

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, November 10, 2020**

Members Present: Alysia Butler, Chair
Lori Hampsch, Vice Chair
Lisa Alberto
Jennifer McKeon
Kristi Brytowski

Also Present: Karen M. Crebase, Superintendent
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Adam Banayan, School Committee Student Representative
Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan, Student Council Representatives
Derek Atherton, Jr-Sr High School Principal
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Principal
Stephanie Ridolfi, Athletic 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 and August 7, 2020 Orders imposing strict limitations on the number of people that may gather in one place, the regular business meeting of the Hopedale School Committee was conducted via remote participation. The Chair called the 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 on the Town's website and announced that the meeting was being recorded and streaming live. A video of the meeting will be available on the Town website.

1. Minutes of October 6, 2020 - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of October 6, 2020.

2. Student Representatives' Report – Jr.-Sr. High School: Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan reported on October's anti-bullying activities, the cancellation of the annual turkey dinner, preparations for the turkey run, Spirit Week, the creation of a mural against injustice, a winter clothing drive and the Toys for Tots collection.

3. Superintendent's Comments – The Superintendent reported that she and the School Committee members participated in a retreat for team building and professional development. She also provided an update on the successes of the extended day program at Union Church, the free lunch program, virtual Back to School Night, and her recent presentation for the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE). She reported that all 1:1 devices have been distributed to students and staff and that protocols for inclement weather on school days will be forthcoming. Finally, due to two positive COVID cases in the schools, the district has initiated its response plan.

4. Response to Superintendent's Comments – The members noted their appreciation for the retreat and the teachers' videos for Back to School Night.

5. Financial Items/Budget -

- **Monthly Report of Accounts Payable Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the recent warrant report as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of seven accounts payable warrants dated October 1 (two), 15 (two), 22 and 29 (two), 2020 in the amount of \$392,278.28.
- **Monthly Reports of Payroll Warrants:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated October 8 and 22, 2020 in the amount of \$962,966.38.

- **Monthly Budget Reports:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for October 2020.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
- **Budget Reduction/Transfers:** Mrs. Davis presented the FY 2020-2021 Budget Transfers/Reductions recommendation for approval. The suggested revisions lowered the existing budget of \$12,728,513 as approved at the July town meeting, to \$12,386,000 as approved at the special town meeting on October 24, 2020. A discussion followed regarding savings due to changes in out-of-district tuition and posting the budget on the Town website. The budget revisions were unanimously approved upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch which was seconded by Mrs. Alberto.
- **Acceptance of BVET \$2,000 grant:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously accepted a grant in the amount of \$2,000 from the Blackstone Valley Education Foundation for the creation of home libraries for at-risk students.
- **Acceptance of Hopedale Friends of Music \$1,239.54 donation:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously accepted a donation in the amount of \$1,239.54 from the Hopedale Friends of Music for the purchase of additional equipment for the music department.

6. Committee Reports-

- **Committee on Policy:** The Superintendent presented a final draft of Policy **IJNDD-Social Networking** which was unanimously approved for adoption upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch and seconded by Mrs. Alberto.
- **Committee on Budget:** The Superintendent reviewed actions taken at the recent special town meeting to address deficits due to the failure of the override vote. These included redirecting Town resources, restricting salary increases, balancing the FY21 town budget, and approving the school budget in the amount of \$12,386,000. She noted that preparations for the FY22 school budget have begun and that the school department plans to request an increase in funding from the Town.
- **Committee on Public Relations:** This item was passed over.

7. Agenda Items:

- **Athletic Fall Program Review:** Mrs. Ridolphi reported on the successful fall season which will end on November 20, 2020. The winter season, which introduces increased challenges with indoor environments, has not yet been finalized but is anticipated to begin on December 14, 2020.
- **Winter Coaching Appointments:** The following coaches were announced for the winter season: Tony Cordani-Varsity Boys Basketball, Tom D'Urso-JV Boys Basketball, Ed Healey-Middle School Boys Basketball, Corey Phillips-Varsity Girls Basketball, Sarah Comeau-Indoor Track, Tim Maguire-Assistant Indoor Track, Joe Drugan-Assistant Indoor Track, Amy Lombardi-Varsity Cheer, Dena Lombardi-JV Cheer, and Mike MacQuarrie-Varsity Ice Hockey. The following positions are still to be filled: JV Girls Basketball, Middle School Girls Basketball, and JV Ice Hockey.
- **Calendar:** The Superintendent presented a revised calendar for the current school year which moves the remaining early release days from Fridays to Wednesdays to insure equity between student cohorts in the hybrid model. In addition, the third professional development day of the school year for teachers was added after the final day of instruction for students. The revised calendar was unanimously approved upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch.
- **Reopening of Schools Data:** The Superintendent reported reopening data to share the progress, successes and challenges of the reopening, current health data, an assessment of cleaning and safety protocols, and survey results from parents, students and staff. She reported that 80% of staff and 84% of students returned to in-person learning; student attendance rates are favorable; and cleaning and safety protocols are being followed successfully. Although survey results reflect challenges with remote learning, it was mentioned that not all students and staff had received their 1:1 devices at the time of the surveys. The Reopening Plan has been generally successful and will continue to be assessed as the school year progresses.
- **Revisit of Kindergarten/Grades 1-2 Parent Petition:** The Superintendent noted that the Reopening Plan provides a vehicle for continuous review of the instructional models at all grade levels, including the primary grades of kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 2. Half-day programs, a return to full in-person learning, and expanding the use of the currently remote Wednesdays are being discussed and reviewed.

In light of current local and state health data, the administration is not recommending changes to the models at this time. Mr. Atherton and Mr. Miller affirmed the importance of the professional development time now scheduled for Wednesday afternoons and will investigate in-person learning for the mornings. The administrative team will be seeking guidance from the instructional staff. It is anticipated that a survey will be distributed to the faculty in the near future.

- **Bus Fees/January-June:** The Superintendent proposed a reduced bus fee of \$120 per student, with a family cap of \$240, for the period between January 1, 2021 and the final day of school. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the recommended bus fee. The Superintendent expressed her thanks to the families that have supported the transportation department with payment of the full fee.
- **JSHS Data Report:** Mr. Atherton noted that no MCAS exams were administered last year and therefore his report focuses on AP, SAT, and PSAT results. Online AP exams were taken by 76 students in art, biology, calculus, chemistry, English, psychology, Spanish, statistics, US history, and world history. Charts were provided to reflect the number of exams taken in each subject, the mean scores, and the percentage of scores equal to 3 or higher. Comparison data was also provided for state and global data. Paper-based PSAT exams were administered to 77 students and paper-based SAT exams were administered to 65 students in ELA and math. The mean scores compared favorably to the state and total scores. Mr. Atherton noted that there will be a focus on improving math scores.

8. **Correspondence** –The Committee reviewed the Jr-Sr High School calendar for November and the BICO Quarterly Report dated September 30, 2020.

9. **Audience to Citizens** - Due to this being a remote meeting, this item was passed over.

The next meeting is scheduled for December 1, 2020.

Adjourn to Executive Session- The Chair announced the need to enter executive session 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. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the members voted by roll call vote to enter executive session for the stated purpose as follows: Mrs. Alberto-yes; Mrs. Brytowski- yes; Mrs. McKeon-yes; Mrs. Hampsch-yes and Mrs. Butler-yes.. The Chair stated that the Committee would not be reconvening in public session and declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: December 1, 2020