**MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

September 21, 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. There were no participants that advised that they were recording the session.

Members Present: Kerry Ni, Carlos AF Da Silva, Libby Lewiecki, Liza O’Reilly, Michelle Ayer, 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.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on September 9, 2020 with one change: to clarify language in item 4.1 (Superintendent’s report) regarding the reduction in enrollments.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

3. **Questions and Comments**

Chair Ni provided time for questions or comments on topics that were not included on the School Committee agenda. There were no questions or comments.

4. **Superintendent’s Report**

4.1 Dr. Austin invited the school principals to provide updates on the reopening of schools. The Elementary Principals (Principal Keady, Principal M. Smith, Principal Wilcox, and Principal Eastwood) provided updates on transportation, student meet & greets, the modeling of behavior protocols, and IPad distribution. Middle School Principal Derek Smith discussed the benefits of the Professional Development training that was completed prior to the start of school, and provided an update on the upcoming Sixth grade student tours. High School Principal Swanson addressed the completion of the virtual Freshman orientation (with in-person self-guided tours), the start of remote learning on 9/16, and the start of the athletic season.

Dr. Austin thanked the administrators, staff, and community for their efforts to reopen the schools. Dr. Austin advised that Hingham is considered “yellow” based on the Commonwealth’s Health Metric tracking due to sixteen new COVID cases over the last two weeks. He advised the community of the importance of following health protocols so that schools can reopen and stay open for hybrid learning. Phase II is scheduled for 9/28/2020 to get 50% of the students into the buildings. Dr. Austin advised that he will provide an update on 10/19/2020 with the Phase II metrics and the plans for Phase III.

Chair Ni thanked the administrators and teachers for the work that has been done to open the schools.

5. **Communications**

5.1 Dr. Austin provided an updated on communications received by the Superintendent. He advised that he has received a number of communications regarding the improvements made to the remote learning program. Dr. Austin has also heard feedback from K-2 parents with a request to prioritize those grades for in-person learning. Dr. Austin acknowledged that he understands the importance of prioritizing this group of students. Dr. Austin also stated that the eight days of remote learning were important step towards establishing routines to prepare the schools in case there is a need to return to remote learning due to changing health metrics.

6. **Unfinished Business**

None

7. **New Business**

7.1 Liza O’Reilly provided an update on the Memorandum of Understanding with HEA Unit B (Paraeducators) for a successor contract. The negotiations were completed in July 2020 and an agreement was reached for a 3 year term, through August 2023. The basic terms of the agreement include:

* Changes to sick leave policy based on length of service in the district
* Updates to the Parental Leave clause to make it consistent with the teacher’s agreement
* Notification to the paraprofessionals with Letters of Assurance at the end of the school year
* A 2% salary increase for each year of the contract
* The release of certain clerical members from the bargaining unit

Ms. O’Reilly encouraged members to approve the contract. There were no questions or comments from the Committee or community.

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement with HEA Unit B for a successor contract for 2020-2023.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

Mary Power (Hingham Board of Selectman) - aye

7.2 Dr. LaBillois provided an update on the Equity Taskforce. He stated that 46 educators participated in five book groups over the summer, discussing books related to educational equity. There was also an elementary school library audit that was completed, with a goal to bring different cultures into the classroom libraries. Nineteen books were identified to provide to the classroom libraries. The Taskforce is also looking for funding partners for additional books. The next step for the Taskforce is to continue progress on the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis that was initiated prior to the school closure in March 2020. The Taskforce will be partnering with a professor from Boston University to support the vison and implementation of the Equity Inclusion Plan. The original timeline was delayed to the closure of schools as a result of the pandemic.

Chair Ni asked if there was a time line to complete the SWOT analysis. Dr. LaBillois estimated that he would expect to have additional information at the October update. Liza O’Reilly thanked the staff for participating in the book groups and requested to have the names and potential costs for the books that are being requested. Dr. LaBillois advised that there is a plan to have an Equity page added to the School website. Nes Correnti asked if parent or community feedback was included in the SWOT analysis. Dr. LaBillois responded that it was a faculty exercise but there is a goal to determine how to engage members of the community. Michelle Ayer advised that the Hingham Unity Council is eager to assist the Taskforce. Ms. Ayer also advised that she attended the METCO meeting regarding the reopening of schools, which had an anti-racism lens and acknowledged that there is an urgency to address the issues of equity. Ms. Ayer advised that some of the suggestions made in the METCO meeting included building a community and space for BIPOC students, opening the lines of communications between faculty and students, and providing context in the curriculums around the contributions to society by people of color. Chair Ni reiterated the importance of moving the work of the Taskforce forward.

A member of the community urged the Taskforce to prioritize their work and to move the agenda forward as quickly as possible.

7.3 Dr. Austin advised that there were 55 Home School applications for approval. He anticipated that many of the students will return to the schools upon the resumption of normal school activities.

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the Home School applications for the 55 students as listed in the Home School document.

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 The Committee heard the following subcommittee and project reports:

* Michelle Ayer advised that Dr. Austin and Carols Perez hosted a meeting with METCO families prior to the opening of schools. Many of the questions and comments were regarding transportation.
* Michelle Ayer provided an update on a meeting with the MSBA regarding the Foster School Building project. In attendance at the meeting were Michelle Ayer, Kerry Ni, Linda Hill, Ray Estes, Mary Power, Michelle Monsegur, Dr. Wilcox, John Ferris, and Dr. Austin. They reviewed the building enrollment study that is underway. The Committee is on track to meet the expected timelines.
* Nes Correnti notified the Committee that HEF (Hingham Education Foundation) met for the first time to start their planning session.
* Carlos Da Silva advised that he attended the first meeting of SNAP (Special Needs Athletic Partnership). They are looking at different ways to raise funds. Additionally, the Capital & Facilities Subcommittee is in the process of scheduling their first meeting.
* Liza O’Reilly advised that the Master Plan Committee will hold a public session to hear the draft of the Plan on October 7, 2020. Ms. O’Reilly also advised that she has forwarded an email to the Capital & Facilities Subcommittee regarding a group that is associated with the Greener Hingham Committee that is looking into electric school busses.
* Kerry Ni advised that the Policy Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday to continue to revise the policy manual. There is a Forecast meeting on Wednesday, Sept 23. She also requested the Committee reach out to the School Principals for their School Council liaison schools to introduce themselves and get on the distribution lists.

7.5 The Committee received notification of the appointment for the 2020-2021 school year of Meaghan Gaven – Long Term Substitute Special Education Teacher at Plymouth River School.

7.6 The Committee received notification of advancements on the salary scale on September 1, 2020 of Elizabeth Doerr Perkins to M+15; Robert Tiews to B+15; and Leanne Turnak to M.

7.7 The Committee received notification of the resignation of teacher Kathryn Avallone.

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

* Dr. Austin thanked the PTOs for their support of the schools this week, including the signs that were placed outside of the buildings.
* There was a question from the community regarding the protocol when someone in a family, other than the student, is showing symptoms of COVID-19. There was a discussion regarding asymptomatic transmission and the protocols around close contacts.
* There was a question on whether there was a schedule of important dates relative to the Foster School Building Committee process in order to keep it in the forefront of everyone’s mind. Dr. Austin advised there are a number of deadlines that are coming up on the Foster Building program and there has been a lot of activity. John Ferris added that we are currently in the Eligibility period and the MSBA has a structured timeline for this period. The goal is to have everything ready for a November board meeting, which will then allow the team to move into a Feasibility study.
* There was a question regarding bus transportation for Middle School students. Dr. Austin advised that ridership was reduced as a result of the restrictions imposed by DESE. During the hybrid process, Dr. Austin believes that he will be able to transport through 8th grade, but that will likely not be possible when schools fully reopen.
* There was a question about whether students’ schedules will change when Phase III begins. Dr. LaBillois advised that Secondary School schedules will change at Phase III. In addition, the Elementary start times will need to change to accommodate the required transportation.
* There was a request for an update on the negotiations with the Hingham Education Association regarding the reopening of schools. Dr. Austin advised that documents are being finalized and that he expects a vote on both sides relatively soon.

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

It was

**Voted**: To adjourn to Executive Session, not to return to Open Session, for the purposes of:

1. Approving minutes of the Executive Session held on September 9, 2020
2. Discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations with HEA Unit A and B for the Memorandum of Agreement for the Reopening of Schools for the 2020-2021 school year;
3. Discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations for 2020-2023 agreements with the Administrators, Custodian and Maintenance Workers, Cafeteria Workers, Transportation Workers and Administrative Assistants

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

The meeting adjourned at 8:19 PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Libby Lewiecki

Documents Included:

