

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

November 15, 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, 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, and Assistant Superintendent 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:

- The Hingham School Committee will enter into executive session pursuant to MGL c. 30A, § 21(a)(1) to discuss the reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than professional competence, of an individual, or to discuss the discipline or dismissal of, or complaints or charges brought against, a public officer, employee, staff member or individual. (Three Open Meeting Law Complaints filed November 4, 2021 by Sarah Gordon, November 4, 2021 by Barbara Lynch, and November 8, 2021 by Kerry Erick).
- Discussing strategy related to negotiations with HEA Unit A for working conditions of the reopening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year, the public discussion of which may be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position
- To approve minutes of prior Executive Session held on September 8, 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

Return to Open Session:

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting back to order at 7:00 PM, and again read the above statement regarding remote meetings. Harbor Media indicated that they would be recording the meeting, as well as Jenna Manto from the Hingham Journal.

Chair Ni also suggested moving item 8.1 (the Foster School Update) to take place after item 3.1 and the Committee members agreed.

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, and Executive Director of Student Services Dr. Suzanne Vinnos.

Guests participating remotely: Advisory Committee members Vice Chair George Danis, Bob Curley, and Caitlyn Kirk;
Student Advisory Committee Student Representative to the School Committee Elijah Webber

Proposed Changes to the Town's Financial Policy

Advisory Committee member Bob Curley explained that the town's financial policy is reviewed every three years by the Advisory Committee and they are looking for input from other departments regarding proposed changes. Chair Kerry Ni shared a document on the screen highlighting the proposed changes as Bob Curley explained the reasons each change is being proposed. Advisory Committee members George Danis and Caitlin Kirk stated that they agreed with Bob Curley's review. School Committee members asked questions about some of the proposed changes: Liza O'Reilly suggested language changes on several items, Jen Benham asked clarifying question relating to emergency circumstance language, Nes Correnti asked if the impact of changing capital outlay capitalization policy was quantified, Kerry Ni made a comment regarding the language relating to financial management in emergency circumstances and proposed including language that states a collaborative review with School Committee, Select Board and Advisory Committee.

Community member Laura Accettella asked a question regarding a change related to unassigned fund balance.

Foster School Building Committee Update

Co-Chair of the School Building Committee Ray Estes was present remotely to provide an update. Mr. Estes reported that the Committee recently had environmental engineers at the site and they are compiling information that is required by the MSBA. He noted that the Committee recently conducted site visits of four schools in different phases of construction in Danvers, Marblehead, Carver, and Wareham and they have narrowed down their choices to four site layouts. Mr. Estes also reported that the hope is to select a site layout in December and then to proceed with a schematic design. He stated that the education staff were engaged in visioning sessions. Mr. Estes also reported that during the winter and spring the Committee will engage with the Conservation Commission to understand what conditions or restrictions may come up with permitting at the site. Nes Correnti asked about cost/benefit analysis of spaces in the design and Carlos DaSilva asked about considerations regarding Climate Action plans. The Committee thanked Mr. Estes for the update.

Community member Diane DeNapoli commented that she is supportive of the Committee looking at the space to assess special education needs.

Approval of Minutes

- Michelle Ayer made a motion to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on November 1, 2021, and seconded by Nes Correnti

Liza O'Reilly and Michelle Ayer suggested edits to the draft of the minutes

- On an amended motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on November 1, 2021 with additions mentioned herein tonight

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 question about how many people were on the School Committee call
- A question about when School Committee meeting may return to in-person format

Superintendent's Report

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

- COVID-19 Vaccination Update: Dr. Maestas stated that the current numbers show that 80% of the students at the High School have been vaccinated and the number of vaccinated students at the Middle School is 51%. He explained that in order to consider lifting the mask mandate, the data needs to be collected regarding the vaccination level of staff in the buildings.

Questions and Comments included:

- A comment regarding teaching acceptance, inclusion and tolerance
- A question asking when the mask mandate may be lifted
- A question regarding the plan to get the data regarding teachers' vaccination status
- A question about whether or not the schools may have a vaccination clinic similar to last year
- A question asking how the data regarding student vaccination status was obtained and verified
- Dr. Maestas acknowledged Hingham High School Athletic Director Jim Quatrmoni, who has been named MIAA Athletic Director of the Year.

Communications

none

Unfinished Business

Superintendent Search Process

Chair of the Superintendent Screening Committee Liza O'Reilly updated the Committee, reporting that they have finalized a candidate profile, and selected Glenn Mangurian as the at-large member of the community to be on the Screening Committee, as well as Nathan Tesler as the Student Representative on the Committee. She also reported that there was an update to the screening committee town representative, Christine Smith will replace Charlie Cristello. Liza reported that the Committee met on November 10th and hopes to schedule preliminary interviews in the coming weeks, and announce finalists during the month of December.

Strategic Plan Process

Dr. Maestas stated that they will be meeting with consultants during the next week to start the process and will share with the community opportunities for input through stakeholder group forums and surveys, as well as possibly having a zoom session. He stated that the calendar will be set up after the holidays. Dr. Maestas also stated that there were only two bidders on the RFP and he has worked with both companies, so he has reached out to the Ethics Commission and will be submitting a form acknowledging the fact that he has worked with them in the past. Dr. Maestas stated that he and Dr. LaBillois will be working to create a development committee to work on the plan and will be coming back to the School Committee with a recommended number of people needed for the committee.

2021-2022 School Committee Report Schedule

The Committee discussed the proposed report schedule and whether some of the reports could be condensed. Dr. Maestas noted the things on the schedule are to make sure that all areas are supported and to keep momentum. Michelle Ayer asked if some of the reports can be condensed or if anything seemed to be overburdensome. Dr. Maestas suggested that he speak with administrative staff and come back with a recommendation. The Committee did not vote on the schedule, and agreed to discuss it at a later meeting.

New Business

2021 Massachusetts Association of School Committees/Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents conference and delegate votes

Chair Kerry Ni stated that she attended the conference and that Michelle Ayer and Nes Correnti attended remotely. She also noted that Carlos DaSilva attended remotely as a delegate. Carlos DaSilva stated that the nine resolutions passed and he reviewed the resolutions and reported on the vote. Nes Correnti reported on the seminars that she attended at the conference which included topics about school schedules, strengthening School Committee/Superintendent partnerships, School Districts at the Center of Polarized Community Debates, Fidelity/Fiscal Cliffs and Future Focus, Promoting Students' Social/Emotional Well-being, and Equity in the Hiring Process, and she stated that she listened to a lecture given a Professor Cunningham of UMASS who is the author of "Dark Money and Politics." Michelle Ayer reported on the seminars she attended remotely which included topics such as Policy Updates (COVID focused), Deeper Learning Pathways for Student Well-Being and Resilience, Kerry Ni stated that she attended seminars on topics such as Culture Changes, Policy, Collective Bargaining, Wampanoag Welcome, Public Meetings, Legal Challenges /District Communication, and Amplifying Student Voices.

Budget Calendar

Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris reported that there was a meeting today of the Finance Subcommittee and the plan is to kick off the budget season in January. He stated that they have worked out a calendar and will be sending it out this week. Nes Correnti reported as the Chair of the Finance/Capital & Facilities Subcommittee that she will be scheduling an upcoming workshop with the full School Committee to prepare for the budget season.

Subcommittee and Project Reports/Warrants Signed

- Michelle Ayer reported that she, Dr. Maestas, and METCO Director Carols Perez held the monthly METCO families meeting via Zoom. She also reported that the Building Committee and the High School Council both have a meeting this week. Michelle introduced Elijah Webber who is the new student representative to the School Committee and Chair of the Student Advisory Committee.
- Jen Benham reported that the Policy Subcommittee of the School Committee had a recent meeting and discussed the field trip policy. She stated that the Policy Subcommittee will meet again on December 1st.
- Nes Correnti reported that the Finance/Capital & Facilities Subcommittee had a meeting today, and that the East School Council recently met.
- Tim Dempsey reported that the Hingham Education Foundation had a recent meeting and that they are planning events, and noted the Christmas Fundraiser which offers a discount for holiday cards.
- Liza O'Reilly reported that there was a Wellness Subcommittee meeting on November 9th at which she and Athletic Director Jim Quatromoni discussed a follow up to the self-study that was done last year, and discussed the athletic budget. She stated that there is an incident reporting form available online, which can be done anonymously for students to report incidents at athletic events.
- Kerry Ni reported that she, Nes Correnti, and John Ferris met with the Recreation Department regarding the fields. She also reported that the Plymouth River School Council had a recent meeting and the Plymouth River PTO also met. Kerry Ni also reported that a Grammy Award winning artist is working with PRS grade five to create a school song.

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 9:21 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:

 11.15.2021 Agenda.pdf 

 20211109085330025.pdf 

 Edits on 11/1 Meeting Minutes 

 Item 3. 1 Financial Policy - Approved 6-19-2018 Final Draft.pdf 

 Item 4.1 11.01.2021 Minutes.pdf 

 Item 8.4 CLA - Schedule of SC Reports - Sheet1.pdf 
