

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

March 8, 2021

Remote meeting via Zoom

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 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, Libby Lewiecki, Liza O'Reilly, Michelle Ayer, Nes Correnti, Jennifer Benham

Central Office Present: Paul Austin

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 February 22, 2021
- b. Discussing strategy related to collective bargaining negotiations with HEA Units A, C, and the Administrators' Association

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 – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

The meeting entered into Executive Session at 6:02.

3. Chair Ni reconvened the meeting at 7:00 PM. Chair 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, James LaBillois, Suzanne Vinnes, John Ferris, Susan D'Amato

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

4. **Actions from the Executive Session**

Chair Ni noted that Mary Power, Board of Selectmen, had joined the meeting to vote on new contracts that have an impact to the town budget.

- 4.1 Liza O'Reilly advised that an agreement had been reached for a three year contract (2020-2023) with the Administrators' Association, which includes the Assistant Principals, Department Directors, Counseling Director, and Athletic Director. Terms of the agreement are retroactive to July 1, 2020. Ms. O'Reilly provided an overview of the key provisions of the agreement.

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

Voted: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Administrators' Association for a successor contract for the 2020-2023 school years.

Michelle Ayer – aye
Jennifer Benham - aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Carlos AF Da Silva – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye
Kerry Ni – aye
Mary Power (Selectmen) - aye

- 4.2 Liza O'Reilly advised that an agreement had been reached for a three year contract (2020-2023) with the Hingham Education Association Unit C (Custodian and Maintenance Workers). Terms of the agreement are retroactive to July 1, 2020. Ms. O'Reilly provided an overview of the key provisions of the agreement.

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

Voted: To approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the HEA Unit C, Custodian and Maintenance Workers, for a successor contract for the 2020-2023 school years.

Michelle Ayer – aye
Jennifer Benham - aye
Nes Correnti – aye
Carlos AF Da Silva – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Liza O'Reilly – aye

Kerry Ni – aye
Mary Power (Selectmen) - aye

- 4.3 Liza O'Reilly provided an overview of a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association (HEA) Unit A regarding the Reopening of Schools. Ms. O'Reilly provided an overview of the key provisions of the agreement. June Gustafson, President of the Hingham Education Association, advised that the HEA met and voted to ratify the Memorandum of Agreement.

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

Voted: To approve the March 1, 2021 changes to the Memorandum of Agreement with the HEA Unit A regarding the reopening of schools for the 2020-2021 School Year.

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

Chair Ni thanked all those that were involved in the negotiation process and stated that she appreciated the collaborative nature of the process.

5. **Approval of Minutes**

- 5.1 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 February 22, 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

- 5.2 On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,
It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on February 23, 2021 (Joint Meeting with the Board of Selectmen).

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

- 5.3 On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,
It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on February 23, 2021
(Linden Ponds Coffee with the Superintendent)

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

- 5.4 On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,
It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on February 25, 2021
(Hingham Unity Council)

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

6. Questions and Comments.

Chair Ni provided time for questions or comments topics that were not included on the School Committee agenda. Community member Leslie Wittmann requested additional detail on the meeting that Dr. Austin held with the residents of Linden Ponds. Community member Heather Chisholm read a statement advocating for a faster reopening of schools for the secondary school students. Rebecca Nidositko questioned how many people were attending the meeting and asked whether the administration was preparing for a full opening of schools in the fall. Julie Donovan asked that grades 6-12 be brought back no later than April 26, 2021 and expressed concerns about the mental health impacts of remote learning. Kristen Pringle shared examples of inconsistent infection control practices within the schools and requested that the schools have a set of consistent guidelines to follow across the district to ensure equity. Matt Cosman shared quotes from experts at the DESE meeting that was held on March 5 that supported the return to in-person learning and requested dates for the return of the Middle and High School students.

7. Superintendent's Report

7.1 Dr. Austin shared a presentation that reviewed the following topics:

- COVID-19 metrics for the Town of Hingham
- Positive Test Cases within the Hingham Public Schools
- Quarantine Cases within the Hingham Public Schools
- COVID-19 Testing data among Hingham Public Schools staff
- COVID-19 Pool Testing for Students
- Educator and Support Staff COVID-19 Testing
- The increase in in-person learning.
 - As of 3/15, Grades 1-5 will attend full days, 5 days per week.
 - Parents can opt for remote learning. Remote teachers will provide core instruction to the students who opt for remote learning.
 - Hingham Middle School and High School Advisory Committees are meeting to develop proposals for increased in-person learning.
 - In anticipation of the proposals, Dr. Austin requested an additional School Committee meeting on 3/15 to review the proposals for the increased in-person learning for the secondary schools.

Community member Valerie Robin requested that there be a listing of community members that log on to the Zoom Webinar and requested that there be a more viable option for secondary students to attend increased in-person learning.

7.2 Director of K-12 Social Studies, Andy Hoey, provided an update on an initiative called the Student-Led Action Civics Project. This is a state led program to enhance civics education that is being implemented at Grade 8. The goal of the project is for students to explore civics issues by researching and developing an action plan on a state or local civics issue that interests them. Students will be reaching out to decision-makers within the town for support. Carlos Da Silva questioned whether the state was providing any funds to support the project. Director Hoey advised that there is no direct funding to the school districts but there may be a state-wide civics fair as part of the project. Liza O'Reilly questioned the size of the groups. Director Hoey advised that the projects were classroom-based.

7.3 Dr. Austin provided an update from the South Shore Educational Collaborative that included their enrollment projections. The FY22 Budget for the SSEC will be voted on in April. Dr. Austin advised that the entire budget was included in the School Committee packet.

8. Communications

8.1 Student Communications: Student representative Carly Kennedy advised 3/8 was the midpoint of term three. The High School celebrated inclusion day on March 3 to promote inclusion and positivity. On March 6, the drama club performed a virtual performance via Zoom for their annual festival. A mask and sanitizer drive was held for the homeless. The Math Team placed first in their division and will advance to the playoffs. A virtual conference will be held with students and the School Committee to obtain student input on the return to school.

8.2 Superintendent's communications: Dr. Austin advised that a petition requesting the full return to school, signed by approximately 600 people, had been received and thanked those that signed the petition.

8.3 Other Communications: None

9. Unfinished Business

None

10. New Business

- 10.1 Dr. Austin read a memo from John Ferris regarding a new bus lease for FY 2022. The HPS lease for 22 School buses will come to term at the end of this fiscal year. A new warrant item has been submitted for this year's Town Meeting for a majority vote to allow the school system to enter into another five year lease for regular school transportation buses. The annual cost is expected to be \$268,380 for the new contract. Due to the lead time required to procure the buses, HPS needs to commit to DATTCO so the buses can be ordered and delivered before school starts in September. Kerry Ni questioned if the buses had seatbelts, which they do not. Chair Ni also questioned if there will be sufficient buses to transport the children for the Extended School Year program. Mr. Ferris advised that he did not anticipate a loss of service.

On a motion by Carlos A F Da Silva and seconded by Nes Correnti,
It was

Voted: To authorize the Director of Business and Support Services to issue a purchase order to lease, for five years, twenty-one (21) Big Yellow Regular School Buses to DATTCO in an amount not to exceed \$275,000 annually subject to a majority vote approval by town meeting which authorizes the schools to enter into a five year lease and an appropriation by town meeting which provides funding for the lease.

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

- 10.2 Dr. Austin reviewed a presentation that provided an update on the FY22 Budget. The presentation included:
- A review of the budget guiding principles.
 - A summary of changes to the Budget since 1/7/21. The preliminary budget after changes is now \$61,362,019, which is an increase of 8.16%.
 - A summary of the changes to the budget
 - An overall view of the changes, by account
 - A review of all budget adjustments

Chair Ni advised that she would like to provide additional information to the community regarding the FY22 Budget, by way of Op-eds. Chair Ni asked if the Committee had any concerns as she would be speaking on behalf of the Committee. There were no concerns raised by the other Committee members.

Community member Joshua Ross questioned if positions for a Fine Arts Director and Special Education Director could be considered now that the overall preliminary budget figure has decreased. Chair Ni advised that the budget is focusing on recovery. Liza O'Reilly added that the Special Education positions are in the budget. Rebecca Silver expressed that the positions should have been added at the beginning of the budget process and that the schools only asked for the minimum. Michelle Ayer added that the strategic plan will be instrumental to guide the filling of those positions. Laura Accettella requested that additional teaching positions be added as a result of the decrease in the preliminary budget. John Ferris advised

that additional funds have not been found and that the positions can be addressed with the overall strategic plan. Nes Correnti added that the number of proposed teachers is not being reduced, but the savings have resulted from new teachers that are lower on the salary scale.

11. Subcommittee and Project Reports

Michelle Ayer advised that there was a meeting with the METCO families on March 3, 2021. On March 10, 2021, METCO is running a panel discussion on racial segregation in suburban school districts. Michelle Ayer and Kerry Ni will host a forum for High School students to provide feedback on the school reopening plan. The High School school council has been meeting to help advise on the school reopening plan.

Jen Benham advised that the Foster School Council meeting was held to collaborate on ideas for the School Improvement Plan. The next meeting for the School Council will be May 5. The Foster School PTA will meet on March 18.

Nes Correnti advised the Finance Subcommittee met on March 2, 2021. There are signed warrants included in the School Committee packet.

Carlos Da Silva advised that the Plymouth River School Council met on March 8. The PTO purchased picnic tables and games for outdoor use. For the Capital and Facilities Subcommittee, Habeeb is on board to provide an update for the school master plan.

Libby Lewiecki advised that she attended the South School Council meeting on February 24, 2021. The schools are working out the logistics for their full return. The next meeting will be on March 24, 2021. The Community Outreach Subcommittee had a Coffee with the residents of Linden Ponds and one is being planned for the Senior Center for April 5, 2021.

Liza O'Reilly advised that the Master Plan draft is being presented to the Planning Board on March 8, 2021. There is a link to the draft on the Town website. There will be a public hearing, the date of which is still to be determined. The Salary & Negotiations Subcommittee will meet on March 9, 2021 with Unit A (teachers) and March 11, 2021 with Bus Drivers. The Middle School school council will meet on March 15. Ms. O'Reilly has been attending the Middle School Advisory Committee meetings regarding the reopening of school. Ms. O'Reilly requested that a budget and fee discussion be added to the March 15 School Committee meeting.

Kerry Ni advised that she will be scheduling the next Policy Subcommittee meeting. Chair Ni congratulated the 11th Grade History students on their virtual History Day presentations.

12. Items Not Reasonably Known within 48 Hours in Advance: None

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

It was

Voted: To Adjourn at 8:34PM

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jennifer Benham - aye

Nes Correnti – aye
































Carlos AF Da Silva – aye
Libby Lewiecki – aye
Liza O’Reilly – aye
Kerry Ni – aye

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34PM.

Respectfully Submitted By:
Libby Lewiecki

Documents Included:

Name ↑

 Agenda_2021_0308.pdf 
 Annotated Agenda_2021_0308.pdf 
 Item 4.1 FINAL MOA Administrators Association 2020-2023_ 3.7.21 (4).DOCX 
 Item 4.2 Final MOA_Unit C Successor Contract 2020-2023_Approved 2021_0308.DOCX 
 Item 4.3 Final MOA Unit A Phase III Reopening_ Approved_2021_0308.DOCX 
 Item 5.1 02-22-21 Minutes.pdf 
 Item 5.2 02_23_2021 Joint meeting SC_BOS minutes.pdf 
 Item 5.3 02_23_2021 Coffee with Linden Ponds.pdf 
 Item 5.4 02_25_21 Minutes_Unity Council.pdf 
 Item 7.1 Superintendents Update_2021_0308 School Committee Meeting ver 3.pdf 
 Item 7.2 Community Letter HMS Action Civics.pdf 
 Item 7.3a SSEC Update to School Committee.pdf 
 Item 7.3b SSEC FY 2022 Proposed Budget.pdf 
 Item 10.1 Bus Lease Recommendation.pdf 
 Item 10.2 FY 22 - Budget Update 3.8.21.pdf 
 Warrants Signed.pdf 