

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, December 7, 2021**

Members Present: Lisa Alberto, Chair
Kristi Brytowski, Vice Chair
Jennifer McKeon

Members Absent: Alysia Butler
Kaitlin Federico

Also Present: Karen Crebase, Superintendent
Derek Atherton, Jr.-Sr. High School Principal
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
Kristen Poisson, BBC Principal
Nora Hodgins, School Committee Representative/Student Council Co-Representative
Ashleigh Bourgeois and Gage Pavia, Student Council Co-Representatives
Elizabeth Callahan, SEPAC Chairperson

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm in the Media Center at the Jr.-Sr. High School, 25 Adin Street, Hopedale, Massachusetts, with a quorum present.

1. **Minutes of November 2, 2021** - The Chair passed over approval of the minutes until a quorum of the members present on November 2nd are in attendance.
2. **Student Representatives' Report** - Ashleigh Bourgeois and Gage Pavia reported on recent and upcoming events, including STUCO meetings, the honor societies induction ceremony, ring dance for tenth graders, clothing and toy drives, the Thanksgiving turkey run which provided meals to nine local families, a community pasta dinner which raised funds for the Milford Food Pantry, monthly staff appreciation events, chorus and band events, the Winter Cotillion and secret snowflake gift swap, and the upcoming production of *Alice in Wonderland*.
3. **Superintendent's Comments** – The Superintendent reported on current positive COVID-19 cases in the district: two student cases at the Memorial School, two student cases at the Jr.-Sr. High School, and one staff case. She noted the success of the district's Test and Stay program and the scheduling of vaccination clinics at Memorial School. Principal Kristen Poisson was recognized for her article "Lessons Learned from Pandemic Pre-K" which was published in ASCD magazine. Ms. Crebase announced the receipt of a grant from MetroWest Health Foundation to support counseling services at the Jr.-Sr. High School. She also shared the resignation of Memorial School Assistant Principal Donna Hennessy, effective at the end of the school year.
4. **Committee Response to Superintendent's Comments** - No discussion followed the Superintendent's comments.
5. **Financial Items**
 - **Monthly Report of Accounts Payable Warrants:** The Committee reviewed the accounts payable report as presented by Mrs. Davis. Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of five warrants dated: November 4 (two) and 18 (three), 2021 in the amount of \$296,938.78.

- **Monthly Report of Payroll Warrants:** Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated: November 4 and 18, 2021, in the amount of \$997,150.24.
 - **Monthly Budget Reports:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report.
 - **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
 - **Acceptance of MetroWest Health Foundation Grant:** Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee unanimously voted to accept a grant in the amount of \$48,474 from the MetroWest Health Foundation to fund multi-tiered support counseling at the Jr.-Sr. High School.
6. **Committee on Policy:** Mrs. McKeon reported that Policies GA, GCE, and GCG were reviewed with no revisions recommended. The following policies, revised to reflect MASC's recommended language, were presented for a First Read:
- GCBB - Employment of Principals**
 - GCF - Professional Staff Hiring**
 - GCI A - Philosophy of Staff Development**
- Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the members unanimously voted to move the policies forward for a Second Read.
7. **Committee on Budget:** The Budget Subcommittee held its initial meeting on November 10, 2021. The subcommittee discussed the timeline for departmental meetings and the preparation of a draft budget which will be presented to the full Committee for review upon completion.
8. **Committee on Facilities:** The Facilities Subcommittee held its initial meeting on November 18, 2021 with Mr. Flaherty and discussed general concerns regarding the buildings and grounds. Mr. Flaherty is preparing a five-year plan which will be presented to the full Committee.
9. **Agenda Items:**
- **SEPAC Update:** The Committee welcomed Elizabeth Callahan, Chairperson of Hopedale's Special Education Parents' Advisory Council (SEPAC) for her annual report. Mrs. Callahan reviewed SEPAC's mission and provided a summary of their activities. She reported on SEPAC's meeting schedule, the annual educator recognition event, scholarships for graduating seniors, a staff appreciation carnation fundraiser, and events for parents. A goal for the current year includes investigating a designation of Memorial School as a Unified School by Special Olympics. The Superintendent and Committee noted their appreciation of the organization's work and support.
 - **Pupil Personnel Services Report:** Pupil Personnel Services Director Karen Cosgrove provided her department's annual update. Ms. Cosgrove reported on the collaboration of all staff as students have been welcomed back to full in-person learning and reviewed the number of students at each building receiving special education services. She reviewed new staff positions and some postings which remain open at this time. Highlighted guiding initiatives include the Accelerated Roadmap, iReady assessments and Tier 1 and Tier 2 interventions for academic and SEL support. A well-attended Family Night was held recently for the district's ELL families. Continuing and ongoing work includes professional development for staff, investigating work opportunities for students, collaborating with SEPAC, and preparing for the upcoming on-site Tiered Focus Monitoring review. Discussions included whether students needing special education or ELL support is increasing district-wide, staff vacancies, and the successful growth of the ELL Family Night since its inception.
 - **School Year Calendar Review:** A preliminary draft of the 2022-2023 district calendar was presented. The draft calendar will be shared with the union leadership and staff, and brought forward again for further discussion.

- **BBC Annual Review of Fees:** Mrs. Poisson presented a proposal for increased preschool tuition for the 2022-2023 school year, noting that rates have been static since the 2017-2018 school year. She also proposed daily rates for new programs being planned for the upcoming school year. A brief discussion followed regarding the expected enrollment for next year, the community interest in the programs, and reasonableness of the rate increases. Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Brytowski, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the presented tuition chart for Bright Beginnings Center's 2022-2023 school year.
- **Forest Friends Preschool Proposal:** Mrs. Poisson proposed a new nature-based program which offers a creative curriculum and allows for increased enrollments despite limited building space. Forest Friends is a student-focused program based outdoors. Mrs. Poisson reviewed the curriculum and programmatic needs, such as outerwear for students and supplies that would travel with the class away from the building. The schedule would be Monday through Thursday from 9:00am to noon and be offered to students 3½ to 5 years of age. Fridays would be reserved for makeup days when class is canceled for inclement weather. Discussions included the impact on students transitioning to kindergarten, the provision of student services and next steps. The members offered, by consensus, their support for Mrs. Poisson's proceeding with the next steps.
- **Masking Discussion:** The Superintendent reported that the state is continuing to offer mask waivers for schools which achieve an 80% joint vaccination rate among staff and students. Currently, none of our schools reaches this threshold. New mask guidance from the state is expected by January 15, 2022. Mrs. Crebase will continue to monitor our schools' vaccination rates and other local districts which have applied for waivers. This will become a continuing item on monthly agendas.

10. **Correspondence** – There was no correspondence to share with the Committee.

11. **Audience to Citizens** – No members of the audience requested to address the Committee.

The next meeting of the Committee will be January 4, 2022 at 6:00 pm.

The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
 Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
 APPROVED: February 1, 2022