

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

December 20, 2021

Remote meeting via Zoom Webinar

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:30 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, Vice-Chair Michelle Ayer, Secretary Nes Correnti, Liza O'Reilly, Jen Benham, and Tim Dempsey

Members not present: Carlos DaSilva

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

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 Michelle Ayer

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

- 2.1. To discuss Substitute pay rate and personnel issues
the public discussion of which would be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position.
- 2.2 To approve the minutes of the Executive Session of December 6, 2021

Michelle Ayer - aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – 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 7:06 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 Vinnos, and Director of Human Resources Susan D'Amato.

Harbor Media indicated that they would be recording the meeting.

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 December 6, 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

- Carlos DaSilva requested making changes to the minutes of December 6, 2021. A discussion followed and there was an amended motion:
- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Carlos DaSilva
It was **voted**: To re-approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on December 6, 2021 as amended

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

- 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 December 9, 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

- 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 December 14, 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

- 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 December 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:

There were no comments or questions at this time.

Superintendent’s Report

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

- Information about the recent increase in COVID cases in the schools, noting the information will now be sent out every Friday for the time being
- The test-and-stay program and issues with CIC and a backlog with testing due to staffing shortages
- The plan to run another round of data of vaccination information to obtain the data of students in the ages 5-11 range
- Discrepancies within the database of vaccine information and the plan going forward to ask for parents to volunteer vaccination information if their child’s name does not appear in the database
- The plan to obtain vaccination information from teaching staff within the coming weeks

Student Communications

Student Representative Elijah Webber was not able to be present, but he sent a statement to Chair Kerry Ni. Elijah’s statement thanked the School Committee for providing students with the opportunity to participate in the Superintendent Interview process. He also noted they are working towards a new accessibility initiative with the student body. The first phase will be the creation of a direct communication in order to allow students to voice concerns, problems, grievances and opinions.

Communications

- There was a question as to the number of people on the call. Chair Ni answered that there were 37 attendees in addition to the panelists.

Unfinished Business

Superintendent Search Process

Chair Kerry Ni reviewed the events of the previous week, during which all four candidates spent a day visiting the schools, meeting district leadership, faculty, staff and students, and participated in public interviews. She stated that the School Committee has a meeting tomorrow evening to discuss the next steps in the process, and thanked everyone who helped with the success of the busy days last week.

Strategic Plan Process

Dr. Maestas shared a timeline to review the next steps in the process of the development of the Strategic Plan and explained the opportunities for those in the community to get involved. He stated that a survey will go out in early February, followed by the forming of focus groups of stakeholders.

New Business

Potential changes to the town Naming Bylaw

Chair Kerry Ni noted the correspondence received from Phil Edmundson who is the chair of the Hingham Naming By-Law Committee asking for input from the School Committee regarding proposed article 40. This proposed article relates to the naming of public building and public lands. Liza O'Reilly and Kerry Ni shared comments on the by-law regarding boards being responsible for the building or lands participating in the Select Board review and a diversity/equity/inclusion component to the updates. Also, questions for the Naming Bylaw committee regarding their review process and whether they are submitting a warrant article for this coming town meeting. Chair Ni stated that if the other committee members give feedback, she would put it into a document, noting that the deadline to give the feedback is January 4, 2022.

School Committee Representative for the School Facilities Master Plan Review Committee

Committee member Nes Correnti is Chair of the Finance/Capital & Facilities Subcommittee and explained that back in 2005 there was a review of a school and facilities master plan that has been developed by Habib and Associates which included a member of the School Committee among the many community members that participated in the review. Nes Correnti stated that they are looking for a School Committee member to go through this process again, and Jen Benham is a member of the Finance/Capital & Facilities Subcommittee and would be a good representative for the School Committee to take part in this review.

School Building Committee Member Ray Estes had questions about when the study was involved and what school facilities were looked at in the study. Nes Correnti explained that the study is in progress and Habib and Associates is working with John Ferris. John Ferris clarified which facilities were looked at as part of this study and that Habib and Associates has presented a draft of the report.

Fields Task Force

Chair Kerry Ni stated that last year the Recreation Department had commissioned a study done by Weston & Sampson and the recommendation was to make the control of all the town fields under one entity. She stated that Recreation Director Mark Thorell along with Doug Foley and Katie Hartman have recognized needs in our town athletic assets, and noted that she and Nes Correnti have had informal discussion with Mark Thorell and Select Board member Bill Ramsey and Town Manager Tom Mayo about forming a group to be formed to oversee these needs and move things forward. Chair Ni stated that one of the top priorities identified are the tennis courts at the High School. Ray Estes, a member of

the School Building Committee commented on the courts' condition and stated the importance of investing in assets such as these.

School Committee Office Hours

Committee member Tim Dempsey discussed having School Committee Office Hours via Zoom, as was done in the past to give members of the Community to ask questions, or voice concerns. Tim Dempsey and Michelle Ayer would host the first session. Michelle Ayer stated that they will hold a 90-minute session during the week after school vacation. There was a question from the community as to how people will know how to join the meeting. Michelle Ayer stated that the Zoom information will be posted on social media and the HPS website.

Wellness Subcommittee Request for Information

Wellness Subcommittee Chair Liza O'Reilly shared a letter that the Wellness Subcommittee prepared to send to Booster Groups and PTO groups to collect financial and operating information. PTO President Joshua Ross was on the call and asked which groups would be receiving this request. Chair Kerry Ni explained the policy that defines the requirement for groups to provide information of fundraising and how they contribute to the School Committee. Other fundraising groups outside Hingham Public Schools would include Hingham Sports Partnership (HSP), Hingham Education Foundation (HEF), Special Needs Athletic Partnership (SNAP), Hingham Pride Project and Hingham Unity Council.

Homeschool Application

Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas stated that he has reviewed the homeschool application for a student in grade 10 that is in the packet, and that he finds the application meets the guidelines therefore recommending approval.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To approve the homeschool application for the student in grade 10, 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

Subcommittee and Project Reports/Warrants Signed

- Michelle Ayer reported that the School Building Committee is meeting weekly, and she thanked Interim Principal Jen Arnold, Dr. Maestas, and Dr. LaBillois for their work with the Committee. She also stated that the monthly meeting for METCO families with the Superintendent will be held during the first week in January.
- Jen Benham reported that the Policy Subcommittee met last week, and that the Foster School PTO and Foster School Council will meet in January.

- Nes Correnti gave an update on work of the Sustainable Budget Taskforce.
- Carlos Da Silva reported that the South School Council met on December 8th, and that the Climate Action Committee recently met.
- Tim Dempsey reported that the Hingham Education Foundation had a recent meeting, but that he was unable to attend due to the interviews for the Superintendent Search.
- Liza O'Reilly reported that the Salary and Negotiations Subcommittee will meet with HEA Unit B to discuss return to school issues, and the subcommittee will preliminarily discuss preparing for the new superintendent agreement. She also stated that the Wellness Subcommittee will need to schedule a meeting to discuss the letter going out to the Booster and PTO groups. She also stated that the Middle School Council will be meeting in January.
- Kerry Ni reported that she attended the Plymouth River School Council. She noted that the testing and contact tracing is overwhelming for the nursing staff. She also noted a discussion on the Toolbox program; they recognize the need to familiarize families on the program.

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

Dr. Maestas address that there is a difficulty attracting substitutes, as the pay doesn't seem to be comparable to other districts. He stated that Human Resources Director Susan D'Amato will do a study and evaluate the rate.

Comments from the public included Barbara Lynch asking if the suggested rates are for teachers after their experience grace period is completed. She also suggested doing training for substitutes. Heather Chisholm asked about why the teacher absences are so high.

- A motion was made by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer to increase the substitute teacher daily payrate from \$105 a day to \$125 a day, effective January 3, 2022 for the 2021-2022 school year.
An amended motion was made by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer:
It was **voted**: To increase the new teacher substitutes daily payrate from \$93 a day to \$113 a day and to increase the experienced substitutes daily payrate from \$105 a day to \$125 a day, effective January 3, 2022, to conclude at the end of the 2021-2022 school year.

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

Adjourn:

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

It was **voted**: To adjourn at 8:47 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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-  2021 HHS Tennis Courts 
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-  12.20.21 Agenda_2nd revision.pdf 
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-  12.20.21 Agenda.pdf 
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-  Item 4.1 12.06.2021 Minutes.docx.pdf 
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-  Item 4.2 12.09.21 Minutes.docx.pdf 
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-  Item 4.3 12.14.21 Minutes.docx.pdf 
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-  Item 4.4 12.15.21 Minutes.docx.pdf 
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-  Item 8.2 Strategic planning Calendar 
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-  Item 8.2 Strategic planning Calendar.pdf 
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-  Item 9.1 ART40.pdf 
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-  Item 9.1 Message from Naming By-law Committee.pdf 
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-  Item 9.1 Naming By-Law Committee Charge.pdf 
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-  Item 9.5 Booster Group Information Letter.pdf 
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-  Item 9.6 Homeschool Application.pdf 