

HOPKINTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, September 24, 2015
Regular Meeting 7:00 PM
Middle School Library
MINUTES

School Committee Chair Ellen Scordino opened the regular meeting at 7:07 PM with the following present:

Members:

Ms. Ellen Scordino, Chair
Ms. Lori Nickerson, Vice Chair (late arrival, 7:28)
Ms. Kelly Knight, Member
Mr. Jonathan Graziano, Member
Ms. Jean Bertschmann, Member

Also Present:

Dr. Cathy MacLeod, Superintendent
Mr. Robert Berlo, Assistant Superintendent
Mr. Ralph Dumas, Director of Finance

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Recognitions

- The 300th Anniversary Celebration included a variety of activities on September 19 and 20, 2015. Dr. MacLeod expressed appreciation to Ms. Bertschmann for her work organizing the event.

III. Public Comments: None at this meeting

IV. Reports

- A. Student Council – None at this meeting
- B. ESBC (taken out of order, after VI. A.) – Mr. Graziano Communications Plan – The methods of sharing information about the project include: Giving the presentation to 18+ organizations, holding office hours at Water Fresh Farm, using all forms of media including Facebook, the local media outlets, and the HCAM website. Talking points and FAQ's are also available.
- C. Liaisons Reports – Ms. Nickerson reported that the first meeting of SPEAC was very well attended, and attendees were receptive to the information Dr. Zaleski presented. The group will be renamed SEPAC to be consistent with the name used in other school districts.
- D. SC Chair Report – Dr. MacLeod and Ms. Scordino met with the Town Manager and the Chair of the Board of Selectmen (BOS). The first item discussed was the progress made in the pursuit of an insurance claim or reimbursement for the damage done by the solar panels on the HHS roof. It was clear in discussions with the insurance company that they are not obligated to pay for repairs; Town Counsel confirmed this conclusion. The next step will be to hold a discussion with the solar panel company as a tenant of the school building.

The budget cycle was briefly discussed. The proposed approach this year will be that the School Department provides the Town with information on the major drivers and the capital improvements being considered. This information will be shared with the BOS sometime in October.

Also discussed was bus parking and the potential impact to contract discussions and the budget. It was indicated that some of the land owned by the Town may be available for bus parking. Further discussions will take place on this issue.

School Committee members were encouraged to redirect to principals and/or faculty, and pass on to the Superintendent questions or comments that are received from community members. This will allow the Superintendent and School Committee to have a well-rounded understanding of topics that are important to the community. If the topic becomes large, or is something the Committee is already considering, the information will be included in the Chair report.

Discussion: Ms. Bertschmann reported the Board of Selectmen indicated during their recent meeting that a liaison from the School Committee will be invited to serve on the committee to review the master plan for the Town.

Conversations with the Town Manager and the BOS will continue in order to refine the timeline and detail of budget information shared by both groups.

E. Superintendent's Report:

- New Building Project Presentation (taken out of order, after IV. A.)

Mr. Mike Shepard joined the table. Dr. MacLeod explained that this presentation will be given multiple times in multiple venues to communicate the plans for the new school building to the community. In addition, a Public Forum will be held on Wednesday, October 14, 2015. Mr. Shepard reviewed the beginning of the Elementary School Building Committee (ESBC), its goals, and activities to date leading up to the Special Town Meeting set for Monday, October 26, 2015 and the Special Town on November 9, 2015. Dr MacLeod presented the educational plan for the new building which will educate preK, K and 1st grade students. Mr. Shepard explained that the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) will reimburse \$14 million for the project. Opening of the new school is targeted for Fall 2018. The tax impact for the average Hopkinton homeowner will be calculated and will be available 2 weeks before the Special Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen plans to form a sub-committee to study the future use of the Center School building. School Committee members asked clarifying questions and offered suggestions for the presentation.

- 8:44 – 8:53: Recommended Budget Cycle 2015-2016 (taken out of order, after IV. D.)

Discrepancies between the School Committee budget timeline and the timeline issued by the Town were reviewed. The timing of the exchange of budget numbers between the Town and school department was identified as an issue by both sides. Monthly meetings with the Town Manager, Chair of the BOS, the Superintendent, and the Chair of the School Committee are expected to provide information to both groups in a more timely way.

- 8:53 – 8:54: The number of absences of teachers, students, and teaching assistants on Rosh Hashanah were 74 students, 8 teachers and 1 teacher's assistant. The School Committee had earlier requested this information.
- 8:54 – 9:03: Adjustments were made, and continue to be made, to the transportation schedule and drop-off / pick up routines to elevate issues at Elmwood School. Road construction projects have heavily impacted traffic patterns.

V. New Business

- A. 9:03 – 9:04: **Joint Capital Project with Town in the amount of \$285.00** – Mr. Dumas

For Consideration: Payment of reimbursement for a joint Capital Project as appropriated in referenced Article 23. Due to the "joint" nature of this appropriation the Town Finance Department will be processing all payments using the REQUEST FOR PAYMENT – JOINT CAPITAL form, which requires three School Committee signatures on the upper right-hand section of the form.

Motion to approve the payment of \$285.00 to the vendor as indicated on the Request for Payment-Joint Capital form was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Ms. Nickerson.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

B. 9:04 – 9:05: **Capital Project School Department Article Warrant #16-013 in the amount of \$17,046.54** – Mr. Dumas

For Consideration: Request and recommendation of Superintendent for payment of invoices for a Capital Project as appropriated in Article 14.

Motion to approve the payment of Warrant #16-013 in the amount of \$17,046.54 to the vendor as outlined in the warrant was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Ms. Nickerson.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

C. 9:05 – 9:06: **Budget Transfer Request** – Mr. Dumas

For Consideration: This transfers remaining funds in the Extended School salaries budget into the Extended School Contracted Services budget.

Motion to approve the budget transfer amount of \$13,610.00 as indicated in the agenda materials was made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Ms. Nickerson.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

VI. Old Business

A. 8:13 – 8:18: **Middle School Washington D.C. Trip** – Mr. Keller (taken out of order, after IV. E., first bullet)

For Consideration: Request and recommendation of Superintendent to approve the revised D.C. venue based on the parent feedback relative to the increased cost.

Recommended Motion to vote to approve the Washington D.C. trip was made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Mr. Graziano.

After discussion, by general consensus the School Committee supported following the format of reading the “For Consideration” and the “Recommended Motion” first, after which Committee members can offer changes to the Recommended Motion. The motion will then be made and seconded. Ms. Nickerson withdrew her motion.

Middle School Principal Alan Keller briefly explained the changes made to the trip. In response to Ms. Nickerson’s questions, Mr. Keller explained that 183 responses from parents were received. This is a higher number of responses than is normally received.

Motion: Move to vote to approve the Washington D.C. trip as presented in the agenda materials was made by Ms. Nickerson and seconded by Mr. Graziano.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

B. 9:06 – 9:26: **School Committee Policy: IHGB Home Education (2nd reading)**

For Consideration: Request and recommendation of Superintendent to review the current policy and define extra-curricular. Policy IHGB was adopted in December 2007. The policy has been shared through listserv.

Dr. MacLeod explained that email addresses are not available for all families who home school their children. Letters to the fourteen families were sent out on Tuesday. Based on this timing Dr. MacLeod recommended approval of the policy be delayed to allow these families time to give feedback.

Discussion: In response to Ms. Scordino’s question, Dr. MacLeod explained that this policy came under review because it was not consistently enforced. After discussions with the Administrative Team, no changes were recommended to the policy. A clear definition of extra-curricular activities would be beneficial. School Committee members asked about specific before and after school activities.

C. 9:26 – 9:28 **School Committee Policy: JF School Admissions and Residency (3rd reading) – Dr. MacLeod For Consideration:** Request and recommendation of Superintendent to revise the policy to limit non-resident admissions to a 30 day period from the start of the school year.

Changes were suggested for consistency throughout the document.

Motion to adopt Policy JF as amended was made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Knight.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

VII. Public Comments: 9:28 – 9:40

- Concern was expressed on the part of a home school family about **School Committee Policy: IHGB Home Education**. Large group activities such as band, drama, and art are areas in which home school students desire to participate.
- Concern was expressed about the change in the definition of extra-curricular activities in policy *IHGB* and the impact that change would have on some students who are currently participating in activities under the present policy.

VIII. Items by Consensus: 9:40

- A. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the Operating Budget & Other Funds Warrant #16-011 in the amount of \$399,314.97.
- B. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve the High School Student Activities Warrant #16-012 in the amount of \$48,595.83.
- C. The Superintendent recommends the School Committee vote to approve \$19,079.00 from the “The Sky’s the Limit” fundraiser be placed in the Middle School Gift Account as indicated in the agenda materials.

On a motion made by Ms. Bertschmann, seconded by Mr. Graziano, the School Committee voted to approve items VIII. A. – C.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

IX. Executive Session: 9:42

On a motion made by Ms. Nickerson, seconded by Ms. Bertschmann, the School Committee voted to enter into an Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations with nonunion personnel with respect to the Superintendent’s contract and to review Executive Session minutes for release and updates with respect to collective bargaining with the HTA. A roll call vote was taken:

- Ellen Scordino, Chair - yes
- Lori Nickerson, Vice Chair - yes
- Kelly Knight, Member - yes
- Jonathan Graziano, Member - yes
- Jean Bertschmann, Member - yes

X. Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Graziano, seconded by Ms. Nickerson, the School Committee voted to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: Favor: 5 Oppose: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

The meeting was adjourned at 10:32 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Ellen Scordino, Chair
Lori Nickerson, Vice Chair