

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

October 19, 2020

Remote meeting via Zoom

1. Call to Order

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting to order at 7:01 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. Chair Ni advised that the Harbor Media and the Hingham Current were both 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.

2. 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 October 3, 2020

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

2.2 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 October 5, 2020

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

2.3 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 October 6, 2020

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – abstain

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 provided an update on the reopening of schools. Dr. Austin thanked the staff of the Hingham Schools, the students, and parents for their efforts during this unprecedented time. Dr. Austin also encouraged the community to review the Frequently Asked Questions that have been posted to the HPS website. Dr. Austin advised that enrollment numbers have stabilized and he reviewed the community and school health metrics. Hingham is “red” based on the Commonwealth of Massachusetts COVID-19 rating process. There have been 13 total cases in the school community but transmission does not appear to be happening within the schools as a result of the six foot distancing and mask policies. Dr. Austin advised that the school’s COVID Response Team continues to meet weekly to review health metrics and the impact on schools. Michelle Ayer questioned whether there may be situations where the community is not “red” but the schools or a particular school may close. Dr. Austin confirmed that was true and that, at any given time, a school could close depending on the specific situation at that school. There was a question from the community regarding the total population, which Dr. Austin advised is about 4,500. There was a question on why the numbers were being tracked cumulatively. Dr. Austin advised that both DESE and the state are also tracking cumulative cases. Dr. Austin advised that he is watching the trends. A question was asked on whether more information can be provided in the communications that are distributed when there is a positive COVID case. Dr. Austin advised that he has consulted with both DESE and the Hingham Health Department on what can be communicated while also protecting an individual’s right to confidentiality. A question was asked regarding why the school system is not testing staff or students for COVID. Dr. Austin advised that he has discussed testing with the Board of Health and he is not averse to doing testing. If there is a cluster of cases, the state would provide mobile testing.

Dr. LaBillois shared a presentation that provided an update on the planning for Phase Three of the Reopening Plan. The update included:

- A review of the current status for Grades PreK-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

- An outline of the “Key Variables for Full Return”, which include Transportation, Classroom/Instructional Space, and Instructional Staff.
- Dr. LaBillois provided an overview of the Phase 3 Reopening plan that focuses on students in grades K-2. There is a target date of January 4, 2021 for the launch of Phase 3, subject to change based on health metrics and collective bargaining. The Phase 3 plan includes the advancement of kindergarten to five partial days per week, and the advancement of grades 1-2 to 5 full days per week.
- Transportation options that the administration considered in order to enable the move to Phase 3 include obtaining additional busses and drivers, adjusting the current policy on who is eligible for bus service from 1 mile to 1.5 miles, and changing the start times of schools.
- Space considerations included adjustments that would be made for serving lunch and to maintain the required spacing. Dr. LaBillois advised that the district is also considering the potential lease of St. Jerome’s School in Weymouth to provide additional space.
- Dr. LaBillois advised that there is plan for Remote Teachers and Remote Paraprofessionals, who would focus solely on the remote learners.
- The plan to advance Grades 3-5 to five full days per week is dependent on preparing the infrastructure for K-2 and would roll out only after the K-2 plan is operational.

The School Committee’s questions and discussions included:

- A question regarding transportation for Grades 6-8 and the number of families that would be impacted by the potential change in the rules regarding bus eligibility from 1 miles to 1.5 miles.
- A question on the ability to hire and train the required number of bus drivers.
- A suggestion that the district may consider discussing the additional expenses for busses and bus drivers at the upcoming Town Meeting.
- A discussion on the possible changes in start times at the Elementary Schools
- A question on whether the proposed changes would be subject to collective bargaining with the Hingham Education Association.
- A question on whether there would be an impact to METCO as a result of the possible changes in school start times.
- A question on the required timeline to prepare for the possible use of St. Jerome’s.

The Community’s questions and comments included:

- A question on whether there has been planning to move to full in-person learning for Middle School and High School. Dr. Austin advised that the current plan is to focus on the Elementary Schools.
- A question on whether there could be an incremental phase that would focus on extending the length of the school day under the current plan.
- A request to move forward more quickly to get students back into school based on teacher comments at curriculum night that there is a need to catch students up on what they have missed.
- A question on whether there has been a ridership survey conducted on the busses and a concern that busses are currently underutilized.
- A question on whether the openings for bus driver positions have been posted.
- A discussion about the deep cleaning/sanitization that is taking place on Wednesdays

when learning is fully remote.

- A question on the use of outdoor space for lunches/snacks.
- A question of when the administration will begin discussions for getting the Middle School and High School back to full in-person learning and whether that also has a target date of January 4, 2021. Dr. LaBillois advised that Middle School and High School will be after January 4, 2021. The focus is currently on the youngest learners who are most at risk. The community member requested consideration for an alternate solution to provide more in-person learning to Middle School and High School.
- A question on the Remote Teaching positions. These positions will be posted internally within the School System.
- A concern about students that would be required to walk to school due to the change of bussing policy and the lack of sidewalks in certain areas.
- A concern about the changes in Elementary School start times that were considered by the Administration. Dr. LaBillois and Dr. Austin both offered that the changes in start times were considered as a potential solution but are not being recommended by the Administration.
- A question about the potential costs for the use of St. Jerome's, including additional teachers, paraprofessionals, and support personnel. Dr. Austin advised that he did not have costs to share at this meeting.
- A question about whether the administration was working with community sports teams that may impact the community spread of COVID. Dr. Austin advised that he is working very closely with the Board of Health on this topic.
- A question on why the Administration is not moving more quickly to bring the High School Students back to in-person learning in January and a concern about the negative impact this will have on the students. Dr. Austin advised that the High School is not moving to full in-person learning due to space and capacity issues.
- A concern that the RRAC (Recovery Response Advisory Committee) that met over the summer is no longer meeting and that there is a lack of communication to the community about what is currently happening. The community member also suggested that there should be a list of Frequently Asked Questions available to the community. Michelle Ayer advised that Frequently Asked Questions are being posted on the HPS website. Dr. Austin advised that he held a follow-up meeting of the RRAC.
- A concern was raised about the youngest learners not getting increased in-person learning sooner. The community member expressed concern that the youngest students are not learning via remote learning. Dr. LaBillois disagreed with the sentiment that the children are not learning. He advised that the issues that needed to be addressed to return to greater in-person learning included transportation and the completion of negotiations with St. Jerome's. Dr. Austin added that he also has to renegotiate the MOA with the HEA in order to move forward.

Michelle Ayer added that two "Coffees with the Superintendent" are scheduled and the community is welcome to join those. She also requested that the community be mindful of the words that they are using when expressing their concerns because the administration and staff are working very hard to move the schools forward and they care deeply about the impact on the students.

The School Committee members individually endorsed their support for moving forward with

the recommendation to pursue a lease with St. Jerome's in Weymouth and to further consider the change in in bus eligibility from 1.0 miles to 1.5 miles. The request was made by multiple Committee members to work closely with the community on the change in bus eligibility, particularly with those for whom the change may create a hardship.

- 4.2 Dr. Austin reminded the community that there was no school on Election Day, 11/3/2020.
- 4.3 Dr. Austin advised the community that there is a request for a Special Town Meeting on 11/21/2020 on the multi-purpose field. The rain date is scheduled for the following day and is scheduled to be held indoors.
- 4.4 Dr. Austin advised that the Federal School Lunch program will be free through the end of the 2020-2021 school year.

5. **Communications**

5.1 Dr. Austin advised that he has received a number of communications regarding the Reopening of Schools. He appreciates that and wants people to know that he hears their feedback. Dr. Austin also advised that he has received a lot of positive feedback on the new HPS website. He thanked Dr. LaBillois for his work on launching the website during a difficult time.

5.2 Chair Ni introduced the new student representative to the School Committee, Carly Kennedy. Carly provided a student perspective on the Reopening of Schools. Carly advised that remote learning is going well and that teachers are doing a good job of interacting with students that are both remote and in-person. She advised the teachers are also doing a good job of providing after-school help. Two struggles identified by Carly were 1) doing group work, especially when in-person with masks and physical distancing, and 2) testing, when some students are remote and some are in-class. The Drama Club is working on a Zoom play. Orchestra, Band, and Chorus are all practicing through Zoom. The Green Team is focusing on having guest speakers help to educate the students. Student Council is working on ways to fundraise. There were student elections and there are new officers in all grades except Grade 12. Sports is going well despite the mask requirements. Chair Ni thanked Carly for providing the student perspective.

5.3 Other Communications: Michelle Ayer advised that she has received some questions on whether the district should consider renaming Columbus Day to "Indigenous Persons Day". This is something that can be considered for the calendar for next school year and will also help to achieve consistency across the district's individual school calendars.

6. **Unfinished Business**

6.1 There was a Second Read of Policy Section E (Support Services). Chair Ni advised that the Committee reviewed the MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) policies alongside the Hingham policies, working with the MASC Field director, Dr. Austin and H.R. Director Susan D'Amato. In response to a question by Libby Lewiecki, Chair Ni confirmed that grammatical edits could still be made to the policies after they were approved, as long as the changes made no change to the substance of the document.

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Libby Lewiecki,

It was

Voted: To approve, as pro forma, Policy Section E, Support Services

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 This was a Second Read of Policy Section F (Facilities Development). Chair Ni advised that these are new policies as the district does not currently have corresponding policies on these topics. Liza O'Reilly added that the Committee incorporated the Town naming by-laws into the policy for consistency. Carlos Da Silva questioned the potential for renaming of fields. Ms. O'Reilly suggested that if the Town changes the Town's naming by-laws then the School Committee should consider updating the School's policies. Chair Ni added that the policy provides the Schools the authorization to name subsections of existing facilities, such as classrooms, gymnasiums and facilities.

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Libby Lewiecki

It was

Voted: To approve, as pro forma, Policy Section F, Facilities Development

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. **New Business**

- 7.1 The Committee discussed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Cafeteria Managers and Food Services Technicians for a successor contract for 2020-2021. Liza O'Reilly advised that there was previously a 3-year agreement and it was proposed to complete a one-year agreement with a 2% increase in wages. At the end of the one-year contract, the two groups would enter full negotiations for a new 3-year contract. This one year contract has been approved by the union.

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

It was

Voted: To approve Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Cafeteria Managers and Food Services Technicians for a one-year successor contract for 2020-2021.

Michelle Ayer – aye
Jen Benham – aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Carlos AF Da Silva – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Liza O’Reilly – aye
Mary Power (Board of Selectman) - aye
Kerry Ni – aye

Mary Power, Board of Selectman, added that she appreciated the prior discussion regarding the opening of schools. As a parent and member of the Board of Selectman, she has seen the amount of time and effort that the Administration, principals, and staff have put into the planning for reopening. She appreciated that the administration will make the best decisions possible.

7.2 The Committee considered a number of proposed resolutions from the Massachusetts Associations of School Committees. The Committee was voting whether or not to support the resolutions at the upcoming Massachusetts Association of School Committee’s Conference on November 7, at which Carlos Da Silva will represent the Hingham School Committee. Carlos Da Silva advised that the resolutions were sent to the Committee prior to the meeting.

Resolution #1 (MCAS and High Stakes Testing) reads as follows: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC rejects the calls for the students of 2022 who missed their tenth grade MCAS testing to be required to make it up during the 2020-2021 school year or ever. We demand those students be held harmless for not taking the MCAS and that their graduation requirements shall be determined by locally controlled voices of the School Committee and School Administration within the remaining graduation requirements of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Additionally, we reiterate our call for a moratorium on all high stakes testing for the 2020-2021 school year so all students can benefit from their time being focused on direct instruction and we urge the legislature to enact a moratorium on high stakes testing of three years.

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

It was

Voted: To support resolution #1 as proposed by the MASC Board of Directors.

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

Resolution #2 (COVID-19 State Funding) reads as follows: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the state must guarantee every school district full reimbursement for whatever COVID-19 expenses are required to follow state mandates. We must ensure a statewide school re-opening that is safe, responsible and equitable. There can be no unfunded mandates for COVID-19.

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

It was

Voted: To support resolution #2 as proposed by the MASC Board of Directors.

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

Resolution #3 (School Committee Anti-Racism Resolutions) reads as follows: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that all the school districts in the Commonwealth should guarantee that racist practices are eradicated, and diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded and practiced for our students, families, faculty and staff. School Committee members should ensure that school culture and that of every district in the Commonwealth is anti-racist, and that acknowledges that all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

On a motion by Nes Correnti and seconded by Michelle Ayer,

It was

Voted: To support resolution #3 as proposed by the MASC Board of Directors.

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

Resolution #4 (Lowering the Voting Age for Municipal Elections) reads as follows: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the sponsors call upon the Massachusetts Legislature to pass the EMPOWER Act and take other means necessary to allow cities and towns to establish a minimum voting age of sixteen years for all municipal elections.

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

It was

Voted: To support resolution #4 as proposed by the MASC Board of Directors.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – nay

Kerry Ni – aye

Resolution #5 (Resolution 5: Supporting Increased Federal Support And Stimulus

Funding For Public K-12 Education) reads as follows: THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that MASC align with state superintendents of schools and urge the Massachusetts Congressional Delegation and state legislators to advocate for and approve additional education funding for our nation’s public schools through the enactment of progressive tax legislation.

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

It was

Voted: To support resolution #5 as proposed by the MASC Board of Directors.

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham – aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O’Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

MASC Resolutions 6 -10 will be considered at the 11/2/2020 School Committee meeting.

- 7.3 The Committee considered a proposal by the Superintendent to utilize remote learning in place of Emergency Snow Days. Dr. Austin explained that the Commissioner is allowing schools to use remote learning rather than a snow day in order to avoid having to extend the school year. This will be allowed for the 2020-2021 school year only.

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

It was

Voted: To authorize the Superintendent to utilize remote learning in place of Emergency Snow Days for the 2020-2021 school year.

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 appointed Nes Correnti as School Committee liaison to the Equity Task Force.
- 7.5 The Committee considered the Home School applications of three students for the School Year 2020-2021. Applications for students SM (Grade 1), JM (Grade 3), and MM (Grade 6) were presented.

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

It was

Voted: To approve the home school applications of the three students presented to the School Committee.

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

- 7.6 The Committee received notification of the appointment for the 2020-2021 school year of Tracy Manning – Grade Four Special Education Teacher (0.5 FTE) at South Elementary School.
- 7.7 The Committee received notification of the appointments of Danielle Ennis, Paraeducator at East School, effective 9/14/20; Matthew Haite – Paraeducator at South Elementary, effective 9/17/20; Alicia Barry – Long Term Substitute Paraeducator at South Elementary, effective 9/28/2020; Karen McGourty – Paraeducator at PRS Elementary, effective 9/19/2020; Thomas McNamee – Tutor at Foster Elementary, effective 9/28/2020; Lisa Webb – Van Driver, effective 9/10/2020.

8. **Subcommittee and Project Reports**

- Michelle Ayer advised that the Special Education Subcommittee will meet on 10/29/20 at 9AM. School Council for the High School will be meeting Wednesday evening. Ms. Ayer advised Dr. Austin that she would like to schedule another opportunity for him to meet with the METCO parents.
- Jen Benham advised that she attended the Foster School Council meeting and the next meeting will be on November 4, 2020.
- Nes Correnti advised that East has the first Council Meeting on 10/28. The PTO is planning community outreach events. The Hingham Education Foundation (HEF) met on 10/7 and

discussed fund raising efforts. They are planning a grant-based program this year to support teachers. Applications will be accepted 11/1-11/20.

- Michelle Ayer added that a teacher brought forward an idea for the Equity Task Force regarding acknowledgement of Indigenous land.
- Carlos Da Silva attended a second meeting of SNAP (Special Needs Athletic Partnership). He advised that PRS scheduled a School Council meeting on Wed 10/21. The Capital & Facilities committee will meet on 10/27.
- Libby Lewiecki advised that Community Outreach has scheduled two “Coffees with the Superintendent” for November 6 (9AM) and November 12 (7PM). The community is invited to attend and speak with the Superintendent. She requested that attendees carefully consider the phrasing of questions and comments, while understanding that the community is frustrated by the current COVID-19 situation.
- Liza O’Reilly advised that the Master Plan Committee is meeting on 10/21/20 and the Middle School Council is meeting on 10/26/20.
- Kerry Ni advised that the Policy Committee is meeting 10/28/20 to complete Section I (Instruction) and start Section D (Financial Management).
- Nes Correnti advised there was one warrant that she signed and was included in the School Committee packet.

9. Other items as may not reasonably be known 48 hours in advance of the meeting.
There were no items discussed.

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

It was

Voted: To adjourn to Executive Session at 10:29 PM, not to return to Open session, for the purposes of:

1. Approving minutes of the Executive Session held on September 21, 2020
2. Discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations with HEA Unit A and B

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:


- [PDF Agenda_2020_1019.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Annotated Agenda_2020_1019.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 2.1 Minutes of the School Committee Meeting held on October 3, 2020.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 2.2 Minutes of the School Committee Meeting held on October 5, 2020.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 2.2 Minutes of the School Committee Meeting held on October 6, 2020.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 4.1 Phase 3 Reopening presented at 2020_1019 SC Meeting.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 4.1 Transportation Options.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 6.1 A - Section E index.pdf](#) 


- [PDF Item 6.1 B Section E - merged.pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 6.2 A -Section F index.pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 6.2 B - Section F.pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 7.1 Cafeteria MOA 2020_2021 9.27.20 \(1\).pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 7.2 MASC Resolutions.pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 7.5 Home School Applications for 3 students.pdf](#) 

- [PDF Item 8 Warrant.pdf](#) 