

**Hopedale School Committee  
Minutes of the Meeting of  
Tuesday, March 2, 2021**

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

Also Present: Karen M. Crebase, Superintendent  
Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan, Student Council Representatives  
Kayla Lelio and Ashley MacDonald, DECA representatives  
Nicholas Toupin, Technology Director  
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 6:01pm 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](mailto:schoolcommittee@hopedaleschools.org). A video of the meeting will be available on the Town website.

**1. Minutes of February 2 2021** - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of February 2, 2021.

**2. Student Representatives' Report – Jr.-Sr. High School:** Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan reported on Spirit Week, student and staff appreciation activities, the upcoming E-Board elections, the recent non-perishable food drive, and Pennies for Patients. Future events being considered include a virtual coffeehouse, Stuff-a-Bus book collection, and a virtual Mr. Hopedale.

**3. Superintendent's Comments** – The Superintendent reported that COVID cases are trending lower locally and statewide, the Master Plan Committee is working on their mission statement, and previous snow days will be made up as in-person days. She extended her appreciation to the Highway Department, School Facilities Department and Transportation Coordinator Deb Brackett for their work after the most recent snow storm.

**4. Response to Superintendent's Comments** – There were no questions or comments from the members.

**5. Financial Items/Budget -**

- **Monthly Report of Accounts Payable Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the warrant report. Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of three FY21 accounts payable warrants dated February 4 and 18 (two), 2021 in the amount of \$290,852.80.

- **Monthly Report 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 February 11 and 25, 2021 in the amount of \$903,022.06.
- **Monthly Budget Reports:** The members reviewed the monthly budget report for February 2021.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
- **Approval of Donation:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch and seconded by Mrs. Alberto, the Committee unanimously accepted a donation in the amount of \$564.13 from Thermo Fisher Scientific's R&D Engineering Department in memory of former teacher Deborah Kita for the enhancement of classroom reading libraries at Hopedale Memorial School.

## 6. Committee Reports-

- **Committee on Policy:** The following policies were presented for a Second Reading and approval: **EBC-S Policy on COVID Related Issues; IC/ICA School Year/School Calendar; JIE Pregnant Students; JLCC Communicable Diseases; ECA Buildings and Grounds Security; IIB Class Size; EEAG Student Transportation in Private Vehicles; and IHBF Homebound Instruction**  
A discussion followed regarding the physical examination requirements in Policy JIE, the approvers listed in Policy EEAG, and the inclusion of contracted vehicles in EEAG. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously approved the policies, other than EEAG, for adoption. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously approved Policy EEAG with an amendment adding "or school-contracted vehicles" in the first sentence of paragraph 2.
- **Committee on Budget:** Mrs. Hampsch reported that the Finance Committee presented a preliminary Town budget on February 3, 2021 and that the School Committee met with the Finance Committee on February 10, 2021. At that meeting, the School Committee presented its preliminary budget in the amount of \$13,145,372 and is currently awaiting guidance from the Town.

## 7. Agenda Items:

- **School Highlight:** Ms. Lelio and Ms. MacDonald reported on the annual DECA States Competition which was recently held in-person in the high school auditorium. They thanked the many businesses that sponsored the event. The forty student participants are currently awaiting their results. The School Committee congratulated Ms. Lelio and Ms. MacDonald for their leadership in successfully planning the event and adhering to the school's strict in-person protocols.
- **Technology Update:** Technology Director Nick Toupin reported on the implementation of new devices throughout the district which include: 250 student chromebooks, 125 student ipads, 100 staff chromebooks, document cameras, staff microphones, loaner hotspots, and 19 Smartboards. Delivery of replacement devices for Grade 6 is pending and distribution of chromebooks for Grade 7 will be completed soon. With regard to technology support, Mr. Toupin reported that the increased number of devices has led to increased requests for support. An additional staff member to assist with repairs and support has been requested in the FY 2022 budget. Planned projects for the upcoming summer include: inventory, repair and service for all 1:1 devices and the installation of new switches and wireless access points which will result in a major upgrade and expansion of the district's infrastructure. A discussion followed regarding the new filtering and security protocols in place for remote learning. The Committee thanked Mr. Toupin for his work and for the significant savings his expertise brings to the district.
- **Coaching Assignments:** The Superintendent presented the list of coaches for the upcoming Fall 2 and Spring Seasons:  
Girls Volleyball: Chris Ridolfi, Varsity and Juan Ruales, Junior Varsity  
Indoor Track: Sarah Comeau, Head Coach with Tim Maguire and Joe Drugan, Assistant Coaches  
Baseball: Zac Brown, Junior Varsity  
Softball: Shanna Lathrop, Varsity  
Girls Lacrosse: Kayla Merrigan, Varsity  
Boys Lacrosse: Eric Overdahl, Varsity  
Outdoor Track: Joe Drugan, Tim Maguire and Sarah Comeau  
Boys Tennis: Alex Laumeister

Girls Tennis: Art Rizzo

Cheer: Amy Lombardi and Dena Lombardi

Positions yet to be filled include Varsity Baseball, Junior Varsity Softball, Junior Varsity Girls Lacrosse and Junior Varsity Boys Lacrosse.

- **Strategic Plan Input and Update:** The Superintendent shared an interactive visual presentation of the draft Strategic Plan and reviewed the initiatives for Strategic Objective #1, i.e. to ensure student academic growth and the acquisition of skills after the pandemic of 2020. Initiatives include the adoption of assessments to identify student gaps and strengths, identifying obstacles, utilizing multi-tiered supports to assist and inspire students, adopting curricula to support needs, and providing enrichment opportunities. Each school will develop individualized action plans based on the district's plan.
- **School Year Calendar Review for 2021-2022:** The members reviewed the draft calendar for the 2021-2022 school year, which plans for full in-person learning. The Superintendent shared a proposal from the Hopedale Education Association to add December 24th to the Holiday Vacation and an Early Release Day on December 23rd. In addition, June 20th will be marked as a Holiday for Juneteenth in the event the school year is extended beyond June 17th. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. Hampsch, the Committee unanimously approved the calendar as presented with the proposed revisions. A discussion followed regarding the placement of Early Release Days, however no further action was taken.
- **Update on Reopening Plan:** The Superintendent reviewed highlights and successes of the current year, including: technology initiatives, development of the RLA and Hybrid models, redesign of school spaces, distribution of meals to families, ventilation upgrades, implementation of safety and cleaning protocols, management of the athletic program, and securing grant funding. She then reviewed the recent directives from the Department of Education for a return to in-person learning and presented her recommendations. She proposed that preschool through grade 6 begin with a phased-in approach on March 22, 2021 with full implementation by April 5, 2021. The Jr.-Sr. High School would move from the 2-1-2 model to a 3-2-3 model on April 5th. The Remote Learning Academy will continue in its current form for the remainder of the school year. Ms. Crebase reviewed planning considerations, including classroom set-up, staffing, outdoor spaces, lunches, transportation, attendance, PPE needs and cleaning protocols. She noted that distances between student desks will be narrowed at all levels. She will survey families regarding their preference for in-person or remote learning for the remainder of the school year and their plans to continue use of school transportation services. Staff will be surveyed on PPE and materials needs. A lengthy discussion followed. The members noted the need for continued patience and the collaboration of all parties as planning continues. The district's focus will remain on the safety of students and staff, expenditures will be funded through federal stimulus programs, and specific details for each school's plan will be shared with families and staff as they are developed. Community members are encouraged to follow local health and safety guidelines outside of school to insure the successful return to in-person learning. Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the School Committee unanimously voted by roll call vote to adopt the Superintendent's recommendation for a transition to full in-person learning in preschool through grade 6 by April 5th and to adopt the Superintendent's recommendation to move to a 3-2-3 model of instruction at the Jr.-Sr. High School by April 5th.
- **Program of Studies:** Mr. Atherton presented new courses to be included in the 2021-2022 Program of Studies. Offerings include: Abnormal Psychology, Current Events, Digital Marketing, Journalism, PLTW Medical Innovations, Music Studies, Piano Lab I, Project Management I and II, Sociology and Social Justice, Varied Voices, and World History Survey. Mr. Atherton reported that student selections for next year will be completed in April, the annual Program of Studies Night will be virtual and has been scheduled for March 16th, and a dual enrollment program with Quinsigamond Community College is available. A brief discussion followed regarding the course description for Abnormal Psychology and Mr. Atherton will follow-up with the course teacher.

8. **Correspondence** – The Committee reviewed a brochure from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees entitled COVID-19 Testing Guidance for School Committees.

9. **Audience to Citizens** - The Recording Secretary was asked to read public comments and questions submitted via the School Committee's email account. Emails were submitted by Lisa Novelli and Len Guertin.

The next regular meeting will be held on April 6, 2021. The currently planned Budget Workshop on March 16th will be held only if needed.

**Adjourn to Executive Session-** The Chair announced the need for an 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 Committee would not be reconvening in public session and the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary  
APPROVED: April 6, 2021