



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee
Remote Special Meeting Minutes of November 23, 2020**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Fiorentini, 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 @ 7:05 pm	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present
Mr. Wood	Absent	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Present
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Present		

Dr. Margaret Marotta, Superintendent of Schools, and Mr. Michael Pfifferling, Assistant Superintendent were also present.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fiorentini read the following Opening Statement: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Baker issued an Emergency Order temporarily suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20. Public bodies otherwise governed by the OML are temporarily relieved from the requirement that meetings be held in public places, open and physically accessible to the public, so long as measures are taken to ensure public access to the bodies' deliberations "through adequate, alternative means."

Dr. Marotta: Rising COVID 19 Numbers and Potential Issues surrounding the Holiday.

Superintendent Marotta reported that a group of 20-25 people (Joint Stakeholders COVID Taskforce), including School Committee member Gail Sullivan meet remotely once a week to review the data and information. At this time, the taskforce advised speaking about the current concerns in a more public format in order to keep schools open more consistently for the school year.

Ms. Andrea Barman, 110 Cogswell Street, Haverhill MA, [Parent and Substitute Teacher] Taskforce Member spoke about her hybrid model decision. She commented that Haverhill's decisions were based on the data and with mutual respect by all the stakeholders and in students' welfare.

Ms. Katrina Sullivan, 16 Westminster Avenue, Haverhill MA, Pentucket Lake School Nurse offered details on contact tracing and testing resources. She related that presently there was a concern regarding staffing shortages and rapid testing delays (5% of staff).

Superintendent Marotta presented the following data for the Committee's review: [1120 COVID Update.pdf](#)

Dr. Marotta reviewed the Proactive Adjustment to Learning Models: Options A~C. She also referenced the following questions that needed to be considered:

Decisions and Meetings:

We are presenting some ideas/options.

- What decisions do you want to decide on this tonight?
- What decisions do you want to decide on the 10th of December?

- Do we need to schedule an additional meeting for over the Holiday Break, or wait until 1/14/21?
Children of Teachers:
 - Thoughts on staff bringing their children to their classrooms WHEN students are remote but staff is in?
- Sports: the MIAA decided that winter sports can commence on December 14th
 - Will we play if we are proactively remote?
 - Will we play if we are in red?
- Holiday Student Activities
 - Practices for plays, & performances
- Staffing during closures.

Vice Chair Rosa inquired about Options D and E. Superintendent Marotta replied that Option D included selecting either Options A, B, or C, high school or middle school remote learning with elementary students returning sooner to in-person learning. She also noted that Option E would be a fully remote model with the return of students in early January 2021 (14 days after the conclusion of the Winter Recess).

The Superintendent provided the following information from the PowerPoint:

Options D

- Option A, B, or C with alternate return dates for High School and perhaps Middle School

Option E

- Remote Learning from 11/30/2020 until 12/11/2021 – 14 days following the December 25th holiday

Attorney Rosa asked for Dr. Maddox's comments at this time.

Dr. John Maddox, 122 Lakeview Avenue, Haverhill MA, School Physician acknowledged his pride in being associated with an urban school district that has demonstrated that during a pandemic it can operate without worsening the situation by adhering to proper protocols. He referenced the third aspect of the pandemic (besides COVID vs Closed Schools) which is the consequences on staff wellbeing. Dr. Maddox reported that our COVID numbers are the lowest in the Merrimack Valley and among Gateway Schools. He advised tightening our protocols, continuing to be vigilant and adding more resources. The School Physician commented that a complete school shutdown would be irresponsible however, a strategic pause with sensitivity to the students' best interests and staff well-being.

Vice Chair Rosa asked if there was a benefit to implementing Option B but with the high school going fully remote until the Winter Break.

Dr. Maddox noted that incidence of transmission among young children was low and that in the majority of cases the students contracted the virus outside of school setting, with the elementary schools (under the age of 10) are the safest school environments.

Attorney Rosa commended the HPS staff for its diligence in dealing with the pandemic. He was ready to make a motion on one of the options.

Attorney Magliocchetti was concerned with staffing limitations preventing the continuation of the hybrid model. He noted that scheduling was a concern among parents of high needs students. He also advised notification to parents as soon as possible to alleviate the uncertainty.

A brief discussion was held about the circumstances regarding the data. Dr. Marotta indicated that several families had contracted the virus and that the transmission did not occur in the schools. Her concern was that due to transmission rates, in-person learning would not be possible without a hiatus.

In response to Attorney Magliocchetti's concerns about high needs students, Dr. Marotta replied that Cohort C students would be the first to return to in-person learning. The Superintendent related that all students would be remote the week of November 30-December 4 and the high needs would return on December 7, 2020.

Mrs. Antkowiak clarified that the first week of remote learning would be November 30-December 4. She related that Option A included a 14-day hiatus for all students including Cohort C.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais stressed the ramifications on staff well-being and safety. She referenced the extreme temperatures within the buildings. Her recommendation was a remote learning model until January 2021. Mrs. Sapienza Donais questioned the criteria for staff testing.

Dr. Marotta responded that Stop the Spread sites had closed and the criteria for testing was being a close contact. She commented arrangements were being made with the test sites to provide reassurance for staff members.

In regards to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello's question, Dr. Marotta responded all students would be graded this year; the pass fail has been discontinued by DESE.

The Superintendent expressed concern regarding staff levels.

Ms. Lauren Sanguedolce, a Joint Stakeholders COVID Taskforce member shared a letter which recommended a "detour" to remote learning model until the beginning of 2021 by putting safety first.

Ms. Sullivan asked for clarification on the temperature issues within the school district, including what was HVAC vs the temperature changes due to open windows. Dr. Marotta responded that the advisory to keep windows open 3 inches in classrooms resulted in temperature drops by approximately noon time and the systems have to be reset/recalibrated to accommodate for these changes. The Superintendent noted that the HVAC Systems had been neglected and recent work had been initiated within the district for repair of this equipment. She suggested that Leftfield give a presentation at the December 10th meeting.

In response to Attorney Rosa' question regarding the return date after the 14-day break after the December holiday break, Mrs. Connolly responded the date would be January 11, 2021.

Mayor Fiorentini asked for a review on Option D. Dr. Marotta answered that it would alter other options at the high school/middle school to allow the earlier return of elementary students.

Dr. Maddox responded to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello's question about the 14-day time period and noted it was not for quarantine purposes. He reiterated his concern for the well-being of students and staff.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais remarked that staff members lived in 108 other communities and came to work in Haverhill and inquired about remote learning option. Dr. Marotta was mainly concerned with capacity while staff were quarantining as a result of out of school activities.

Mr. Wood thanked the Superintendent and Taskforce for their comments. He emphasized the options were being considered as a result of capacity issues not spread issues. Mr. Wood thought it was too early to make a long-term remote learning decision since it would impact parents' working situations and providing for their families. He was leaning towards Option B because of the flexibility.

Mayor Fiorentini was leaning towards Options B or D and noted the key issue was capacity. He referenced a letter from a grade 3 special needs student who had challenges on the remote learning day. The Mayor offered holding a special meeting next week.

Dr. Marotta concurred it was a balance between staff and students.

Mr. Anthony Parolisi, HEA President commended the Joint Taskforce. He echoed his concern with staff well-being and related the isolation of Wednesday Remote Teaching Days. Mr. Parolisi noted the collaboration and proactiveness of the taskforce.

Mr. Wood stated there was two distinct issues the option decision and staff safety, including all employees.

Attorney Rosa stated he was ready to make motions.

Mayor Fiorentini noted the motions would only pertain to school return dates, not teacher working locations.

Attorney Rosa recommended Option B; Option D with HHS students out until Winter Break with the exception of Cohort C and Option E students not returning until 14-days after the Winter Break.

Several members requested the motions be taken separately to ensure clarity of the motions.

Attorney Rosa made motion to approve Option B {fully remote first week; second week Cohort C returns and third week Hybrid Model returns}. Mr. Wood seconded the motion.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais questioned why the one-week hiatus and how it helped the school district.

A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	No	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	No	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	No		

4 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

3 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Attorney Rosa made a motion to approve Option D the High School being fully remote until the Winter Break {return date of January 11, 2021}, with the exception of Cohort C.

Mayor Fiorentini asked to review Option D again.

Dr. Maddox provided the following information to the School Committee: [Dr. Maddox 11.23.20.pdf](#) which was a Mathematica Study (Safely Opening Schools) which shows the “Relative Schoolwide Cumulative Infection Data among operating Scenario and School Type”. He explained that there were three scenarios: Green (Standard Operating Procedures no masks and no distancing), Gray (Elementary and Secondary with distancing and masks) and Yellow (Hybrid Model).

Mr. Wood stated that there was no firm data to support remote learning option until January 11, 2021 and recommended re-evaluation at the December 10th School Committee meeting.

It was clarified that there was no second on the motion and it “died” for lack of a second.

A motion was made by Mrs. Sapienza Donais to hold a special meeting next week. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello seconded the motion. A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	No
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	No
Mr. Wood	No	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	No		

3 members voted in the affirmative

Motion fails

4 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

A motion was made by Mrs. Sapienza Donais that teachers and educational support personnel work remotely November 30-December 4, 2020. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Dr. Marotta clarified that the HEA Proposal allowed for remote work next week and Cohort C students would return on December 7, 2020, with students in the classroom. She related that this motion was included in the MOU.

Mayor Fiorentini asked if Mrs. Sapienza Donais wished to make the motion that teachers who do not need to be in-person be allowed to teach remotely the week of December 7-11, 2020. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello offered that Cohort C teachers could bring their children to work and Mrs. Sapienza Donais stated yes.

Dr. Marotta replied that teachers could not have their children in the building while they were teaching.

The Mayor asked for Dr. Marotta’s opinion. Superintendent Marotta replied she had expressed her thoughts on the matter, but added that it would be very difficult to determine “who needs to be in the building”.

Mayor Fiorentini noted it would cause problems, but understood the reasoning behind the motion.

A motion was made by Mrs. Sapienza Donais that teachers who do not need to be in-person be allowed to teach remotely the week of December 7-11, 2020. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	No
Mr. Wood	No	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	No
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Yes		

4 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

3 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Mr. Poor, Consentino Interim Principal offered that in his school every teacher had a least one Cohort C student and agreed with the Superintendent that it would be difficult to make the determination regarding what teachers should work remotely.

Dr. Marotta stated there were no gray areas and should not be determined by the principal. She noted that if a student was in class, the teacher should also be in attendance.

Mr. Parolisi reported there was recall language in the MOA stipulating the order of returning to in-person teaching from remote teaching. He then offered that the Cohort C student numbers were small, therefore, there could be some educators who could work remotely and supervised by other educators.

Mayor Fiorentini clarified it was a one-week motion.

Dr. Marotta asked if practices, plays and sports are occurring or not occurring.

Mayor Fiorentini replied all activities should not be held, unless it can be done remotely.

Attorney Magliocchetti reiterated the top priority is health and safety of our students and teachers, however, the mental health impacts needed to be pondered in this decision. He agreed in principle, but other factors needed to be considered at this time and the decision was not clear cut as stated by the Mayor.

Attorney Rosa agreed with Attorney Magliocchetti's opinion. He offered including in the motion that there would be supervised activities.

Superintendent Marotta commented that SAT's would be held on December 5, 2020 at HHS.

Mayor Fiorentini cautioned about avoiding social gatherings. He restated education was the most important.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to suspend all activities according to Option B, with the exception of the SATs. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion.

Attorney Rosa commented that the motion was in line with MIAA guidance on the start of practice on December 14, 2020.

A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

New Business ~ Superintendent's Recommendation for Warrant Approval.

The following Warrant(s) were recommended for approval:

- A) Warrant EV20201120A totaling \$18,805.25 Warrant EV20201120A.pdf;
- B) Warrant JE20201204 totaling \$8,747.71 Special Meeting 11.23.20 Warrant JE20201204 August 2020 P-Card.pdf;
- C) Warrant JE20201204B totaling \$15,825.85 Special Meeting Warrant 11.23.20 JE20201204B Sept 2020 P-Card.pdf;
- D) Warrant EV20201204 totaling \$710,721.16 Special Meeting 11.23.20 Warrant #4D

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to approve Warrants #4 A~D. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion.

A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Abstain
Mr. Wood	Yes	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Yes		

6 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes
0 members voted in the negative
1 member abstained

Vice Chair Rosa: Appointment of members to new negotiating subcommittees for Security and Facilities.

Attorney Rosa announced that Mr. Wood and Mrs. Sapienza Donais would be serving on the Security Negotiations Subcommittee and that Attorney Magliocchetti and Ms. Sullivan would be serving on the Facilities Negotiating Subcommittee.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to adjourn the meeting (8:59 pm). Attorney Magliocchetti1000 seconded the motion. A roll call vote was requested:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Attorney Rosa, Vice Chair	Yes
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Yes		

7 members voted in the affirmative Motion passes
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

The Committee members wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving!