



**Haverhill Public Schools - School Committee
Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes of June 22, 2023**

A moment of silence was observed in memory of Shay Sullivan, son of Ms. Gail Sullivan and a long-term educator at Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School.

Roll Call - Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Wood, Chairperson Pro Tem called the meeting to order (7:00 pm) and requested a roll call vote:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Present in person	Attorney Rosa	Present in person
Ms. Sullivan	Present in person @7:10 pm	Attorney Magliocchetti	Present in person
Mr. Wood	Present in person	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Present remotely @ 7:03 pm
Mayor Fiorentini	Absent		

Superintendent Margaret Marotta, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Michael Pfifferling were in attendance.

Acknowledgement of Haverhill School Committee Scholarship Recipients [School Committee Scholarship Awards 2023.pdf](#).

Dr. Marotta, Superintendent and Ms. Garcia-Santana, High School Assistant Principal presented certificates to students who were in attendance. Superintendent Marotta was excited to present these scholarship certificates to the students on behalf of the school committee (checks will be distributed separately and a later date).

The following students were present: Wendina Alezy, Julia Camasso, Nicollas Cederman, John Costa, Felicya DeCicco, Olivia DeCicco, Nayeli Gonzalez, Paige Gosselin, Grace Grauwiler, Shani Hurdle, Michael Iversen, Nathaniel Iversen, Arianna Jimenez, Patrick Kelleher, Russell Leung, Franklin Longenecker, Kaleigh Longenecker, Carli Quinlan, Katelyn Quinlan, Abigail Towler, Justin Tran, Keegan Wipff, Virgil DeAngelis, and Haley Phillips.

Mr. Wood congratulated all the recipients and noted that the scholarship total award was \$104,861.

Recognition of Haverhill Public Schools’ Retiring Staff Members.

Superintendent Marotta stated that tonight was the beginning of a new tradition with each retiree selecting a book including a personal note then the books will become part of their school’s library. The following staff members were acknowledged and commented on the reasons for selecting their book:

- Edith Riley, Bradford Elementary School (Children who dance in the rain);
- Mary Senior, JG Whittier School (Superlative Birds);
- Phillip Zuber, Silver Hill School (Sign of the Beaver);
- Kathryn Pickering, Pentucket Lake (Children’s Sign Language Dictionary);
- Carol Poulin, Consentino School (Fish in a Tree);
- Bruce Michitson, Golden Hill Principal (Pink and Say);
- David Penn, Haverhill High School (Imposter Syndrome);
- Judy Call, Haverhill High School;
- Karen Blaustein (The Curse of Being a Wallflower);
- Margaret “Peg” McInnis (We are the Future, Voice for Peace).

Superintendent Marotta read the names of staff who were retiring who were not in attendance: Cheryl Kozlowski, Hunking School; Patti Sullivan, Tilton Elementary School; Teresa Desmarais, Walnut Square School; Tom Jordan, Haverhill High School and Susan Beaudoin, Haverhill High School.

Mr. Wood extended the committee’s appreciation for their years of service.

Communications/Reports.

Public Comment (In-person & Remote).

Mr. Peter Yannakoreaus, 85 Millvale Road, Haverhill, spoke against a racist religion being taught in our schools.

Mr. Stephen Costa, Haverhill, spoke in support of the payment of a tutor who assisted his transgender stepson in returning to the high school after struggling with mental health issues.

Mr. Nate Hartwell, Haverhill, MA expressed sympathy to Ms. Sullivan and Mr. LeBlanc on the loss of their son. He thanked the school committee for its support of the debt exclusion. Mr. Hartwell spoke against the consolidation of power in the mayor’s office. He referenced that improper processes were strengthened by this type of power. Mr. Hartwell hoped for a change in the city charter.

Student Advisory Council Report ~ Melanie Palacios.

Melanie congratulated all the teachers and administrators on their retirements and the scholarship recipients. She also commented that tomorrow was the last day of finals at the high school.

Superintendent Comments/Reports.

Request for Approval of fourth amendment to the Whitsons’ Food Service Agreement [Amendment #4 Whitsons' Food Service](#).

A motion was made by Ms. Sapienza Donais to approve the fourth amendment to the Whitsons’ Food Service Agreement. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. Mr. Wood, vice chair pro tem requested a roll call vote with the following results:

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

6 members voted in the affirmative

Motion passes

0 members voted in the negative

0 members abstained

School Committee Reports/Communications.

Attorney Rosa & Attorney Magliocchetti: Haverhill School Committee’s response to the public’s call for action and investigation regarding comments attributed to School Committee member Scott Wood in media reports.

Attorney Rosa made a motion requesting that Mayor James J. Fiorentini and the City of Haverhill provide all members of the Haverhill School Committee with the following documents related to alleged comments attributed to School Committee member Scott Wood by 5:00 pm on Thursday, June 29, 2023:

- 1) The entire unredacted copy of the investigative report, including all supporting documents, e.g., emails, faxes, (FBI, Massachusetts State Police, and other law enforcement reports or documents), etc., related to an investigation conducted by Haverhill Deputy Police Chief Donald Thompson in 2013.

- 2) The entire unredacted copy of the investigative report, including all supporting documents, e.g., emails, faxes, (FBI, Massachusetts State Police, and other law enforcement reports or documents), etc., related to an investigation conducted by Haverhill Detective Richard Welch in or about 2020.
- 3) The entire unredacted copy of the investigative report, including all supporting documents, e.g., emails, faxes, (FBI, Massachusetts State Police, and other law enforcement reports or documents), etc., related to an investigation conducted by Haverhill Police Capt. Meaghan Paré in or about 2022.
- 4) The alleged contract between the City of Haverhill and School Committee member Scott Wood requiring that the City destroy the 2013 report that retired Police Chief Alan DeNaro allegedly used as the basis for not hiring Mr. Wood, including all supporting documents between Mr. Wood, Mayor Fiorentini, former Chief DeNaro and the City Solicitor.
- 5) The civil complaint filed against the City of Haverhill by School Committee member Scott Wood, including any exhibits attached to the complaint and any documents referred to in the complaint, including but not limited to emails, faxes, etc.

Attorney Magliocchetti seconded the motion.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais stated as a Haverhill school committee member this conversation bothered her to the very core and did not want to be judge and jury for a fellow member. She did not want to be involved in this action. Mrs. Sapienza Donais continued that the members were all equal colleagues worked together and this type of action would fracture the committee. She noted it was a sad night for integrity of a school committee to be questioned by other colleagues. Mrs. Sapienza Donais questioned the premise for this motion and indicated there was no evidence of wrongdoing.

Attorney Rosa stated that the intent was for transparency since the public was expressing concern and he had concerns too. He indicated that the motion was simply seeking information and being allowed to review the documents. Attorney Rosa stressed that there were no allegations but noted that the matter started back in 2013 and questioned the reasoning behind the actions that were taken over the past several years.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais stood by her initial statements.

Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello concurred with Mrs. Sapienza Donais' sentiments.

Attorney Magliocchetti underscored that no allegations had been made about this issue. He disagreed with Mrs. Sapienza Donais and felt that this situation would bring the committee together. Attorney Magliocchetti indicated there was no actual proof regarding statements attributed to Mr. Wood, however, the committee was seeking the information. He continued that Mr. Wood was being given the benefit of the doubt. Attorney Magliocchetti alleged there were reprehensible comments attributed to Mr. Wood. He stated that the committee should have been informed in 2013, there were no accusations, however, there needed to be some measure of action and was seeking collaboration with the city to obtain documents that were already out in the public. Finally, Attorney Magliocchetti remarked there was no political motive.

Mr. Wood related that by MGL, background checks were private and the documents were illegally leaked to the public. He noted that this matter was part of pending litigation. Mr. Wood stated there was no proof, and the information was fabricated and not true. He commented on his record of diversity and inclusion and expressed gratitude to local pastors who recently had met with him and appreciated their words of

wisdom. Mr. Wood concluded that since this was a legal matter there would be no further comment. He forcefully stated that it was fabricated and not true.

Mr. Wood, Vice Chair Pro Tem requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	No	Attorney Rosa	Yes
Ms. Sullivan	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	No	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	No

3 members voted in the affirmative
 3 members voted in the negative
 0 members abstained
 Motion failed

Attorney Rosa: An attendance update and plans for 2023-24 school year [C Attendance Presentation June 22,2023](#).

Superintendent Marotta commented that the information was not pretty and efforts were underway to get students back to school with the community’s help.

Ms. Marchant presented a report on the data specifically noting the devastating impact of COVID. She highlighted that the district had met its goal according to accountability data and there were some positive impacts. Ms. Marchant reported that it was not a Haverhill issue. She focused on the efforts to address chronic absenteeism with the assistance of all stakeholders (staff, students, parents, and community) and referenced the reinstatement of the Attendance Panel.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais inquired the number of days whereby a student would be considered chronically absent by the district.

Ms. Marchant responded 10% equaling 18 days and explained the interventions prior to that designation.

Attorney Rosa asked for more elaboration on the Attendance Panel.

Ms. Marchant provided a brief explanation of the Attendance Panel [Attendance Panel](#). She indicated that many parents were unaware of the consequences of poor school attendance and how to seek advice/help from educational professionals. Ms. Marchant appreciated the budgetary support of the school committee.

Attorney Rosa suggested partnering with Haverhill Promise on an attendance pledge.

Ms. Marchant answered any awareness efforts were greatly appreciated to deal with attendance issues.

Ms. Sullivan asked if data was being collected on the reasons students missed school and asked for the top three reasons.

Ms. Marchant responded it would only be an anecdotal answer and was difficult to obtain from the students.

Attorney Magliocchetti asked about the influence of gaming and social media and noted it was a major problem.

Ms. Marchant replied that it was a significant concern and supported early intervention.

Attorney Magliocchetti requested an exploration of grant funding for this topic.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais asked if there were any policies that after a specific number of absences there were be a requirement to repeat the grade.

Ms. Marchant related that punitive measures had the opposite effect on the student and did not result in better attendance.

Subcommittee Reports.

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

Attorney Magliocchetti reported that there was a maintenance subcommittee meeting this morning. He stated that during the executive session after the meeting there would be an executive session to discuss the maintenance director’s contract which would expire at the end of this month. Attorney Magliocchetti continued by noting the numerous school maintenance jobs, the number of capital projects and a retention problem with custodians. He related it was one of the better subcommittee meetings and a lot of information was obtained about our schools.

Mrs. Sapienza Donais added that some of the issues with the school grounds appearance were the result of lack of staff. She concluded the subcommittee was aware of the issues and would continue to monitor the maintenance work in the schools.

New Business.

Superintendent’s Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20230623 and EV20230623B totaling \$2,285,287.06 [Combined Warrants EV20230623 and EV20230623B.pdf](#) [Detail Warrant EV20230623 and EV20230623B.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was Attorney Magliocchetti made by to approve Warrant Number EV20230623 and EV20230623B totaling \$2,285,287.06. Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion.

Attorney Rosa requested clarification on the Moody School roof expenditure of \$300,000.

Assistant Superintendent Pfifferling responded that it was the total cost, there was a city account number and that the MSBA would provide a certain percentage (approximately 76.8%) reimbursement.

Mr. Wood, vice chair pro tem requested a roll call vote with the following results:

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

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

Superintendent’s Recommendation to approve Warrant Number EV20230623A totaling \$1,039.68 [Combined Warrant EV20230623A.pdf](#) [Detail Warrant EV20230623A.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made Mrs. Sapienza Donais to approve Warrant Number EV20230623A totaling \$1,039.68. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. Mr. Wood, vice chair pro tem requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Attorney Rosa	Yes
Ms. Sullivan	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Abstain

Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	Yes
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5 members voted in the affirmative
 0 members voted in the negative
 1 member abstained
 Motion passes

Superintendent’s Recommendation to declare items surplus and dispose of in accordance with city ordinances [SurplusForm.28Partitions 06.22.23.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

A motion was made by Mrs. Sapienza Donais to declare items surplus and dispose of in accordance with city ordinances. Ms. Sullivan seconded the motion. Mr. Wood, vice chair pro tem requested a roll call vote with the following results:

Mrs. Sapienza Donais	Yes	Attorney Rosa	Yes
Ms. Sullivan	Yes	Attorney Magliocchetti	Yes
Mr. Wood	Yes	Mrs. Ryan-Ciardello	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 June 8, 2023, [Final Edit for Approval Hybrid Regular Meeting Minutes 06.08.23.pdf](#) and Use of Facilities [UOF 06.22.23.pdf](#) as indicated in the agenda material.

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

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

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

A motion was made by Attorney Magliocchetti to go into executive session (Superintendent’s Conference Room – City Hall, Room 206) to discuss negotiation strategies regarding school nurses, cafeteria, transportation, the ESP unit of the Haverhill Education Association and the maintenance director’s contract and to not reconvene in open session. Mrs. Sapienza Donais seconded the motion. Mr. Wood requested a roll call vote with the following results:

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

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

