

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 11, 2022

Remote meeting via Zoom Webinar

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 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.

Harbor Media indicated they would be recording the meeting.

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 Director of Human Resources Susan D'Amato

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:

- To discuss Superintendent contract negotiations
- To discuss a Memorandum of Agreement with the Hingham Education Association Unit B regarding the reopening of schools for the 2021-2022 school year

The public discussion of which would be detrimental to the Committee's bargaining position

Return to Open Session:

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting back to order at 4:01 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

Members absent: none

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

Also present: Student Representative Elijah Webber

Action from Executive Session

Salary and Negotiations Subcommittee Chair Liza O'Reilly stated that they have come to an agreement with Dr. Margaret Adams for a contract from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2025 and explained that the contract provides that Dr. Adams will participate in the induction and mentoring program. Liza O'Reilly also explained a consulting agreement to compensate Dr. Adams for transitioning days that will take place prior to July 1st.

- On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer
It was **voted**: To approve the contract and consulting agreement with Dr. Margaret Adams

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

Liza O'Reilly discussed the Memorandum of Agreement with the HEA Unit B regarding the reopening of schools.

- On a motion by Liza O'Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer
It was **voted**: To ratify the Memorandum of Agreement with the HEA Unit B regarding the reopening of the 2021-2022 school year

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

Policy EBCFA – Face Coverings

Chair Kerry Ni explained the history of the policy and the DESE mandate, noting that the policy is in place until it is rescinded. She also noted that the School Committee has received advice from medical experts, educators, parents, students, and members of the community. She explained the DESE mandate expires on February 28th.

Dr. Maestas stated that this week he had a meeting with the HEA at which the union expressed concern that the students would be returning after vacation without masks, and were worried that it would cause a spike in COVID cases. He thanked the panel of experts that met this week to advise the School Committee.

Dr. Maestas also stated that today Hingham High School was granted a waiver to become mask optional as of Monday February 14th after having reached the 80% vaccination rate threshold.

Each School Committee member commented on the issue

- Michelle Ayer stated that she agrees with medical advice that masks are important indoors and that vaccines are the way to return to normalcy. She stated that the goal of the policy was to keep schools open and that she feels the Committee did a good job.
- Carlos DaSilva stated that he is in favor of rescinding the policy.
- Jen Benham stated that she is in favor of leaving masks up to choice and is in favor of rescinding the policy.
- Nes Correnti stated that the pandemic has caused so much infighting within the community and a great deal of stress on students. She stated that she is also comfortable to remove the mask mandate, following DESE guidelines, and made a plea for people to be patient and kind to one another.

- Liza O'Reilly stated that the School Committee has received many emails regarding the policy. She encouraged people to get vaccinated and for families to sign up for the at home tests.
- Tim Dempsey stated that he is in favor of rescinding the policy. He noted that there were 186 people on the call, and stated that he hopes going forward people will still continue to participate in these meeting for the many important issues facing the schools such as the budget, a new school building, and a new Superintendent.
- Kerry Ni stated that she does have some lingering concerns that after the vacation week, there may be an increase in cases.

Kerry Ni explained that the Committee was not hearing public comment, as they had comments on this issue a few days prior at the meeting on Monday, February 7th.

- Carlos DaSilva made a motion to rescind the mask policy effective February 28, 2022, adding that the superintendent and his leadership team would inform the School Committee if there is a need to return to a mask mandate
- Michelle Ayer requested to amend the motion.
- On an amended motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To rescind policy EBCFA effective Monday, February 14, 2022

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

Overnight Field Trip COVID Travel Policy

The School Committee discussed the policy regarding overnight field trips (Policy JJH, IJOA) and debated whether to require vaccinations, or testing before these trips. After a discussion, the Committee agreed to get more information to find out how changes in policy may affect upcoming trips, such as the eighth-grade trip. Chair Kerry Ni stated that they will bring the discussion back to the Policy Subcommittee.

Adjourn

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To adjourn at 5:34 PM

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


Respectfully Submitted By:
Nes Correnti

Documents Included:



 02.11.2022 Agenda revised.pdf 



 02.11.2022 Agenda.pdf 

 Draft_ Overnight Field Trip Travel Policy.pdf 


 EBCFA - Face Coverings.pdf 

 February 10, 2022 Health and Education Task Force Meeting.pdf 

 Hanover face_covering_policy_9121.pdf 

 HEA Mask Policy Feedback February 2022.pdf 

 Scituate Policy.pdf 

 weekly-covid-19-vaccination-report-2-10-2022.pdf 