

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

June 4, 2020

Remote Meeting Via Zoom

1. Call to Order Chair Ayer called the meeting to order at 5:30PM. She stated that the meeting was being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to an Order issued by the Governor of Massachusetts dated March 12, 2020 Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Attendees were advised that the meeting and all communications during the meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. Any participant who wished to record the meeting was asked to notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.

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

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

Visitors Present: No sign in as this was a remote meeting.

2. New Business

2.1 The Committee discussed the outdoor display of the Philadelphia Pride Flag at Hingham Public Schools. Chair Ayer noted that the Committee discussed flying the Philadelphia Pride Flag over Hingham Public Schools during the month of June in celebration of Pride Month to show support for the LGBTQ+ community at Monday night's meeting under the 48 hour agenda item. She noted that Pride month was usually celebrated in the buildings and that the Pride flag and symbols are usually displayed in classrooms and throughout the buildings. She shared a list of ways Pride Month is usually celebrated in Hingham Schools with the Committee. Chair Ayer proposed flying the flag outside our schools now that schools are closed to show that we are an inclusive community. Dr. Austin and the building Principals support flying the flags. The Committee did not vote on this at the last meeting because it was not on the agenda. This meeting was convened to discuss the proposal.

Michelle Ayer noted that she is in favor of flying the flag, especially since kids are not in schools to see the many signs of support. She referenced a recent report in social media about a Hingham student who experienced hate speech.

Flying the flag would show support for LGBTQ+ students and staff. Additionally, given world-wide protests to end racism, she noted that the Philadelphia Pride Flag includes black and brown stripes, representing the suffering of black and brown people.

The Committee discussed the proposal. Kerry Ni stated that flying the flag ties into the HPS mission statement, which strives to develop habits of physical and emotional well-being, including a spirit of self-worth, resiliency, and adaptability, as well as respect for the diverse views and backgrounds of others. Nes Correnti noted that her platform is safety, social-emotional learning and equity; LGBTQ+ is not an opinion, it is an identity. Carlos Da Silva stated that he was fully supportive. He hoped that this would send a loud and clear message that we embrace diversity and hopes the Flag can be flown yearly. Libby Lewiecki agreed that flying the flag is an extension of what already happens inside the buildings and also supported flying the flag annually. Dr. Ed Schreier wholeheartedly supported the proposal and looks forward to participating. Liza O'Reilly said this proposal is a perfect way of supporting the Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ+ communities. Schools in other districts fly the flag and she is in favor of developing a policy moving forward. Michelle Ayer noted that the Committee received a legal opinion letter from Counsel Andy Waugh, which advised that the School Committee is entitled to make this vote. Additionally, she informed the Committee that earlier in the day, the Board of Selectmen issued a proclamation recognizing Pride Month, all the work the Hingham Pride Project has done to get flags flying all over Hingham, and the work of the schools to provide an inclusive environment for all students. Dr. Austin thanked the Committee for being bold and thoughtful, so all kids feel welcome in school, a warm and inviting atmosphere that celebrates diversity. He appreciates and applauds the efforts of the Committee and supports the initiative.

Chair Ayer recognized members of the community who wished to speak. Harriet Wiley, a graduating Senior, spoke in support of the resolution. She stated that as a member of GSA, it means a lot that the consensus is to hang the flag. She stated that she is happy and proud to say that she graduated from Hingham. Andrew Ayer, member of the Hingham Pride Project, thanked Michelle Ayer for bringing up this issue. As he delivered flags around town, he talked to many parents with kids who said it's about time their kids are allowed to show their true selves. Jen Benham commented that she fully supports this and that the flag has been a part of the LGBTQ+ community for 4 decades. Curran Dillis, a HHS alumnus and former leader of GSA, stated that he was reassured to see the support and that this is a step in the right

direction. He noted that he still sees people who either don't get the message or don't care to listen, so this is great to see as a part of our school's position. He noted that it's wonderful to see the progressive energy. Alyssa Porter stated that there are many free flags and vinyl clings that will be available to teachers in the fall. Michelle Ayer thanked her and the Hingham Pride Project. Emma Fennelly thanked everyone who is helping. She transferred into Hingham and had seen schools that don't show support for the LGBTQ+ community. She appreciates the allies, young and old who are helping and pointed out that other towns fly the pride flag year round. The flag means a lot to everyone in the community. Chrissy Roberts said she would love to see the flag fly every year.

On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Carlos Da Silva,

It was

Voted: To display the Philadelphia Pride Flag for the month of June at all Hingham Public Schools.

Nes Correnti – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Ed Schreier – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

Carlos Da Silva – aye

Michelle Ayer – aye

Michelle Ayer thanked everyone and especially noted the positive involvement of the young adults.

3. Other Business Not Reasonably Known 48 Hours in Advance: None

4. Adjournment

On a motion by Kerry Ni and seconded by Liza O'Reilly,

It was

Voted: To adjourn at 5:56PM

Nes Correnti – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Ed Schreier – aye

Kerry Ni – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye

Respectfully Submitted By:
Kerry Ni

Documents Included:
6/4/2020 Agenda

[5-4-20 Agenda.pdf](#) 

[5-4-20 Annotated Agenda.docx](#) 

[Item 2.1 4-6-20 Minutes.pdf](#) 

[Item 6.2 CoachesStipends.xlsx](#) 

[Item 6.2 Forecast and Spending Controls.pdf](#) 

[Item 6.4 IJNDB - ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY - TECHNOLOGY](#) 

[Item 6.5 A Index - merged.docx](#) 

[Item 6.5 A Section - merged.docx](#) 

[Item 6.6 Draft fy21 calendar - v2.pdf](#) 

[Item 6.6 Draft fy21 calendar early start.pdf](#) 

[Item 7.1 MGL Chapter 76 \(school choice\).pdf](#) 

Item 7.3 B Index - merged.docx 

Item 7.3 B Section - merged.docx 

Item 7.4 C index - merged 

Item 7.4 C section - merged 

Item 8 FEMC.pdf 
