

**HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD
MAY 13, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School Library.

Robert Mann, Chairman, presided:

Board Members Participating: Tammy Fareed, Vice Chairman
Brooke Arthur, Secretary (participation began at 5:04 p.m.)
Amy Kellner
Carryl Roy (participation began at 5:02 p.m.)

Members of the Board Absent:

Also Participating: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator
Candice Fowler, Principal, Hollis Upper Elementary School
Paula Izbicki, Principal, Hollis Primary School

Due to the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis, and in accordance with Governor Sununu's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this Board is authorized to meet electronically.

Board members and members of the Administration were participating via Zoom. Each member of the Board was asked to state, for the record, where they were, why their attendance in person was not reasonably practical, who, if anyone, was with them, and whether or not they were able to hear the proceedings.

Chairman Mann

Stated he was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, he was alone in his home office, and could hear the proceedings.

Member Kellner

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

Vice Chairman Fareed

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was not alone in her home currently, and could hear the proceedings.

Member Roy

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

It was acknowledged all members participating electronically could be heard. The Board was reminded all votes would be taken by Roll Call.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Chairman Mann stated the desire for the Board to engage in a discussion around the re-start of schools and the NH DOE’s School Transition Reopening and Redesign Task Force (STRRT).

Member Arthur

Stated she was participating electronically from home, attendance in person was not reasonably practical due to COVID-19, she was alone in the room she was in, and could hear the proceedings.

PUBLIC INPUT - None

NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey informed the Board the Organizational Meeting of the SAU41 Governing Board has been postponed until the June timeframe. The Governing Board meeting, typically held this time of year, also addresses issues such as salaries of SAU personnel. As the COOP Annual Meeting has not yet been able to be conducted, there is no official budget for the SAU. Once the date of the COOP Annual Meeting is set, a date for the next Governing Board meeting will be identified.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis School Board [January 8, 2020](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

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

Yea: Robert Mann, Brooke Arthur, Carryl Roy, Amy Kellner 4
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED
Member Fareed Abstained

Hollis School Board – **Public Hearing** [January 28, 2020](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 2, Line 25; replace “201” with “2013”

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

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

Yea: Robert Mann, Tammy Fareed, Amy Kellner, Carryl Roy, 4
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Member Arthur Abstained

Hollis School Board - **Special** [February 13, 2020](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

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

Yea: Robert Mann, Tammy Fareed, Amy Kellner, Brooke Arthur 4
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Member Roy Abstained

Hollis School Board – **Special** [March 9, 2020](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 28; replace “effected” with “affected”
Page 6, Line 11; replace “give” with “given”

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

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

Yea: Robert Mann, Tammy Fareed, Brooke Arthur, Carryl Roy, Amy Kellner 5
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

Hollis School Board – **Annual Meeting** [March 17, 2020](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER**

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

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

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

Hollis School Board - **Organizational Meeting** [April 1, 2020](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 5, Line 13; replace “commented” with “commended”

Hollis School Board [April 29, 2020](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 3, Line 32; replace “appropriately” with “appropriate”

MOTION BY MEMBER ARTHUR TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE APRIL 1, 2020 ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING AND THE APRIL 29, 2020 MEETING, AS AMENDED MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER

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

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

5

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

PRINCIPAL REPORTS

Paula Izbicki, Principal, Hollis Primary School (HPS), spoke of the work being done to the building while it is unoccupied.

Discussions have occurred around plans for the 3rd grade students; ways in which to be able to do all of the activities that we would normally do in a regular school year.

Principal Izbicki commented on the Teacher Appreciation Week put together by the PTA, and of how meaningful it was.

This year, as a staff, they decided not to do gifts for staff, but instead to recognize the local businesses that have been so supportive of the schools over the years. Letters were sent to the businesses thanking them for their support and advertising was done encouraging people, if they could, to support the businesses.

Candice Fowler, Principal, Hollis Upper Elementary School (HUES), commented on the amazing shape of the buildings. She spoke of having had the opportunity to meet with students this past week; did the lunch bunch and was able to show off some of the things happening in the building. They are focused on the traditions they

can help students with in this remote setting. They want to honor some of the traditions like the Promotion Day, Field Day, etc. All of those plans are in the making.

A few parents and teachers at PTA questioned how they would retrieve/drop-off materials, etc. Protocols are being put in place to ensure we can get and give materials back.

She spoke of being pleased to be able to continue with the awards, HUES News, etc. and of the work of the specialists in finding ways to help infuse some fun activities so that the connection is not all work, which is one of the comments she has heard from the students who are missing out on the opportunities to connect with others. She spoke of appreciation for the level of parent support with remote learning.

DISCUSSION

- Transportation

Student Transportation of America (STA) was compensated for the period March 13th through April 4th. Since that time, the SAU has been in discussions with them. As of last month, the issue was turned over to legal counsel. STA was looking at a 70/30 split, which the Administration did not feel was appropriate. Legal counsel has suggested the District pay for fixed costs.

With STA coming on board this year, they were able to significantly upgrade our bus fleet, which comes at a cost of leasing those buses. That is one of the fixed costs. Also looked at are costs associated with the leasing of the vans utilized for special education, the lease for the cost of the bus barn, and two salaries; mechanic who remains on full-time to address maintenance, inspections, regular start-up/runs, and that of the dispatcher who will be developing the bus routes for next year.

Although originally requested, they are not looking for driver salaries. The District did not feel that was appropriate, and as we moved further into understanding information around the CARES Act, it was learned that in some ways a driver actually benefits from going on unemployment. We do expect drivers will come back in the fall; however, believe it will be somewhat difficult because of concerns over COVID-19. STA has been advertising regularly, and hopes to overcome driver shortages. It is likely there will be drivers from across the State that may not be comfortable driving, and it is unknown what the restrictions will be on the bus company for numbers.

Legal counsel notes the positive relationship the District has enjoyed in the short time it has been with STA and the desire for that to continue. It is a benefit that they work with a number of other school districts in the area and that there is the ability to share/shift drivers, get buses for field trips and extra-curricular runs, etc. We are not paying any fuel costs (purchase directly), not looking at driver labor costs, or other variable costs.

The recommendation of counsel and of the Administration is that the District cover up to 55% of the cost for the months of May and June. Funds are available in the budget. This will represent a savings, and will ensure we have buses, the mechanic, and the dispatcher.

Asked if 55% would adequately cover other operational costs that would occur whether running the buses or not, e.g. maintenance, Superintendent Corey responded he believes it has been a difficult negotiation, but this seems to be about the standard percentage districts are contributing. The lowest percentage he is aware of is 45% and the highest 72% (not with STA). STA has done a great job of recognizing this as a unique situation, and they are trying to cover all of their operational costs in order to ensure they are ready to go for the first day of school.

Asked for clarification, Superintendent Corey responded 55% of what the District would traditionally pay for that time period (monthly cost for that period). Member Arthur questioned if the District typically has July and August payments, and was informed it does not; goes on the school year calendar.

Chairman Mann questioned if the agreement was come to outside of the normal contract. Superintendent Corey stated he is familiar with only one district across the State that actually has a pandemic clause in their contract (paying 45%; with STA).

Vice Chairman Fareed noted a clause in the contract, Item 28 - Additional Understanding, which states in part "the CARRIER understands that if student numbers do not warrant the continuation of any route for the towns, the CARRIER will pass on the savings to the DISTRICT." Superintendent Corey remarked the contract would allow the District to choose to pay very little, if anything, but the problem would be an uncertainty with what would occur with the bus leases; if we would have buses in the fall, which is why it was more of a negotiation; we need each other to exist.

Member Kellner questioned whether there is the opportunity to gain use of the buses, e.g., for the library to deliver materials, given the need for them to be run on a regular basis. Superintendent Corey stated his belief the bus company would consider that. It is a matter of being very selective as there are a number of their drivers that fall into the category of high risk.

Member Arthur questioned the date the drivers made the transition to unemployment, and was informed it was approximately 30 days after the closure.

Vice Chairman Fareed spoke of a vote by the Board to continue payment on the contract for the early days. Superintendent Corey stated the vote was for full payment on the contract for the first month as the belief, at the time, was the intent to re-open in the April 4th timeframe. It was not until we went to the extended closing that we entered into negotiations.

Member Kellner questioned if the likelihood the number of students on a bus will have to be reduced is being considered. Superintendent Corey responded, if utilizing existing social distancing rules, it could be that there would be 13 students on a bus. A wide variety of options are being considered.

- FY20 Budget Update

Kelley Seeley, Business Administrator, introduced to the Board, Donna Smith, Assistant Business Administrator.

Ms. Seeley commented on ongoing work with closing out of Purchase Orders. Were the fiscal year to end today, and all adjustments made, we would be giving back to the taxpayers approximately \$300,000. She stressed that number would change. It could be lower or higher. There will be additional expenses and additional savings. There are a great deal of unknowns and many expenses that will cross fiscal years.

Because the last student day is June 12th, which is much earlier than normal, and there are a certain number of days that we cannot go without services for our special education students, we will have at least an additional week of the Extended School Year (ESY) program in the month of June (current fiscal year (FY)) at a significant cost. We will most definitely have compensatory education costs related to special education students. We do not know what those costs will be at this time and what costs will fall in FY20 and FY21. Food Services has done a fabulous job of distributing food to our families, are using all inventory, and doing

everything they can to ensure costs for that program do not exceed what we have for fund balance. However, there is the potential that could experience an overrun. The only revenue being generated is what the State is providing for reimbursement. If the program goes into an overrun situation, it will have to be addressed through the General Fund. We will likely also have additional cost for Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfection. Some of that cost will be in FY20 and most in FY21. We will have re-opening costs, some of which may fall in FY20.

It is understood there will be device replacement costs. Across all 3 districts, devices have been sent out to help students with remote learning needs. Some will come back in less than perfect condition and some may not come back at all.

There are savings that have been identified. Transportation is one area of savings. The District will be eligible for funds from the CARES Act (\$8,000), and is also eligible for a small special education grant as well as cost reimbursement for some items (75%) through FEMA.

Ms. Seeley recommended the Board increase the amount of retained fund balance that is normally factored into the end of year expenses; typically retain \$152,000. She recommended retaining a higher amount (can retain up to \$284,000) believing most of the additional expenses will incur in FY21. Asked if a specific recommendation would be available by the June timeframe, Ms. Seeley replied a much clearer picture should be available by that time.

Asked if there are other contracts that could be renegotiated to achieve savings, she indicated there are some in the area of special education that are in the process of being closed. Assistant Superintendent Thompson noted there are transportation providers other than STA that provide transportation for students that are out-of-district. Those contracts are based on use. Because we are not utilizing them there will be savings there.

Member Roy commented on the Governor offering free PPE to businesses and questioned if there has been any inquiry around that being provided to school districts. Ms. Seeley spoke of having picked up PPE from the DMV. Although a small amount, additional requests can be made.

Asked to provide an explanation of compensatory services, Assistant Superintendent Thompson spoke of the District's obligation to provide all students a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). When we go into remote learning, it can be difficult to do that. We have made adjustments, and the vast majority of our students are able to access the services they need. It is difficult right now to determine whether or not we achieved FAPE. We really will not know until we come out of remote learning and have the opportunity to do assessments to see if there has been regression. If there is, we could have an obligation to provide make-up services to some of our students. Right now we really do not know what that looks like.

One example that is concrete, is students who had community based programs; we cannot do that so we know that those students will receive compensatory ed. In terms of our contracted service providers, they, for the most part, are providing students the same level of services so there will not be any cost savings in regard to that. It is really difficult right now to be able to indicate what compensatory services might look like. We did increase the ESY program by one week on the front end and one week on the back end in an effort to minimize what we may end up owing down the road.

Superintendent Corey informed the Board the NH DOE has created a task force that will look at a series of issues around re-opening. He stressed, the decision to re-open is that of the school boards working with the Superintendent. These are all local decisions. He stated concerns with the task force noting they do not have a public school superintendent on the task force, which was brought up to the Commissioner.

He commented on the solid decisions the Administration has made to date. The District has gone through this phase of remote learning moving from March 13th to 3 days later becoming a remote learning environment, and for the most part, doing a rather good job.

The countries of Denmark, Germany, and South Korea are either back with students or will be very shortly. He participated in an international Zoom meeting earlier in the day and spoke with the leaders of 6 buildings over there who are working first hand with students. In some cases, because they have space, they have been able to split classes in half and because their countries fund education, they have been able to hire teachers. He does not believe that would work for us; we do not have building space, etc.

A lot of the safety measures taken in places such as supermarkets could occur in our schools, e.g., plexiglass. We will have PPE for those in need. We will have to have some ability to function remotely for those students and staff who, because of their own unique health needs, will not be able to take the risk of coming into the building; if we are allowed to open. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug will have a plan in place to address curriculum and Assistant Superintendent Thompson and Amy Rowe, Student Services Transition Coordinator, have done amazing work in the area of special education, which will continue during ESY and into the fall.

Superintendent Corey spoke of his weekly participation with a group of 13 superintendents from the south central district. He is looking forward to the task force; however, reiterated it will be a local decision. We may not be going to a cafeteria again; lunches may be coming to students. We may need to remove furniture from classrooms to gain space. Staff has been and will continue to do an outstanding job of cleaning. It is a lengthy process.

Currently, the primary focus has been on two events; graduation for the senior class and the COOP Annual Meeting. For both of those we are looking at in-person, outdoor ceremonies. The Administration is working with the fire and police chiefs from both towns as well as the local emergency management teams.

The Administration will be planning for a number of scenarios; continue with remote learning, traditional environment, and a hybrid. The decision reached will be based on data gathered over the summer. There will also be a transition plan in place should there be the need to move to remote learning from traditional learning in a quick timeframe.

Chairman Mann spoke of being pleased to hear of the collaboration with other superintendents who are all experiencing the same challenges. He suggested there will be the need for the Board to communicate, over the summer, what the criteria might be to make the “go / no go” type of decision around re-start and be able to share that information with parents and the community-at-large.

Member Arthur questioned when regular Board meetings might resume. Superintendent Corey suggested when we get further along and can do so with proper social distancing. There is ample space at the HPS library to make it workable. The concern would be with the inability to predict the number of people that might attend. Currently there is still in place a restriction on gatherings in groups larger than 10. However, what was explained to superintendents was that with 10 people and proper social distancing, it could be considered 10 groups of 1.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented on the age of the students in the District, and her hope that when considering what will be recommended for the fall, the Administration takes into account the fact that remote learning has a different impact on their learning and social experience than it does on older students. Superintendent Corey agreed; however, spoke of the need to also consider the developmental piece. If we return to school, there would be concern with 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7-year-old students, excited to see their friends for the first time, high-fiving each other while passing in the hall, etc.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Superintendent's recommendation for transportation

MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENTS RECOMMENDATION TO NEGOTIATE THE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACT WITH STUDENT TRANSPORTATION OF AMERICA

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

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

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

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Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Superintendent's recommendation regarding non-union employees

Superintendent Corey noted a previous action of the Board authorizing him to make operational decisions. The non-union employees referenced, O.T., speech, and language, do not fall under the union, and typically receive a salary increase at this time of year. During the budget process, the District approved 3% raises. Being looked at is a range of 2.1% to 3% based on performance. Assistant Superintendent Thompson and Amy Rowe, Student Services Transition Coordinator, through the annual review process with the employee, will determine the actual percentage of increase.

MOTION BY MEMBER FAREED TO APPROVE THE SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDED SALARY INCREASE OF UP TO THREE PERCENT (3%) FOR NON-UNION EMPLOYEES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Fareed spoke of the importance of treating our professionals with as much stability as we can as we will need them, and they will be very much in demand through the summer and fall.

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

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

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Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ARTHUR**

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

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

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Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The May 13, 2020 meeting of the Hollis School Board was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____