



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee
Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of November 17, 2022**

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Toni Sapienza Donais, Vice Chair called the meeting to order at 7:30 pm and requested a roll call of the members:

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

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

Pledge of Allegiance was recited by the audience.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais read the following statement: The Haverhill School Committee encourages the district community to attend its meeting to learn about public school operations and programs. In addition, the committee wants to hear the wishes and ideas of the public. The following points are a summary of the committee's public comment policy: speakers must provide their full name and address and will be allowed three minutes to present their material, the presiding chairperson may permit an extension of the time limit. Individuals may address topics on the agenda item, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of the responsibility of the school committee. Improper, defamatory or abusive remarks are not allowed and are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or abusive comments, the chairperson may terminate an individual's permission to address the committee. The committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any members of the school committee. All citizens shall speak to the full committee through the chair and should not address individual members or administrators.

Public Comment.

Ms. Michelle Joubert rebutted comments made by a school committee member at the last meeting regarding teachers' unwillingness to conduct negotiations during the summer months and the timeline of negotiations. She noted that the HEA did meet after the close of school for negotiations with the school committee and was disheartened and saddened by the school committee member's comments.

Ms. Morgan Flaherty, 73 South Liberty Street, Haverhill, MA, spoke in support of students' attendance at the Turkey Toss next week and believed the actions of some students should not prevent HHS students' participation. She commented that innocent senior students were being punished and it should not impact other activities especially since they had lost so much due to COVID.

Ms. Abigail Brown, Student Council Vice President provided a report:

- Coffee House will be held on December 7th;
- Holiday Spirit Week is upcoming with details still being finalized;
- iReady incentives are ongoing with Ms. Bailey since there have been some issues with implementation of the test and developing tools for motivating students;
- Health curriculum policy discussions are ongoing with Ms. Arivella with the inclusion of student feedback;
- Harassment form was being revised with an option for anonymous reporting;
- The student council issued a statement regarding the recent hazing incident: the student council strongly condemns the actions that took place by the few football members whose misconduct led

to the cancellation of the rest of the season. The community of Haverhill High students were disappointed by the revelation of illegal and disturbing hazing activities on the football team. Not only were there consequences for those who are involved but unfortunately it affected the student body as a whole. Not only was the annual Thanksgiving game canceled but a major senior event, the Turkey Toss was taken away from us as well. This is a very disheartening time for the Haverhill community because yearly traditions were put on hold as of now and this is not acceptable Hillie behavior. She extended condolences to the victim and his family and hoped that these actions will never be repeated at the school or anywhere else.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Dr. Marotta offered a statement: the school district became aware of allegations of misconduct by some members of the football team last week. We began investigating the misconduct and initial consequences had been imposed in accordance with the district's policies and procedures (Hazing, Harassment and Student Discipline). This occurred prior to us receiving the video, which I am sure many of you have seen parts of these videos. It became abundantly clear that our investigation did not concern an isolated incident but unfortunately many players were involved or aware of this misconduct. As indicated in the district's statement last evening, we are prevented from disclosing any specific information about the investigation however again our investigation is ongoing into to hazing, harassment and misconduct. We are cooperating with the district attorney's office and the police department. However, I will report to the following immediate steps: we have implemented counseling supports for anyone who has been negatively affected by the incident, we have instituted individual safety plans for several students that were most impacted by the conduct, for others, discipline has been imposed and we expect additional consequences will be forthcoming. The football season including all practices, events and games has been canceled. It saddens me that because of this conduct our entire school community will suffer. The district will not tolerate harassment, hazing or retaliation in any way. We applaud those who have had the courage to stand up and come forward. We expect more information may surface and we encourage parents to talk to their students about these issues. We understand the impact of this event will go beyond those explicitly involved and that students may react in variety of ways. Please know our schools have many skilled clinicians that are available to help and support students and athletes. On a personal note, I would like to thank many in our community and beyond who have reached out in the last 24 hours to show support for the school system in this difficult time.

Mayor Fiorentini read a statement: I am Interrupting my vacation tonight because it is so important to send a clear and unequivocal message regarding the disgusting hazing and bullying incident at Haverhill High School. We have to recognized that hazing and bullying is completely and utterly unacceptable. It's not who we are as a high school or as a community. The message tonight is that this behavior is totally unacceptable. I fully support the superintendent's decision to cancel the game and to bring in an outside person to conduct a thorough and complete investigation along with the police department. Normally I do not support calling in the police but this is so serious and immediate and decisive action in required in this matter which occurred with my complete support. The involved students should be permanently barred from any and all Haverhill sports teams, which is a harsh punishment, but it sends a clear and unequivocal message that it is unacceptable behavior. The investigation needs to look into how it happened, why it happened, measures to prevent or stop it, if the investigation reveals that any staff member knew of the incident or failed to stop it, or report the incident, they need to be dismissed from our employment. These actions do not represent our community or the vast majority of our student body. Our students are good students who routinely go on to the finest colleges/universities or the military and are represented by the student council member who spoke this evening emphasizing that this behavior is not acceptable to the overwhelming majority of students. I am confident that most students are appalled by these behaviors. I saw only a short portion of the video clip and was disgusted not only by the behavior but the fact that other young people seem to stand around and watch it happen. He stated a longer video may show that students did try to stop it. I am hoping that I am wrong but it appears there may be a bigger problem. The

problem of a culture that says that violent behavior and bullying is acceptable at least in sports. We send the message tonight that violence is completely unacceptable and it is not an instance of “boys being boys”. He contacted Attorney General Maura Healey’s office (Governor-Elect) and the assistant attorney general informed of a group that deals with sports cultures and recommended contacting the Northeastern Center for the Study of Sports in Society or a similar group. It was his recommendation to proceed in this manner tonight. He concluded by assuring parents that their students are safe in playing sports in Haverhill.

MCAS Report: Superintendent Marotta [11_17_2022_MCAS_2022_PP.pptx.pdf](#)

Mrs. Antkowiak (opening remarks) and Ms. Lally (Math) provided an analysis of the MCAS report.

Attorney Rosa inquired about the better performance of grade 10 students on the test.

Ms. Lally responded that there was less new material to learn for the grade 10 test.

Mrs. Antkowiak noted that the grade 10 students could read better than grade 3 students who had lost two years of learning due to the pandemic.

Ms. Peterson assessed the ELA results with the committee with encouraging results for grade 10, but more concerning results for grades 3 and 5.

Mrs. Antkowiak provided an analysis of science scores. She acknowledged during COVID students did not have access to hands-on experiences.

Attorney Rosa clarified that the districts were comparable to districts as classified by DESE.

Dr. Marotta spoke about chronic absenteeism and its impact. She reported that DESE adjusted the rate to 20% = 36 days.

Mayor Fiorentini stated that the change in the absenteeism rate was an absurd decision and agreed with comparing the results to similar school districts. He noted that extra money did not translate to better test scores.

Mrs. Antkowiak provided focusses to improve the test scores for this school year.

Attorney Magliocchetti expressed gratitude to the educational community but much more was needed to address the learning loss and discrepancies in funding.

Mr. Wood was concerned with absenteeism in the district along with the learning loss throughout all grade levels. He was pleased with the steps that the district was taking to address these issues and was hoping for a return the investment.

Attorney Rosa was encouraged by the resources to improve achievement, but absenteeism was a huge issue. He thought that the change in percentage was the wrong message from DESE.

In response to Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello’s statement regarding improvement, Mrs. Antkowiak stressed the importance of collaboration with parents, and staff to drive students’ educational progress and advancement.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais concluded that the right people were in place to correct the district’s path.

Acceptance of Gifts to Silver Hill School (from the estate of the late Sheila Jameson): Assistant

Superintendent Pfifferling [Sheila Jameson Gifts to Silver Hill 11.17.22.pdf](#). Mr. Pfifferling requested acknowledgement of the donation of \$3,000 to the PTO and \$2,000 for Winter Festival and acceptance of the \$2,800 for teachers.

A motion was made by Attorney Rosa to accept the donation of \$2,800 for Silver Hill teachers (to be used at their discretion). Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion. The vice chair 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 |

60 Brown Street Lease: Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling [Brown Proposed Lease.pdf](#). Dr. Marotta explained that the Housing Authority was giving the district additional time to find another location.

Mr. Wood asked about the use of this building.

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling responded that the facilities department was using this location as office space and storage facility. He reported that the originally cost was \$1.00/year and now would be \$1,500/month.

There was brief discussion on the lease, the building's use and its cost.

A motion was made by Attorney Rosa to approve the 60 Brown Street Lease. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. The vice chair 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

Financial Report "Red/Green Report": Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling [Red.Green 10.31.22.pdf](#). Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling clarified that the report did not include expenses for the resolution of the teachers' contract.

School Committee Reports/Communications.

Ms. Sullivan: MSBA Approval Letter regarding Consentino School [Haverhill Consentino MS PS+B BAL.pdf](#). Ms. Sullivan acknowledged the fulfillment of a major milestone in the Consentino School Building Project with approval from the MSBA Board of Directors of the facilities' grant in the amount of \$68,991.966. She praised Dr. Marotta and her team for their work on reducing the cost of the project, since the reimbursement rate did not match inflation.

Attorney Rosa and Attorney Magliocchetti: Introduction of parents from the John Greenleaf Whittier Middle School Site Council to discuss module classrooms [11.17 JGW SPACE ASSESSMENT.pptx.pdf](#). The parents (Mr. Ken Morse, Mr. Chad Pfeil, Gilliane Melville) recommended purchase of portable module classrooms to accommodate the student population. Mr. Morse noted that class sizes were projected next year at 28-29/classroom. He referenced that there were appropriate staffing levels but not enough space. Mr. Morse recommended purchase of portable classrooms since a new school was many years from a reality.

Ms. Sullivan acknowledged the issues with portable classrooms especially safety, poor ventilation and the possibility of mold and asked for other possibilities.

Mr. Wood requested looking at other options besides portable classrooms.

Mr. Morse related that a short-term solution was needed to address these overcrowding issues.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais agreed there was a problem but did not know the specific solution.

Ms. Sullivan suggested a subcommittee along with administration to examine the overcrowding problems.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello asked about other possibilities.

Principal Matthew Condon noted that the advocacy for space was a joint effort between the school's administration and parents. Mr. Condon reviewed the presentation with the committee.

Assistant Principal Cathy Koch offered a more detailed explanation of space utilization in the school. She noted the space was driving instruction and not educational needs.

Mr. Condon closed with a suggestion of collaboration and the next steps. He thanked the committee for its time.

Attorney Magliocchetti thanked everyone for its participation tonight. He acknowledged the need to bridge the gap in the interim before construction of a new school. Attorney Magliocchetti voiced concerns about the increase in housing development especially in the Bradford section. He advocated for state and federal funding contributions. Attorney Magliocchetti would support module classrooms.

Attorney Rosa indicated that the city council may need to be consulted regarding this solution.

Mr. Pfeil acknowledged the improvement in construction of these modules.

In response to cost, Dr. Marotta answered that it would be \$150,000/classroom (purchase and installation).

Mr. Wood noted that the National School Safety Council did not support module classrooms in respect to day-to-day security. He supported the formation of a subcommittee to study this subject and if the city would be agreeable to financing.

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to refer the Whittier School module classroom matter to the Joint Facilities Subcommittee.

Attorney Magliocchetti recommended referral to the Joint Facilities Subcommittee.

Dr. Marotta stated that there was an internal committee that was studying these housing issues. She noted there may be a need to adjust district lines regardless of school options including modules.

The vice chair 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

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative
0 members abstained

Attorney Rosa: Haverhill Public Schools awarded a STEM-focused Internship grant in the amount of \$131,000. Attorney Rosa acknowledged the receipt of this grant.

Mrs. Antkowiak introduced Ms. Victoria Kelley, Supervisor of Career Technical Education (Grades 5-12). She noted that in FY11 there were 10 internships and there were now 200 internships this year. Ms. Kelley introduced Lisa Hunt, Internship Coordinator. She was excited about paid internships being awarded by the state to high schools. Ms. Hunt related that the internships offered career options.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais: Discussion of School Committee Meeting Schedule 2023 [2023 Preliminary HSC Calendar .pdf](#).

Mr. Wood assumed chairing the school committee meeting since Mrs. Sapienza Donais had an agenda item.

A motion was made by Mrs. Sapienza Donais to approve the 2023 School Committee Meeting Schedule. Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello seconded the motion. Mr. Wood, Vice Chair Pro Tem 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

Subcommittee Reports.

Maintenance Subcommittee Update: Attorney Magliocchetti & Mrs. Sapienza Donais.
There was no report.

New Business.

Superintendent's Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20221118, EC20221118B & EV20221118C totaling \$2,499,715.17 [Warrant EV20221118, EV20221118B and EV20221118C.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mr. Wood to approve the warrants. Attorney Rosa seconded the motion. The vice chair 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 October 27, 2022, [Final Edit Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes 10.27.22.pdf](#) and Approval of the Use of Facilities [UOF 11.17.22.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

