

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE – EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE

January 13, 2022 at 7:00 PM
Remote Meeting via Zoom Webinar Meeting

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Dave Anderson at which time he adopted the following statement from School Committee Chair Ni, regarding remote meetings:

CHAIR COMMENT: This meeting is being held remotely as an alternate means of public access pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021 temporarily amending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law. You are hereby advised that this meeting and all communications during this meeting may be recorded by the Town of Hingham in accordance with the Open Meeting Law. If any participant wishes to record this meeting, please notify the chair at the start of the meeting in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, § 20(f) so that the chair may inform all other participants of said recording.

Members of Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee (ACES) participating remotely: Dave Anderson, Nancy MacDonald, Alan MacDonald, Evan Sheehan, and George Danis.

School Committee Members participating remotely: Chair Kerry Ni, Vice-Chair Michelle Ayer, Secretary Nes Correnti, Liza O'Reilly, Carlos DaSilva, Jen Benham, and Tim Dempsey

Central Office Members participating remotely: Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas, Assistant Superintendent Dr. James LaBillois, Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris, Executive Director of Student Services Dr. Suzanne Vinnes, and Director of Human Resources Susan D'Amato

Visitors: There was no sign in as this was a remote meeting. Kerry Ni stated that 22 people on the call were participating remotely.

2. Proposed change to the Hingham High School grading policy for the 2021-2022 school year

Dr. Maestas noted that these are unusual times due to the pandemic and that Principal Swanson is proposing that Curriculum Directors at the High School be permitted to forgo midterm exams this year. Principal Swanson stated that this proposal is not being made lightly and that the students themselves are eager for things to get back to normal. He noted that in recent weeks, the unprecedented absences of both students and teachers have created significant learning challenges. He stated that the proposal is to forgo the midterm exams and use one day as a makeup day for semester work students may have missed.

Committee members discussed the proposal and voiced support of the idea, and discussed whether make-up days can be counted as instructional days. Dr. Maestas stated that he would get clarification of that from DESE.

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti

It was **voted by the School Committee**: To approve the proposed change to the Hingham High School grading policy to forgo midterm exams for the 2021-2022 school year

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye Tim Dempsey – aye Liza O’Reilly - aye

Kerry Ni – aye

The Committee then discussed the recent policy change this week that enables Dr. Maestas to make decisions to change certain policies, if necessary.

- On a motion by Liza O’Reilly and seconded by Michelle Ayer

It was **voted by the School Committee**: To authorize Interim Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas to make a decision about the make-up day for Hingham High School midterms for the 2021-2022 school year, based on information obtained

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye Tim Dempsey – aye Liza O’Reilly - aye

Kerry Ni – aye

3. Approval of Minutes

- On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti

It was **voted by the School Committee**: To approve the minutes of the School Committee budget meeting held on January 6, 2022

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye

Carlos A.F. DaSilva - abstained Tim Dempsey – aye

Liza O’Reilly - aye Kerry Ni – aye

4. Proposed Operating Budget for FY ‘23

Director of Business and Support Services, John Ferris reviewed corrections made to the proposed Operating Budget for FY ‘23 from previous week’s budget presentation. Mr. Ferris also reviewed added information that had been requested and reviewed current enrollment and enrollment trends.

Mr. Ferris and the Committee discussed enrollment trends, and anticipation of enrollment for FY’23.

- Michelle Ayer noted these trends will not reflect younger people moving to Hingham from urban areas during the pandemic.

Carlos Da Silva asked whether costs have gone down because of fewer students being enrolled in the district. Mr. Ferris noted there are no cost savings because there are no cuts in resources, there are no cuts in full classes from the drop in enrollment to allow for cost savings.

Liza O'Reilly noted that birth rates and enrollment were studied when the district was in the process of opening a fourth elementary school and new middle school.

The then-three existing elementary schools were over crowded, which required the need for East Elementary to be built.

The High School was built and planned for approximately 1100 students. We have been over capacity there for the past few years.

The old middle school was built for approximately 800 students; HPS peaked at 1000 students during that time. John Ferris noted new Middle School was built for 1040 students and enrollment peaked at 1100 students. Mr. Ferris noted that during the MSBA process the enrollment studies projected HPS would peak at a total of 4500 students. Enrollment likely to climb again over the next several years.

Nes Correnti noted that HPS student to teacher ratio had been higher than benchmark towns in the past, and higher than the state average. We will gain more insight into teacher and classroom needs when Dr. Maestas completes the classroom audit.

Tim Dempsey noted that students who moved out of district and into private schools during the pandemic may stay in the private schools now that they are settled there. The recovery of enrollment may take some years to bounce back.

5. Kids in Action (KIA)

John Ferris explained that there is a new requirement to have a nurse available for the Kids in Action (KIA) program and explained that this will be an additional cost of running the program going forward. He reviewed the cost of the program explaining that the proposed increase for FY'23 will cover the cost of the nurse. Other costs of the program include health insurance, bus allocation as HPS provides transportation, and supplies. Mr. Ferris noted it will take several years to build the program back up.

He is proposing to resume other allocation expenses as the program recovers. Expenses not covered for FY23: custodian (resume allocation in FY24) and rent/heat and maintenance (resume allocation in FY25).

KIA Director Jackie Sansone was present remotely and stated that she is comfortable with the added increase, which she explained still makes the cost comparable to similar programs in surrounding communities. Enrollment is fairly consistent this year from last year however parents are working from home therefore students are not staying as long as they used to. Enrollment pre- COVID was 190 students, currently at 161 students.

Tim Dempsey asked if an increase in enrollment is expected. Mr. Ferris noted that enrollment is not projected to change from where it is at now.

Nes Correnti asked whether the students are still going to two different schools and whether custodian and nurses cover both. Mr. Ferris stated the program will only need one nurse. The custodial is an allocation of the staff in the current buildings. Nes also asked if the KIA program would move to one building, possibly Foster after it is built. John Ferris stated they are still considering how the program will change.

Jen Benham asked how the cost of KIA would compare to other towns if a 5% increase was approved. Jackie Sansone stated KIA would still be at a lower cost.

Kerry Ni stated she likes rebuilding gradually over the next couple years.

Michelle Ayer stated with inflation, a 5% increase provides a good blend between recovering some costs and continuing to be a lower cost option for working parents.

Liza O'Reilly stated the increase seems reasonable given an increase hasn't happened in two years.

Jen Benham stated 5% increase seems reasonable. She suggested sending the information to parents quickly so they can plan accordingly.

The Committee discussed the proposed increase.

On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti

It was **voted by the School Committee**: To approve the 5% increase in tuition for the Kids in Action Program starting in FY'23

Michelle Ayer – aye

Jen Benham- aye

Nes Correnti – aye Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye Tim Dempsey – aye Liza O'Reilly - aye

Kerry Ni – aye

6. FY '23 Operating Budget Functions

Director of Business and Support Services John Ferris reviewed the detail sheets for the following functions:

Function 3300 Transportation Function 3510 Athletics

Function 3520 Other Student Activity Function 4120 Heating of Buildings Function 4130 Utilities

Function 4210 Maintenance of Grounds

Function 4220 Plant Maintenance

Function 5100 Employee Retirement Function 7000 Non-Instructional Equipment Function

3300B – Special Ed Transportation Function 9100B – Out of District Tuitions Function 9100E –

Vo-Tech Tuitions

Michelle Ayer asked if retirements is an unusually higher number of retirements. John Ferris stated he believes this is the new norm; retirements will start to accelerate, there will be a generational change that occurs in the schools over the next several years.

Liza O'Reilly asked if \$130k included in degree changes is reflective of new staff coming on. John Ferris noted the amount for degree changes has been relatively consistent over the past several years. As staff used it in the past, he allocates the portion relating to that staff to correct line item. Increase in pay relating to degree changes only happens once a year, it gets reported by staff in September.

George Danis noted that software expense increase in prior year due to remote learning; he asked is added software costs will continue going forward. John Ferris noted software is part of the educational platform that had been developed and will continue to be used.

Transportation reflects new buses and METCO buses with related METCO grant offset.

Food Services is not funded through operations therefore function 3400 doesn't reflect any expenses.

- Athletics expense increased however being offset by Athletics revolving account. Balance of revolving account was going to be used to help fund cost of turf replacement. Still some funds available for future turf use.
- John Ferris noted money for clubs was kept consistent; requests for new club was made however nothing dropped off, should prioritize clubs you want and fund those. Middle School redistributed funds of some clubs to add other activities.
- Carlos Da Silva asked what Field Maintenance Supplies relates to given the Rec Department took over. John Ferris noted it associated with sport activity and not field maintenance, ie. cost of paint to line the fields.
- Michelle Ayer asked about the \$5k offset to drama. John Ferris has taken that off and student parking. Mr. Ferris noted that parking fees that are being collected now should be going into the building revolving account, to be used for grounds maintenance.
- John Ferris noted Security is being captured in maintenance charges.
- Building rental building revolving of \$40k to be used to offset heat.
- Maintenance of Grounds – expect to transfer \$40k to Rec Center for field maintenance. Rec Center getting the revenue from field rentals.
- Building acquisition of equipment, will use building rental revolving account as an offset if any equipment is needed.
- TRACES rent noted = \$61.2k at Libbey Pkwy
- Special Ed – looking to add two vans; we can provide transportation more efficiently than what we contract that out for. Has two vans included in Capital. Purchase through operating if Capital Outlay does not cover it.
- Vocational transportation – portion of costs covered by the state; total amount received by state goes straight back to the town, not HPS.
- George Danis asked whether hybrid or electric vans could be used going forward. John Ferris stated that conversation just commenced during Finance/Capital & Facilities subcommittee meeting; will be looking into it.

7. Finance/Capital & Facilities Subcommittee

John Ferris stated that the Capital/Finance and Facilities Subcommittee met today and he asks that the School Committee give authorization to present to the Capital Outlay Committee.

On a motion by Michelle Ayer and seconded by Nes Correnti

It was **voted by the School Committee**: To authorize the Finance/Capital and Facilities Subcommittee to refine and present capital to the Capital Outlay Committee at the meeting scheduled for January 31, 2022

Michelle Ayer – aye Jen Benham- aye Nes Correnti – aye
Carlos A.F. DaSilva - aye Tim Dempsey – aye Liza O’Reilly - aye
Kerry Ni – aye

8. Other items not reasonably known 48 hours in advance

Ray Estes raised three points for the Committee’s review and consideration:

- Money raised from parking at the High School – check written went to HHS Activity Fee
- Other School Activities and Middle School Activities – look into whether intramural coordinator is now being funded by the district. HSP gave a grant initially for \$3k for some years. Was not fully funded in prior year as it was put on hold due to COVID. HSP did not get request this year. John Ferris stated that is not being funded in the current budget. Is intramural coordinator at Middle School still required.
- Last week during budget presentation Dr. Maestas noted there was a request for four additional coaches: unified basketball, unified track and two rugby coaches. From equity perspective, these positions would be important to compensate coaches accordingly.

9. Adjournment

- On a motion by George Danis and seconded by Nancy MacDonald

It was **voted**: To adjourn at 9:25 PM

Dave Anderson – AYE

Al MacDonald – AYE

Evan Sheehan -AYE

George Danis -AYE

Nancy MacDonald - AYE

Respectfully Submitted By: David Anderson

Minutes Approved 4/14/22