

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, December 1, 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
Thomas Hammann, Facilities Director
Karen Daige, Extended Day Program Director
Sarah Hockey, Grade 2 Teacher
Max Beasely and Rebecca DeMello, MetroWest Survey Presenters
Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Principal

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 6:00 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 website and announced that the meeting was being recorded and streaming live. Members of the public are welcome to email questions to schoolcommittee@hopedaleschools.org. A video of the meeting will be available on the Town website.

1. Minutes of November 10, 2020 - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of November 10, 2020.

2. Student Representatives' Report – Jr.-Sr. High School: Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan reported on a virtual Massachusetts Association of Student Councils (MASC) speaker series, the fall central district MASC conference, working with Memorial School to provide Thanksgiving baskets to families in need, their Staff Appreciation lunch, upcoming Dairy Queen fundraiser and establishing communication as their focus for the year.

3. Superintendent's Comments – The district has responded to the first positive student COVID cases in accordance with its previously established protocols. There have been cases at Bright Beginnings Center, Memorial School and the Jr-Sr High School. No cases have been transmitted within the school buildings. Due to DESE reporting guidelines, which require that a student be in a school building within seven days of being reported, only one student is reported for Hopedale in the 'Positive COVID-19 Student and Staff Cases in Schools' Report. With regard to winter athletics, the season is limited to skiing, basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey and swimming, with competition beginning on January 8, 2021. The Food Services Department is providing meals to 162 students for pick-up or delivery on Wednesdays and will be providing brown-bag breakfasts beginning next week. Ms. Crebase also reported that she has been appointed to the Hopedale Master Plan Steering Committee.

4. **Response to Superintendent's Comments** – Mrs. Hampsch noted her appreciation for the Superintendent agreeing to serve on the Master Plan Steering Committee. Mrs. Butler thanked the community for their support of the district as it manages its COVID cases.

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. Hampsch which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of one FY20 accounts payable warrant dated November 25, 2020 in the amount of \$451.62 and five FY21 accounts payable warrants dated October 29 (two), November 12 and 25 (two), 2020 in the amount of \$334,212.73.
- **Monthly Reports of Payroll Warrants:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated November 5 and 19, 2020 in the amount of \$952,206.04.
- **Monthly Budget Reports:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report for November 2020.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.

6. **Committee Reports-**

- **Committee on Policy:** Mrs. Alberto presented three policies for a First Reading:
JRA- Student Records, JK- Student Conduct, and KBBA - Non-Custodial Parents' Rights
The proposed policies are based on recommended MASC language and will replace current policies. By consensus, the policies were moved forward for a Second Reading with no further discussion.
- **Committee on Budget:** The Superintendent reported that the Budget Subcommittee will schedule its first meeting for FY22 after department meetings are completed and the initial FY22 budget is drafted.
- **Committee on Public Relations:** This item was passed over.

7. **Agenda Items:**

- **Facilities Update:** Mr. Hamman provided a Facilities Update highlighting departmental changes in response to the school reopening plan. He highlighted special projects and accomplishments, newly acquired equipment and systems, regularly contracted and additional evening cleaning procedures, daily sanitizing routines, and the additional cleaning and sanitizing taking place on Wednesdays each week. The members noted their appreciation for his department's work to keep the school community safe.
- **Extended Day Program:** Ms. Daige reported that, in addition to the After School Club, she is offering a full day program for students during their remote learning days. Although enrollment is lower than recent years, she is hoping more families will take advantage of the programs. She expressed her thanks to the Union Church for hosting the new full day program.
- **School Highlight- Elementary Grade 2 Hybrid Model:** Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal, introduced Ms. Hockey who reviewed her hybrid instructional model. She shared that a positive attitude, collaboration, advance planning and organization has helped to bring success to her classroom. Her goals include building connections with families, working on student engagement both in the classroom and remotely, meeting individual student needs despite physical distance, and developing independent learners. A discussion followed regarding student comfort with technology, the challenges of teaching reading, and the importance of communicating with families.
- **Metrowest Adolescent Health Survey:** Guidance Counselor Max Beasley and School Adjustment Counselor Rebecca DeMello reported on the 2018 MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey. The survey was taken by 489 high school and middle school students and gathered data on substance abuse, mental health, physical activity and nutrition, violence and bullying, and protective factors. With regard to high school students, Ms. DeMello highlighted trends for substance abuse, vaping, sources of stress, mental health, physical activity, and time spent online. Mr. Beasley highlighted trends for the district's middle school population, including substance abuse and vaping data, reports of bullying, sources of stress and mental health. A discussion followed regarding the positive programs currently in place, those being investigated by the counselors and school administration, and the students' higher attachment to the Hopedale school community as compared to others in the region. The counselors confirmed that the data is used to inform support services and that future data will likely reflect students' current challenges. They advocated for

increased lower tier interventions, scheduled blocks of time for students to access services, staff training, and increased outreach at the middle school level.

- **Special Education Report:** Pupil Personnel Director Karen Cosgrove provided the annual Special Education Department Update. She highlighted outreach to parents, including the ELL Family Day and virtual meetings; the instructional models offered to special education students which include the Remote Learning Academy, hybrid model, and 4-day in person option; service delivery challenges; and innovative work occurring at each building. Ms. Cosgrove also discussed the process for establishing students' COVID Special Education Learning Plans. A discussion followed regarding the evaluation cycle for students, the process for early interventions, and budgetary needs. Ms. Cosgrove noted that the highest need for her students currently is to receive more in-person instruction and services.
- **Calendar Update:** The Superintendent reported that plans had been in place to schedule in-person instruction on Wednesday, January 6th, a regularly scheduled remote day, due to the Professional Development Day on Monday, January 4, 2021. This would insure equity for in-person learning between the hybrid cohorts that week. The Hopedale Education Association recently advised the Superintendent, however, that the schedule change was not in compliance with the terms of the Reopening Memorandum of Agreement between the School Committee and the HEA which provides that Wednesdays are remote learning days. The Superintendent, therefore, recommended that the professional day be moved to January 6th to provide both student cohorts with two in-person learning days the week of January 4th. A lengthy discussion followed regarding possible solutions, including leaving the calendar unchanged and correcting the inequity at a later time, moving the professional day to January 6th, cancelling and/or rescheduling the professional day to later in the year, and reopening the Memorandum of Agreement to bargain for in-person instruction on Wednesdays. Ms. Crebase noted that a discussion about reopening negotiations with the union would initially need to be held in executive session. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee voted unanimously to table the current discussion.
- **Updated Winter Coaching List:** This item was passed over.
- **School Committee Mission Statement:** The members reviewed proposed revisions to the School Committee mission statement which had most recently been affirmed in 2015. The language changes better reflect the Committee's accounting practices of relying on transparency in producing a fiscally responsible budget and the accurate title of the district's lead administrator as "Superintendent". The revised mission statement was unanimously approved upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski.

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

9. **Audience to Citizens** - The Recording Secretary was asked to read questions submitted via the School Committee's email account. In response to a question submitted by resident Len Guertin with regard to plans for returning to full time in-person instruction, the Superintendent responded that the district is currently committed to maintaining six feet of distance between individuals in the buildings and the hybrid model. A question relating to current adolescent health data was also submitted by Mr. Guertin. The Superintendent responded that new school-based data would be available after the next Metrowest survey, which has not yet been scheduled.

Adjourn to Executive Session- The Chair announced the need to enter executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Hopedale Education Association since an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the bargaining 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.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 5, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: January 5, 2021