

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, February 4, 2020**

Members Present: Lori Hampsch, Chair
Alysia Butler, Vice Chair
Lisa Alberto
Craig Adams
Jennifer McKeon

Also Present: Karen Crebase, Superintendent
Francis Hodgens, Student Representative to the School Committee
Claire Manning, Power of One Recipient
Kelsey Evans, Project 351 Ambassador
David Alberto, Jr., JSHS Student Council Representative
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Stephanie Ridolfi, Athletic Director
Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Director

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Media Center at the Jr.-Sr. High School, 25 Adin Street, Hopedale, Massachusetts, with a quorum present.

1. **Minutes of January 7, 2020** - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the meeting minutes for January 7, 2020 were unanimously approved.
2. **Student Recognition** - The Superintendent recognized and congratulated Fran Hodgens for receiving the Worcester County Superintendent's Award, Claire Manning for receiving the Power of One Award, and Kelsey Evans for her appointment as Hopedale's Project 351 Ambassador. Ms. Crebase highlighted the accomplishments of each student and shared how they positively impact the school community.
3. **Student Representative Report – Jr.-Sr. High School:** DJ Alberto reported on recent and upcoming activities, including: DECA district and state competitions, fundraising to benefit the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, the STUCO Hyannis Leadership Conference, MCAS testing, winter sports season highlights, Alumni Day, auditions for the spring musical *Annie*, auditions for Central Districts, Power of One celebrations, the exchange program trip to Italy, and the March 5th Curriculum Night.
4. **Superintendent's Comments** – Congratulations were extended to the students who participated in this year's DECA district competition and to those who will participate in the upcoming state competition. The Superintendent also reported on the successes of the winter sports teams, the individual accomplishments of several athletes, and the community recognition of senior Claire Manning and Pat Guertin as recipients of this year's Power of One Awards. During the recent administrative retreat, district administrators discussed strategic planning, professional development, action planning and alignment at the building levels. Ms. Crebase updated the members on the progress of the Town Administrator Search Committee which has completed their interviews and submitted candidates for consideration to the Board of Selectmen. Finally, the Superintendent recognized an anonymous donor for a \$500 contribution to the food services program to fund the debt of several families who are experiencing financial hardship.

5. **Committee Response to Comments** – There were no questions or comments from the members.
6. **Financial Items**
 - **Monthly Report of Accounts Payable Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the accounts payable warrant report as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of four warrants dated January 3, 9, 16 and 22, 2020 in the amount of \$280,899.00.
 - **Monthly Report of Payroll Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the payroll warrant report as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of three payroll warrants dated January 2, 16 and 30, 2020 in the amount of \$1,366,187.25.
 - **Monthly Budget Report:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for January 2020. She noted deficits in the long-term substitute and course reimbursement lines which will be resolved by year-end.
 - **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
7. **Committee Reports**
 - **Committee on Policy:** No report.
 - **Committee on Budget:** The Chair reported on the recent joint meeting with the Finance Committee. Finance Committee members had shared budgetary concerns facing the Town as they prepare their recommendations for FY 2021. The Superintendent noted that the School Committee will continue to work with the Town as budgets are finalized.
 - **Committee on Fields:** Mrs. McKeon reported that several new members have joined the committee. At their most recent meeting, goals, design plan costs, and funding possibilities were discussed. It is anticipated that an article will be on the Annual Town Meeting warrant to approve design plan funding.
 - **Committee on Public Relations:** No report
8. **Agenda Items**
 - **Annual Review and Approval of Fees:** Fee proposals from the previous meeting were revisited for approval. Athletic Director Stephanie Ridolfi was present to answer members' questions regarding athletic fees. She explained that the recommendation to maintain athletic fees at their current level is due to a concern that student athlete participation could decrease. Although members expressed that maintaining fees will require greater funding from the general school budget, they accepted the Athletic Director and Superintendent's recommendation to maintain fees at the present time. The Committee will reconsider athletic fees after the FY 2021 school budget is approved. A discussion followed regarding the percentage of the athletic program that should be funded by fees and the possibility of assessing an extracurricular fee to offset budgetary needs in the future. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the fee schedules as presented at the previous meeting.
 - **Enrollment Projections:** The Superintendent presented charts reflecting the district's current enrollment by grade, as well as enrollment projections for the 2020-2021 school year. She noted that 67 resident students were sent registration packets for the 2020-2021 kindergarten class and that registration is occurring until February 14, 2020.
 - **School Choice Report:** The Superintendent presented charts by grade and by town indicating current incoming and outgoing school choice enrollments, a graph from DESE showing Hopedale's school choice enrollment trends from fiscal year 2011 through fiscal year 2020, and data showing Hopedale's school choice tuition receipts and expenditures for incoming and outgoing school choice students from 1996 through 2019. Currently, Hopedale is receiving 154 students and sending 54 students to other districts under the school choice program. Applications for next school year will be made available on March 1, 2020.

- **2019-2020 Calendar Update:** After surveying the staff, the Superintendent reported that the preferred start date for next school year is the traditional start date of Tuesday before Labor Day, i.e. September 1, 2020. Staff also requested a half-day on the day before Christmas Eve. The calendar submitted for approval reflects both staff suggestions. Upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the 2020-2021 school year calendar was unanimously approved as presented.
- **Bi-County Collaborative Quarterly Report:** The Superintendent presented the quarterly Bi-County Collaborative report for January 2020. The report included information regarding enrollment numbers, budget, the activities of the Member District PD Committee, and courses being offered.
- **Overnight Field Trip Request: Hyannis, MA:** The Superintendent presented a request from Student Council Advisor Christopher Chatham to approve a field trip to Hyannis for the Annual Student Council MASC Spring Leadership Conference from March 4 through March 6, 2020. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mr. Adams, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the overnight field trip.
- **Proposal to Use Electronic Signatures for Warrants:** Mrs. Davis presented a proposal for approval which would enable School Committee members to sign warrants with an electronic signature through a secure portal. The proposal has received the prior approval of the Town Accountant and the application will be built internally. After a brief discussion, the proposal was unanimously approved upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon.
- **Opportunity Act:** The Chair reviewed recent legislation which is intended to address school budgeting concerns throughout the state. The newly adopted Student Opportunity Act will provide additional funding for districts based on enrollments of English Language Learners and socio-economic demographics. Schools will submit action plans to support the use of the received funding. It is anticipated that Hopedale will receive approximately \$30 per student.
- **Open Meeting/Conflict of Interest Training:** The Chair and Vice Chair recently attended a workshop on the Massachusetts open meeting and conflict of interest laws which was hosted by Hopedale town counsel and was open to all local boards.
- **STARS Parent Information Night:** Pupil Personnel Services Director Karen Cosgrove reported on the recent evening meeting for families who have students enrolled in the Jr.-Sr. High School STARS Program (Students Taking Action and Responsibility for Success). Topics discussed at the Parent Information Night included tiered supports, available vocational programs, peer mentorships, transitions from elementary school and extracurricular opportunities.
- **College Dual Enrollment:** Principal Derek Atherton reviewed current opportunities that are available for seniors to earn college credits while enrolled at Hopedale Jr.-Sr. High School. Students are currently taking courses through Quinsigamond Community College, Middlesex Community College, Framingham State College and Becker College. Additional opportunities are being investigated.
- **Overview of Curriculum Night:** Mr. Atherton reported on the upcoming Curriculum Night which is scheduled for March 5, 2020 at the Jr.-Sr. High School. Parents will be invited to attend grade-level appropriate workshops that will be followed by an opportunity to informally meet with staff on a variety of topics, including academic offerings, extracurricular programs, and athletic opportunities.
- **JSHS Program of Studies for 2020-2021:** Mr. Atherton announced that the Junior High and Senior High Programs of Studies for the upcoming year will be emailed to all families. Changes in course offerings include the addition of Creative Writing as an explore-class in Grade 9, Spanish for ELL students and native speakers, Astronomy, Advanced Guitar, and two Program Lead The Way courses: Human Body Systems and Cybersecurity/Computer Science Principles.
- **Coffee and Conversation with the Principal:** Mr. Atherton reported on his recently held parent evening for families with students in grades 6 through 8. A similar meeting for high school families is also scheduled. Mr. Atherton and Assistant Principal Tim Johnson answered questions in an informal setting and shared the successes of the junior high program.

9. **Correspondence** – Members reviewed the Memorial School February calendar.
10. **Audience to Citizens** – Finance Committee Chair Sam Hockenbury reported to the Committee that the Board of Selectmen have several candidates to consider for the open Town Administrator position, that he is meeting with Superintendent Fitzpatrick of Blackstone Valley Technical Regional High School to discuss that school's budget, and he is looking forward to continuing work with the Hopedale School Committee to address the Fiscal Year 2021 Budget.

Next Meeting – The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for March 3, 2020.

Adjournment – The Chair announced the need to enter executive session to conduct a strategy session in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, to conduct a strategy session in preparation for collective bargaining with union personnel, and to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property, since an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the positions of the Committee. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the members voted by roll call vote to enter executive session for the stated purpose as follows: Mrs. Butler- yes; Mr. Adams- yes; Mrs. Alberto- yes; Mrs. McKeon- yes; and Mrs. Hampsch- yes. The Chair stated that the Committee would not be reconvening in public session and declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: March 3, 2020