

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2021
Virtual Meeting
7:00 PM

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

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

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by Mrs. Miller.

Approval of Minutes:

April 14, 2021: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the April 14, 2021 *School Committee Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Lynch and seconded by Mr. Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment: None

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron: The committee was copied on an email about a potential Farmer's Market coming to Hanover. We met with the Town Manager and Department Heads. It will be at the High School. The details to be determined. Our students and activities will take precedent. It will run on Sundays 11:00AM – 3:00PM starting in the middle of May. Our athletic director will be in touch with HYAA to make sure there is enough room for everybody to have what they need and to support the Farmer's Market. We are in conversations with Public Safety and the Town Manager's office. We support this as long as it doesn't interfere with the High School.

COVID Health Update-Mrs. Patricia Smith: COVID-19 has been trending well over the last two weeks both town and school-wide as well as across the State. However, we have seen new cases throughout the week. We still need to remain vigilant. The Governor announced some positive changes to masking guidelines which is very exciting. As a school district, we need to follow DESE guidelines regarding wearing masks and distancing both indoors and outdoors. Check the Hanover Public School's COVID dashboard for trends and the DESE website for updates. Pool testing has resumed and we continue to see promising results from our quarantine and testing data. The State has announced that quarantine and testing are no longer required when students are seated and wearing masks in the classroom or on the bus and are at least 3' apart. A very important change that we are excited about. This eliminates the need to quarantine students if classroom or bussing is their only exposure. Quarantine and testing requirements have not changed for extracurricular, activities, etc. Fully vaccinated individuals do not need to quarantine and test. The State has extended the 90-day limit on fully vaccination status to no set limit at this time. A lot of students are coming in saying they have at least gotten the 1st vaccine. This results in more students not having to quarantine or test.

Questions:

Mr. Miraglia: What is the age minimum that students can get vaccinated?

Mrs. Smith: 16 years old with Pfizer.

Mr. Miraglia: Do we know if the vaccine will become available for younger than 16?

Mrs. Smith: It is being studied but we do not know the timeline for the results of those clinical trials.

Mrs. Corbo: Are we still at six feet for lunch?

Mrs. Smith: Yes, anytime there is no mask, so as long as they are eating or have a mask break, they must remain at six feet.

Mrs. Miller: Do you think it is going to change so that the students do not have to wear their masks outside at recess?

Mrs. Smith: I do not anticipate that will happen for this school year. If they are out at recess and they are deliberately distanced at six feet, then they can take off their masks. If they are running around the playground, they will not stay at six-foot proximity, so they would need to keep their masks on.

Mrs. Lynch: Do you know data on the percentage of facility and staff that have been vaccinated?

Mrs. Smith: At this time, we do not have exact numbers. We are not tracking that data at the moment. We believe a lot of our staff have been vaccinated as we no longer have a waitlist. It is information that we would like to have and down the road, we hope to get that information as we move forward.

Superintendent Evaluation Timeline: We are typically further along in this process. We did not have the typical goal setting for Mr. Ferron as our one goal was to keep everyone safe, and healthy. We can fill out the DESE rubric that they give us. You can fill it out and send it to Mrs. Miller by next Wednesday, May 5th. Mrs. Miller will highlight and have a summary by Friday, May 7th to discuss so it will be done before the town election.

Questions:

Mrs. Lynch: Will you be sending it out?

Mrs. Miller: Tahnee will be sending this out as soon as the meeting is over.

Federal School Lunch Update: We are pleased to announce that they extended free lunches for the school year 2021-2022. This is great news for our School District. Here is a quote from SNA President Reggie Ross, SNS. "School nutrition staff can focus on safely serving students without having to worry about meal applications or collecting payments. Families struggling to make ends meet will know their children are nourished and ready to learn." We are very excited about this update and our participation has skyrocketed. A huge shoutout to our cafeteria staff as they have done an extraordinary job in making this all work in difficult times. Knowing we will have free lunch next year and it will be entirely reimbursed through Federal and State reimbursement, gives us more confidence as we go into 2021-2022.

Questions:

Mr. Geary: With the reimbursement, does that fund the revolving account for salaries?

Dr. Raab:

Yes, it will just about make it so we end the year in the black.

Mr. Geary: Over the past few years before the pandemic, Mrs. Petrowski was aggressive with changing our menu up and providing unique options for the students. Obviously, that might go away. How does it affect Lynn's operations of how she is ordering and buying? What is the plan for getting back on track?

Dr. Raab:

There are three different things that she has been working on this year that have kept us going. We received a grant for approximately \$30,000 - \$40,000 from the Department of Education to upgrade some of our equipment. She also received approximately \$100,000 what for we term "Food from the Federal Government." She is getting

food directly from the Federal Government stores which cut our food costs and give us predictability. The variety has gone down, but in every building, there is some prepackaged food. While it is still prepackaged food, the students have a lot of choices. There will be a conversation with Lynn regarding next year and what we need to do to move forward. One of the things we did lose was the ala cart menu and that was one area where we had some profit. The Federal reimbursement is not giving us any profit.

Mrs. Corbo: Does this apply to breakfast served only at middle and high school as well?

Dr. Raab: Yes, it does.

Report of Finance Department presented by Dr. Raab:

FY '22 Budget Approval: Nothing has changed since our last update. Our last meeting with the Advisory Committee went great and they are meeting tonight. Everything is ready to go for Monday, May 3rd at the Town Meeting. Our \$1.7 million increase will be part of the Omnibus budget article. In terms of other annual Town Meeting articles related to the School Committee originally, we had a \$350,000 article for special education reserve. Tonight, the Advisory Committee is considering whether they can increase it up to \$450,000 which will allow for anticipated needs for next year especially as we recover from the pandemic. There is a \$75,000 annual Town Meeting article for technology for upgrades at Cedar School, Police, and Fire. Please go to the Town Meeting at 7:00 PM on Monday night at the High School.

Questions: None

Special Education Reserve Fund Transfer: Dr. Raab asks the School Committee to consider a Special Education Reserve Fund Transfer of \$250,000. Currently, there is \$460,000 in the account. If we transfer \$250,000 we are left with \$210,000. There is an upper limit in the law and we cannot have more than 2% in our net school spending and here that is \$700,000. If we leave \$210,000 and if the Advisory Committee put in anywhere from \$350,000 to \$450,000 the money back in next week at the Town meeting that brings us back to where we need to be. The reasons for this are simple, we have unanticipated special education expenses for transportation, additional tuitions, and students changing places. In the memo, it is outlined how the money would be split up and request the School Committee's approval to transfer the funds. The Board of Selectman unanimously voted to fund the transfer and with the School Committee's vote tonight, we will be able to transfer these funds tomorrow.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Lynch: Dr Raab you did a really great job explaining the circumstances that cause this transfer. We hear it all the time so we are used to it: but, for those that have not understood the necessity of it, you did a really good job.

Motion by Lynch to approve the use of \$250,000 from the Special Education Reserve Fund. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Report of Teaching and Learning:

MCAS 2021 Schedule and Legislation Update presented by Mrs. St. Ives:

As of today, we will be participating in MCAS. DESE has reduced the testing time. In grades 3 through grades 8, there will be one session in each area and for High School, there will be 2 sessions in each area. They extended the windows to give us more time for flexibility with spacing with students and for those who might be participating remotely. The grade 3 to grade 5 window is May 10th through June 11th. Grade 6 to grade 8 window is May 17th through June 11th. The High School students will be participating on May 24th and May 27th and June 1st and June 2nd for Biology. The biggest piece is the amount of time. They are anticipating that it is going

to be at least half the time it previously took. Each building has put its own schedule together and will be sending it out to parents soon.

Mr. Ferron: There was a significant effort on behalf of MTA, MASS, and other organizations to ask if the MCAS can be skipped this year. It appears that is not going anywhere and has to come from the Federal Government down. It was an effort not to just lobby the Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor but, also our Congressional Delegation at Washington, DC.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Lynch: What about the requirements for graduation?

Mrs. St. Ives: The competency determination for graduation has been waived for 11th graders. It is going to be satisfied with the courses that students take on a typical high school schedule. They would have to have taken it last year. The current 10th graders have to take it. Seniors were waived last year.

Mrs. Corbo: The time has been reduced so it won't take as long to complete and the exam itself has been modified. Are we going to be using this exam to look back at our progression? This does not seem like a fair year to do that.

Mrs. St. Ives: It is not and that is what is going to be most difficult when you want to do an authentic analysis. There are so many variables that you cannot judge one against the other. They bought the sampling so that across the State they know we are looking at where kids are. We understand what parts of the curriculum kids were able to hold on to and well as where those gaps are now.

Mrs. Corbo: It looks like we are not going to be able to look at last year's data and compare it to the date that is taken this year.

Mrs. St. Ives: We would have to go back two years.

Mrs. Corbo: Is there any legislation pending to waive the competency requirement for this year's 10th graders?

Mrs. St. Ives: That is being asked in many groups but the Commissioner has not come out and even started those discussions yet.

Mr. Miraglia: The modification is not that they just cut out a piece but it is different?

Mrs. St. Ives: They are calling it a "session sampling approach." It is not cutting out one part of the ELA session. It is a completely different approach.

Mrs. Miller: Is it like iReady?

Mrs. St. Ives: It is not adaptive.

Comments:

Mr. Ferron: We will have an update on high school activities and the prom. We just received new guidance on graduation. It looks like graduation will be as normal as possible.

Mrs. Corbo: Is senior prom still scheduled for May 15th? Will Junior prom and homecoming be happening?

Mr. Paquette: Yes, and Junior prom will be moved to the fall. Homecoming has not been entertained yet. These kids have lost enough and we are going to try and get back some of these as much as we can.

Mr. Ferron: Guidelines for graduation are what we are looking at very closely. We need to make sure it is outside. This will be communicated to parents. We will need to have a rain date.

Mrs. Miller: Is awards night going to be virtual again?

Mr. Paquette: Awards night is in the planning process. We do not want it to be virtual. We are putting together some creative thoughts on how we can do that safely. We hope to have it figured out by Wednesday but there is a lot of planning involved. Students need to be recognized in person.

Mr. Geary gives a shout-out on the logo and the Hawk. It is working its way out into sports and everything. People are getting excited.

Mrs. Miller: Do we know when the school store will have it?

Mrs. Lynch: They are working on which particular logo they will put on which particular apparel. Hats just came in with the Hawk on it.

Action Items: None

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for May 12, 2021. Expected agenda items will be COVID Health Update, Fiscal FY '22 budget. HS activities, Prom, Graduation.

Motion by Lynch to adjourn the open session at 7:33pm. The motion was seconded by Geary. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary