

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 28, 2022

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.

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, Jen Benham, and Tim Dempsey

Members absent: Carlos DaSilva

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:

- To approve the minutes of the Executive Session held on February 11, 2022
- To discuss strategy related to negotiations of non-union individual contracts

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

Michelle Ayer - aye

Jen Benham - aye

Nes Correnti - aye

Tim Dempsey - aye

Kerry Ni - aye

Liza O'Reilly - aye

Return to Open Session:

Chair Kerry Ni called the meeting back to order at 7:13 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

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 Budget meeting held on January 20, 2022

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 January 24, 2022 as amended after a discussion regarding changes proposed by Liza O’Reilly

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 February 7, 2022

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 joint meeting with the Select Board and Advisory Committee held on February 8, 2022

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 joint meeting with the Student Advisory Committee held on February 10, 2022

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 February 11, 2022 as amended after a discussion regarding changes proposed by Kerry Ni

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 questions or comments at this time.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Maestas stated that the principals reported that things went well at the schools today, as it was the first day of face masks being optional for all schools. He noted that the district will continue to report the weekly COVID case numbers. He explained that the CDC has just changed their mask recommendations for school buses to be optional as well, and that recommendation is supported by DESE. Dr. Maestas also gave information about an upcoming vaccination clinic sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to be held at the Hingham Middle School on Saturday, March 5th from 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM. Lastly, Dr. Maestas thanked the Facilities Department for their work in ensuring that the snow and ice from the recent storm was cleared, making the walkways and buildings ready to welcome back students and staff this morning.

Student Communications

Student Representative Elijah Webber reported that things went well at the High School since the wearing of face masks has become optional. He stated that some students have decided to go without masks, and some are still choosing to wear one, but that students were transitioning well. Elijah also reported that on the evening of March 8th, there will be a performance of the All-Town Band to be held at the High School.

Other Communications

Kerry Ni reported that she was copied on several parent communications in support of the proposed FY '23 budget sent to the Select Board and Advisory Committee.

Unfinished Business

Budget Update

John Ferris explained the highlighted changes in the proposed budget. He explained that some of the changes are related to recent notifications of upcoming retirements, leave returns, or position changes. Mr. Ferris explained that there isn't a need to vote on these changes right now, as things will continue to change over the next few months, due to factors such as the ones discussed.

Strategic Plan Update

Dr. Maestas stated that a survey will be going out this week to stakeholders which will give feedback that will help the planning process.

Community member Laura Accettella asked if there are plans to share the data from the survey with individual schools as it pertains to them, to which Dr. Maestas stated that schools would be given the information gained from the survey.

Foster School Principal Search

Assistant Superintendent Dr. James LaBillois updated the Committee on the search for a new Foster School Principal. He reported that fourteen applications have been received, and eight candidates have been selected to come for an interview this week with the screening committee. He stated that they plan to identify semi-finalists at the end of this week and then there will be a second round of interviews in which the incoming Superintendent, Dr. Margaret Adams, will participate.

East Elementary School Principal Search

Dr. LaBillois updated the Committee on the search for a principal for the East Elementary School. He reported that the screening committee is in the process of reviewing resumes and will be planning preliminary interviews.

Director of Business and Support Services Search

Director of Human Resources, Susan D'Amato, updated the Committee regarding the search for a new Director of Business and Support Services, as John Ferris will be retiring. Ms. D'Amato reported that the Screening Committee will be meeting for training on Wednesday March 2nd, and that they are hoping candidates will be available to interview on March 14th or 15th. She stated that the goal is to have a candidate selected by the end of March.

New Business

Hingham Human Rights Commission

Kerry Ni stated that Committee member Tim Dempsey is willing to be the School Committee Representative on the Hingham Human Rights Commission and Elijah Webber stated the Student Council made a recommendation for Ava Lydotes, a sophomore at Hingham High School, to be the Student Representative on the Commission.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To recommend School Committee member Tim Dempsey and Student Representative Ava Lydotes to the Select Board for the Hingham Human Rights Commission

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye

Tim Dempsey – aye

Liza O'Reilly - aye

School Department Capital and Facilities Master Plan Committee

Chair Kerry Ni stated that the following people have volunteered to be part of the School Department Capital and Facilities Master Plan Committee:

School Committee representative and Chair: Jen Benham

School Building Committee representative: Ray Estes

Select Board appointee: Tom Mayo

Capital Outlay Committee representative: Eric Valentine

Community representative appointed by School Committee: Aisha Oppong and Dr. Ed Schreier

School Department staff resources: John Ferris and team

COVID Related Overnight Field Trip Travel Policy (File JJH, IJOA) third read

The Committee discussed the proposed policy and collectively agreed to make decisions regarding overnight field trips on a case by case basis, so no vote was taken on the proposed policy. The Committee agreed not to change field trip decisions made previously this year.

- Community member Erin Childs asked the Committee to consider changing previously made decisions, as the pandemic situation has changed since certain decisions were made regarding field trips.

School Committee Meeting Venues

The School Committee discussed the idea of returning to in-person meetings. The Committee agreed that the remote meetings have offered more accessibility and participation, but collectively agreed that a return to in person meetings would be preferable. The Committee also agreed that Subcommittees may want to continue to meet remotely if that works best for the members' schedules.

Questions and Comments from the community included:

- A comment that the remote meetings offer parents with young children the ability to attend

The Committee discussed getting in touch with Harbor Media to find out if it is possible to have remote participation along with in-person meetings, and agreed to discuss this at the next meeting.

Model UN Conference (April 2022)

Dr. Maestas explained that the proposed trip is to take place in April and organized by Boston College. Vice Chair Michelle Ayer clarified that this was a trip that had been previously approved, but the venue has changed, noting that Boston College does have a vaccination requirement for the students that attend.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To approve the proposed field trip for the Model UN Conference in April of 2022

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

- Jen Benham reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on February 18th and plans to meet again this week on March 2nd to discuss the MOU with the Hingham Police Department.
- Liza O'Reilly reported that the Hingham Middle School Council met, but she was unable to attend. She stated that the Wellness Subcommittee plans to meet this week on March 4th.
- Kerry Ni reported that she recently met with the Chairs of the Advisory Committee and the Select Board to discuss the proposed budget. She also stated that the Plymouth River School Council will meet next week.

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

New CDC and DESE Guidance re: masks on school buses

The Committee discussed the new guidance from the CDC regarding buses. Director of Business and Support Services Ferris stated that they are still disinfecting the buses each night and the drivers are keeping the windows open as well. The Committee agreed to accept the guidance and did not make any policy.

Carlos DaSilva reported that he participated in the selection of a House Doctor and explained that this is the selection of a contractor to perform preventative maintenance on school buildings. John Ferris explained that the selection process is the same as when a contractor is selected for large projects, but that the law allows for keeping a contractor on retainer to save time when repairs are needed. Carlos DaSilva stated that the two firms selected are Soco Tech and Habib and Associates.

Adjourn:

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti
It was **voted**: To adjourn at 8:25 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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-  02.28.2022 Agenda revised.pdf 
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-  02.28.2022 Agenda.pdf 
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-  FY23 Forecast v 1.2 Summary - 2.18.2022 Reduce Stabilization.pdf 
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-  Item 4.1 Minutes Budget Session III January 20.pdf 
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-  Item 4.2 Minutes of January 24.pdf 
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-  Item 4.3 Minutes of February 7.pdf 
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-  Item 4.4 Minutes of Joint meeting with SB and Advisory February 8.pdf 
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-  Item 4.5 Minutes of SC and SAC meeting February 10.pdf 
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-  Item 4.6 Minutes of February 11.pdf 
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-  Item 8.1 Hingham FY 2023 Budget Update 2.28.22.pdf 
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-  Item 9.2 School Master Plan Committee .pdf 
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-  Item 9.3 Draft_ Overnight Field Trip Travel Policy (1).pdf 
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-  Item 9.3 Draft_ Overnight Field Trip Travel Policy.pdf 
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-  Item 9.5 Eagle MUNC Model UN Conference.pdf 
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-  Item 10 Warrants.pdf 
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