

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
December 09, 2020
Virtual Meeting
6:00 PM

Present: Mrs. Leah Miller, Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mr. John Geary, Mrs. Libby Corbo and Mr. Pete Miraglia

Also, Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Debbie St. Ives, Keith Guyette, Matthew Paquette, Daniel Birolini, Jane DeGrenier, Michael Oates, Matthew Plummer, Patricia Smith.

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Mrs. Miller.

Public Comment: Tracy Coughlin-Parent of a HS student. Wait to ask until after the reopening.

Approval of Minutes:

November 18, 2020: Mrs. Lynch requested the minutes to be tabled until the next meeting.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:

Mascot Update

Mr. Paquette: Our mascot selection is coming down to the wire. We are currently entertaining 3 finalists. Thank you to everyone who submitted mascot names and logos. Thank you to our Mascot Selection Committee who dedicated their time, insights, and genuine investment throughout this process. After working through 400 name submissions and deliberating on the potential of 85 logo suggestions, we now present to you the final 3 Mascots:

- Hanover Hawks
- Hanover Huskies
- Hanover United

Questions:

Mr. Miraglia: Enjoyed the video with the names released. Can you remind everyone the final 6 names again?

Mr. Paquette:

Hawks

Huskies

Hornets

Hanover United

Hanover Wolfpack

Hanover Anchors

COVID Health Update

Mrs. Smith:

Thursday, December 3rd Hanover moved into the red level for community COVID transmission which is more than 10 average cases per day per 100,000 over a 2-week period and a test positivity rate of greater than 5%. As of today, the daily case rate per 100,000 is 38.39 and our test positivity rate is 5.25%. The actual daily average case rate is 5.50. No new cases were reported today related to our schools. We expect an update from the State tomorrow on our test positivity rate by 5:00 or 6:00 pm which will be updated on the COVID Dashboard. We reached out to the Mass Department of Public Health, the Department of Elementary Secondary Education COVID consultant, and the Town of Hanover Board of Health for specific guidance considering our case rate, positivity rate, and no evidence of spread of COVID-19 within our schools. The guidance we received was to move forward in our current programming. Since the opening of school 48 teachers, students, and/or staff have tested positive. Twenty-four of those have been reported since Thanksgiving. Many of the cases have been connected to small gatherings or family clusters outside of school and had a clear external source of exposure.

As long as Hanover remains in the red level, we will stay in close contact with the Department of Public Health, DESE, and Hanover Public Health.

Questions:

Mrs. Miller: Would you say most of these cases are family spread? So, these numbers of cases in school most likely have multiple kids from the same family.

Mrs. Smith: Yes, mostly household spread with multiple children in family groups that are from the same family.

Mr. Miraglia: Do we feel confident there is no school spread? If the case is positive and they are already in school, we trace to make sure there is no in-school spread. Is there anything else you do to be positive that there is no spread?

Mrs. Smith: We look for evidence from the state. Any person that gets a positive test for COVID or any other communicable disease goes to Maven (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiologic tracing system). Every lab has to report to that system. Every student that tested positive would be in that system and every contact would be entered into that system and if that person became positive it would be noted in the system. We then track if this person is associated with the school and at what level. The State has a good pulse on the spread in school.

Re-Opening Update

School Committee: Mrs. Miller has released the following School Committee Statement. This statement is posted [here](#) on the Hanover Public School website.

Comments:

Mrs. Corbo: Please re-read the part of the statement regarding all students will have the opportunity to in-person learning by early February but should say **increased** in-person learning by early February.

Mrs. Miller: Correction statement “Grade level returns will be staggered and all students will have the opportunity for full in-person by early February.”

Public Comment:

Tracy Coughlin, parent of a high school student

“I appreciate all that the School Committee and administration have done and have worked on. My comment is regarding the high school. I would like to propose that the high school schedule return to a 7-period day schedule. The current 4-blocks a day is horrible. The flex block is a waste of time. It was sold to us that it was going to be for additional learning. It is basically a sleep-in for everybody. Nothing gets accomplished. If Cohort A could go back to 7-periods a day for Monday, 7-periods a day on Tuesday, then go remote on Thursday and Friday, it would be beneficial. With this 90-minute block, teachers often have students on for the first 7 minutes; then sends them away to do busywork. With my plan, if the student had a question or an issue on Monday, then the student can come back on Tuesday and address it with the teacher. Something has to be done with the Flex block. It is a joke.” She questioned if there was any feedback on this being a possibility.

Mr. Ferron noted her suggestions. “The reason these decisions were made had to do with safety. It had to do with not moving students around the school. As we look forward, and plans evolve on getting students back, then all these issues can be looked at it with a more comprehensive approach. We will revisit the schedule. See where we are going which may change in a month, 6 weeks, or 8 weeks.

Report of Finance Department presented by Dr. Raab:

FY '21 Budget Update

Everything is trending as expected. When we put the budget together in June, we did not realize the additional salaries we would have to add in September. In October, we hired additional teachers to work 4 days a week, hired paraprofessionals, and additional nurses at the middle school, Cedar and Center Schools.

A guidance position was reinstated at the high school. All together those salaries have been supported since school began on September 17th and we want to continue until the end of the school year. The CARES Act funded \$160K of those salaries, but in order to continue these positions for the rest of the year, we need an additional \$350 to \$370K. We hope there will be additional funding from the CARES Act and stimulus monies. The state is still putting its budget together. There has been a commitment to funding Chapter 70 which would be an additional \$700K to the town. The gap hasn't gone away. We realized an unexpected additional \$250K in expenses for special education transportation and additional staff. Those budget gaps exist and we are dealing with them daily.

Transportation Committee Update

Dr. Raab:

Mrs. Lynch and Mr. Miraglia have recently been appointed to the Transportation Committee. We met with Steve Ingle last week. Even though we do not have the buses running on Wednesdays, he still has numerous overhead costs. He is maximizing everything that he can. On Wednesdays, he has his drivers do an extra deep cleaning and he has absorbed the costs of the cleaning. We have not received any upcharge for that. He also explained he is having a hard time recruiting new bus drivers. If the district continues not to have the busses run on Wednesdays, the district could realize a fuel credit of \$12,000 by the end of the school. He has been very responsive to the Principals with any changes.

Mr. Miraglia:

It is easy to say, if he isn't running the busses on Wednesdays, don't bill us for that; but there is much more to it. I commend Steve for his service. If you look at the level of service and flexibility he is doing, I am satisfied with everything.

Mrs. Lynch:

Steve Ingle is a member of our community. He and his family have lived in Hanover for over 60 years. He has owned the bus company for a long time and he goes out of his way to do whatever he can. He set up the busses, determined where each child would sit, and put a smiley face with their name on the seat.

He guarantees the safety of the children as they are transported to school. His dedication is unmatched.

Mrs. Lynch thanked him.

Mrs. Miller:

Thank you for sitting on the Transportation Committee.

Dr. Raab FY '22 Budget Timeline

Budget 1.0. Few challenges

- 1) There are unknowns and some assumptions had to be made.
- 2) I am really assuming we will be back to normal in January 2021. I am not budgeting some of the expansion personnel we have now. We need to make the decision if we are going to keep them.
- 3) Technology that has supported the hybrid situation, such as Zoom accounts and Ingenuity, are additional costs. Expanding the Virtual High School presence has been supported by the CARES Act. We also bought a lot of technology and educational software and we are not going to be able to keep it all after this year. Tom will recommend what we keep.

- 4) Three of the Labor Union Contracts are currently settled: Paraprofessionals, Secretaries/Administrative Assistants and Cafeteria Workers will be going into Year 3 in September. The Hanover Teachers Union Contract expires in June 2021.
- 5) The expansion positions we added in September are going to be cut back in June. The question remains- Are we going to want to reinstate them? One more piece of the puzzle.

Action Items: None

Mr. Ferron would like to thank everyone on this call for all the work being done, especially the administration staff and school nurses. Each day will be a challenging day, but a great day. Teachers are keeping our students safe and by doing those things, the community will be healthy and safe as well.

Mrs. Miller: Thank our students and families for doing things out of their comfort zone.

The School Committee Statement will be posted on our website tomorrow.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for January 6, 2021. Time to be determined. Expected agenda items will be: FY '21 Budget Update, COVID Health Update

Motion by Mrs. Lynch to adjourn at 6:51 PM. The motion was seconded by Mr. Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary