

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, April 6, 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
Laura Ingemi, Business Teacher
Carly Smith and Edda Phillips, MassHire Interns
Louis Arcudi, Hopedale Selectboard, Representative to Negotiation Team
Kaitlin Federico, Candidate for School Committee
Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Timothy Johnson, Jr.-Sr. High School Assistant Principal
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 with the members and Superintendent present in the Media Center at the Jr.-Sr. High School. The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:02 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 March 2 and 9, 2021 - Upon a motion by Mrs. Alberto and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes of March 2 and 9, 2021.

2. Student Representatives' Report – Jr.-Sr. High School: Katelynn Brunt and Madison Sullivan reported on the recent virtual coffeehouse, Pennies for Patients, Student Council activities, and future plans for Stuff-a-Bus and Mr. Hopedale.

3. Superintendent's Comments – The Superintendent thanked the Edward Kennedy Health Center in Milford for holding a vaccine clinic for district staff and the Hopedale Board of Health for establishing a consortium with neighboring towns to provide vaccines. Approximately 91% of the district staff has received at least one dose. Ms. Crebase asked families to continue following state and CDC guidelines to maintain low community cases, especially as the schools return to full in-person learning. She also reviewed recent activities for the senior class and provided an update on the fall-2 and spring sports seasons. Bright Beginnings Center and Memorial Elementary School have returned to full in-person learning and a robust extended school year program is being planned. The Superintendent asked for residents to contact the Town Hall if they are interested in participating in open space and recreation planning for the Town.

4. Response to Superintendent's Comments – A brief discussion followed regarding the adopt-a-senior program for the Class of 2021. Thanks were extended to Ms. Cosgrove for her continuing work to plan this year's summer program, to staff who have been vaccinated, and to everyone who assisted the staff in receiving vaccination appointments.

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 one FY20 accounts payable warrant dated March 18, 2021 and three FY21 accounts payable warrants dated March 4 and 18 (two), 2021 in the amount of \$244,243.19.
- **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 March 11 and 25, 2021 in the amount of \$1,008,560.23.
- **Monthly Budget Reports:** Members reviewed the monthly budget report for March 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 \$7,500 from the Eppley Charitable Gift Fund of the Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund to the Hopedale Jr.-Sr. High School Boosters.
- **Approval of Donation:** Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee unanimously accepted a donation in the amount of \$1,112.06 from the Hopedale Boosters to the Jr.-Sr. High School Athletic Department for the purchase of volleyball pads.

6. Committee Reports-

- **Committee on Budget:** Mrs. Hampsch noted that the budget sub-committee is awaiting guidance from the Finance Committee before considering revisions to next year's proposed budget. She reported on recent sub-committee and Finance Committee meetings and suggested that a budget workshop be scheduled for the entire Committee. After a brief discussion, it was agreed that the workshop would be held on Tuesday, April 27th.
- **Committee on Policy:** Mrs. McKeon reported that the sub-committee reviewed MASC Policies KBE, KCB, KDD, KE, KHB, KI, KLG, KLI, KLK and determined not to recommend adoption. The following policies were presented for a First Reading and discussion:
KDA - Guidelines for Posting Information on JSHS Sign
KF - Community Use of School Facilities
KF-R - Community Use of School Facilities
KH - Notification of Non-School Related Activities
Consideration of KHA - Public Solicitations in the Schools was tabled until a correction is made in the references.
Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon which was seconded by Mrs. Alberto, the Committee unanimously voted to move the policies forward for a Second Reading and approval at the next meeting.
- **Committee on Health and Safety:** The Superintendent reported on the recent meeting and noted that monthly meetings will focus on staff and student well-being. Action items are being developed and will be shared with the Committee when drafted.

7. Agenda Items:

- **School Highlight:** The Superintendent introduced Ms. Ingemi who is working with MassHire and the HSSIIEP (High School Senior Internship in Education Program) to provide work experiences for three high school students interested in the field of education. The student participants receive payment through a grant from DESE and have been assigned to assist in social studies, Spanish and second grade classrooms. Ms. Phillips and Ms. Smith reviewed their classroom responsibilities and noted that they are gaining experience which will help inform their future college and career choices. Ms. Ingemi also reviewed other capstone and internship opportunities currently offered at the Jr.-Sr. High School. A brief discussion followed regarding HSSIIEP and the potential for continuing participation after this school year.
- **School Choice Applications for 2021-2022:** The Committee reviewed the number of applications received to date for participation in next year's school choice program. Mrs. Hampsch recommended that before determining the number of available seats for 2021-2022, the Committee consider the needs of current students, especially with regard to learning loss during the state of emergency, and the potential for additional resident student enrollments from newly proposed housing developments. Upon a motion

by Mrs. Hampsch which was seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee unanimously voted to approve nine applications which have priority as siblings or the children of permanent staff. The remainder of the applications will be reviewed at the May meeting.

- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Sub-Committee Discussion:** The Chair proposed the creation of a School Committee sub-committee to focus on strengthening an inclusive and supportive environment in the district and shared a presentation detailing its purpose, goals and timelines. Mrs. Butler reviewed similar initiatives currently in place throughout the state and nationally, as well as those currently in place in the district. Charts reflected the changing demographics of the student body since 2011 and lack of diversity among professional staff. The Committee discussed other work currently underway in the district, staff professional development, and the benefits of investigating a community-wide rather than school-focused plan. The Chair will investigate current efforts underway in the schools and community and report back to the Committee.

Selectman Arcudi joined the meeting and the Chair moved to the Approval of the Unit A Contract.

- **Approval of Unit A Contract:** Mrs. Hampsch gave a brief summary of the 2021-2024 Unit A agreement provisions which include salary increments of 2% in the first year and 2.25% in the second and third years, elimination of lower steps, a retirement incentive and expanded stipend offerings. Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members and Mr. Arcudi unanimously voted by roll call vote to ratify the 2021-2024 contract as presented: Mrs. Hampsch- yes; Mrs. Alberto- yes; Mrs. McKeon- yes; Mrs. Brytowski- yes; Mr. Arcudi- yes; and Mrs. Butler- yes.
- **Hopedale Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Committee:** The Chair reported on the Town Committee which is reviewing Hopedale's preparedness for natural disasters and other unforeseen events, and their impact on resident safety. The Committee will be reviewing infrastructure and resources. Mrs. Butler will report back to the School Committee as the meetings progress.
- **Stipend for School Committee Members:** Stipends for members had been included in the final approved FY2021 school budget although the Town removed stipends from its budget. The members determined, by consensus, to waive the payments and allocate the budgeted funds for a school-related purpose. The members asked the Superintendent to seek recommendations from the building administrators.
- **Strategic Plan-Objective #2:** The Superintendent presented the second strategic objective of the revised strategic plan, i.e. ensure growth in social/emotional competencies and application of those skills to manage and achieve positive goals, support reconnecting relationships and make responsible decisions. The supporting initiatives include the assessment of student and staff needs, the creation of strategies to promote self-care, provide experiences to ensure college and career readiness, practice integration of academics and social/emotional learning, and identification of tiered interventions. An interactive visual representation of the plan was shared with the Committee.
- **Superintendent's Self-Evaluation:** The Superintendent shared her end-of-year self-evaluation. She highlighted the successful development and implementation of the reopening plan, negotiations with the HEA, ongoing revision of the reopening plan as the district moves to full in-person learning, and continuing work to finalize the district's strategic plan.
- **Distribution of Superintendent's Evaluation Form:** Evaluation forms for completion were shared with the Committee members. The Chair will also post an online form and asked that they be returned by April 27th. The summary evaluation will be presented at the May meeting.
- **School Committee Evaluation Form Discussion:** A draft evaluation form, based on the tool used last year, was presented for discussion. The Chair will post the form online and asked the members to return completed forms to the Vice Chair by April 27th.
- **Jr.- Sr. High School Reopening Plan:** Mr. Atherton reviewed the 3-2-3 schedule for hybrid students in grades 7 through 12 which will begin on April 5th. Beginning April 26th, he proposed that students would move from the 3-2-3 model and return to full in-person learning. Mr. Atherton explained the details of the new in-person model which would include five 60-minute classes per day, a flex block at the end of each day, and a rotating seven-period schedule. The Remote Learning Academy model would continue for the remainder of the school year but move to 60-minute classes. He reviewed protocols for

attendance, transportation, arrival and dismissal, passing in hallways, desk spacing, mask breaks, PPE and cleaning. A discussion followed regarding the flex block, the privacy of absent students, considerations due to closer seating in classrooms, and student vaccinations. Upon a motion by Mrs. Hampsch and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski the Committee voted unanimously by roll call vote to approve the Jr.-Sr. High School in-person reopening plan as presented, as follows: Mrs. Hampch- yes; Mrs. Alberto- yes; Mrs. McKeon- yes; Mrs. Brytowski- yes; and Mrs. Butler- yes.

8. Correspondence – No correspondence was presented for review.

9. Audience to Citizens - The Recording Secretary was asked to read public comments and questions submitted via the School Committee's email account. An email was submitted by Greg Habel on behalf of Hopedale for Change in support of the proposed Diversity, Equity and Inclusion sub-committee. The email is included as an official part of this meeting's record. The Superintendent addressed concerns raised in the email by reviewing the initiatives currently underway in the schools to support the district's core values and to create a welcoming environment for all students.

The next regular meeting will be held on May 4, 2021. A budget workshop will be held on April 27th.

Adjourn to Executive Session- The Chair announced the need for an executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation since an open meeting would have a detrimental effect on the position of the Committee. 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 8:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: May 4, 2021