



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee Hybrid
Regular Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2021**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Fiorentini, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Absent	Attorney Rosa	Present in person
Ms. Sullivan	Present in person	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardiello	Present remotely
Attorney Magliocchetti	Present in person	Mr. Wood, Vice Chair	Present in person
Mayor Fiorentini, Chair	Present in person		

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mayor Fiorentini read an act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency was signed by Governor Baker and allows for remote meetings and hearings by public bodies through April 1, 2022. This meeting will be available via live streaming over HCTV and WHAV. The full meeting recording will be posted on the HCTV website.

Communications/Reports ~ Public Comment

There was no one present for public comment.

Student Advisory Council ~ Hailey Prunier.

Ms. Prunier related that Max Popoloski had filled in during the summer due to her job as a overnight camp counselor. She offered the following comments:

- Wonderful summer but was excited to return to school for Senior Year;
- Freshmen and Sophomore Orientation (tours and activity fairs showcasing HHS) had been held this past week;
- Schedules were issued, if any errors, please fill out Google Form from Guidance Department;
- Emphasized knowing your schedule (School Brains (before school starts on Tuesday, August 31st;
- Complete all summer work and reading;
- Parents/Guardians are advised to fill out student profile sheet (green sheet);
- Welcoming comments for Principal Jason Meland, Assistant Principal Meg Fitzgerald and Assistant Principal Samuel Bradbury;
- Working together with the Administrative Leadership to create the best school
- Seniors, please begin college searches and applications;
- Extended well wishes to everyone for a good school year.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Superintendent Marotta announced the opening of school for grades 1-12 on August 31st with preschool and kindergarten beginning school the following week.

Transportation.

Dr. Marotta commented on the troubleshooting regarding bus driver shortages. She introduced Mr. John McCarthy, President of North Reading Transportation.

Mr. McCarthy who indicated there was a bus driver shortage and then introduced Mr. Peter Delani, Director of Customer Relations at Beacon Mobility.

Dr. Marotta was alerted to a driver shortage a week ago and had started to make contingency plans. She related that Superintendent Maureen Lynch at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School had volunteered drivers for elementary and middle school bus runs.

Mayor Fiorentini offered that everyone was working together to alleviate the driver shortage.

Mr. McCarthy thanked Superintendent Marotta and Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling.

Attorney Rosa asked about Beacon Mobility and was informed by Mr. McCarthy that it was a company with many other entities under its umbrella.

Mr. Delanie provided a presentation to the school committee members [Beacon Mobility Presentation](#).

Attorney Rosa was appreciative of finding a long-term solution, but was concerned with streamlining the process.

Mr. McCarthy referenced changes in policies over the years to obtain bus drivers (i.e., life time lookback, CORI, SORI and fingerprinting).

Attorney Rosa asked about the pay range for bus driver in Haverhill.

Mr. McCarthy responded that the rate was \$22.00/hour (\$265) while in other communities the salaries are \$25-30/hour (\$350-\$450).

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling related the wages had gone up over the years.

Attorney Rosa asked about the ranking of Haverhill.

Mr. McCarthy stated that Haverhill had the lowest rate. He also provides transportation services in surrounding communities.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about other bus companies in the state.

Mr. McCarthy commented that there were 45-50 companies.

Attorney Magliocchetti acknowledged the competition with other companies, such as Amazon and UPS.

In response to Mr. McCarthy's comments on state funding, Attorney Magliocchetti noted monies had been focused in the classroom.

Mr. McCarthy stated that the challenge was the stimulus check. He believed that by the situation will be resolved by October.

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling reported that last Friday there was a shortage of 10 regular bus drivers and 3-5 mini-bus drivers. He noted that the both teams (NRT & HPS Administration) had met on Tuesday afternoon and identified a shortage of 10 regular bus drivers and 13 mini-bus drivers. Mr. Pfifferling stated that Dr. Marotta had called Whittier Regional and they are subcontracting with NRT for 8 regular bus drivers for elementary and middle school routes. However, the Assistant Superintendent reported the high school still needed four (4) bus drivers so NRT are using other staff to operate our buses to complete these routes, along with looping and polling families regarding bus usage in an attempt to consolidate the four (4) routes to three (3) routes. Mr. Pfifferling offered that there are 13 mini-bus drivers for special education routes.

Mr. McCarthy offered that the issues should be resolved by October.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked that transportation be placed on the next agenda.

Mayor Fiorentini asked for clarification on the corporate structure.

Mr. McCarthy related that Beacon Mobility was a name (marketing) that had been selected with a number of other acquired companies. He noted that there was a Haverhill Office that was being renovated but was the same office since 1937.

Renaming of TEACH.

Dr. Marotta introduced Principal McDowell who would provide a report on the school activities.

Mr. Kenneth McDowell, Principal provided an update on the building including its services and the renovations and recommended an adjustment to the name to Bartlett School and Assessment Center. He indicated that there would be an expansion of services to other communities.

Mayor Fiorentini referenced that General Bartlett was the youngest general in the American Civil War. He acknowledged Mr. Wood's effort in retaining the Bartlett School.

A motion was made by Ms. Sullivan to rename the program to Bartlett School and Assessment Center. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion.

Mr. Wood clarified that the program was being renamed not the school.

Attorney Rosa referenced that the name change would simplify the understanding of the program and its opportunities.

Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

COVID Update.

Dr. Marotta related that the Commissioner had enacted a mask mandate effective until October 1, 2021. She referenced the Frequently Asked Questions and Welcome Back newsletter [HPS Back-to-School FAQ \(ENG\).pdf](#) that was distributed this evening to members and would be sent tomorrow morning to all parents.

Mayor Fiorentini announced a vaccination clinic tomorrow GAR Park along with food pantries and some churches to increase the vaccination rate.

Dr. Marotta noted the 80% vaccination rate within schools would allow for the removing masks in the building.

Attorney Rosa commented that 23 people had been vaccinated recently at a Pentucket Lake School Clinic.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about air conditioning in the “cookie cutter” schools for school reopening.

Dr. Marotta replied that it will not be completed for the beginning of the school year. She would have Mr. Dorrance at the next meeting to provide an update.

In response to Ms. Sullivan’s question on pool testing, Superintendent Marotta related that this process would continue for the upcoming school year (free initiative from the State).

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello asked if pool testing would be the same as last year and Dr. Marotta answered that it would be the same procedure (opt-in) except for HHS sports with athletes participating in weekly pool testing.

IT Update.

Mr. Russell provided the following updates:

- All Social Media posts/sites must be approved by the Superintendent and IT Department and run by an HPS employee;
- Remind App platform is a communication application that is district controlled and will potentially eliminate unauthorized social media sites and account;
- Updates on our systems, network, website and providing trainings regarding security;
- Fully functional for the school year;
- Implementing for district controls.

In response to Attorney Rosa’s comment on updating the social media policy, Mr. Russell noted that the policy was good, but that staff needed to understand the policy.

Superintendent Marotta was pleased with the Remind App.

School Committee Reports/Communications.

Attorney Rosa: Attendance Plan for 2021-2022 School Year.

Attorney Rosa was interested in plans for ensuring school attendance.

Dr. Marotta referenced the balance between school attendance and wellness.

Ms. Dion, Director of Guidance, Counseling, and Student Support Services and Ms. Marchant, Supervisor of Attendance spoke about routines and rituals that are essential for student success and promoting school attendance.

Ms. Dion reported on strong community partnerships especially the State Coiin Program Initiative (Collaborative Improvement and Innovation Network which focuses on comprehensive school mental health network for students, families and communities. She noted that it was pairing students with the right people and providing the right support and to determine if the supports were contributing to positive student outcomes. Ms. Dion related that Haverhill was one of five districts selected for this program and that data would be analyzed to determine the effectiveness of programs.

Ms. Marchant recognized the efforts of the Hillie Community prior to the pandemic that resulted in the decrease in the chronic absenteeism rate to drop 3-4%. She noted the emphasis on family engagement and social emotional wellbeing of our community. Ms. Marchant spoke about the various approaches to School Attendance Month in September ("Rebound with Attendance") along with information on best practices.

Mayor Fiorentini asked about how to improve school attendance rates.

Ms. Marchant offered that absenteeism was a symptom. She noted that there were home visits.

Attorney Rosa related parents and students underestimated poor attendance and asked about follow-up with parents and students.

Ms. Marchant highlighted the student support teams and other interventions (calls, letters, the new Remind App).

Attorney Rosa reported that chronic absenteeism (10% of school year = 18 days).

Mr. Wood asked about the oversight of high school attendance.

Ms. Marchant responded it was a team effort including homeroom teacher, parent liaison, guidance counselor(s) and grade level assistant principal(s).

Mr. Wood referenced the high school attendance coordinator system that was successful for many years and asked for reconsideration of this model.

Ms. Marchant responded that parent liaisons took over the role in recent years.

Mr. Wood stressed the importance of having an administrator in this role instead of a parent liaison.

Attorney Magliocchetti mentioned the outreach efforts during COVID and asked about the takeaways. He wanted to ensure that these resources, supports and communications were maintained for this school year.

Ms. Marchant commented on the interactions that had been established with parents by utilizing email and virtual meetings.

Ms. Dion responded the family connections that were developed and successful during a difficult school year.

Ms. Marchant emphasized the importance of knowledgeable staff that had been hired was critical in the success.

Attorney Rosa: P-EBT Cards and food for Haverhill families.

Attorney Rosa reported his awareness of this federally funded program to support Haverhill families with food during the pandemic. He was alerted by Representative Vargas that many of these cards had not been activated by our families. Attorney Rosa submitted a FOI request (Department of Transitional Assistance) and discovered that 5518 cards were issued with \$7,863,178, and as of August 1st 637 cards have never been activated and there was \$1,633,178 left on these activated and non-activated cards for use regardless of income.

Attorney Rosa continued that Representative Vargas had directed him to the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute that had a partnership with DESE. He reported that there may be more than 800 cards that had not been activated and additionally deposits of \$187.50 had been added to the cards in July and August. Attorney Rosa noted there was miscommunication regarding the cards and related even graduates received the money, including 18-22 aged students. He related that DESE would provide names on the cards so that there could be outreach to the families including homeless students. Attorney Rosa stated that families could shop online and donate the food to the community. In conclusion, he was hopeful that the school district would work with DESE to get funds to the families and emphasized the benefit to our community.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello related the cards could not be used for online purchases.

Attorney Rosa referenced the website www.map-ebt.org with frequently asked questions that stated Amazon and Walmart were acceptable stores. He related that the card is non-transferrable but food could be donated to food pantry.

Ms. Sullivan thanked Attorney Rosa for bringing this important information to the Committee's attention and would be so helpful to families. She highlighted the food need within the community.

Dr. Marotta was excited to hear that the names could be obtained from DESE. She related that awareness of this issue would continue this upcoming school year.

Attorney Magliocchetti: School Field Trips.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked if this was a discussion item.

Dr. Marotta replied that only walking field trips had taken place during the summer. She noted there were several impediments to field trips.

Attorney Magliocchetti clarified that longer range field trips were the type of field trips.

Superintendent Marotta offered that this item would require further discussion, research and thought.

Subcommittee Reports ~ None.

Old Business.

Mr. Wood referenced the Vehicle Policy [HPS Vehicle Agreement DRAFT.pdf](#).

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the Vehicle Policy. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion.

Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

New Business.

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20210827 & EV20210827B totaling \$900,291.25 [Detail Warrant EV20210827 & EV20210827B.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the Warrants. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. Mayor Fiorentini, Chair requested a roll call vote:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

Superintendent's Recommendation to declare the enclosed items surplus and disposed of in accordance with city ordinances .

SW PM

Items by Consensus.

Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2021.
Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval of Use of Facilities as indicated in the agenda material.

SW PM

SW GS

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

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

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

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

6 members voted in the affirmative
0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained
0 members absent

