

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, June 9, 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
Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan, Student Council Representatives
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Diana Schindler, Hopedale Town Administrator
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 6:03 pm under these provisions with a quorum present. She invited members of the public to monitor the meeting by using the information provided in the School Committee Agenda as posted on the Town of Hopedale website. The meeting was recorded and streamed live at townhallstreams.com/towns/hopedale_ma. Members of the public were encouraged to email comments and questions to schoolcommittee@hopedaleschools.org. The Chair added that the Audience to Members section of the meeting was suspended for this remote meeting and that the Public Hearing previously planned for this evening had been postponed.

A moment of silence was observed to honor the life of Andrea Wasnewski.

1. **Minutes of May 5 and 26, 2020** - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the meeting minutes for May 5 and 26, 2020 were unanimously approved.
2. **Student Representative Report – Jr.-Sr. High School:** Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan reported that class officer elections were recently held virtually and that STUCO is planning their summer meetings and the school-year calendar of events.
3. **Recognition** - The Committee and Superintendent recognized Mr. Adams for his dedicated six-years of elected service to the Hopedale Public Schools and the many years prior, noting that his participation will be missed.

The Committee and Superintendent recognized Fran Hodgens for his service to the School Committee as its student representative for the past year, for sharing his personal insights, and for offering the Committee a perspective on behalf of all students.

4. **Superintendent's Comments** - The Superintendent noted her appreciation of the support from families during the building closures, the creativity of the staff to provide instruction, and the enthusiasm of the community contributing to celebrations of special days and milestones. She especially highlighted events for Grade 6 and the Class of 2020, the National Honor Society Induction, and Memorial Day. Ms. Crebase added that, despite media reports, the state has not yet released guidelines for the opening of school in the fall.
5. **Committee Response to Comments** - Mr. Hodgens, as a member of the Class of 2020, thanked the administration for their support planning meaningful events for the seniors.
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 April 29, May 14 and 27 (two), 2020 in the amount of \$326,812.00.
 - **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 two payroll warrants dated May 7 and 21, 2020 in the amount of \$898,279.26.
 - **Monthly Budget Report:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for May 2020, noting that it reflects the deficit transfers approved at the previous meeting.
 - **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
 - **Acceptance of \$1,000 Grant from Project Bread-The Walk for Hunger, Inc.:** The schools have been awarded a \$1,000 COVID-19 Rapid Response Grant by Project Bread. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the Committee unanimously accepted the grant.
 - **Acknowledgement of \$800 Fee Adjustment from the Park Commission:** The schools have been notified of an \$800 adjustment in their fee for the use of fields during Fiscal Year 2020. The Committee unanimously accepted the fee adjustment by consensus.
 - **Authorization to Approve Year End Transfers:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the Committee unanimously voted to authorize the Chair to approve year end budget transfers, subject to ratification at a subsequent meeting.
 - **Approval of Year End Revolving Account Deficit Balance Transfers:** Mrs. Davis reported estimated deficits in the food services (\$22,000), transportation (\$26,000) and preschool (\$46,00) revolving accounts. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Butler, the Committee unanimously voted to transfer any unfunded expenses at year end to the general fund.
7. **Committee Reports**
 - **Committee on Budget:** The Superintendent provided an overview of the budget process to date and shared that the most recent draft budget reflects a 2% reduction from the fiscal year 2020 budget. She invited Town Administrator Diana Schindler to update the Committee on the recent work of the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen to finalize the town budgets, and to provide guidance to the School Committee for its next steps. Ms. Schindler reported that the annual town meeting will be held on Thursday, June 25th on the grounds of the Community House, with a rain date of June 26th. A special town meeting will also be held at that time to address a current FY20 deficit in health insurance premiums. Early next week the Board of Selectmen will approve and post the related warrants. A lengthy discussion followed regarding five budget scenarios being considered by the Finance Committee, potential decreases in state funding, distribution of informational materials to the residents prior to the meetings, the Town's current and historical levy limit, and the Town

Administrator's proposed budget. The Chair noted that the Finance Committee's current documentation does not accurately reflect the Town's contribution to the operations of the schools and that it is much less than the amount stated.

The Superintendent recommended that the Committee schedule their Public Hearing on Thursday, June 25th at 4:00pm in order to finalize their fiscal year 2020-2021 budget immediately prior to Town Meeting. The recommendation was approved unanimously upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mr. Adams. The Chair noted that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees will be offering workshops soon and that the Budget Sub-Committee will meet to prepare the final budget to be considered at the Public Hearing.

- **Committee on Policy:** The Policy Committee reported that they reviewed the following policies and determined that no action is recommended: **JICH, JIH, JII, JJ, JICA, JICE, JICF, and JICFA-E.** Policy **JJF-1-Waiver of Liability** was presented only to confirm a change in labelling to **JJHA**. The Committee also presented two policies for a First Read which were moved forward for a Second Read at the next meeting:

JICC- Student Conduct on School Buses and JICFA-Prohibition of Hazing

- **Committee on Fields:** Mrs. McKeon reported that the Fields Committee was unable to perform planned borings due to restrictions on the site. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for June 10th.

8. Agenda Items

- **CARES Act Funding:** The Superintendent shared a summary of prior and anticipated expenses which qualify for financial assistance under The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. The Town's grant is expected to be \$526,000 for past expenses and those anticipated for re-opening costs. Ms. Schindler acknowledged the Superintendent's work on her submission to the Town and reviewed the claiming process, the anticipated payment schedule, and the types of school expenses that may be funded for FY20, including private protective equipment, food service costs and technology purchases. Re-opening expenses submitted by the Superintendent include thermal cameras, no-touch faucets, bottle-filling stations, 1:1 technology, and staffing to assist families.

- **Discussion of Advisory Committee for School Reopening:** The Superintendent submitted her guidance document for the Advisory Committee and reviewed its purpose, goals and structure. In addition to the leadership board, which will finalize the work of all groups, there will be panels to study and put forward plans for Academic Programming, Logistics, Student Life and Extracurricular Activities, Physical Safety and Mental Health, and Equity and Access. Due to the number of applications to serve on the Advisory Committee from members of the staff and community, the Superintendent may implement a lottery to determine the membership. She is seeking a wide diversity of opinion while creating manageable working groups. The work of the Advisory Committee will begin when the state issues its guidance on school openings in mid-June.

- **Update on Bright Beginnings Center Tuition Reimbursement:** The Superintendent reported that all families have received refunds for tuition paid for the period of BBC's closure.

- **Update on Transportation Reimbursement:** The Superintendent reported that all families have received refunds for bus fees paid for the period of the building closures. She thanked families who waived their reimbursement as a contribution to the transportation department to cover post-closure expenses.

- **1:1 Technology Update:** The Superintendent reported that technology for students in grades 7 through 11 has been successfully distributed through curbside pickup.

- **Special Education Update:** The Committee welcomed the PPS Director to present an update on special education services provided during the building closures. Ms. Cosgrove reported that there has been an 80% student participation rate in services, instruction and support. Staff has

been meeting virtually with students and families. Guidance from DESE has been used as a foundation for the department's planning and services.

- **Update on Extended School Year (ESY) Programming:** Ms. Cosgrove also reported on the district's programming for its extended school year and noted that her department is following all guidance offered by DESE. Due to changing state guidelines, her focus has been on the flexibility of services and programming. Current plans include remote learning for the summer session, while in home supports and some 1:1 in person services are being investigated. She also shared the results of a survey sent to families to gauge well-being and interest in summer programming. A discussion followed regarding the successful ability to staff the ESY program.

- **Blackstone Valley Technical Regional High School Enrollment:** The Superintendent presented an overview of Hopedale's relationship with Blackstone Valley Technical Regional High School and the 13-district charter at its foundation. She also provided a 5-year history of enrollment by Hopedale students and the costs to the Town. A discussion followed regarding the expansion of BVT's physical plant, the impact on the town budget, and Hopedale's efforts to increase program offerings to encourage students to remain in-district. Mr. Hodgens discussed the limited number of BVT students entering the trades after graduation and his concerns about issues of equity, diversity and equal access to programs based on data from the DESE profile website.

- **Superintendent Evaluation:** The Chair reviewed the process by which each member contributed individually to the evaluation and her consolidation of responses in the final document. Mrs. Hampsch noted the Committee's support of the Superintendent's leadership especially during this time. She reviewed specific ratings based on the DESE Model Rubric and presented a summary of Ms. Crebase's summative evaluation which rated the Superintendent's overall performance during the 2019-2020 year as proficient. The summative evaluation reflected the Superintendent's progress on the goal of student learning and her performance on the standards of instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, and professional culture which received ratings of proficient and exemplary. Highlights include Ms. Crebase's effective management of the building closures and current budget difficulties. Her successes also include work obtaining grants, strong leadership skills, community relationships, fiscal management, collaboration, and curriculum implementation.

- **School Committee Self-Evaluation:** The Vice Chair presented the Committee's 2019-2020 self-evaluation which rated the members' overall performance as proficient. The evaluation tool reviewed the members' progress on their goals of professional development, policy development, community outreach, collective bargaining and budget development, strategic planning, and evaluation. The members also rated their performance on the standards of instructional leadership, management and operations, family and community engagement, and professional culture.

- **School Committee Meeting Calendar for 2020-2021:** The members reviewed the draft calendar of meetings for the upcoming fiscal year. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the meeting schedule was unanimously approved as presented.

9. **Correspondence** – The Committee reviewed two emails from candidates seeking election to represent District 4 and the Chair discussed her response to both.

Next Meetings – Public Hearing on June 25, 2020
Regular Meeting on July 7, 2020

Adjourn to Executive Session- The Chair announced the need to enter executive session i) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation since an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and ii) to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members voted by roll call vote to

enter executive session for the stated purposes as follows: Mrs. Alberto-yes; Mr. Adams-yes; Mrs. McKeon-yes; Mrs. Butler-yes; and Mrs. Hampsch-yes. The Chair stated that the Committee would not be reconvening in public session and declared the meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: July 7, 2020