

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, May 5, 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
David Alberto, Jr., Jr.-Sr. High School Student Council Representative
Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan, Student Council (2020-2021)
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Nicholas Toupin, Technology Director
Debra Brackett, Transportation Coordinator
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 the meeting was being recorded and streaming live. A video of the meeting will be available on the Town website. Members of the public were encouraged to email comments or questions to schoolcommittee@hopedaleschools.org. The Chair added that the Audience to Members section of the meeting was suspended for this remote meeting.

1. **Minutes of April 17 and 21, 2020** - Upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. Alberto, the meeting minutes for April 17 and 20, 2020 were unanimously approved by roll call vote.
2. **Student Representative Report – Jr.-Sr. High School:** DJ Alberto introduced Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan who will succeed him as the Jr.-Sr. High School Student Council Representatives for the upcoming school year. The Committee welcomed the new representatives and thanked Mr. Alberto for his service and dedication to representing the Student Council during the past year.
3. **Superintendent's Comments** - The Superintendent expressed her gratitude to the staff, community and parents for their commitment to the district's students during the building closures. She encouraged families to contact teachers or administrators with any concerns or questions. For assistance with meals, families can confidentially contact Food Services Director Cheryl Bober or the Superintendent. Communications will be sent to staff and families as soon as the state provides guidance on end-of-year activities, summer programs and the fall opening of school. Ms. Crebase also reported that the Class of 2020 is allowed to prove competency for graduation through coursework rather than MCAS scores.

4. **Committee Response to Comments** - A brief discussion followed regarding the state waiving the use of MCAS scores to determine graduation competency. The Superintendent confirmed that, at this time, the waiver only applies to the Class of 2020.
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 to ratify the payment of three warrants dated April 1 (two) and 16, 2020 in the amount of \$122,604.19.
 - **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. Alberto, the members unanimously voted by roll call to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated April 9 and 23, 2020 in the amount of \$934,779.34.
 - **Monthly Budget Report:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for April 2020.
 - **Independent Accountant's Report for the Year Ended June 30, 2019:** Mrs. Davis briefly reviewed the report and noted that there were no findings.
 - **Approval of \$50,000 Grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Office of Grants and Research:** The schools have been awarded a \$50,000 grant under the Safer Schools grant program to fund security upgrades. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously approved the grant by roll call vote.
 - **Approval of the Transfer of Salaries from Revolving Accounts to General Fund:** Mrs. Davis reported that some revolving accounts are in deficit due to the building closures. To pay salaries supported by these accounts, she recommended that funding be transferred to the general fund. Upon a motion by Mr. Adams which was seconded by Mrs. Alberto, the Committee voted unanimously by roll call to transfer the following salary amounts to the general fund: \$43,790 for food services, \$18,530 for transportation, and \$83,920 for Bright Beginnings Center.
 - **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
 - **Approval of Proposed Contract Amendment for Out-of-District Transportation with Van Pool:** The district is eligible for a discounted transportation rate provided by Van Pool in light of school closures due to covid-19. To take advantage of this, the School Committee voted unanimously by roll call to approve the contract amendment proposed by Van Pool. The motion was made by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Butler.
6. **Committee Reports**
 - **Committee on Budget:** The Chair reported on the Finance Committee's recommendation that budgets reflect level funding in salaries with a two percent decrease in other expenses. Funding these budgets would require that voters approve an override. Without an approved override, the school budget may revert to a level-funded budget with a 2.56% (or \$323,000) reduction. The Finance Committee will meet again on May 13th to provide departments with additional guidance. A brief discussion followed regarding the impact the BVT assessment has on the town budget. Also, Mr. Adams noted his appreciation to the school leadership for their work creating and sharing budget documentation.
 - **Committee on Fields:** Mrs. McKeon reported that the Fields Committee will use available grant funds on geotechnical field work, such as borings, to determine the condition of land which may be used for fields.
7. **Agenda Items**
 - **Technology Update:** Mr. Toupin reported on the hiring of his technician, Tom Robinson, and on recent projects, including the installation of grant-funded building access control

systems, visitor management, new smartboards, implementation of an extended backup system for disaster recovery, setup of a new elementary school domain server, and the acquisition of new Chromebooks for JSHS MCAS testing, the JSHS media center, and elementary classrooms. Due to the building closures, 90 devices were prepared and distributed as loaners for families and staff, hot spots have been established, and several new systems have been implemented. Future projects include the setup of a failover radius system, installation of additional security cameras and building access controls, and migration to Google Drive as the district's primary storage resource.

- **One to One Device Plan Presentation:** Mr. Toupin proposed a 1:1 device program for the Jr.-Sr. High School. He reviewed the current deployment of technology at the school, which includes labs, shared devices, and carts. He noted the disadvantages of the current distribution of resources, such as inefficient allocation, loss of educational time, absence of standardization, lack of personal responsibility and the inability to plan for consistent budgeting. The assignment of a dedicated device to each student would increase educational time, allow for standardized devices, provide sustainable financial budgeting, encourage the development of personal responsibility and provide efficient management of devices. Mr. Toupin explained that the district's infrastructure improvements, device count, and current teaching strategies support the recommended solution at this time.

Mr. Toupin reviewed implementation, distribution, maintenance and repair plans. There will be an initial cost of approximately \$10,000 for protective cases. He noted that a buy-out will be offered at graduation and optional annual insurance against damage will be provided at a minimal cost. A brief discussion followed regarding the ability of students to opt out of the program, the continued use of personal devices, and a previous program in Grade 6. The Committee members expressed their support for Mr. Toupin's proposal and their appreciation of his hard work and dedication on behalf of the district.

The Chair announced that she would hear the Transportation Update out of order and welcomed Mrs. Brackett to the meeting.

- **Transportation Department Update:** The Superintendent and Mrs. Brackett reported that annual registration for next year has not yet begun but will be ready once the state provides guidance on the start of school in the fall. In addition, plans are underway to provide reimbursements to families who paid for transportation but have not received services due to the building closures. Reimbursements will be optional. The Committee extended their thanks to the drivers for their work during the closure and will look forward to future recommendations from Mrs. Brackett regarding transportation and the opening of school.

- **Re-Opening Advisory Group Discussion:** As was suggested at the previous meeting, the Chair and Superintendent recommended the creation of an advisory group to guide the Committee's actions regarding the opening of schools. By consensus, the Committee agreed to establish the group and discussed that participants might include Mrs. Brackett, building leadership, and members of the Committee, among others to be determined. Mrs. Alberto and Mrs. McKeon expressed interest in serving as Committee representatives.

- **Superintendent Self Evaluation:** The Superintendent shared her self-evaluation and invited the members to contact her with questions. She highlighted achievements on her goals to oversee contract negotiations, develop academic and extracurricular opportunities at Memorial School, revise the high school college admissions process, and implement, review and revise the district strategic plan. Ms. Crebase noted that the building closures have affected her work on negotiations and the strategic plan. With regard to progress on standards, she highlighted how the building closures have adjusted her approach to each. Focus shifted to remote learning, retaining instructional integrity, increasing communication, using funds in unique and innovative ways, engaging all community stakeholders, and providing guidance to all staff members.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent for her leadership during this crisis and suggested that the goals pertaining to negotiations and the strategic plan, Goals 1 and 4, be restructured on a two-year cycle to be completed during fiscal year 2021.

- **Distribution of Superintendent End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Form:** The Chair advised the members that the superintendent evaluation tool will be available online and that they should review the Superintendent's performance on Goal 2, Goal 3, and the Standards. She asked that individual evaluations be completed by May 22, 2020 for consolidation by the Chair. The summative evaluation will be presented at the June meeting.

- **Approval of School Choice Seats:** The Superintendent presented a chart listing next year's anticipated enrollments at each grade level and the number of school choice applications received to date. A brief discussion followed regarding the Committee's policy on school choice acceptances and the availability of space at the elementary level. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call to accept all outstanding applications as currently presented: 5 students in Grade 1, 3 students in Grade 2, 3 students in Grade 4, 4 students in Grade 5 and 7 students in Grade 6. A discussion followed among the Committee and Mr. Atherton regarding the larger size of the classes in Grades 7 and 8. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call to accept all outstanding junior high applications as currently presented: 6 students in Grade 7 and 4 students in Grade 8. A discussion followed regarding issues raised by accepting older students in light of the district's unique graduation requirements. Based upon Mr. Atherton's recommendation and expected transfers to BVT in Grade 9, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call to accept all outstanding high school applications as currently presented: 7 students in Grade 9, 2 students in Grade 10, 2 students in Grade 11 and 2 students in Grade 12.

- **Senior Class Activities Update:** Mr. Atherton reported that he has been in contact with class advisors, community members, clergy, parent groups and other administrators to plan meaningful activities for the Class of 2020. Final decisions on cancellations, postponements or changing to virtual formats will be made after the Governor's recommendations scheduled to be delivered on May 18, 2020. As examples, he stated that plans are being made for the annual Sports Night and Baccalaureate to be held virtually. Class Night could be a hybrid with some virtual sections and others integrated into graduation. Although gathering restrictions are unknown at this time, it is hoped that graduation would be a traditional outdoor ceremony. A lengthy discussion followed regarding potential graduation dates, plans for prom, expectations for the annual cruise, and appreciation for Mr. Atherton's efforts to be inclusive and considerate of students in his decision making.

- **Disney Trip Request:** Mindful of the uncertainty of travel and gathering restrictions in the fall, Mr. Atherton requested approval for the Class of 2021's Disney trip. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mr. Adams, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call to approve the Disney trip for planning purposes and to allow the school administration discretion with respect to the dates, scheduling and planning.

- **Re-Appointment of Superintendent to BICO Board of Directors:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mr. Adams, the members unanimously voted by roll call to appoint Superintendent Karen Crebase as the Hopedale Public Schools' representative to the Bi-County Collaborative Board of Directors for the 2020-2021 school year.

- **Distribution of School Committee Self Evaluation Form:** The Chair reported that the evaluation form will be shared as an online tool. She asked that responses be submitted by May 22, 2020 to allow for consolidation and presentation at the June meeting.

- **Discussion of Need for July Reorganization Meeting:** The Chair recommended that a reorganization meeting be held after the Town Election, currently scheduled for June 16, 2020. By consensus the Committee agreed to meet for purposes of reorganization on July 7, 2020.

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

Next Meeting – A budget workshop will be posted for May 26, 2020. The next general business meeting of the Committee is scheduled for June 9, 2020 at 6:00 pm; it will be preceded by the school's annual public hearing at 5:30pm.

Adjournment – Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously voted by roll call to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: June 9, 2020