

# MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 21, 2020

## Remote meeting via Zoom

### 1. Call to Order

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting to order at 6:04 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 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 was recording the session.

Members Present: Kerry Ni, Carlos AF Da Silva, 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.

### 2. On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer, it was

Voted: To enter into Executive Session and to reconvene in Open Session, for the purposes of:

- a. Approving minutes of the Executive Session held on November 19, 2020
- b. Approving minutes of the Executive Session held on December 7, 2020
- c. Discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations for a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with HEA Unit A for the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 school year
- d. Discussing strategy related to negotiations with HEA Unit C for a 2020-2023 collective bargaining agreement

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

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jennifer Benham - aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos AF Da Silva – aye  
Libby Lewiecki – not present  
Liza O'Reilly – aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

The meeting entered into Executive Session at 6:07.

3. Chair Ni reconvened the meeting at 7:01 PM. Ms. Ni re-read the above statement regarding remote meetings and recording and advised that Harbor Media was 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, Suzanne Vinnes, John Ferris, Susan D'Amato

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

#### 4. **Approval of Minutes**

- 4.1 On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Jen Benham,

It was

**Voted:** To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on December 7, 2020

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – No audible response

- 4.2 On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Michelle Ayer,

It was

**Voted:** To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on December 16, 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

#### 5. **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 during this section of the meeting.

6. Dr. Austin and Liza O'Reilly reviewed a presentation regarding the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with HEA Unit A regarding the increased in-person learning.

Liza O'Reilly reviewed:

- The Focus of the negotiations - Students, Safety, Resources and Regulations, and Budgets
- The process and timeline for the negotiations
- The agreement to license the former St. Jerome's school

Dr. Austin reviewed the timelines for increased in-person learning.

- Kindergarten - Beginning January 11, 2021 Kindergarten students will attend schools in-person 5 days a week, 4 hours per day.
- Grades 1 & 2 - Beginning January 11, 2021 Grades 1 and 2 will add Wednesdays for in-person learning for alternating cohorts. The district has a target of February 1, 2021 to increase in-person learning to 5 days a week/4 hours per day with a condition that Town health metrics are at grey or green for 3 consecutive weeks and there is no evidence of in-school transmission.
- Grades 3-5 – There is a target date of February 1, 2021 for in-person learning on Wednesdays (4 hours per day) for alternating Cohorts, with a condition that Town health metrics are at grey or green for 3 consecutive weeks and there is no evidence of in-school transmission. The district has a target of March 1, 2021 to increase in-person learning to 5 days a week/4 hours per day with a condition that health metrics are at grey or green for 3 consecutive weeks and there is no evidence of in-school transmission.
- There is a target of February 1, 2021 for a full opening of Foster North (former St. Jerome's School), with requirements for cleaning, installation of additional technology, furniture, and staffing.
- Secondary Schools – There is a target date of January 11, 2021 to provide increased in-person learning to "high risk" students, as identified by Principals and teachers.

Liza O'Reilly reviewed additional meetings that will be scheduled with the Hingham Education Association.

Dr. Austin reviewed a timeline of the key dates for increased in-person learning.

Liza O'Reilly reviewed the resources that the Committee and Administration have reviewed to help guide the reopening decisions.

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

It was

**Voted**: To approve the updated Memorandum of Agreement with HEA Unit A for the Reopening of Schools for 2020-2021

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos AF Da Silva – aye

Libby Lewiecki – aye

Liza O'Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye

## 7. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Austin provided an update from the South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC). He advised the School Committee that he provided, in their information packet, budget and enrollment information on the SSEC.

Dr. Austin reviewed the COVID-19 Health Metrics. Hingham remains yellow based on the state's color-coding system. There were an additional 12 positive COVID test cases in the schools in the past week, with approximately 60 people in quarantine. Plymouth River School (PRS) pivoted to full remote learning for one week as a result of a cluster of cases. The state provided COVID-19 testing to 104 students and staff, all of which were negative. Dr. Austin thanked the staff, students, and parents of PRS for their handling of the COVID-19 situation at Plymouth River School. In response to a question by Libby Lewiecki, Dr. Austin reviewed the contact tracing process that takes place when a positive test case is identified. There were a number of questions from community member regarding the use district's use of the state color coding system to guide the reopening process and whether other communities were using the same standards.

Dr. Austin shared a presentation with additional detail on the efforts to increase in-person learning. The presentation included:

- An update on the opening of Foster North (the former St. Jerome's School). Foster North will house Foster Grades 1 and 2 effective February 1, 2021. Additional information will be provided in January from Principal Wilcox.
- Phased Re-entry Plan 2.1 addresses the plans to have Kindergarten students across the district return to in-person classes 5 days per week, 4 hours per day, effective January 11, 2021. Additionally, students in Grades 1 and 2 will begin to attend in-person classes on Wednesdays, starting on January 13, 2021. Wednesdays will alternate between the existing Cohorts. Cohort A will attend on the Wednesday of Week 1, Cohort B will attend on the Wednesday of Week 2.
- Phased Re-entry Plan 2.2 includes the following:
  - No sooner than February 1, 2021 and with a condition that health metrics for the Town are at grey or green for 3 consecutive weeks and there is no evidence of in-school transmission, Grades 1 and 2 will return to school five days per week, 4 hours per day, with a change in physical distancing to 3-6 feet. Students in Grades 3-5 will begin in-person learning on Wednesdays (4 hours per day), for alternating Cohorts. Cohort A will attend on the Wednesday of Week 1, Cohort B will attend on the Wednesday of Week 2.
  - No sooner than March 1, 2021 and with a condition that health metrics for the Town are at grey or green for 3 consecutive weeks and there is no evidence of in-school transmission, students in Grades 3-5 will return to school five days per week, 4 hours per day, with a change in physical distancing to 3-6 feet.
- For Secondary Schools, effective January 11, 2021 the principals, in collaboration with teachers, will begin a process to include more students for in-person learning on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday. Priority will be given to Special Education students, students on 504 plans, homeless/Foster Care students, English Language Learners, students whose grades have dropped by a full letter grade between terms, and students with identified social/emotional concerns.
- Dr. Austin responded to questions from the community.

## 8. Communications

8.1 Student Communications: Student representative Carly Kennedy provided an update from the schools. The High School had a virtual awards ceremony to honor 27 students with the

“Catching Kindness” Award. The Winter Sports season began, with games starting in the first week of January. Student Council and Sports teams are working to create videos to raise awareness among students on COVID-19 guidelines and how to reduce the spread of the virus. The “Spreading Acts of Kindness” club has been collecting Personal Protective Equipment and accepting donations for South Shore Hospital.

- 8.2 Superintendent’s communications: Dr. Austin advised that the MSBA has approved the Foster School to move into the Feasibility phase of the school rebuilding program. The MSBA also approved the project for new windows at the Plymouth River School.
- 8.3 Other Communications: There was no discussion under this topic.

## 9. Unfinished Business

- 9.1 Dr. Austin provided an update on the HPS FY21 Operating Budget. He advised that there are no changes to the budget at this time. John Ferris added that the Administration is continuing to monitor all expenses and they have submitted another reimbursement under the Plymouth County COVID-19 program. Chair Ni advised that there is a joint meeting of the School Committee, Board of Selectman, and Advisory Committee on December 22, 2020.

## 10. New Business

- 10.1 Heather Rodriguez gave a presentation from the HPS Counseling Department on Social Emotional Supports during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The presentation focused on efforts to care for the children while planning for the return to school. Ms. Rodriguez encouraged parents to contact the schools if they felt there were any issues with their children. The presentation addressed:
  - Professional Development training that was provided to staff prior to the return to school.
  - Trauma Screening - to identify students that had been impacted by COVID.
  - Calm Classroom – practice of mindfulness techniques
  - Community Programming that addressed anxiety in parents and children
  - Universal Screening – completed by teachers at the Elementary levels and by students at the Secondary levels.
  - Ongoing Support and resources from the Counseling Staff at the Elementary and Secondary Level.

Ms. Rodriguez responded to questions from the community. Ms. Rodriguez advised that parents should reach out to the Adjustment Counselors at their child’s school or the Counseling Department if they have any concerns regarding their children.

- 10.2 Chair Ni provided an update on the Policy Subcommittee’s review of Sections D, G, H, and L of the Hingham Public Schools Policy manual. The goal of the review is to ensure that all policies include best practices and all legal requirements. Policies are reviewed in comparison to the Massachusetts Association of School Committee Policies. This was a first read of the following policies:
  - D – Fiscal Management
  - G – Personnel
  - H – Negotiations
  - L - Education Agencies Relations

These policies will be included on the agenda of the January 11, 2021 School Committee meeting for a second read.

- 10.3 The Committee received notification of the resignation of Marianne Gates, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Recording Secretary to the School Committee, effective 12/11/20.

### **11. Subcommittee and Project Reports**

Jen Benham

- The Foster School Council will meet on January 6, 2021.

Nes Correnti:

- The Finance Subcommittee met on 12/8/2020 to discuss the FY'22 budget.
- The administration is addressing upcoming expiration of bus leases.
- The Equity Taskforce completed meetings with Plymouth River Elementary, East Elementary, and Hingham Middle School.
- There were three warrants included in the School Committee Packet for review.

Carlos Da Silva:

- The Capital & Facilities Subcommittee met on 12/8/20 to review line items on the Capital Budget. They are exploring the possibility of moving Technology expenses from the Capital Budget to the Operating Budget to free money for Capital Projects. The subcommittee heard a presentation from Net Zero regarding the possibility of using solar power canopies.

Libby Lewiecki:

- The Community Outreach Subcommittee scheduled a Coffee with the Superintendent with the Senior Center for February 10, 2021 at 1:30. The subcommittee is working on scheduling a meeting with Linden Ponds.

Liza O'Reilly:

- The Master Plan Committee will meet on January 6, 2021 for a final overview of the Master Plan. The plan will be presented to the Planning Board on February 1, 2021.

Kerry Ni:

- Chair Ni questioned Michelle Ayer on the scheduling of a School Committee meeting to view a 25 minute METCO. The Committee will work to identify a date.
- The Special Needs Athletic Partnership (SNAP) participated in "Wreaths Across America" to lay wreaths on the graves of fallen soldiers to honor their service.

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

There was no discussion under this item.

13. On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Libby Lewiecki,

It was

**Voted:** To adjourn at 9:44 PM.

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:

Name	↑
 Agenda_2020_1221.pdf	
 Annotated Agend_2020_1221.pdf	
 Item 4a - Minutes from the School Committe Meeting of December 7 2020.pdf	
 Item 4b - Minutes from the School Committee Meeting of December 16 2020.pdf	
 Item 6 Revised MOA Presentation_2020_12_20 School Committee Meeting v4 (1).pdf	
 Item 7a South Shore Educational Collaborative (SSEC) Update.pdf	
 Item 7b COVID-19 Health Metric Update_2020_1221.pdf	
 Item 7c District Reopening Plan Update.pdf	
 Item 10.1 HPS Emotional Health in 2020 (1).pdf	
 Item 10.1 HPS Social Emotional Supports Presentation.pdf	
 Item 10.2 Section D Index.pdf	
 Item 10.2 Section D.pdf	
 Item 10.2 Section G.pdf	
 Item 10.2 Section H.pdf	
 Item 10.2 Section L.pdf	
 Item 11 Warrants (3).pdf	