



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee  
Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2022**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

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

Dr. Margaret Marotta, Superintendent of Schools and Mr. Michael Pfifferling, Assistant Superintendent of Schools were also in attendance at the meeting.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais read an act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency was signed by Lt. Governor Polito and allows for remote meetings and hearings by public bodies through March, 2023. This meeting will be available via live streaming over HCTV and WHAV. The full meeting recording will be posted on the HCTV website.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the attendees.

Communications/Reports.

**Public Comment (In-person & Remote).**

Mr. Matthew St. Germain, Haverhill, MA, spoke concerning a J.G. Whitter School personnel issue in relation to his child’s disability and an incident involving staff regarding his son’s condition. He was unhappy with the superintendent’s response to this matter and asked that the issue be addressed by the Dr. Marotta.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked the superintendent to respond to this parent’s concerns.

Dr. Marotta replied that the results of a personnel investigation cannot be shared with the public. She indicated a willingness to meet with the parent to address his concerns.

Mr. St. Germain commented that the teacher had racist tendencies. He asked the superintendent for confirmation of derogatory or inflammatory remarks made to his child and by staff in a public setting. Mr. St. Germain indicated it was his rights as a parent to be aware of any situation involving his son, including lack of response from the assistant principal.

Dr. Marotta related her willingness to speak with the parent offline regarding the issues, but noted that the discussion of personnel matters was a law not a policy.

Ms. Sullivan was concerned with the serious issues that were being presented to the committee and indicated that public comment was not the format for addressing these matters. She stated that the committee was violating its own policy in terms of time, repeated topics and the nature of the comments.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested that the agenda item Public Comment Policy (addition to agenda document Mrs. Sapienza Donais be moved up in the agenda order. There was no objection to this request.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais referenced the policy [08.25.22 Public Comment Policies.pdf](#) and recommended the reading along with publication on the agenda.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the reading of the public comment policy at each meeting and adding the policy to the agenda. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion.

Mr. Wood commented that the policy needed to be enforced by the chairperson.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

**Student Advisory Council Report ~ Sean Wynn.**

Sean provided the following high school update:

- Fall sports have started their practices
- Freshman Orientation went well on Monday
- First Day of School is August 30
- Fall Fest date is September 29th
- Student Council will hold a raffle for a parking spot shortly after the beginning of the school year.

**Superintendent Comments/Reports.**

Introduction of new administrative staff – names and backgrounds:

- Kevin Soraghan, Interim High School Principal
- Roland Boucher, High School Assistant Principal (Operations)
- Dinorah Peralta, High School Assistant Principal, Grade 11
- Nelly Garcia-Santana, Assistant Principal, Grade 12
- Petra Farias, Supervisor of School Counseling K-12
- Frank Kowalski, Assistant Principal, Grade 10
- Jon Mangion, Interim Assistant Principal, Grade 9
- Brendon Parker, Nettle School Assistant Principal
- Eileen Doherty, Interim Nettle School Principal
- July Perez, Nettle School Assistant Principal
- Matthew Condon, John Greenleaf Whittier Middle School Principal
- Donna Martin, Silver Hill Principal

Mr. Wood welcomed back the new administrators along with welcoming back several staff and was excited about the diverse, talented high school administration.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked for Mr. Soraghan’s initial impressions.

Mr. Soraghan expressed appreciation to Dr. Marotta for her support along with central administration. He reported that there the building was in great shape with some minor facilities repairs in the S-wing. Mr. Soraghan noted that 98% of the student population were there for the right reasons and asked for patience once the school opened with 1800 students.

Superintendent Marotta was excited about the upcoming year and thanked the staff for their energy and commitment.

**Gateway School Launch Update ~ Brian Edmunds, Principal.**

Mr. Edmunds was honored to be in Haverhill and was excited to share some updates regarding the establishment of the gateway program for grades 7-12 [SC Presentation - Gateway Academy 8.25.22.pdf](#).

Attorney Magliocchetti along with Mrs. Sapienza Donais had visited Crowell, and he was impressed with the facilities work especially the floors. He was concerned with the enrollment (92 students) and asked if there was space for additional enrollment.

Mr. Edmunds replied that there was a capacity for 120 students in the school's program along with the flexibility to make adjustments.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais was very encouraged about staff's energy.

Attorney Rosa was excited about the program and asked about the possibility of students transitioning back to a comprehensive high school.

Mr. Edmunds replied that the decision would be made in discussion with the family and student since the gateway program is a destination for some students.

The committee members thanked Mr. Edmunds.

**Summer School Recap ~ Dianne Connolly, Director of Title I and Community Outreach.**

Mrs. Connolly provided a review of the summer school program presentation [2022 Summer Programs \(1\).pdf](#).

In response to Attorney Rosa's inquiry on credit recovery, Mrs. Connolly replied that student data was available for participants and there was a celebration of some good wins (50%+ of the students receiving credit recovery).

Regarding Attorney Rosa's questions on the Bridge to Haverhill High School mandatory and other programs to assist students with the transition to HHS, Dr. Marotta answered that these 38 students failed both Math and English were in the mandatory program. Mrs. Connolly noted there was an optional program in the learning academy.

Attorney Rosa was pleased with the "Step up to K" program and asked for tracking of these 18 students and comparison with other students.

Attorney Magliocchetti was impressed with the internship program and asked about continuation during the school year. Mrs. Connolly would attempt through grant funding for the continuation of these programs and highlighted the work of Denise Johnson in grant writing.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked if there were any students who were not able to participate in extended school year. Mrs. Connolly related that 5% math and 11% ELA increases for students who participated in the summer programs.

Attorney Magliocchetti wished that bridge program could be mandatory for all grade 8 students going to Haverhill High School since it was a great concept.

Mrs. Connolly announced that the state Title I Office had requested a presentation from Haverhill Team at its November conference on the vacation academies and the robust summer programming and thanked everyone for their support.

Ms. Sullivan expressed her gratitude to Mrs. Connelly and the entire team on its hard work, amazing achievement and incredible success and asked for more information on the Title I invitation.

Mrs. Connelly acknowledged Dr. Marotta’s leadership.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais thanked the huge team for addressing the needs of the students.

**Playground Ordinance ~ tabled on 8.11.22.**

Superintendent Marotta asked about whether the matter was a city or district matter.

Mr. Pfifferling asked for guidance from the school committee since it was not a park and recreation issue.

Attorney Magliocchetti recommended (with a motion) referral to the policy subcommittee and noted the noise issue with people playing basketball.

Mr. Wood was opposed to referring to the policy subcommittee, but preferred that the city’s noise ordinance addressed the disturbance concerns, i.e., loud music in relation to the concerns expressed by the neighbors.

Ms. Sullivan asked what type of policy development.

Attorney Magliocchetti stated that the matter needed to be addressed by the school committee in some manner. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello		Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	No	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes
4 members voted in the affirmative		Motion passes	
1 member voted in the negative			
0 members abstained			

**Transportation Update ~ Michael Pfifferling, Assistant Superintendent.**

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling announced the recent passing of long-term employee and former interim transportation director, Lorraine Turrell and extended condolences to her staff and family.

Mr. Pfifferling had invited Ms. Elizabeth Murphy, Supervisor of Transportation K-12, Mr. Peter Delani, Director of Customer Relations for Beacon Mobility, Ms. Maryann Kocur, NRT Operations Vice President Haverhill Office and Ms. Lisa Alterisio, Operations Vice NRT President Methuen Terminal (special needs transportation).

Mr. Pfifferling reported that the district was in a better position this year, however there was needed additional work. He reported the swipe card system was being utilized on busses with the cooperation of NRT. He related that Transfinder system has been fully implemented in the district and will result in an email to parents indicating bus routes/stops for their children.

Ms. Murphy provided the district was fully staffed with drivers and monitors (she along with the dispatcher are the backup CDL drivers) the routes had been designed by the district and the routes were being continually updated on the website along with parental notifications and clarified that the email contained a link to update any discrepancies. She added that bus passes were being prepared and staff would be attending open houses.

Mr. Delani commented that this year was better than last year and would provide an update. He commented that on importance of his working relationship with the district. He noted additional work needed to be done to achieve the 10% above the contracted requirements. Mr. Delani that the routes had been reviewed in order to do dry runs and safety checks. He reported that there were 33/34 bus drivers (AM) and 32/34 (PM) for Haverhill's routes. Mr. Delani related there were an additional four (4) CDL drivers in training for future deployment by the end of September/early October. In relation to special education routes there were 9/14 drivers for 11/14 routes, he noted there were 7 (7D) drivers to be allocated for routes in order to fulfill the route requirements and additional information would be provided to the district tomorrow regarding the special education route coverage.

Attorney Rosa asked how the special education routes would be covered with 9 drivers.

Ms. Alterisio reported that there had been consolidation of routes along with 7D drivers utilizing 9-passenger vans.

Attorney Rosa was concerned with the length of the route and questioned if it was a longer route.

Mr. Pfifferling stressed with NRT that the tiers are very close together (with 30 minutes between middle school and elementary school) and there was no excuse for special education students' late arrival at school.

Attorney Rosa asked about driver salaries in comparison to last year when there was a less favorable contract according to NRT.

Mr. Delani answered \$30/hour vs. \$22/hour big bus drivers and \$22.50 vs. \$25/hour special education bus drivers.

Attorney Rosa stated that the transportation contract increased by \$900,000/annually and asked how the district ranked in salaries.

Mr. Delani noted that the salaries are not at the lower end and there has a recruitment center which was opened in Lawrence for recruitment efforts in the Merrimack Valley. He indicated there were non-traditional methods in recruitment. Mr. Delani stated the company was being aggressive in hiring to alleviate the challenges of call-outs by drivers (the company was lower than the 10% nationwide driver shortage).

Attorney Magliocchetti was disheartened to hear about driver shortages. He asked about other efforts at recruitment and requested an improvement in the situation, since it the present state was not satisfactory for the district.

Mr. Delani gave examples such as, regional, ongoing and regular open houses, \$5,000 signing bonus for CDL licensed driver, bonus along with internal referral bonuses and have worked with DMV, DESE, DOT and Governor's Office to obtain and train new drivers. Mr. Delani responded that some options to address these concerns were still in the planning stages along with a planned trip to Washington DC to meet with the Department of Transportation on initiatives.

Attorney Magliocchetti stressed the need for improvement in the very near future.

In response to the turnover rate, Mr. Delani did not have a specific answer, but emphasized achieving over the 10% rate driver staff would help with this problem.

Mr. Pfifferling was concerned with the athletic event/charter transportation and the scheduling of meets/activities so close to elementary dismissal time.

Mr. Delani supported working with athletic directors on the scheduling matter.

Attorney Rosa advocated for late bus transportation for students who wished to stay after school for academic support and working on possible solutions.

Mr. Pfifferling replied there are two (2) late busses for each section of the city running Monday through Thursday for this purpose, however, there were some walking to their homes but the bus got the students to their neighborhood.

Superintendent Marotta was excited about the beginning of school year on Tuesday, August 30, 2022.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked that the open house schedule be provided to the committee.

**School Committee Reports/Communications.**

**Subcommittee Reports.**

Legal Counsel Selection Subcommittee with a contract update: Mr. Wood, Attorney Magliocchetti and Attorney Rosa [2022-08-19 Engagement Letter Haverhill.pdf](#).

Mr. Wood commented he and Attorney Magliocchetti had with Attorney Connelly. He related that the retainer had been eliminated and hourly rate has been reduced (agreed rate is \$260/hour) in the contract. Mr. Wood commented that Attorney Connelly will be a huge asset to the district and school committee.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the contract with Morgan, Brown & Joy. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello		Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

5 members voted in the affirmative  
 0 members voted in the negative  
 0 members abstained

Motion passes

Mr. Wood noted that Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello’s votes were not being heard by the committee and it has to be heard by a majority.

Maintenance Subcommittee Update: Attorney Magliocchetti & Mrs. Sapienza Donais.

Attorney Magliocchetti noted that he and Mrs. Sapienza Donais had toured Crowell and Greenleaf Schools yesterday. He noted the enthusiasm of the Gateway custodian. Attorney Magliocchetti had spoken with the superintendent along with Principal John DePolo about the Greenleaf School and the facilities issues.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais was pleased with the improvements at Crowell School but noted that the window treatment at Greenleaf School needed to be addressed by the district and would be a significant upgrade.

Security Consultant: Mr. Wood.

Mr. Wood announced funding for school safety issues, trainings, and audits from the state (\$40M). He added that the district should be waiting to hear about the funding amounts and opportunities. Mr. Wood related that the superintendent would be developing an RFP for a security consultant to provide on-call service, hiring, safety initiatives and deployment along with training. He indicated the superintendent would be aggressive in securing funds.

Ms. Sullivan reported that the Consentino School Building Project was advancing to the MSBA in October.

Attorney Rosa requested consultation with the experienced well trained Haverhill Police Department on all security issues.

Superintendent Marotta noted that the police department had been very helpful on all safety matters and appreciated the partnership.

**Suspension of the Rules (MOU with HEA-Teachers' Unit).**

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to suspend the rules to discuss an MOU with the teachers' unit. Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

Dr. Marotta reported that the memorandum of understanding would allow for high school teachers willing to assume a sixth class to be compensated \$75.00 per day for the class, since there were some classes that did not have an instructor. She noted that there had been a similar agreement last year.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to approve the MOU with HEA-Teachers' Unit. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

**New Business.**

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20220826A, EV20220826B, & EV20220826C totaling \$1,477,579.96 [08.25.22 Warrants EV20220826 and EV20220826B copy.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the warrants. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

Superintendent's Recommendation to declare items surplus and dispose of in accordance with city ordinances [Surplus 08.25.22.pdf](#).

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the superintendent’s recommendation on surplus items. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

Motion passes

**Items by Consensus.**

Superintendent’s Recommendation for Approval of the Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of August 11, 2022, [FINAL Edit Hybrid School Committee Regular Meeting 08.11.22.pdf](#) and Approval of Use of Facilities [UOF 08.25.22.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the items by consensus. Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

Motion passes

Attorney Magliocchetti noted that during the Greenleaf visit there were old filing cabinets and other items that should probably be declared surplus.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to adjourn the meeting (9:04 pm). Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. Mrs. Sapienza Donais requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Attorney Rosa	Yes	Ms. Sullivan	Yes
Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes

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

Motion passes