

# MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 7, 2022

## Remote meeting via Zoom Webinar

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 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, 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 participating remotely: Student Representative Elijah Webber

Visitors: There was no sign in as this was a remote meeting, and there were 49 attendees at the start of the meeting.

### Approval of Minutes

- Nes Correnti requested to table the 1/24 minutes to next time
- 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 31, 2022

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

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Carlos DaSilva  
It was **voted**: To approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting held on February 1, 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 3, 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

**Questions and comments from the community included:**

- A question about the face mask policy, to which Kerry Ni stated that the issue was a later item on the agenda this evening and people should save those questions for when the matter is being discussed
- a questions asking when the School Committee will resume in-person meetings, to which Vice-Chair Michelle Ayer noted that the format of remote meetings adds to accessibility

**Presentation of the Administration’s proposed FY ’23 Operating Budget**

Kerry Ni called the public hearing to order at 7:10 PM.

Dr. Maestas reviewed the main points of the proposed budget and introduced Director of Business and Support Services, John Ferris to begin the presentation. John Ferris gave a presentation of the proposed operating budget.

Comments and questions about the proposed FY ’23 Operating Budget included:

- A question about enrollment as well as a concern regarding the number of children who have left the district
- A question about why there is not a more significant increase in the proposed special education budget
- A suggestion of doing some kind of audit of students that have left the district to find out how many return
- A question regarding the competitiveness of salaries of newly created positions
- A suggestion to teach data analyst skills at the High School
- A question as to whether the amount allocated for Special Education Professional Development is enough
- A question about the timeline of job posting for new positions such as Fine Arts Director
- A concern regarding a large number of students getting on the wait list at prospective colleges and a suggestion that this be addressed in the budget of the guidance department
- A question about sharing resources with the town for positions such as Payroll/Benefits or Data Analyst
- A question asking what is done to bring students back to the system
- A question about the CARES act

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To adjourn the public hearing at 8:19 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

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Maestas stated the Hingham Middle School will be applying for the mask waiver based on the vaccination rate, and that the district is still waiting for the approval of the waiver for the High School.

### **Communications**

Chair Kerry Ni stated that the School Committee had received many emails about the Face Covering Policy and explained that tonight's agenda has a first read of the policy as the Committee considers making changes. She suggested that the Committee consider another meeting for later in the week to do a second read of the policy.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### **Update on Student Progress**

Assistant Superintendent Dr. James LaBillois gave a presentation on student progress in the district which included:

- Details about achievement gaps
- Data detailing elementary reading skills
- Data showing the number of students receiving math support and social-emotional support in the district
- A comparison of the data collected in the fall of 2021 and the winter of 2022 in elementary reading skills
- A comparison of the data between the performance of last year's students and current students
- Next steps in addressing student needs

Comments and Questions following the presentation included:

- A concern regarding the data of progress made by lower elementary students
- A question about the number of students needing math support

#### **Strategic Plan Update**

Dr. Maestas updated the Committee reporting that three focus groups have been held so far and that the next will be on February 16<sup>th</sup> with town officials and the target date to put out the survey to stakeholders is February 28<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Recommendations of the Sustainable Budget Task Force**

Committee member Nes Correnti reviewed the recommendations of the task force noting that the task force organized its recommendations into two broad categories: those related to revenue and those related to expenditures and process improvements.

Comments and Questions from the community included:

- A concern regarding considering raising participation fees for students

#### **The Proposed FY 2022-2023 Budget**

The Committee members spoke in support of the proposed budget as presented.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti  
It was **voted**: To recommend the FY 2023 Budget to the Select Board and Advisory Committee, as proposed

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye

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

### **Foster School Update**

Ray Estes of the School Building Committee updated the School Committee, and shared preliminary design and site plans for the new Foster Elementary School. Mr. Estes mentioned that there will be a School Building Committee meeting this week. He also explained the funding request that will be needed for Town Meeting.

### **Student Communications**

Student Representative Elijah Webber presented data collected through a student survey to gather students’ opinions about wearing masks in school.

### **Policy EBCFA - FACE COVERINGS**

Chair Kerry Ni explained that this is the first read of the policy so no action would be taken this evening. She stated that at this time they would hear public comments on the issue.

- Rebecca Lynch voiced concern about speech and language difficulties for students due to mask wearing
- Lauren Burm asked about the student presentation of the data and asked if it would be available online, as well as advocating for an end to the mask mandate
- Barbie Lynch voiced concern for the social/emotional development of students due to wearing masks
- Heidi Castellani voiced concern for young students wearing masks
- Matt Cosman stated that he feels the High School could have had masks off sooner
- Julie Donovan asked about the process once a waiver is granted

Kerry Ni stated that she is meeting with union representation tomorrow, which is required prior to changing a policy. She also stated that some Committee members are meeting with a group of medical experts later this week for advice.

- Lindsey Kruzer stated that word out of the Governor’s office indicated that the mask mandate may not be extended after February 28<sup>th</sup>, and advocated for a mask-optional policy
- Erin Childs asked the names of the people on the panel of medical experts

The Committee agreed to have a meeting at the end of the week, on Friday February 11<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 PM.

### **New Business**

The Committee received notification of the appointments of: Kimberly Carvette, Long-term Substitute at East Elementary (effective 1/12/22); Norah Brink, Paraeducator at Foster Elementary (effective 1/31/22); Emerald Anderson, Office Assistant at Hingham High School (effective 2/7/22).

The Committee received notification of the resignations of: Christina Grande, Paraeducator at Plymouth River Elementary (effective 1/11/22); Patrick Murphy, Paraeducator at Hingham High School (effective 1/28/22).

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

- Michelle Ayer reported that there was a remote meeting last week for METCO families, and that Dr. Maestas and Susan D’Amato also attended. She also stated that there was a recent SEPAC meeting and a Strategic Planning meeting with the consultants.
- Jen Benham reported that the Policy Subcommittee met last week and that the Foster School Council had a recent meeting.

- Nes Correnti reported that the Sustainable Budget Taskforce presented to the Select Board and Advisory Committee with the Capital Outlay Committee, and that there are warrants in tonight’s meeting packet.
- Carlos DaSilva reported that the Climate Action Committee met recently.
- Tim Dempsey reported that the Special Education Subcommittee met during the previous week.
- Liza O’Reilly reported that the Salary and Negotiations Subcommittee met last week with HEA Unit B and that the Wellness Subcommittee is collecting reports from various fundraising groups.
- Kerry Ni reported that the Plymouth River School Council has an upcoming meeting.

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

**Adjourn:**

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Liza O’Reilly  
It was **voted:** To adjourn at 11:29 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:**

- [PDF 7.1 HPS COVID Impact UPDATE \(2.7.22\).pdf](#)
- [PDF Agenda 02.07.2022.pdf](#)
- [PDF FY23 Five-Year Preliminary Forecast v.1.1 - 02.03.2022.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 2.2 Minutes 1.31.22 with Capital Outlay.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 2.3 Minutes of Joint meeting with SB and Advisory 2.1.22.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 2.4 Minutes of Joint meeting with ACES 2.3.22.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 4.0 Hingham FY 2023 Budget Hearing Presentation 2.7.2022 Web Version .pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.5 Foster Project Slides for SC update 2.7.22.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.6 EBCFA - Face Coverings.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.6 Mask Policy Resources.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.6 SAC Survey Report.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.6 Timelines on masks changes in Cohasset, Norwell and Scituate.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 7.6 Urgency+of+Normal+Toolkit.pdf](#)
- [PDF Item 9 Warrants Signed.pdf](#)
- [W SBTf Recommendations.docx](#)