

MINUTES OF THE HINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

February 13, 2017

1. Call to order.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Liza O'Reilly at 7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Aylene Calnan, Carlos Da Silva, Carol M. Falvey, Cynthia Galko, Liza O'Reilly, Kay Praschma and Ed Schreier

Central Office Present: Dorothy Galo, James LaBillois, Elizabeth Kurlan, John Ferris

Visitors Present: Debbie Stellar, Diane DeNapoli, Donna Smallwood, Jaime Kenney, Monica Matthews, Kathy Jordan, Linda Kutsch, Ted Hirsch, Becky Leary, Anita Ryan, Dan Coughlin, Courtney Orwig, Katherine Gaughen, Evan Sheehan, Kerry Ni.

2. Approval of Minutes.

2.1 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee Meeting held on December 14, 2016.

2.2 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee Budget Work Session III held on January 19, 2017.

2.3 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the Joint Meeting of the Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee and the School Committee held on January 21, 2017.

2.4 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Carol M. Falvey,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee Budget Work Session IV held on January 26, 2017.

2.5 A vote on the minutes of the Executive Session of the School Committee held on January 26, 2017 was deferred until next meeting.

2.6 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Carol M. Falvey,

It was

Voted: To approve the minutes of the School Committee Meeting held on January 30, 2017.

3. Questions and Comments. None.

4. Superintendent's Report.

Dr. Galo directed the Committee's attention to a number of documents in the packet. First, the Hingham High School newsletter was included and contained an illustrated section containing pictures of some of the 100 scholastic art awards HHS students received. Also included was the agenda from the Commendation Ceremony at the State House for our Commended Schools (PRS and South Elementary) and information regarding the Future City competition HMS students participated in. Dr. Galo also directed the Committee's attention to the February enrollment numbers and the draft of the 2016 Annual Town Report. She asked for feedback from the Committee on the Annual Report and will include some relevant pictures to compliment the narrative text.

Dr. Galo commented on the process used to make the call to cancel school due to snow and extreme weather. She noted that she understood that parents can become frustrated with what they perceive as a "late" decision, but Dr. Galo explained that the process to actually make a decision is comprehensive and involves driving the roads, checking school parking lots, and consultation with the DPW.

5. Communications.

5.1 Communications Received by the Superintendent. Dr. Galo noted that both she and the Committee were in receipt of a letter from a parent at Foster School regarding class sizes. She noted that she would comment on the issue later in the meeting during the budget discussion.

5.2 Student Communications. None.

5.3 Other Communication: Dr. Galo noted that in the packet was a copy of a communication she sent to parents of students with IEPs and 504 plans regarding recent improvements in special education and recruiting members for the Special Education Continuous Improvement Taskforce.

School Committee Chair Liza O'Reilly read a statement in response to communications that have been sent regarding the retirement of the Hingham High School principal.

6. New Business.

6.1 On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Carol M. Falvey,

It was

Voted: To begin the public hearing meeting of the proposed FY'18 Operating Budget.

- Presentation of the Administration's proposed FY '18 Operating Budget, as adjusted for changes since the meeting of January 30, 2017.

Dr. Galo began the presentation by reviewing the timeline and activities of the budget development process. She then reviewed some overarching comments and challenges about Special Education, state aid, retirements, leaves of absences, collective bargaining and some individual contracts, and overall enrollment. Dr. Galo proceeded to review the proposed FY '18 budget by category (as of 1.5.17). The budget was presented in three sections: regular education, special education, and vocational education. Overall, the initial request was a 5.6% increase over the FY '17 operating budget. Dr. Galo then explained that since this initial budget, the Administration has made another \$238,348 in reductions.

Dr. Galo explained the process to consider requests made by the district's Administration. Requested items were classified as (1) additions that could be justified to be level services (or additions to the base that reflect level services needs), (2) additions that do reflect a new service need but are not included in the budget, and (3) additions that can be justified relative to need, but aren't moved forward in the budget. Dr. Galo then reviewed the proposals and explained each of the proposals that could be justified to be level services and are in the proposed budget.

Dr. Galo reviewed the reductions made to the initial budget and noted that the revised budget proposal to the Committee contains a 5.1% increase over FY '17. DG also noted that this year the district received two formal requests for additions to the budget from the community. The first request was to add a grade 4 teacher to address class sizes at Foster School and a second request to conduct an independent evaluation of special education.

Dr. Galo first addressed the request for the addition of a grade 4 teacher at Foster School. She reviewed elementary enrollment by grade across the four elementary schools, then the average class sizes and total number of sections of each grade by school. Given a close examination of all the variables associated with the request, Dr. Galo noted that she was unable to recommend the addition of a teacher to Foster School.

- Discussion of budget reallocations that could be used to fund Special Education initiatives
Dr. Galo then discussed the request to conduct an independent evaluation of the special education program. This has been an evolving request over the past several weeks. At the most recent meeting with Administration and parents, consensus was reached on how to best move forward. The Administration has committed to identify sources of funding to ensure that Year I of the Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan is funded. Dr. Galo explained that the proposal in front of the Committee for consideration is the district's plan to fund, while not adding to the bottom-line budget. Dr. Galo noted that up to \$10,000 could be used from budget line S2100 (SPED legal budget), up to \$5,000 could be used from budget line R2350 (professional development) and up to \$10,000 could be used from the FY '18 IDEA grant. This proposal allocates up to \$25,000 to fund Year I of the Special Education Continuous Improvement.
- Comments and questions about the proposed FY '18 Operating Budget.
Dr. Galo returned to the PowerPoint presentation and reviewed next steps, as recommended by the Administration for the School Committee:
 1. Accept all proposed changes to the budget to date, as presented by the Administration
 2. Be prepared to vote on SC Budget on 2/27/17, accepting any additional reductions as they may become known up to that date
 3. Work with the Advisory Committee's Education Subcommittee to clarify the magnitude of the gap between the budget as presented and the anticipated available revenues.

School Committee Chair Liza O'Reilly then asked the School Committee for questions or comments about the presentation. The Committee then asked questions, made comments and commended the administration for the overall budget and for working collaboratively to address the special education request. The Committee clarified that roughly 83% of the proposed budget involves personnel and a discussion ensued regarding the ability of parents to make enrollment requests outside of their neighborhood elementary school to another elementary school in town.

Ms. O'Reilly then invited public comment. Jaime Kenny, a parent, stated that the proposal to fund the Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan went a long way with parents and she thanked the Committee. Diane DeNapoli, speaking on behalf of SEPAC, thanked the Committee for their time and energies and requested that any surplus funds at the end of the year be allocated to support and fund the Special Education Continuous Improvement Plan. Monica Matthews, Foster School teacher and parent of three Foster School students, expressed her disappointment that Dr. Galo's recommendation was not supporting the addition of a teacher at Foster School. She noted her advocacy for class size and asked the Committee to ensure a high standard of class sizes at all grade levels. Ms. O'Reilly asked Ms. Matthews and others to continue to share their thoughts on the needs of the Hingham Public Schools. She stated that the School Committee is working on a long term vision for the district and input from the community is welcome.

- On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Carlos Da Silva,

It was

Voted: To adjourn the public meeting of the proposed FY'18 Operating Budget.

- 6.2 The Committee reviewed a proposed fee for late payment of the kindergarten tuition deposit for school year 2017-2018, as recommended by the Community Outreach Subcommittee. Aylene Calnan and Cynthia Galko explained that the \$125 additional processing fee is intended to encourage timely kindergarten registration so that appropriate staffing decisions can be made.

On a motion by Cynthia Galko and seconded by Carol M. Falvey,

It was

Voted: To approve a \$125 late payment fee for Kindergarten tuition for school year 2017-2018.

- 6.3 The Committee reviewed a proposed tuition increase for the Integrated Pre-K program for school year 2017-2018. Aylene Calnan explained the process used to arrive at the Policy Subcommittee's recommendation for a tuition increase. Kay Praschma questioned whether the 2% increase was a function of "tradition" or if it was in line with personnel costs. Discussion ensued and the recommendation was made to (1) ensure the families were not priced out of the program, (2) because it is a mandated program, to ensure that the tuition is used as an offset in associated areas. It was also determined that when future tuition increases are to be considered the School Committee should be presented with past enrollment numbers, including any information on waiting lists.

On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To approve Pre-K fees for 2017-2018 of \$1275 for the two-day program, \$1905 for the 3 day program and \$2500 for the four day program.

- 6.4 The Committee reviewed a proposed tuition increase for the Kids in Action program for school year 2017-2018, as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee. Kids in Action Director Kathy Jordan was present and explained the proposal for fee increases.

On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To approve proposed tuition increase for the Kids in Action program for school year 2017-2018

- 6.5 The Committee reviewed a bid for a 2017 7D 10-passenger van. John Ferris, Director of Business and Support Services reviewed the bid opening. The lowest bid was from New England Wheels.

On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Cynthia Galko,

It was

Voted: To award the bid for a 2017 7D 10-passenger van to New England Wheels, Inc for \$35,992.

- 6.6 The Committee received financial and budget updates from the South Shore Educational Collaborative meeting held on January 20, 2017.

- 6.7 The Committee discussed the Health and Wellness Center proposed warrant item. School Committee Chair Liza O'Reilly reviewed the upcoming dates and activities relative to the FY18

budget development process with the town. There was some discussion on future meeting dates, but the Committee did not decide, at this time, on additional meeting dates and/or times. Ed Schreier provided a review of discussions relative to the Health and Wellness Center project from last year. Dr. Galo then reviewed the slides used during last year's presentation on the project. Dr. Galo noted that, if the article moves forward, the district would be requesting to fund Phase 1 of the project (\$89,850). The Committee discussed the merits of the article and each expressed their opinion on the issue. Foster School and the recent steam pipe issues were discussed and noted as an urgent facility issue for the administration to manage.

On a motion by Edward Schreier and seconded by Aylene Calnan,

It was

Voted: Not to include the article in the warrant for FY18. Ed Schreier, Carol M. Falvey and Aylene Calnan voted in favor; Liza O'Reilly, Cynthia Galko, Carlos Da Silva, and Kay Praschma were opposed.

6.8 The Committee continued discussion about the School Committee's longer term planning and initiatives and priority setting. School Committee Chair Liza O'Reilly reviewed the draft document that contained individual information from the Committee. Discussion ensued and Ms. O'Reilly provided clarification on specific aspects of the document. Following discussion, the Committee suggested the feedback of the Administration before the document moves forward and Ms. O'Reilly encouraged Committee members to review and send her updates to their priorities and she would work to revise the document for future discussion.

6.9 The Committee received notification of the appointment of Angela Hoey, Special Education clerical paraprofessional, effective January 30, 2017 and Laura Kennedy, Language Lab Technician, effective January 25, 2017, both at Hingham High School.

6.10 The Committee received notification of the resignation of Samuel Perkins, paraeducator at Hingham High School, effective February 13, 2017.

7 Other items as may not reasonably be known 48 hours in advance of the meeting. None

8. Subcommittee and Project Reports.

Policy Subcommittee: Met last week and the next meeting is scheduled for 3/3/17.

Salary and Negotiations Subcommittee: Met last week and the next meeting is scheduled for 3/16/17.

Community Outreach Subcommittee: Next meeting will be on 3/7/17.

Long-Range Planning Subcommittee: Met on 2/1/17 with the Capital Outlay Committee. Interviews for HHS roof Design firms will be held on 2/15/17.

Special Education Subcommittee: Members attended the SEPAC meeting last week and will be attending the 3/8/17 SEPAC meeting.

The Committee discussed the timing of further budget discussions and it was decided to wait until 2/27/17 in the hope that more information will be available at that time. The Advisory Committee Education Subcommittee is scheduled to meet on 2/14/17 at 6:30p.m. There is not a posted School Committee meeting at that time so up to three members of the School Committee can attend, with others in the audience if necessary. It was also clarified that there is no need to attend the Board of Selectmen meeting on 2/16/17 since the Health and Wellness Center warrant article will not be moved forward.

9. Adjournment.

On a motion by Aylene Calnan and seconded by Kay Praschma,

It was

Voted: To Adjourn at 10:48 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by:
Cynthia Galko