**MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

August 10, 2020

**Remote meeting via Zoom**

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Kerry Ni 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 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: Kerry Ni, Carlos AF Da Silva, Libby Lewiecki, Liza O’Reilly, Michelle Ayer, Nes Correnti, Jennifer Benham

Central Office Present: Paul Austin, Suzanne Vinnes, John Ferris, Susan D’Amato

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

1. **Approval of Minutes**

On a recommendation by Liza O’Reilly, the Committee made a decision to postpone the approval of the 8/6/2020 meeting minutes until the next meeting, scheduled for 9/9/2020. This was done due to the short turn-around between the 8/6/2020 and 8/10/2020 meetings, which did not allow members sufficient time to review the minutes.

3. **Questions and Comments**

Elizabeth Moulds commented on a letter that was sent to the Committee and Administration that was signed by approximately 30 families. The letter addressed the decision by the Middle Schools to only use levels for math classes. The families are requesting additional discussion and consideration on this topic.

4. **Superintendent’s Report**

4.1 Dr. Austin provided an update on the Facility Report that was provided to the School Committee. He highlighted the following items:

* HVAC system filters have been upgraded and ordered from MERV 8 to MERV 11. Delivery is expected in late August. Although various COVID guide lines have recommended MERV 13 filtration, this application is not designed at our properties other than East School. Filtration at these efficiency levels would develop high static pressures leading to loss of air flow, as well as damage to our supply side motors.
* Quarterly preventative maintenance of all HVAC systems and equipment is underway at all schools. This entails filter exchanges, heat exchanger cleaning, motor testing, damper operation and building management.
* Procurement of up to 90% of the required PPE and other material has been ordered and or received.
* Classroom set-up underway following Guide Lines and RRAC
* Duct cleaning of all HVAC systems will continue at South, HS, and MS.

Carlos Da Silva requested that Dr. Austin share the facilities updates and Air Quality information with the Committee between now and the next meeting.

5. **Communications**

Dr. Austin advised that he did receive a number of emails from parents regarding the reopening of schools and he appreciates the feedback. He acknowledged that he also received the letter from the Middle School parents regarding the topic of leveling of classes.

Chair Ni also acknowledged that the School Committee has received much feedback and thanked the Community for their input. She also acknowledged that the Community has volunteered to support the schools in a number of ways.

6. **Unfinished Business**

6.1 The Committee reviewed their Operating Protocols, which outline how the Committee members work together.

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the updated School Committee Operating Protocols for 2020 – 2021.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

6.2 Dr. Austin advised that the Reopening Plan was submitted to DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) on time. He advised that the plan is still subject to change based on medical guidance and what is in the best interest of students. Dr. Austin acknowledged that there is a great deal of work to be done prior to the beginning of school. He expressed his appreciation to the community for their attendance at the 3 Community Forums. Dr. Austin was questioned by Steve Baker whether families that opted for the fully remote option had the ability to change their decision as the COVID situation changed. Dr. Austin confirmed that families could change their decision and advised that a process (e.g. how much advanced notice) would need to be established to help manage the process. Dr. Austin was asked by Katie Gould to speak to feedback that had been received from teachers and administrators and their level of support for the Reopening Plan. Dr. Austin responded that Administrators had helped to build the plan and that 35-40 teachers had also been involved in the planning. Dr. Austin advised that he had received feedback that teachers appreciated the slow, phased-in approach. He stated that the School Administration is in the early stages of negotiations with the teachers’ union (Hingham Education Association) and they are working collaboratively. Dr. Austin advised that he expects that there will be a reduced teaching staff due to the fact that some teachers may not be able to work due to medical issues. June Gustafson, HEA President, agreed with Dr. Austin that the teachers were included in the planning process and advised there is apprehension and concerns among teachers. Child care issues are a primary concern of the teachers. Ms. Gustafson added that she is confident that things can be worked out. Greg Corbett questioned whether anyone on the Committee or Dr. Austin had a comment on the letter that was sent to the Committee and Administration regarding the removal of the leveling (other than Math) in the Middle School. Dr. Austin advised that the guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) was to limit the Cohorts. Leveling of students creates more Cohorts and increases the interaction between students. Principal Derek Smith concurred that safety was a priority and the goal is to limit the number of cohorts and interactions. As soon as leveling can be put back into place, it will be reinstituted. Dr. Austin added that teachers are able to differentiate instruction within the classroom. Michelle Paterniti questioned if the plan remains to level for Math classes. Principal Smith advised that the recommended Math level will be the foundation of the Cohorts, and that World Language choice will also be factored into the Cohort grouping. Principal Smith responded to a follow-up question by advising that there would be a greater degree of leveled instruction at the High School. Elizabeth Moulds questioned how the leveling would be impacted if learning goes completely remote. Dr. Austin advised that was still to be determined. HEA President June Gustafson added that mixing upper standard classes and advanced classes can be beneficial and that Middle School teachers are good at differentiating instruction within a classroom.

7. **New Business**

7.1 Dr. Austin provided the Committee an update on changes to the 2020-2021 School Calendar. September 14, which was going to be the rescheduled date for the Boston Marathon, is no longer considered a holiday; teachers will work on that day. Students will start (remotely) on 9/16/2020. Liza O’Reilly advised that 9/1/2020 is Primary Day and that 6/19 (Juneteenth) will be considered a state holiday in 2021 and suggested that the Administration consider how that could impact the calendar if snow days are required. It was later determined that 6/19/21 is a Saturday holiday and would not impact the School Calendar if snow days were required. Chair Ni asked if Kindergarten would start on the same days as all other students. Dr. Austin confirmed that is the current plan.

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the School Calendar for Fiscal Year 2020 – 2021.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

7.2 The Committee received updates on the subcommittee and project reports.

* Michelle Ayer provided an update on the meeting that was held with METCO parents to discuss the Reopening Plan. There were approximately 25 parent and guardians on the call. The meeting was well received and additional meetings will be scheduled. There is an Anti-Racism in Schools event scheduled for 8/27/2020.
* Nes Correnti provided an update on a meeting of the Finance Subcommittee. The Fiscal Year 2021 budget has remained the same. All COVID-related expenses (e.g. technology, PPE, and cleaning supplies) are being tracked. Purchasing is limited to essential items. iPads for K-2 have been ordered; laptops for teachers have been received; Chromebooks have been ordered but are back-ordered. The Committee discussed future plans for the Kids in Action program and is working with the Town for potential space and support. The Committee is looking into whether there will be a need for additional resources for nurses and janitorial staff. The Town is submitting invoices for the CARES Act; there is a possible reimbursement of $1.6Million. FY 20 Books are being closed. The next subcommittee meeting is scheduled for 9/22/2020 at 11:00 AM. Michelle Ayer questioned whether we had an understanding of what technology equipment we will be providing for teaching staff for remote teaching. John Ferris, Director of Business Services, advised that the plan includes iPads, laptops, Chromebooks, licenses to facilitate online learning, and Webcams among other things. Liza O’Reilly suggested that the RRAC (Recovery Response Advisory Committee) Facilities committee pull together a list of what was ordered. Ray Estes suggested the Administration send a communication to parents with a list of items that are still being worked on so that parents can know what to expect. Mr. Estes also suggested that the RRAC continue to meet to discuss and provide input regarding technology needs.
* Libby Lewiecki advised that the Community Outreach Subcommittee had three forums on 8/5/2020 to hear input from the public on the Reopening Plan. There is also a Coffee with the Superintendent scheduled for 8/13/2020 at 9:00AM to provide the community additional time to hear about the plan and ask questions.
* Liza O’Reilly advised that there was a Master Plan Subcommittee meeting and that the subcommittee is on track to provide a plan to the Planning Board in Mid-October. They worked on defining the vision statement for the town that we want in the year 2035. The overarching goals include honor the town character, protect the environment and prepare for the impact of climate change, improve safety for all modes of travel and reduce traffic congestion, provide a variety of housing to encourage population diversity, support a vibrant local economy, provide services that support the health and wellness of residents of all ages, and provide infrastructure that supports the town’s need to manage growth.
* Kerry Ni advised that the Policy Subcommittee would be meeting to update policies that are specifically related to COVID.

7.3 The Committee heard a recommendation for approval of a Virtual 6th Grade at Su Escuela from Community Outreach Subcommittee Chair Libby Lewiecki. Ms. Lewiecki advised that the Community Outreach Subcommittee reviewed Su Escuela’s application and held a virtual meeting on 8/4/2020 and recommends approval. Liza O’Reilly questioned whether the plan was to return to an in-person program upon completion of the COVID situation. The representative from Su Escuela advised that they would apply again if there was a plan to have an in-person program.

On a motion by Libby Lewiecki and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was

**Voted**: To approve the Virtual 6th Grade program at Su Escuela

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

7.4 Dr. Austin made a recommendation to the Committee to approve the Home School applications for the following students:

a) Student KC (Grade 3)

b) Student LG (Grade 1)

c) Student ST (Grade 1)

d) Students AB (Grade 1); JB (Grade 2); BB (Grade 4); EB (Grade 5)

e) Student EW (Grade 1)

f) Student KM (Kindergarten)

g) Students RO (Grade 4); SO (Grade 3); NO (Grade 1)

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the home school applications for the above listed students

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

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

Dr. Austin advised that community that the school system is in need of Substitute teachers. Interested candidates can contact Susan D’Amato, Human Resources Director.

Kerry Ni advised that there was a decision made at the Finance Subcommittee to appoint Nes Correnti as a designee to sign the School Committee warrants. Either Chair Ni or Nes Correnti will be able to sign the warrants.

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

It was

**Voted**: To Adjourn to Executive Session at 8:10 PM, not to return to Open Session, for the purposes of:

1. approval of Minutes of the Executive Session held on July 27, 2020

b. discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations with HEA Unit A for Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for reopening of school for the 2020-2021 school year,

the public discussion of which may be detrimental to the Committee’s bargaining position.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

Respectfully Submitted By:

Libby Lewiecki

Documents Included:

