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Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee

Regular Meeting Minutes of February 13, 2020

Theodore A. Pelosi, Jr. City Council Chambers – 7:00 pm

Attorney Richard Rosa, Vice Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Present	Ms. Sullivan	Present
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Present (arrived @ 7:10 pm)	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present
Mr. Wood	Absent	Attorney Rosa	Present
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Absent		

Dr. Margaret Marotta Superintendent of Schools was also present., Student Advisory Council Member Gabriela Vargas was in attendance representing Ms. Leah Pearse.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the members.

Vice Chair Rosa stated "those attending tonight's meeting should be aware that the meeting is being audio and video recorded by HCTV and WHAV. Any audience members who wish to record any part of the meeting must inform the Chair who will announce the recording. This is to comply with the MA wiretap statute."

#### Public Comment.

Ms. Helen Zbitnoff, 19 Village Woods Road, Haverhill MA, spoke about the recent school committee meeting. She referenced an excellent presentation about the CTE Program at Haverhill High School and others, followed by a barrage of vindictive behavior. Ms. Zbitnoff noted the School Committee had three jobs: to hire a superintendent, to set policy and to build a budget to benefit all children. She commented about the delay in completing the goals and asked if the committee was entering into an alternative facts territory. Ms. Zbitnoff believed that the Committee was not working collaboratively with the Superintendent. She had heard statements were being made on the Haverhill Public Schools Parents Facebook page that were critical and could not be validated, because she had been blocked from participating by a member of the School Committee from this page, who was not in attendance. Ms. Zbitnoff cautioned against speaking in the media negatively about the Haverhill Public Schools.

#### Communication and Reports.

##### Student Advisory Council Report – Ms. Leah Pearse.

Ms. Pearse introduced herself to the new members, since she not been in attendance since the new year. She updated the committee on the following news from HHS:

- Vacation is close, very excited;
- Sophomores have MCAS in March;
- Course selection for Freshman to Juniors;
- Student Council working towards offering after-school drivers' education due to current expense;
- New Restorative Justice Pathway (new pathway) including new classes, such as Justice in Society, Mock CSI, Forensics, True Crime and Investigative Journalism.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to move up the Summer Building Renovations Item from Mrs. Sapienza Donais. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:



Mrs. Dianne Connolly, Director of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support announced some of the efforts to revise the professional development within the district. She noted that it was mid-cycle review and that staff members had been polled regarding these efforts to plan for Spring 2020 and the school year 2020-2021.

Ms. Natalie Campisano, teacher and Nancy Burke, educational support personnel spoke about professional development survey results. Ms. Campisano described the survey process and recommendations for future surveys. Mrs. Burke was pleased that she was part of the committee and educational support personnel were included in the process and would be able to attend beneficial sessions. Mrs. Connolly concluded with Human Resources Coordinator would be having "Power Hour" with the clerical staff and ended with the quote "we are better together".

In response to Attorney Magliocchetti's question about the high strongly disagree responses, Mrs. Connolly reported that many non-unit staff were not included in data base and therefore did not get their first choice.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about educational support personnel involvement. Mrs. Burke responded that this group was not offered choices or opportunities to participate in professional development. She noted her selection as Massachusetts ESP of the Year 2017 and finishing second in the country. Mrs. Burke was also a cancer survivor.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais indicated her strong support for professional development and asked for the course offerings. She commended the work of all educational support personnel.

Mrs. Connolly noted educational support personnel should have the same professional development.

Vice Chair Rosa asked who was surveyed and he was impressed with the results.

Mrs. Connolly responded both teachers and educational support personnel and the goal was to give staff a voice and choice.

Ms. Sullivan introduced Ms. Renee Murphy, Bradford Elementary Grade 3 Teacher to discuss Reading Intervention efforts.

Ms. Murphy recognized Ms. Louise Perry, Principal and Ms. Nicole McGrain, Assistant Principal. She provided the following information on this effort [Renee Murphy School Committee Meeting Presentation 02.13.20.pdf](#). Ms. Murphy provided individual reading puppets to the Committee.

Ms. Perry related on the positive experiences with the dog log.

Attorney Magliocchetti indicated his support of the program.

Vice Chair Rosa extended the Committee's gratitude for the presentation.

MCAS Accountability Review.

Dr. Marotta provided an update on MCAS [Haverhill MCAS Data Review 02.13.20.pdf](#), specifically a redesign of the school and district accountability system.

Ms. Sullivan noted it was a completely different formula and weighing system for MCAS along with 2018 pilot program.

Superintendent Marotta offered the following statements:

- This generation of MCAS is a more difficult assessment.
- Different formula, weighted differently and a more rigorous and difficult assessment.
- Achievement along with progress and growth.
- High School Completion.

- Progress towards English Proficiency for English Language Learners.
- Chronic Absenteeism.
- Advanced work completion level at high school level.
- Different measures.
- More comprehensively looking at students and their needs.
- In 2019 no schools in Haverhill were deemed as underperforming.
- City as a whole was making substantial progress towards targets (45%).
- Important to eliminate inequities within our schools and all our schools are moving up.
- At the high school, the peak was reached at 2018, after years of stagnation, due to significant work by teachers over many years.
- The benchmark was set in 2018 when lower achieving students were retained in grade 9 and not taking the assessment.
- Benchmark score is an anomaly, the impact is significant.
- Discussions held with DESE over the past week, their prediction is our schools including the high school, (data heavily weighted by high schools and elementary schools were performing on target - expectation is that the high school will continue to improve) will continue their strong performance.
- District is excited about this trend.
- Grade 3 Reading improving scores and closing the gap with other communities across the state.
- A steady increase in reading levels within our schools and we are on track for continued growth.
- Student Growth Percentiles in Haverhill were higher than DESE comparable communities and on line with our similar Gateway communities.
- Scores are looking solid and we will continue to grow.
- Teachers and students within the district are working hard.

Ms. Sullivan commented on the changes in the MCAS and this resulted in the inability to make comparisons over multiple years. She related that it was an odd and unusual change in accountability and that DESE advised no comparisons until the end of this year. Ms. Sullivan advised the members to develop an understanding the new accountability system, she thanked Dr. Marotta for the presentation.

Vice Chair Rosa highlighted the following such as, no Haverhill schools were underperforming and the increase in reading proficiency across the district.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello questioned the retention policy and parents' decision-making in the decision.

Dr. Marotta answered that in kindergarten it was the parents' decision and in other grades it was the principal's decision. She further stated that interventions and supports needed to be implemented for the students since many ultimately dropped out of school.

#### Subcommittee Reports.

Attorney Magliocchetti reported on a recent policy subcommittee meeting, which contained an extensive agenda. He noted one of the items was a policy for working at home and requested that the Superintendent for the next policy subcommittee meeting determine who the individuals were who worked at home. Attorney Magliocchetti referenced the data person who had been approved for this arrangement since 2012.

Ms. Sullivan noted that MASC had been contacted and no community in Massachusetts had this policy, but it was within the purview of the committee to establish a policy and direct the Superintendent to implement a procedure.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais commented it was in instances of weather and sickness and asked for equity to be followed with all employees.

Attorney Magliocchetti related that the MASC Updated Policy recommendations will be put on file prior to approval. Additionally, he referenced the existing policy of school committee's role and interactions with the schools and asked members to be mindful of the policy.

Attorney Magliocchetti reported on the last Finance Subcommittee meeting in which the revised SOI for the Haverhill High School roof was reviewed (vote under item 4A) along with additional state funding (parent letter).

Dr. Marotta shared the parent letter on the Student Opportunity Act funding [SOA Parent Letter 02.11.20.pdf](#) which explained the how the plan is developed (on a short timeline for a large task) by the superintendent in consultation with the school committee and input from parents as well as other community stakeholders.

Attorney Magliocchetti noted that the Finance Subcommittee would be meeting monthly until budget and SOA plan is finalized.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello asked about the School Visit policy.

Attorney Magliocchetti responded that the school committee member should contact the superintendent prior to the visit. He always followed this policy since becoming a member and had never been denied access to a building. Attorney Magliocchetti offered it was a courtesy.

Ms. Sullivan offered that Mr. Scully had informed her that a notification 48 hours before a visit was required, because a visit by a school committee member might be considered disruptive if activities were happening in the school.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked that the matter be reviewed when Mr. Wood is in attendance.

Attorney Rosa asked about the contents of the Superintendent's letter and the one-time allocation of \$2m for implementing full-day kindergarten.

Dr. Marotta clarified that it was \$3m (DESE information) and was funded every year.

Vice Chair Rosa stated the district/taxpayer cost to go to full-day kindergarten was \$200,000 in the FY20 budget, however, the state is funding \$3m each year. Superintendent Marotta stated that was correct. Mr. Rosa commented it was a huge win for taxpayers in the city and thanked Dr. Marotta.

#### Old Business.

Vice Chair Rosa read the following:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on February 13, 2020,, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Haverhill School Committee of Haverhill, Massachusetts in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated February 13, 2020 for the Haverhill High School, 137 Monument Street, Haverhill MA 01832, which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future, Haverhill High School Roof Replacement (Priority 1); and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of

a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the revised Haverhill High School Statement of Interest as indicated in the agenda material. Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion.

Vice Chair Rosa noted that the dates had been revised in the Statement of Interest and that was the reason the matter was before the Committee this evening.

A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

Vice Chair Rosa noted that Summer Building Renovations – Mrs. Sapienza Donais remained on the table.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais: Notification of Surplus (tabled 01.23.20).

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to remove Notification of Surplus (tabled 01.23.20). Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked for a listing of surplus items be provided to the School Committee prior to disposal.

Vice Chair Rosa responded that the School Committee does not have a policy, but the City's policy is anything valued at \$10,000 or more is required to be declared surplus.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais stated it was past practice (40 years) to bring items to be declared surplus to the School Committee.

Dr. Marotta commented that the School Committee has voted four (4) times this past year to surplus items (perceived value or large items), so in fact, this practice has been followed by seeking School Committee's approval.

Ms. Sullivan asked if people were throwing away valuable items.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais referenced items being disposed of near the barn.

Attorney Magliocchetti visited the barn and noticed the sinks from the cosmetology department were there. He noted that this issue would be addressed at Policy Subcommittee along with input from the Mayor and City Purchasing Director Steve Bucuzzo.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to remove the Superintendent's Goals (tabled 01.23.20) from the table. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

Vice Chair Rosa acknowledged receipt by email (this morning) and in hard copy (tonight's meeting) of the latest draft of the Superintendent's Goals. He opened the matter for discussion purposes.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais stated that there was 99% agreement on goals with the removal of videotaping of lessons and the one piece is the meeting with the superintendent.

Ms. Sullivan had a clarification concern and agreed the Committee was close to agreement, however suggested the following revision to the Superintendent Goals document on page 2 "is to increase Haverhill's accountability report by 3%". She questioned the seven categories in the report card and how it translates into a percentage and indicated it was the report card.

Vice Chair Rosa asked specifically if the report card referenced the accountability report.

Ms. Sullivan noted in stipulating a goal, it needed to be specific and delineated.

Attorney Rosa noted an amended motion could include "to increase Haverhill's accountability report in the State's Accountability System by 3%" and remove the word 'card' and adding 'accountability' before report."

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the following revision to the Superintendent Goals document on page 2 "to increase Haverhill's accountability report in the State's Accountability System by 3%" and remove the word 'card' and adding 'accountability' before report." Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

Attorney Magliocchetti asked for the next steps.

Ms. Sullivan stated the next step was the face-to-face meeting (conversation) between the Superintendent and subcommittee to obtain Dr. Marotta's feedback.

A discussion was held on the next steps.

Both Attorney Magliocchetti and Vice Chair Rosa acknowledged the work of the Goals Subcommittee. Attorney Rosa noted the matter would be on the next agenda.

#### New Business.

Warrant Approval [Warrant Binder 02.13.20.pdf](#)

Vice Chair Rosa noted Warrant #2 would be withdrawn and approved separately.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve Warrants #1, 3, 4, and 5 as indicated in the agenda material. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked about the Bank of America Bankcard expenditures. Dr. Marotta answered that several school department employees had p-cards to purchase items immediately. Mrs. Sapienza Donais questioned the 99 Restaurant expenditures.

Mrs. Smith answered that expenditure was for the NEASC Committee, which was our obligation. She commented that there were five (5) cards and very secure. Mrs. Smith approved the transactions and limitations on expenditures, it was actually a purchasing card.

A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve Warrants #2 as indicated in the agenda material. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Abstain
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
4 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
1 member abstained			

Discussion of Crest Collaborative Letter. [CREST Letter 02.07.20.pdf](#)



Dr. Marotta offered that the purpose of the letter was to inform School Committees that the Collaborative (district special education students) was in the process of purchasing a new larger building in Andover MA (purchase price is \$10m and needs roughly \$10m in renovations to make it operational). She explained that the building will hold twice as many students and would provide a better service. The Superintendent stated they were notifying us of this large investment and assured us that it will not impact tuition, but their plan is to enroll more students.

Vice Chair Rosa asked how many Haverhill students were enrolled. Dr. Marotta would have to verify the information (10-15 students). Superintendent Marotta answered that there was a process for tuition increases (certain allowable percentage each year and if the increase is above that figure, DESE is involved and public comment is solicited.)

#### Items by Consensus.

[FT MA 02.13.20.pdf](#) and [School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes 01.23.20.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve Items by Consensus as indicated in the agenda material.

Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

Vice Chair Rosa announced there was not a need for an executive session.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to adjourn the meeting (9:05 p.m.). Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. A roll call vote was held with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Attorney Rosa	Yes		
5 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
0 members voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			