

**Hopedale School Committee
Minutes of the Meeting of
Tuesday, March 1, 2022**

Members Present: Lisa Alberto, Chair
Jennifer McKeon
Alysia Butler
Kaitlin Federico

Members Absent: Kristi Brytowski

Also Present: Karen Crebase, Superintendent
Karen Cosgrove, Pupil Personnel Services Director
Lynne Davis, School Accountant
Brian Miller, Memorial School Principal
Kristen Poisson, Bright Beginnings Center Principal
Nora Hodgens, School Committee Representative
Ashleigh Bourgeois and Gage Pavia, Student Council Co-Representatives

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

1. **Minutes of February 1, 2022** - Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Federico, the minutes of February 1, 2022 were unanimously approved.
2. **Student Representatives' Report** - Ashleigh Bourgeois and Gage Pavia reported on recent and upcoming events, including STUCO meetings and conferences, monthly staff appreciation events, the upcoming production of *Little Mermaid*, DECA competitions and the All State concerts. Planning is underway for the annual Coffeehouse, executive board elections, Stuff-a-Bus food collection, Mr. Hopedale, and National Administrators Day.
3. **Superintendent's Comments** – The Superintendent reported a smooth transition as students and staff moved to a mask-optional setting in the buildings. She reported one positive student COVID-case districtwide and an upcoming vaccine clinic at Memorial School. Ms. Crebase announced a joint Blackstone Valley Educator Job Fair scheduled for April 7th at Milford High School, the completion of a ramp at the Memorial School playground, the completion of Phase-1 of a painting project at Bright Beginnings Center, and full enrollment in next year's preschool, pre-kindergarten, and Forest Friends programs. The retirements of Janet Carboni, Suzanne Dunn and Mindy Feng, teachers at Memorial School, were also announced.
4. **Committee Response to Superintendent's Comments** - There was a brief discussion regarding enrollments for the new Forest Friends program.
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. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of six warrants dated: February 10 (four) and February 24 (two), 2022 in the amount of \$252,433.61.

- **Monthly Report of Payroll Warrants:** Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Butler, the members unanimously voted to ratify the payment of two payroll warrants dated: February 10 and 24, 2022, in the amount of \$988,951.47.
- **Monthly Budget Reports:** Mrs. Davis presented the monthly budget report.
- **Warrants for Signature:** There were no warrants distributed for signature.
- **Donation from King Philip Regional School District:** Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Butler, the Committee unanimously voted to accept the donation of twenty used mobile stands for interactive flat panels worth approximately \$11,980.

6. **Committee on Policy:** The following policies were presented for a Second Reading:

GCJ- Professional Teacher Status

GCQE- Retirement of Professional Staff Members

GCRD- Tutoring for Pay

GDB- Support Staff Contracts and Compensation Plans

GDO- Evaluation of Support Staff

GDQD- Suspension and Dismissal of Support Staff Members

Upon a motion by Mrs. McKeon and seconded by Mrs. Alberto, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the policies as presented. With regard to Policy EBCFA- Face Coverings, which was rescinded at the last meeting and discussed at the Policy Committee's recent meeting, Mrs. McKeon recommended that no replacement policy be considered at this time.

7. **Committee on Budget:** The Superintendent reported that a joint meeting between the School Committee and Finance Committee has been scheduled for March 9th. The previously scheduled Budget Workshop for the Committee on March 15th is canceled.

8. **Agenda Items:**

- **Technology Update:** The Superintendent provided the technology update on Mr. Toupin's behalf. She reported on the successful addition of a part-time technology support technician, the deployment of chromebooks and docking stations for classroom teachers, and the installation of smartboards and interactive flat panels in classrooms. The district saved \$300,000 over the summer by upgrading the network infrastructure in-house. Recent software upgrades include using Aspen for the district's internal absence system rather than contracting with an additional vendor, the implementation of an E-Sports program utilizing Nintendo switches, ongoing planning for a new unified communication platform for emergency alerts, website hosting, mobile access, and social media connections, and the deployment of a new human resource system to streamline personnel forms and workflows. After the update, members discussed the success of the E-sports program and the current ability to acquire a third-party ADA-compliant web platform due to decreasing costs. The Superintendent will share questions regarding the new firewall with the Technology Director.
- **Coaching Assignments:** The following list of spring coaches was presented to the Committee: Girls Lacrosse: Varsity-Kayla Merrigan, JV-Maureen Hodgins; Softball: Varsity-Shanna Lathrop, JV- Andrew Dietrich; Baseball: Varsity-Kevin Bresciani, JV-Zac Brown; Tennis: Girls- Art Rizzo; Track: Tim Maguire, Joe Drugan and Sara Comeau. The Boys Tennis coach position is yet to be filled. A brief discussion followed regarding the possible transition of the Boys Lacrosse team to a co-op with Milford High School or Nipmuc Regional High School.
- **Mask Discussion:** With the CDC recently lifting mask mandates on school vehicles and leaving the issue to local control, the Superintendent asked the Committee to consider whether the district's mask mandate on school buses and vans should be lifted. Ms. Crebase shared the area school districts which have lifted their mandates. In response to a question, the Superintendent

noted that the district would consider refunds for families that opt not to ride buses based on the Committee's decision. Upon a motion by Mrs. Federico and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee voted unanimously to lift the district's mask mandate on school vehicles. Mrs. Butler abstained from voting and a procedural discussion followed.

9. **Correspondence** - The members reviewed a request for feedback from the representative of the Hopedale Open Space Committee dated February 18, 2022. Mrs. Butler shared that she had attended a recent open forum where similar feedback was sought from community members. A discussion followed regarding the relevance of some questions to the mission and responsibility of the School Committee, the purview of the Town's Field Committee, and the ability of the Committee to respond in a timely manner. It was determined by consensus that each Committee member will submit suggested responses to Questions #1, #3, and #10 to the Superintendent who will craft a response on behalf of the members.
10. **Audience to Citizens** – Kate Guertin, a parent, confirmed with the Committee that the mask mandate on school transportation vehicles would be effective on March 2, 2022 and inquired whether other mitigation measures would be lifted. The Superintendent reported that she will review data over the upcoming weeks and revisit existing mitigation strategies, including distancing and cafeteria procedures.

The next regular meeting of the Committee is scheduled for April 5, 2022 at 6:00 pm. There will be a virtual joint meeting with the Finance Committee on March 9, 2022 to discuss the FY 2023 budget.

Upon a motion to adjourn the meeting by Mrs. Butler and seconded by Mrs. McKeon, the Committee unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Jeanne McGuane, Recording Secretary
APPROVED: April 5, 2022