

## MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 6, 2021

### Remote meeting via Zoom Webinar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chair Kerry Ni at which time she read the following statement regarding remote meetings.

CHAIR COMMENT: This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please 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 participating remotely: Chair Kerry Ni, Secretary Nes Correnti, Liza O'Reilly, Carlos DaSilva, Jen Benham, and Tim Dempsey

Members absent at this time: Michelle Ayer

Central Office Members participating remotely: Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas

Visitors: There was no sign in as this was a remote meeting.

#### **Adjourn to Executive Session:**

On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Nes Correnti,

It was **voted**: to enter into Executive Session and to reconvene in Open Session, for the purposes of:

1. To discuss a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association (HEA) Unit A regarding the reopening of schools
2. To receive an update on the Sustainable Budget Task Force discussion of collective bargaining agreements for all units
3. To approve the minutes of the Executive Session of November 15, 2021 the public discussion of which would be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position.

Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O'Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

#### **Return to Open Session:**

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting back to order at 7:02 PM, and again read the above statement regarding remote meetings.

Members participating remotely: Chair Kerry Ni, Vice-Chair Michelle Ayer, Secretary Nes Correnti, Liza O'Reilly, Carlos DaSilva, Jen Benham, and Tim Dempsey

Central Office Members participating remotely: Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas, Assistant

Superintendent Dr. James LaBillois, Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris, Executive Director of Student Services Dr. Suzanne Vinnes, and Director of Human Resources Susan D'Amato.

Guests participating remotely: Student Advisory Committee Student Representative to the School Committee Elijah Webber, Athletic Director Jim Quatromoni

Harbor Media indicated that they would be recording the meeting, as well as Jenna Manto from the Hingham Journal.

#### **Action from Executive Session:**

Liza O' Reilly explained the conditions of the agreement with the HEA.

- On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer  
It was **voted**: To ratify the Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association (HEA) Unit A regarding the reopening of schools

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O'Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

#### **Approval of Minutes**

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on November 15, 2021

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O'Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

#### **Questions and Comments from the Community Included:**

- A comment thanking District Leadership for the response during the previous week regarding an incident related to racism. A statement acknowledging that more needs to be done and an offer to partner with the Hingham Unity Council.
- A question about the progress of the Equity Team's work and clear policy guidelines on how district addresses bias-related incidents.
- A comment about overnight field trip policy.
- A request for School Committee meetings to be held in person. Also requested a list of those participating on the call.

## **Superintendent's Report**

Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas gave a report that included:

- Thanked Ms. Sutton and Ms. Vanderhoven on their statements regarding the racist and ableist incident at the school. Acknowledged several letters and communications received regarding the incident as well. Stated the district's desire to work with community organizations to continue the work to address bias related incidents. The goal is for everyone walking into an HPS building to feel as if they belong. Spoke with the district's Equity and Inclusion coach, Dr. Darnisa Amante-Jackson about doing a community-wide discussion. The district has made some progress and will continue the work. Will work to communicate progress as well.
- An increase in the number of positive cases of COVID-19 in HPS. Students who were close contacts in school can be part of the test and stay program. Dr. Maestas acknowledged the great work of the HPS nurses.
- An introduction of the new Media and Communications Specialist Heather Kashman.

## **Student Communications**

Student Representative Elijah Webber stated that the Student Advisory Council will be holding a meeting next week. He also reported that the students attended a leadership event with speakers from Core Trainings and that the students found the workshop impactful and relevant.

## **Communications**

Kerry Ni stated that the School Committee has received a number of messages regarding the incident last week involving racist/ableist language asking for the District to do more, as well as offers to help, and parents looking for more resources.

Kerry Ni stated there have been requests from the community about engaging in dialogue with the School Committee. Kerry noted that the School Committee meetings are meetings held in public for the purpose of conducting School Committee business; they are not public hearing meetings. The School Committee does like to hear feedback therefore will be bringing back the office hours for the public to ask questions and engage in dialogue.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Superintendent Search Process**

Chair of the Superintendent Screening Committee Liza O'Reilly updated the Committee, reading a report from the Superintendent Search Screening Committee naming the following four candidates as finalists for the position: Dr. Margaret Adams, Dr. Scott Carpenter, Dr. Jennifer Curtis, and Dr. Andrea Schwamb. The resumes will be posted online. The Screening Committee reviewed 20 completed applications and subsequently invited six applicants to an interview. Liza O'Reilly thanked the 11 members of the Screening Committee for the many hours they devoted, including Nathan Tesler, the student representative, for his in-depth research and perspectives. The School Committee will meet on December 9, 2021 to review next steps in the process with NESDEC (the New England School Development Council).

On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti

It was **voted**: To accept the report from the Screening Committee

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O’Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

### **Strategic Plan Process**

Dr. Gary Maestas stated that he and Dr. LaBillois will be meeting with the consultants this week and will be reporting back to the Committee thereafter, including a full detailed calendar of the process.

### **New Business**

#### **Receive notification of John Ferris’ retirement**

The School Committee acknowledged having received notification from Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris of his intent to retire at the end of the school year. The Committee members thanked Mr. Ferris for his years of service and dedication to the Hingham Public Schools.

#### **Winter Coaching Recommendations**

The Committee noted having received the memo from Athletic Director Jim Quatromoni detailing Winter Coaching assignments.

#### **2021 MCAS Results**

Assistant Superintendent Dr. James LaBillois shared the results of the 2021 MCAS for Hingham Public Schools. His review included assessment results and benchmark comparisons for all students, high needs students, and those for students with disabilities. Dr. LaBillois also noted that the MCAS administration in the spring of 2021 was significantly different than in previous years, so the data being reviewed should not be used to compare data to performance in previous years.

Dr. LaBillois noted the district is focusing its top priorities: Supporting the full return to in-person learning (routines, classroom, structure); Year 1 implementation of newly designed HTSS academic structures, student screening, interventions and monitoring; The social-emotional health and wellness of all students; Belonging and reestablishing the school as a connected community.

Questions were asked by committee members. Curriculum Directors Dave Jewett and Mary Andrews were also present remotely to assist in the discussion of the data.

#### **HHS Crew Training Trip**

Hingham High School Rowing Association President Sonya Claridge was present remotely along with Hingham High School Crew Program Director Marika Kopp. Ms. Claridge explained the details of the trip which is to take place in Florida in February of 2022. The School Committee asked questions about the trip, specifically if the facility has a vaccination requirement. Ms. Kopp assured that they will make sure to take all safety precautions on the trip. The Committee also asked about the cost of the trip and if there would be fundraising. Ms. Claridge stated that they normally fundraise for this trip to provide financial assistance to those who need it.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To approve the HHS Crew Training Trip to occur during February break 2022 subject to the policy to be determined, to follow all Hingham Public Schools overnight travel policies

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O’Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

### **Girls’ Hockey Trip to Vermont/ Boys’ Hockey Trip to New Hampshire**

Athletic Director Jim Quatromoni explained that both the girls and the boys’ trips are ones that have been taken many times in previous years. He stated that they normally fundraise to offset the cost. He stated that this is a one-night stay and that after the games, the students will not be leaving the hotels. The School Committee asked about vaccination requirements. Mr. Quatromoni stated that vaccination is not a requirement at these facilities, but that they have a high vaccination rate on both teams and will be following all safety protocols put in place. The School Committee discussed options such as having the athletes test before they go, after they return, or both. Dr. Maestas clarified that since this is a school event, the students would qualify for the Test and Stay program.

Public comments included:

- A comment that a trip policy should not distinguish between the number of nights, as a trip for several nights was just approved
- A statement that even those that are vaccinated can get COVID, so testing may make more sense than a vaccination requirement
- A suggestion to leave the testing up to parents

On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Carlos DaSilva

It was **voted**: To approve the girls and boys varsity ice hockey teams’ travel to Vermont and New Hampshire in December of 2021 with the condition that the participating students all complete health checks before and after the trips

Liza O’Reilly amended the motion to add that the unvaccinated students be enrolled in the test and stay program.

The amended motion was seconded by Tim Dempsey

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - abstain  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O’Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

### **Sustainability Director**

Committee member Carlos DaSilva who is also a member of the Climate Action Committee, shared a draft resolution and asked the School Committee to support the resolution to call on the Hingham Select Board and Advisory Committee to include a Sustainability Director position in the FY 2023 budget.

After a discussion the Committee members agreed that it would be inappropriate to bring this resolution forward at this time, and Carlos DaSilva withdrew the resolution.

### **Homeschool Application**

Dr. Gary Maestas stated that he had reviewed the homeschool application in the Committee's packet and recommends approval for the students in grade 1 and grade 3.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To approve the homeschool application as recommended by the Superintendent

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O'Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

### **COVID-19 Policy**

Committee member Jen Benham, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee explained the recommendations and changes to the overnight field trip policy. Chair Kerry Ni explained that this is a first read of the suggested changes and there would not be a vote on this tonight.

Questions and Comments from the public included:

- A comment that when making statements regarding COVID, members should cite where that information is coming from
- A question asking if students who have recovered from COVID would be exempt from a vaccination policy
- A concern that many students may be eliminated from the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, and a suggestion that testing be required instead of vaccination
- A concern of students' social-emotional health if they are left out

Chair Ni stated that the Policy Subcommittee has a meeting on December 13<sup>th</sup> and will continue to review the policy.

### **Subcommittee and Project Reports/Warrants Signed**

- Michelle Ayer asked the chair to agree to allow Tim Dempsey to Chair the Special Education Subcommittee, and Chair Ni agreed.
- Jen Benham reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on December 1<sup>st</sup> and agreed to review school handbooks.
- Nes Correnti reported that the Finance, Capital & Facilities Subcommittee met about Budget presentations and stated that there are warrants in the packet. She also stated that the Sustainable Budget Committee is meeting once a week.
- Tim Dempsey reported that SEPAC recently had Rights and Responsibility training.
- Carlos Da Silva reported that the Climate Action Plan Committee and the South School Council both have meetings this week.
- Liza O'Reilly reported that the Wellness Subcommittee will be meeting this week and that the Salary and Negotiations Subcommittee will be scheduling a meeting around the Superintendent Search dates.

- Kerry Ni reported the Plymouth River School Council will be meeting next week. She also stated that she is part of group that has met with Mark Thorell from the Recreation Department to discuss the fields along with John Ferris, Nes Correnti, Viki Donlan from the Recreation Department, and Select Board member Bill Ramsey.

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

none

**Adjourn:**

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To adjourn at 10:41 PM

Michelle Ayer – aye  
Jen Benham- aye  
Nes Correnti – aye  
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye  
Tim Dempsey – aye  
Liza O’Reilly - aye  
Kerry Ni – aye

Respectfully Submitted  
By:  
Nes Correnti

Documents Included:

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 [9.3 2021 MCAS REPORT \(12.6.21\)](#) 

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 [9.3 2021 MCAS REPORT \(12.6.21\).pdf](#) 

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 [12.06.21 Agenda Revised.pdf](#) 

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 [12.06.21 Agenda.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 4.1 11.15.2021 Minutes.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.1 Retirement Notice to School Committee November 22, 2021.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.2 Winter Coaching Recommendations.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.4 HHS Crew Training Trip.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.4 HINGHAM HIGH CREW RANKED.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.5 Girls' Ice Hockey Trip.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.6 Boys' Ice Hockey Trip.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.7 DRAFT Resolution.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.7 Sustainability Director Argument School Committee.docx.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.8 Homeschool Application.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 9.9 Hingham Public Schools General \(Interim\) Policy on COVID-Related Issues\\_draft.pdf](#) 

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 [Item 10 Warrants signed.pdf](#) 

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