

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

July 8, 2020

Remote meeting via Zoom:

1. Call to Order

Liza O'Reilly, senior ranking member of the School Committee, called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. 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 this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. Any participant who wished to record this 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: Liza O'Reilly, Michelle Ayer, Carlos AF Da Silva, Kerry Ni, Libby Lewiecki, Nes Correnti, Jennifer Benham

Central Office Present: Paul Austin, James LaBillois, Suzanne Vinnes, John Ferris, Susan D'Amato

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

Liza O'Reilly stated that this is the first meeting following the town elections and advised that she would chair the meeting until a new chair is elected. Ms. O'Reilly thanked former School Committee member Dr. Ed Schreier for his service and welcomed the new members to the School Committee – Michelle Ayer, who is returning after reelection, and Jen Benham, who is newly elected. Ms. O'Reilly explained that the process to elect new officers is a self-nominating process and is voted by roll call.

1.1 Election of Chair

It was

Voted: To elect Kerry Ni as Chair of the School Committee

Carlos Da Silva - aye

Michelle Ayer - aye

Kerry Ni - aye

Libby Lewiecki - aye

Nes Correnti - aye

Jen Benham - aye

Liza O'Reilly - aye

1.2 Election of Vice Chair

It was

Voted: To elect Carlos Da Silva as Vice Chair of the School Committee

Jen Benham - aye

Nes Correnti - aye

Libby Lewiecki - aye

Michelle Ayer - aye
Liza O'Reilly - aye
Kerry Ni - aye
Carlos Da Silva - aye

1.3 Election of Secretary

It was

Voted: To elect Libby Lewiecki as Secretary of the School Committee.

Jen Benham - aye
Nes Correnti - aye
Libby Lewiecki - aye
Michelle Ayer - aye
Liza O'Reilly - aye
Carlos Da Silva - aye
Kerry Ni - aye

2. **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Carlos Da Silva and seconded by Libby Lewiecki,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on June 15, 2020.

Jen Benham – abstain
Nes Correnti – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

Michelle Ayer advised that the Facilities Department and the School Committee wanted to present an honorary Facilities Department shirt to Dr. Ed Schreier to thank him for his work that supported the facilities of the Hingham Public Schools.

3. **Questions and Comments.**

No questions or comments.

4. **Superintendent's Report**

4.1 Dr. Austin provided an update on the South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC). He advised that the bank balance of the South Shore Educational Collaborative is healthy at \$3.1 million. Summer enrollment is on par with past years. Community enrollment is about 60% of past years as a result of the Corona Virus. The next union negotiations are scheduled for July 27, 2020. The SSEC is on track to finish Fiscal Year 2020 in the black, and will close its books on July 24, 2020. Summer programs are scheduled to begin on July 6, 2020.

4.2 Dr. Austin provided an update on the Recovery Response Advisory Committee (RRAC). He advised that the RRAC & Subcommittees continue work to prepare for the potential opening of schools in fall. He stated that the district is planning for and hoping for a full opening but must also plan for a hybrid

learning plan and a remote learning plan. Plans are due to the Commissioner of Education in early August. Dr. Austin stated that we are communicating to the community weekly and he asks for the community's patience as we work through the details of the plan. There will be major work to determine how to use the space most effectively. A survey will be sent to families by 7/17/2020. Dr. Austin advised that we are still awaiting information and guidance from the Commissioner and the Governor regarding transportation, athletics, and PPE. The committees are listening to our constituents and teachers about their concerns. Our primary goal is to develop a plan that is in the best interest of our staff and students. The committees have over 100 people working on the reopening plan. Michelle Ayer asked if there would also be a survey of the staff. Dr. Austin advised that we will survey the staff in collaboration with the June Gustafson of the HEA.

- 4.3 Dr. Austin provided an update on the Facility Department Report for April – June 2020. He advised that the details of the report were provided in a packet to the School Committee. The Facilities department has done a tremendous amount of work while the schools have been closed. Dr. Austin thanked Katie Hartman and Doug Foley for the work they have done in measuring the district's classrooms in order to determine capacity as related to the social distancing requirements. Chair Kerry Ni also thanked the Facilities department for the work they have been doing.

5. **Communications**

There were no additional communications to report.

6. **Unfinished Business**

- 6.1 The Committee completed a second read of Section J (Students) of the Hingham Public Schools Policy Manual. Chair Ni advised that the Policy Committee met with the Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) field director in order to review the MASC sample policies alongside the Hingham policies to ensure that they reflect best practice. Chair Ni advised that this section of the policy is important because the topics included in this section directly impact students. Chair Ni advised that Nes Correnti had provided a recommended update to section JBB; Bullet 1 – this section has a list of protected categories that is different from what is listed in other sections of the policy. Chair Ni advised that the list of protected categories from Section A will be used to replace that bullet point. Libby Lewiecki recommended that the second sentence in the first paragraph of section JB say “and foster care” rather than “or foster care” and requested that the correction be carried throughout the document. Chair Ni asked that Ms. Lewiecki make that change to the document. After discussion, it was determined that the Committee would postpone a vote on Section J in order to allow all parties time to adequately review the policies.

7. **New Business**

- 7.1 Dr. LaBillois provided an update on the Equity Taskforce. He reviewed a PowerPoint presentation that covered the work of the Equity & Inclusion Working Group. Dr. LaBillois started by sharing the mission of the Hingham Schools: To provide challenging and comprehensive educational programs in a safe and supportive environment, enabling all students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for success as local and global citizens.

Dr. LaBillois advised that the Equity initiative was presented to the staff at Opening Convocation at the beginning of the 2019-2020 School Year. They discussed an examination of design, and examination of current practices, and an examination of current resources. The purpose of the examination was to develop a roadmap that would result in an HPS Equity and Inclusion Plan. As a result of the COVID-19 School Closure, the release of the plan has been delayed from June 2020 to a date TBD.

Dr. LaBillois shared the names of the representatives of the Working Group, which includes representation from the Elementary schools, Middle School, High School, and District office. He advised that the first major task, which has been completed, was to define Educational Equity. The agreed-upon definition was *“the shared responsibility of all members of our school community to address the opportunity gaps that exist within our society and impact our student’s ability to reach their full potential”*. The ultimate goal, and vision of Equity is that *“regardless of student background, experience, and knowledge, HPS students will be provided opportunities and resources to develop socially, emotionally, and academically in a safe, supportive, enriching, and bias-free environment.”*

Dr. LaBillois reviewed the tasks that had been completed by the team, the tasks that are currently underway, and the tasks to be completed. He provided an overview of the 3/3/2020 district-wide Professional Development day and the beginning steps of a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats). Analysis of the SWOT data was temporarily halted as a result of the COVID-19 closure but has been restarted. There is also a group that is meeting over the summer to ensure that classroom libraries represent a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Dr. LaBillois advised that equity audits have always been included when curriculums are reviewed.

Dr. LaBillois advised that the next steps for the Working Group are to formulate strategies and actions to address the district’s vision, to develop Professional Development activities, and to determine how to measure the success of the program. Dr. LaBillois also reviewed the key questions that were included as part of the SWOT Analysis.

Michelle Ayer commented that she appreciated the work that is being done and stated that we have been quiet for too long regarding discrimination, bias, and bullying. The culture is changing and it will be hard and uncomfortable and we cannot hide behind traditions. The young men and women in the care of the Hingham Schools have to know they have a voice and we need to listen to them and stand up for them. She stated that success will be measured by the spirit of self-worth that a student develops while part of the Hingham Schools. Ms. Ayer asked that Dr. LaBillois share the titles of the books that have been part of the Book Clubs. Dr. LaBillois advised that the books include The Person You Mean to Be, White Fragility, Stamped: Racism, Anti-Racism and You, So You Want to Talk about Race?, I’m Still Here, and Between the World and Me. Dr. LaBillois advised that the turnout for this voluntary summer program shows the level of commitment of the teachers. Libby Lewiecki questioned if the School Committee members could participate in the Book Clubs. Dr. LaBillois advised that he would consider that request and respond back to the Committee. Kerry Ni offered that the Hingham Unity Council is discussing some of the same books. Liza O’Reilly commented that she appreciated the completion of the SWOT analysis and questioned whether the group had considered getting input from students or parents about their experiences. Dr. LaBillois responded that there have been discussions about holding focus groups and they have a longer view of completing SWOT analyses with community members and parents. Michelle Ayer acknowledged the burden on the schools is heavy and agreed that this should be a community wide effort. Dr. LaBillois also advised that the district is building consultative partnerships with experts in the field and partnering with BU and Harvard.

- 7.2 John Ferris reviewed a recommendation on the Fiscal Year 2021 Per Diem and Hourly Rates schedule. Mr. Ferris explained that the per diem rate schedule is a group of rates that are reviewed annually and are not included in any specific bargaining units. Mr. Ferris reviewed the Pay Rate Summary document and walked through the rate schedule. He explained that increases were made to the rate for substitute teachers in order to remain competitive with the minimum wage. He also reviewed rates for substitute nurses, long term substitutes, tutor substitutes, Extended School Year teachers, Bus and Van monitors, Driver Ed’s coordinator, Summer School Teachers, Custodian Subs, Kids in

Action, Technology Assistance, Tutors, and the Athletic Trainer. Many of the positions received a 2% increase, but not all. The rates were also previously reviewed by the Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee. Liza O'Reilly added that the subcommittee reviewed the rates to ensure that they were aligned with other rates in our contracts. The greatest increase was with teacher substitutes with a goal of attracting new subs. Ms. O'Reilly suggested that for the Athletic Trainer, the district make an arrangement to pay season by season as a result of COVID-19 impacts. Mr. Ferris confirmed that the Athletic Trainer is typically paid by season and he will have additional conversations with the Athletic Trainer about the potential impacts of COVID-19.

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

Voted: To approve the recommendation on the FY21 Per Diem and Hourly Rates schedule as presented.

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Michelle Ayer – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Carlos Da Silva – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

7.3 Dr. Austin provided an update on the status of reimbursements for COVID-19 expenses from the Plymouth County Commissioner. He stated that many people have been discussing the concept of a \$225 per pupil district aid. He advised that districts in Plymouth County and Boston are not eligible for this \$225 reimbursement and we will rely on the Plymouth County funds. The funds are not school specific - it is approximately \$1.5 million for the Town of Hingham, and we have yet to determine how to distribute the funds between Town and the School. We have ordered laptops at \$300,000 to ensure that teachers have the technology for remote learning. The purchase of Chromebooks are backed up until December and we have PPE and electrostatic disinfecting guns on order. Mr. Ferris advised that we are submitting expenses for a July 10 filing deadline. To file for the reimbursement you have to have paid the invoices already. Mr. Ferris advised that we have approximately \$66,000 in paid invoices for ancillary items that we could submit (PPE, cleaning supplies, overtime for cleaning and disinfecting). Once we pay the invoices we can input additional submissions. Mr. Ferris shared documents from the Plymouth County Cares program. Michelle Ayer asked for clarification on whether the funds that the schools are going to submit for reimbursement go directly to the schools or to the town. Mr. Ferris advised that we work with the town to submit the information and then Mr. Ferris will ask the town to move the money back to the appropriate school accounts (e.g. PPE, Technology, Transportation, Special Education). Liza O'Reilly indicated that in the financial plan that we agreed to with the town, we told the town that we would identify all (not just reimbursable) COVID-19 related expenses. If we exceed what is reimbursable, the town needs to understand that we have incurred additional expenses. Nes Correnti questioned if there were invoices sent during Fiscal Year 2020 and did we receive that money for those invoices. Mr. Ferris advised that it will go back to the Town General Fund.

7.4 Dr. Austin provided an update on the bids for the Network Switches for the four Hingham Elementary Schools. He advised that there was a memo in the School Committee packet that provided the recommendation for the bids for the purchase of 9 Network Switches. There were 51

requests for bid specifications, resulting in 7 sealed bids. The lowest bidder was a vendor called On-Que Computer whose quote said they would provide “new or reconditioned” switches. The second lowest bid was from Integration Partners Corporation, who provided a quote for new switches. Although the bid for Integration Partners was higher, it was preferred because it was for new equipment. Dr. Austin stated that he supports Mr. Ferris’ recommendation that the bid be awarded to Integration Partners at the quoted price of \$170,052.59. Mr. Ferris advised that the lowest bidder, On-Que Computers, was not satisfied and has filed a protest with the Inspector General’s Office. Mr. Ferris also contacted the Inspector General’s office but has not heard any updates.

Liza O’Reilly questioned what the original budget was and Mr. Ferris advised that the award was in the range of the original budget, which he believed was approximately \$190,000.

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

It was

Voted: To award the 9 Network Switch bid to Integration Partners at the quoted price of \$170,052.59.

Jen Benham – aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye
Liza O’Reilly – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

- 7.5 The Committee discussed the parameters to guide the development of a calendar of 2020 - 2021 School Committee meeting dates. Chair Ni advised that the Committee normally meets on the first and third Mondays of each month at 7PM. She advised we would follow that same pattern, adjusting as needed, and discuss the dates at the next meeting.
- 7.6 The Committee discussed the appointment of a member of the School Committee to the Foster School Building Committee. Chair Ni advised that Michelle Ayer had expressed interest and questioned if anyone else was interested. No other member requested to be considered for the position.

On a motion by Liza O’Reilly and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

Voted: To appoint Michelle Ayer as the School Committee representative to the Foster School Building Committee.

Jen Benham – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye
Liza O’Reilly – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

- 7.7 The Committee considered the Home School Application of Jeffrey Robert Breen (Grade 1) for FY'21. Dr. Austin advised that he had reviewed the plan and endorsed the application for the Committee's approval.

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

It was

Voted: To approve the home school application of Jeffrey Robert Breen.

Jen Benham – aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

- 7.8 -7.10 Chair Ni advised that Item 7.8 was to advise of a notification of an advancement on the salary scale; 7.9 was notification of new appointments; and 7.10 was notifications of FY21 leaves of absence.

8. **Other items as may not reasonably be known 48 hours in advance of the meeting.**

Michelle Ayer advised that the Committee had not yet discussed committee assignments for the next year. Chair Ni advised that she would email a list of the subcommittees and liaisons to the members and the members can provide their preferences back to Chair Ni by 7/16/20. The appointments can be made at the next meeting.

9. On a motion Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer,

It was

Voted: To adjourn to Executive Session at 8:38PM, not to return to Open Session, to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel, the public discussion of which would be detrimental to the committee's bargaining positing, and to conduct a Unit A Grievance Hearing.

Jen Benham – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Michelle Ayer – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye
Carlos Da Silva – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

Respectfully Submitted By:
Libby Lewiecki

Documents Included:

 [7-8-20 Agenda.pdf](#) 

 [Item 1.1 - 1.3 School Committee Ballot.pdf](#) 

 [Item 2.1 6-15-20 Minutes.pdf](#) 

 [Item 4.1 SSEC Update.pdf](#) 

 [Item 4.3_Facility Dept June - School Opening Report \(1\).pdf](#) 

 [Item 6.1 HPS Policy Manual Section J - merged.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.1 Equity Update.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.2 Proposed Pay Rates Hrly Per Diem.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.3_Plymouth County Cares -Schedule.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.3_Plymouth County Cares General.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.3_Plymouth_county_download_request_6.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.4_Network Switch Award Recommendation - Integration Partners.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.4_Network Switch_Letter of recommendation.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.5_SC Meeting Calendar19-20.pdf](#) 

 [Item 7.7 Home School Application Breen.pdf](#) 
