- a. Approval of the minutes of the Executive Session of the School Committee held on December 16, 2019.
- b. Approval of minutes of the Executive Session of the School Committee held on January 6, 2020.
- c. Discussing matters related to the current HEA Unit A collective bargaining contract, the public discussion of which may be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position, and act as appropriate,
- d. Discussing matters related to the collective bargaining negotiations with the HEA Unit A for the 2020-2023 contract, the public discussion of which may be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position.

M. Ayer - did not vote as she left the meeting	K. Ni - aye
N. Correnti - aye	L. O'Reilly - aye
C. DaSilva - aye	E. Schreier - aye
L. Lewiecki - aye	

Respectfully Submitted
by:
Kerry Ni

Documents Included:

[2-24-20 Agenda.pdf](#) 

[Annotated Agenda February 24 2020.pdf](#) 

[Item 2.1 1-23-20 minutes.pdf](#) 

[Item 2.2 1-26-20 SC and ACES Minutes.pdf](#) 

[Item 2.3 2-3-20 Minutes.pdf](#) 

[Item 4 Austin Mid-Year Summary Report February 2020.pdf](#) 

[Item 6.1 FY '21 Update and Revolving.pdf](#) 

[Item 6.3 2019 DRAFT annual report.docx](#) 

[Item 6.5 Proposed Policy 6.5.1 ADMINISTERING MEDICINES TO STUDENTS.pdf](#)

[Item 7.1 Van Bid.pdf](#) 

[Item 7.2 Quiz Bowl Field Trip.pdf](#) 

[Item 9 Warrants Signed.pdf](#) 