

HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD
AUGUST 3, 2022
MEETING MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Wednesday, August 3, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Primary School.

Amy Kellner, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Caryl Roy, Vice Chairman
 Tammy Fareed, Secretary
 Brooke Arthur
 Robert Mann

Members of the Board Absent:

Also Participating: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
 Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

CORRESPONDENCE/RESIGNATIONS/NOMINATIONS

The Administration is finalizing the last opening for a Guidance Counselor at the Hollis Upper Elementary School (HUES). The intent is to make an offer in the coming days. Beyond that, the district is fully staffed for all professional staff. There remain openings in the food service area, for paraprofessionals, and 1 part-time custodian position.

Presently, there is a driver for every large bus and each van. The bus routes have gone out. A few new developments are being addressed, e.g., requests made. Superintendent Corey and Chief Hoebeke are conducting ride arounds to determine if bus stop locations are appropriate, the amount of walking required, etc.

The expectation is that the school year will open in a very unrestricted environment, and the need for regular COVID updates is not anticipated. Internal monitoring will take place. Should the need arise, a notification process would be initiated. This will be discussed again at the September meeting.

The FY24 budget process has begun. Being looked at is the potential opening for Environmental Science at HUES. That has always been a part-time position. A curriculum discussion will be entered into, and the Board updated throughout the budget season.

Asked about the Compliance and Communications Specialist position, Superintendent Corey noted applications were received. During the process, it was evident that the best qualified individual was a current SAU employee. Ms. Alyssa Akhtar has taken on the position and has hit the ground running having already addressed a number of Right-to-Know requests as well as work on a security grant that will be discussed later in the meeting.

The Administration has not yet been able to fill the vacant position in Student Services. At this point, the duties (out-of-district students) have been taken on by the Director of Student Services. It may be that stipends are provided to administrators if required to cover those cases.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis School Board [June 1, 2022](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 4, Line 38; insert “of” following “amount”

MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-1

Member Arthur Abstained

Hollis School Board – **Public Hearing**. [June 1, 2022](#)

MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-1

Member Arthur Abstained

Hollis School Board – **Non-Public** [June 1, 2022](#)

MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-1

Member Arthur Abstained

PUBLIC HEARING - Hollis Public Water System

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY THAT THE BOARD RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Board recessed at 6:10 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 6:18 p.m.

PUBLIC INPUT

Karen Belmonte, 46 Truell Road

Spoke of concerns regarding a change in the music programming at HUES. Prior to COVID, students were given the opportunity to participate in both band and music and had the option to miss recess once a week for a lesson with all students that played their particular instrument.

With the previous 6 day special rotation that means that students have music instruction about 3 days; one band, one music, and one recess option instrument lesson. Students now have to choose band or music, which is a significant reduction in the music program. This began last year. Although disappointed, she believed it to be COVID related and temporary.

Brookline schools are offered lessons once a week before the start of school, music class during school, chorus option during school and orchestra twice weekly after school. She is disappointed her children will not have the same opportunities as the children they will join in 7th grade.

Students have missed many opportunities that were available pre-COVID. The last time her incoming 6th grade student had a normal school year was 2nd grade. She spoke of the opportunities missed during that time. She requested the Board not make students choose between band and music.

Andrea Levesque, 18 Saw Mill Road

Shares the concerns expressed by the previous speaker. She was not aware that this had occurred and that it would continue along this path. She questioned what the justification was for this change. She questioned, if COVID related, why has it not returned to its prior state. What we have for programming in this area is very small compared to what she was provided during her education. She shares the concerns expressed and would like to understand the reasoning for the reduction in offerings.

PRINCIPALS' REPORT

Superintendent Corey highlighted items from the Administrative Report provided with the [agenda](#) packet.

“After research and discussion with Paul Karpawich, we are looking to take the next step forward by starting a sustainable food waste recycling program at the Hollis Primary School (HPS) and HUES. This program would be in partnership with Grow Nashua. Our problem is that a large amount of food waste is created each day with breakfast and lunch service. It is our hope to create a food scraps diversion food waste program. This program would teach everyone to throw the food scraps into receptacles which would be covered, stored outside, and picked up by Grow Nashua. Our next step is to start working with Grow Nashua/Paul Karpawich to write a grant for the start-up costs. We will provide more information to the Board as it becomes available.”

The goal is to get it up and running this year. There have been small pilot programs within certain classrooms as part of the environmental program at HPS, and this is a natural expansion and something that when we look to the future is part of the skillset that will become common for students.

Vice Chairman Roy questioned start-up costs. The information was not readily available, but believed to be a program that, if grant funding was not available, would come before the Board for a funding discussion.

Superintendent Corey informed the Board of the high enrollment for 1st grade. Because of the teaching shortage, if needed, a solution that differs from adding a teacher may be considered. Enrollment is lower than NESDEC projections (NESDEC runs high). Kindergarten numbers are not growing as expected. Part of that is families choosing to delay enrolling in public school at the young ages.

Asked if the sustainable food waste recycling program would seek to solicit parent volunteers, Superintendent Corey remarked if it goes in the direction hoped, there would likely be the need for support for the

environmental science teacher. The district will return to a more traditional cafeteria this fall. There will be children who have never been in that setting. There will be a learning curve with a lot of different things.

Asked if there will be additional discussion related to the public comment provided, Superintendent Corey stated he has touched base with Principal Fowler, and they are looking at it. Part of the issue faced is the length of the school day. When a group of students is taking music there is another of about the same size that we have to provide some sort of instruction for. We cannot necessarily move them along as that would not be fair. It is a delicate balancing act. The situation really changed because of an enrollment growth. When we had to move to the extra sections, we had to get away from what was the traditional piece. There will be discussion of the Brookline model (before or after school), which would provide greater flexibility. For the majority of students seeking that program, their families typically are willing to do that early arrival or stay a little later.

DISCUSSION

- Facilities Update

Roofing projects have been completed. There are new window frames in grade 1 and the conference room. Asbestos had been present in the window frame pipe (last known asbestos at HPS).

The entrance between grade 1 and the Library Media Center serves two purposes; better classroom and provides a secondary means of egress.

In the 2nd and 3rd grade wing, heat source air pumps are all up on the walls. Electrical and water pieces to make them fully functional will be completed in the coming weeks. New tile flooring in designated classrooms has been done at HPS and is being completed at HUES (front entry, gymnasium floor, 1st floor hallway).

The outside of the gym at HPS has been prepped for the new siding. There will be a significant enhancement of the insulation of that end of the building. Solar panels and the insulation that has been addressed over the past few years will result in benefits in heating and electric costs.

The front office has gone through a slight reconfiguration; both Administrative Assistants are now in the front section. That was done to provide the School Resource Officer (SRO) with his own office in both buildings. The bollards are ordered and will be placed at the front of both schools. Member Fareed questioned where the bollards would be placed and was told they would be outside of the main doors (likely between the columns). They will be in the form of planters.

- Staffing Update

Superintendent Corey noted the district presently has an opening at HUES for guidance. An offer will be made in the coming days. A kindergarten position had opened up and has been filled. The kindergarten teacher went over to Brookline for a 3rd grade position. The district is presently seeking paraprofessionals. There is also a need in food service and for a part-time custodian (4 hours/day).

- Building Security

- Update on Summer Discussions
- Submission of State Grant for Security

Superintendent Corey noted some matters, as permitted, would be discussed in non-public session. The Administration meets regularly with the Police Chief to discuss security aspects. They are looking at providing the Police Department 24/7 access to the buildings. Research that came out of the most recent tragedy identified a problem with building access.

He spoke of the 2nd means of egress provided for the classroom and those in the library. Chairman Kellner questioned if the discussion is to create two means of egress in as many classrooms as possible and was told every room now has that.

Superintendent Corey commented on the new windows in the first grade noting someone of his height could still look into other rooms, but 99% of the population will no longer be able to. From the standpoint of someone in the building that sight distance is not what we want. The changes allow for natural light to continue to be provided while increasing security. Removal of the windows in the conference room at the other end of the building served two purposes; removed the asbestos and satisfied one the recommendations of the police chiefs, e.g. less windows.

Tabletop activities will be conducted with the Police Department and Administrative Team at the high school on August 25th. The Police Chief requires all of his officers to walk the buildings. Should they have to respond, it would not be their first time in a building.

Over a year has been spent in preparation for the latest security grant that will be coming out. A primary piece being put up for the grant is communication devices that work across the entire SAU. Research has shown that during incidents cell phone activity increases to a level rendering it useless. The Hollis Fire Department, Hollis dispatch and Brookline ambulance and fire came to the district a year or so ago, having been actively involved in our buildings and the safety aspects, and said this is the way we needed to go next. The cost is in the area of half a million dollars. Each school would be able to receive approx. \$100,000 through the security and safety grant.

It is feasible that some smaller buildings may not have the \$100,000 in communication devices. The Administration continues to look at architectural design for main entrances. The Hollis buildings are very secure. If you go to the high school, it is now a situation similar to bank teller windows; you cannot get out of the lobby without a designated purpose. The same exists at CSDA. Many of our schools are set up really well to continue those transitions. Costs associated with planning and architectural design would likely come from the maintenance trust.

While completing energy upgrades, security issues have also been addressed, e.g., new doors (minimized glass). The Administration works closely with New Hampshire Homeland Security and has done extensive work. Superintendent Corey commented on the role the SROs play in those discussions. He spoke of being pleased with the progress the district continues to make. He stressed for the community that what was being discussed was the Hollis Fire Department, Hollis dispatch, and Brookline Ambulance and Fire and Police formulating this plan for us. They came to us and said this is what you need and what you need to do to accomplish it.

Currently there are walkie-talkies that can go from the office of the Superintendent to the high school, but we need a repeater to be able to make that happen with our Brookline folks.

Member Fareed commented on prior discussions of the Safety Committee comprised of all of the agencies in Town. Superintendent Corey remarked the Town's Emergency Management Team typically meets quarterly or

when the need arises. That involves all entities, e.g., fire, police, schools. They go over a variety of scenarios and what the responses would be.

Member Fareed remarked there are notebooks maintained for all of the potential scenarios. There is a lot of time and forethought involved. This is not a reaction to one incident or headlines, it is feet on the ground, calm, rationale thinking.

Superintendent Corey noted the bus company is involved as they would be doing the pickup. Practice drills of reunification are conducted. Member Fareed remarked this could be a weather event or any kind of emergency.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the Joint Loss Management Team that conducts monthly inspections of all of the buildings. They go into classrooms and review them for safety issues. There is a required number of training hours that every teacher, Superintendent, etc. has to do, e.g., blood borne pathogens, slip and fall, best practices. These are overseen by the Human Resource Department.

We do plan for a catastrophic event but focus in on what is the day-to-day as that is the safety piece for a student, e.g., how do we do dismissal. The same thing is done from an IT point of view; phishing emails are sent to staff. We have extensive data and have to take all of the precautions we can to protect that data and the financial resources of the SAU.

Vice Chairman Roy questioned if part of the discussion is around improving the front of HPS and was told it is. Superintendent Corey noted in the natural process of the grants the doors eventually will be phased out. Part of the problem we face right now is supply chain issues. With both secretaries now in the front viewing windows we will not have instances of lack of coverage. Placing the SRO there gives a much better presence. As the community may or may not be aware every staff member has to fob in, and every fob is unique. During COVID everyone was required to fob out. That practice will remain. That will enable the Administration to know who is in the building at any given time.

A series of evacuation drills are conducted with the bus company. CPR and first aid training is offered to all staff.

Superintendent Corey commented we are all focused in on some of the tragedies that have occurred, but for us it is more everything we do; what are our procedures and practices. The Business Administrator and Assistant Superintendent ultimately oversee those.

Asked about the timing of grant approval, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her belief the result will be known at the end of the month.

Asked about the source of the grant, Superintendent Corey stated the Governor has set aside \$10 million in safety and security for schools. Each school had to apply. The first round was available for a short window and only for public schools. It was right around the time a lot of Superintendents were brand new. The thought is that will serve us well having been prepared and submitted right away. The next round is for public schools as well as private entities.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's recommendation regarding the Unreserved Fund Balance

Superintendent Corey noted the recommendation of the Business Administrator to maintain the fund balance at its present funding level of \$284,000. The following reasons were identified: doing so would ensure the fund balance is tax neutral as compared to last year's tax rate, the district's budget already contains a contingency fund of \$95,000, and the district has a maintenance trust fund, if urgent repairs are required, which can be used to supplement the retained fund balance with proper approvals.

When an unanticipated expense occurs, if the need were based specifically on a student new to the district requiring services, the special education trust would be looked to as a funding source. If related to another aspect/item, the first area looked to for funding would be the operating budget. From there, the Administration would bring forward a recommendation to utilize the Contingency Fund. If the expense was greater than the Contingency Fund could support, the Retained Fund Balance would be looked to.

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ACCEPT THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR'S RECOMMENDATION TO RETAIN THE SUM OF UP TO TWO HUNDRED EIGHTY FOUR THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$284,000) OF SCHOOL FUND BALANCE FROM THE FY22 SCHOOL YEAR AS THE END OF YEAR AVAILABLE FUNDS ALLOW

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ARTHUR

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Business Administrator's recommendation regarding the Hollis School District's Expendable Water Trust

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ACCEPT THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR TO AUTHORIZE THE EXPENDITURE OF FIVE THOUSAND SEVENTY SIX DOLLARS (\$5,076) FROM THE HOLLIS SCHOOL DISTRICT WATER SYSTEM EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR THE PURCHASE OF THE MAINTENANCE ITEMS IDENTIFIED DURING THE PUBLIC HEARING

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **JLDBB** – Suicide Prevention and Response
Given its 2nd Reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF POLICY JLDBB – SUICIDE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted there have been no recommended changes since the time of the first reading. The policy is based upon the prevention plan that was presented and provided by the Director of Student Services.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

NON-PUBLIC

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE, (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF AND (i) CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE PREPARATION FOR AND THE CARRYING OUT OF EMERGENCY FUNCTIONS

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ARTHUR

Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Carryl Roy, Robert Mann, Tammy Fareed, Brooke Arthur, Amy Kellner

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 7:05 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 7:52 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ADJOURN

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The August 3, 2022, meeting of the Hollis School Board adjourned at 7:53 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____