

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, April 21, 2020**

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

Also Present: Karen Crebase, Superintendent
 Francis Hodgins, Student Representative to the School Committee
 David Alberto, Jr., Jr.-Sr. High School Student Council Representative
 Lynne Davis, School Accountant
 Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal
 Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
 Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
 Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Director

Pursuant to Governor Baker's March 12, 2020 Order suspending certain provisions of the open meeting law, GL chapter 30A, section 18, and the Governor's March 15, 2020 Order imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, this meeting of the Hopedale School Committee was conducted via remote participation. The Chair called the virtual meeting to order at 6:00 pm under these provisions with a quorum present. She invited members of the public to monitor the meeting by using the information provided on the Town's School Committee website. She announced that a video of the meeting would be posted on the same site. She encouraged members of the public to email comments or questions to schoolcommittee@hopedaleschools.org and noted that the Audience to Members section of the meeting was suspended for this remote meeting.

1. Minutes of March 3, 2020 - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the meeting minutes for March 3, 2020 were unanimously approved by roll call vote.

2. Student Representative Report – Jr.-Sr. High School: DJ Alberto reported the activities that have been cancelled due to the Governor's orders restricting gatherings, including club meetings, fundraising events, performances, field trips, MCAS exams, competitions and senior celebrations. He noted that Advanced Placement exams would continue in an abbreviated online format. Also, Student Council elections occurred remotely. The Committee thanked the Student Council for planning important online activities for students during the building closure.

3. Superintendent's Comments – The Superintendent announced that the Governor has ordered Massachusetts school buildings to remain closed through the remainder of the 2020-2021 school year. She reported that remote learning will continue and that Hopedale would continue to recognize the scheduled April vacation. Ms. Crebase congratulated Town Administrator Diana Schindler on her recent appointment. She also reported that the annual town election has been postponed until June 16, 2020 and the annual town meeting has been postponed until June 23, 2020. Finally, the Superintendent highlighted the many accomplishments of the winter sports teams and extended her congratulations to all the athletes and coaches.

4. Committee Response to Comments – There were no questions or comments from the members.

5. 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 by roll call vote to ratify the payment of six warrants dated March 17 (for FY 2019), February 27, March 5, 11 and 17 (two), 2020 in the amount of \$266,176.74.

- **Monthly Report of Payroll Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the payroll warrant report as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously

voted by roll call to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated March 12 and 26, 2020 in the amount of \$979,696.54.

- **Monthly Budget Report:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for March 2020.
- **Acceptance of Donations:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mr. Adams, the Committee unanimously accepted by roll call vote a \$10,000 donation from American Student Assistance for the purchase of food for lunches and the school food pantry. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mr. Adams, the Committee unanimously accepted by roll call vote a \$7,500 donation from Bank of America's Eppley Charitable Gift Fund for the benefit of the Boosters Club.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.

6. Committee Reports

- **Committee on Budget:** With regard to fiscal year 2020, the Chair and Superintendent reported that chapter 70 and circuit breaker funding is likely to continue with no major budgetary impact. Savings generated by the building closures are expected to supplement current losses in school revolving accounts. With regard to fiscal year 2021, the Finance Committee requested the budget committee to submit additional budgets that reflect 1) level funding, 2) a 1.5 to 2% decrease, and 3) a 5% decrease. The Finance Committee has not yet offered a final recommendation on the provided budgets. The Superintendent reported that the schools will be able to access state funded extraordinary relief for special education and there will be additional savings due to retirements. Mr. Hodgins added that despite budget issues, Hopedale Jr.-Sr. High School has been recognized by *U.S. News and World Report* as a top school statewide and nationally.

- **Committee on Fields:** Mrs. McKeon reported that the Fields Committee will withdraw its request for funds at the annual town meeting. The Committee will remain active and will take actions to improve the fields that can be funded by grants.

7. Agenda Items

- **Update and Discussion Regarding School Closure:** The Superintendent reported that all staff members are working diligently to continue instruction for students. She urged parents to reach out to teachers and administrators with questions and concerns. While educational services are being provided by our instructional staff, others are serving and delivering meals, stocking the district food pantry, providing laptops, establishing hot spots for internet access, sterilizing the buildings, and sharing supplies with other town departments and first responders. The Superintendent noted that the last regular day of school for students was March 13, 2020 and that remote learning began on March 18, 2020.

Ms. Crebase reviewed the district's remote learning plan, including guiding principles and goals, and invited Principal Atherton, Principal Miller, Director Poisson, and Director Cosgrove to provide their unique perspectives. All administrators spoke of the resilience of students, staff and families. They praised the creative solutions being implemented through video chats with students, supports for families, virtual planning among staff members, individual remote learning plans aligned with education plans, and maintaining connections with the community.

Due to the Governor's recent announcement that buildings will be closed for the remainder of the year and that social gatherings are limited, celebrations for Grade 6 students and members of the Class of 2020 are impacted. Mr. Atherton and Mr. Miller announced that they will strive to postpone activities rather than cancel them.

- **Public Hearing Date:** The Superintendent recommended that the annual public hearing be held at the beginning of the School Committee meeting on June 9th. Prior to that date, additional budget workshops may be scheduled.
- **School Choice Available Seats for Kindergarten:** The Superintendent presented historical data on kindergarten school choice applications. For the upcoming year, there are 69 Hopedale residents registered and 21 school choice applicants, with four having priority under the current policy. The Superintendent recommended accepting at least seven students to allow space for those who may move to Town during the summer. She noted that the maximum allowable acceptances under the policy would be eleven. After a brief discussion regarding funding and appropriate class sizes, Mr. Adams made a motion to accept eleven

school choice students for Kindergarten. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alberto and passed unanimously by a roll call vote.

- **Discussion of Superintendent's Evaluation Process:** The Chair reported that the superintendent evaluation form will be distributed for completion at the next meeting. The Superintendent will also present her self-evaluation at that meeting. The Chair will consolidate the input from individual members and present the Superintendent's evaluation at the June 9th meeting.
- **Discussion of School Committee Evaluation:** The Chair will distribute the Committee's evaluation form at the next meeting. The Vice Chair will consolidate the input from individual members and present the evaluation at the June 9th meeting.
- **September 14, 2020 – Boston Marathon Date Discussion:** The Superintendent reported that the Governor may declare September 14th a state holiday. This could require an amendment to the already approved school calendar for 2020-2021. She will update the Committee if the Governor acts.

8. **Correspondence** – There was no correspondence to review.

Next Meeting – The next general business meeting of the Committee is scheduled for May 5, 2020. The tentative Budget Workshop scheduled for April 28, 2020 will not be held.

Adjournment – Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mr. Adams, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call vote to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: May 5, 2020