

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2021
Hybrid Meeting
7:00 PM

Present: Mrs. Leah Miller, Mrs. Ruth Lynch, Mrs. Libby Corbo, and Mrs. Ryan Hall

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

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM by Mrs. Miller.

Welcome: New School Committee Member Mrs. Ryan Hall

Mrs. Miller welcomed Mrs. Hall to the School Committee.

Mrs. Miller: Although John does not ask for nor enjoy receiving accolades, we just want to take some time out of this meeting to thank John Geary for his 9 years of service to the School Committee. To say John has been a valuable member of this committee would be quite an understatement.

On his long tenure on the committee, John has navigated many major pivotal changes for the district. Early on in his time, he was tasked with hiring a new Superintendent for our district – I would say he did a pretty good job with that one. He has been a part of major educational initiatives including Envisions math implementation and Read 2700. He was part of the team that implemented district elementary schools as well as the renovation of Center School. On top of all that he served tirelessly during this pandemic. He served as chair for 3 years as well as the chair of the budget subcommittee.

John was very proud to be a member of the School Committee and was always aware of the responsibility required when an individual takes on an elected position. He never forgot that he was a very visible representative of our town. John was a great role model to the newest members of the Committee and he often took time to explain our role. John made it a point during his time on the Committee to treat professionals as professionals. He held people to the same standards he held himself to. He was consistent, dedicated, and reflective in his role on this committee and was always a strong advocate for all students. John was involved in extensive planning, decision-making, and assessment of programs and personnel, all of John's decisions were made in the best interest of all students. He worked to establish and maintain a strong relationship with town officials, to advocate for our school's budget and resources.

Beyond all this, John is an exceptional father, husband, and friend. We are grateful to his wife Kellie and his kids Hannah, Conlan, Thomas, and Quinn for lending us their husband and dad for all these years. He leaves a legacy of selfless serving that they can be proud of.

On a personal note, I am extraordinarily grateful to have served beside him for these last 5 years. He has taught me many things and has shown me what it means to serve for the good of others. John, you will be missed.

Public Comment:

Mr. Geary: First and foremost, Congratulations to Libby on your re-election to School Committee and congratulations to Ryan on a successful campaign and starting your new term as a School Committee member. The past few weeks have been amazing, and it has been a very powerful learning experience and time of personal growth for me that I will never forget. I wish you both all the best for the next 3 years.

To Ann Coates, Tony DeFranzo, Laura Collins, and the entire HTA and HTA negotiating team. Thank you for an amazing journey this past year. I was fortunate to be a part of the process to return the Hanover students and staff

to the classroom and it was an invaluable professional experience that is attributed to all of you - negotiating and collaborating like true pros.

To Trisha Smith, Carol Krall, our school nurses, Victor Diniak, and the facilities staff. Bravo! You made it happen and I am forever in your debt. Victor and Bob, I know that I have been a thorn in your side for many years...you and your teams have proved me wrong this year and your department has become the silent and humble heroes of the district. You are out of sight but certainly not out of mind.

To the Hanover Police and Fire Department. Thank you for dedicating your lives to protecting the school community's health and safety. From traffic patterns, MIH programs, to school resource officers, and emergency response, your efforts - great and small - are not taken for granted.

To Matt, Debbie, Tom, and the entire administration team. Your steadfast dedication to our district's success is nothing short of amazing. Please stay the course, continue to set high standards for excellence in and out of the classroom, and TRUST that you have earned the respect of the Hanover community and they support your decisions. Always remember...with that trust...comes speed!

To my fellow Committee members that I leave behind to carry the flag. I will always admire your passion and commitment to our school community. The center of the arena is not always a pleasant place to work but please continue to avoid the distractions and enthusiastically challenge the administrators. Lead by example, and strive for collective excellence that meets the needs of ALL students. Celebrate and share the positives, and don't let the negatives slow you down. There will always be more positives!

And finally, to the students of Hanover, the peers of my own children. I promise to continue to serve you in a different capacity. You might not see me on TV or at the front of the room, but I will be there - if you need a cowboy clown for field day, a turkey to serve you Thanksgiving lunch, a television chef to teach you how to cook a simple snack, a parent to sweep the gymnasium, or applaud for you at the play, an advocate for a positive student experience, and to remind the adults why we are all here. A resident to poke Victor and his team to weed the flower beds around the school building before graduation, or back to school night, a loud voice to announce YOUR NAME at the big game, a friend to write you a college recommendation letter, or a hand to shake when you return as an alumnus, I will be there for you.

I am sincerely grateful for my time serving the Hanover School District. Best wishes to all.

Approval of Minutes:

April 28, 2021: Motion entertained by Mrs. Miller to approve the April 28, 2021 *School Committee Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Lynch and seconded by Mrs. Corbo. The motion carries with majority vote with abstention from Mrs. Hall.

Report of the Superintendent presented by Mr. Ferron:

COVID Health Update-Mrs. Patricia Smith: COVID-19 has been trending well over the past two weeks in both town-wide and school data. And we've had several days in a row over the past two weeks with no cases. However, we continue to see periodic cases and small clusters. The trends are very hopeful; however, we need to remain vigilant with our protocols.

We encourage everyone to check the [Hanover Public Schools COVID-19 Dashboard](#) regularly to view new cases and trends and the DESE website for any new updates. This week, the FDA approved the use of the 2-dose Pfizer vaccine for children ages 12- 15, and just this afternoon, the CDC and the American Academy of Pediatric approved its use in this age group as well. Just this evening CVS announced that the vaccine will be available for anyone age 12 and older in 154 locations in Massachusetts beginning tomorrow. We are awaiting plans from the **S**tate vaccine program and Governor Baker announced that we may have more information as early as tomorrow.

Pooled testing continues, and in the past two weeks, we have had no positive pools, although today's results are still pending.

Overall, we are very hopeful about the trends and we will continue to monitor the situation closely.

Questions:

Mrs. Corbo: You mentioned the approval of the vaccine for ages 12 through 15. What can you tell us about the vaccine possibly being mandated for schools?

Mrs. Smith: I have not heard any updates regarding a possible mandate. I cannot tell you when more information will be out but it is most likely being discussed. We will keep the community informed as soon as we have more information.

Mrs. Hall: Several states surrounding MA are not requiring masks for athletes outside. A big push from parents in this State to possibly remove masks from athletes or students during recess due to the mask requirements being dropped. Do we know where the schools are standing on that? Is this going to happen for our athletes and during our recess?

Mrs. Smith: The State did announce that certain low-risk sports do not need to wear masks if they can maintain distancing. It has not made its way to the MIAA at this time. Sports like baseball, tennis, and golf where you can distance could come into play.

Mrs. Miller: We can advocate with Governor Baker and DESE. Mrs. Hall, are there States around us that have already done it?

Mrs. Hall: RI and some States are moving in that direction. A large group of parents in MA are driving the discussion.

Mrs. Miller: Thank you Mrs. Smith for all the work you are doing so that our seniors can have a prom with the testing protocol. We are incredibly blessed to live in Hanover and that you and your team were able to do that. Most towns did not even have a Prom.

Mrs. Smith: The community has been supportive of the testing programs. We are testing all the seniors two weeks in a row leading up to Prom. Our Board of Health has said that if we are testing all of the seniors who are attending Prom, we can allow a little more movement and a dance floor.

Approval of Superintendent's Summative Evaluation presented by Mrs. Miller: Each member of the sitting School Committee fills out an individual evaluation report for Mr. Ferron. We then collaborate and put together one document that is the Summative Evaluation. At the end of all the DESE guidance, we have to rate his overall performance. The choices are unsatisfactory, needs improvement, proficient, and exemplary. We as a committee rated him as exemplary. We then rate his impact on student learning as low, moderate, and high. We rated him as high. Below is the summary comments from the Summative Evaluation Report:

Mr. Ferron is a dedicated leader highly skilled in human resources and personnel management and Mr. Ferron's educational leadership during this past year proved to be the most vital factor in creating a meaningful educational experience for all children during the pandemic. The formal goal-setting process was simply on hold this year as the top priority was COVID response. Mr. Ferron stated: "The leadership team district-wide set adaptable and actionable goals almost daily and I was able to model, support, and lead that process."

Under Mr. Ferron's leadership, Hanover was a state-wide leader for COVID response and getting students at all levels safely back to school well before other communities. Mr. Ferron is respected at the highest levels of state government as a result of his insight and leadership on COVID response plans and outcomes. He has been recognized by MA Department of Education and Commissioner Riley for excellent achievement. He is to be highly commended for his dedication and commitment.

The community sentiment over this extremely difficult year was that the Hanover Public Schools was fortunate to have Mr. Ferron as our leader, and as a School Committee, we strongly agree.

Questions/Comment:

Mr. Ferron: Thank you very much! I appreciate the support. It takes a team to make this work, for example, Tricia Smith and her team, all of our principals, administrators sitting around this table, administration team at the central office, teachers, support staff, cafeteria workers, DPW, facilities, bus drivers, Town Manager, Police and Fire Department, Board of Health, Board of Selectmen, and Advisory Committee. EVERYONE has played a role and done an incredible job. Through it all, they have been adaptive, patient, and maintain support through the whole pandemic. It has been a challenging year. Incredibly, we have come this far for Hanover High School to have a prom. All of the steps and all of the infrastructure to get there. We did a great job as a community of leading the way. Everything we did was with a purpose, safety, reflection, academic, and social well-being. It has been an experience of a lifetime.

Mrs. Miller: We did vote on this evaluation in Executive Session. It had a unanimous vote but we are going to vote it in public session now. We will only have three votes.

Mrs. Corbo: As a reminder, the summative evaluation is the majority compilation. Individual evaluations are available for the public to view online. We also discussed during Executive Session the Letter of Commendation. Should we wait for Mr. Miraglia on this one?

Mrs. Miller: We will push this to a later meeting.

Motion by Lynch to approve *Mr. Ferron's Summative Evaluation* for 2021. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The motion carries with majority vote with abstention from Mrs. Hall.

Year-end High School Activities presented by Matt Paquette:

Mr. Plummer: In the time of COVID, putting together a Science Fair is next to impossible. We had three students that participated in the Science Fair at all levels including the States. Those participants are Ashley Stracco, James Parry, and Daniel Nguyen. Danny's project earned him a 3rd place award at the State level which is the highest in Mr. Plummer's tenure. We would like to invite all three of them to a future School Committee meeting as I cannot do Danny's project justice.

Mr. Paquette: We are going forward with the Senior Prom. Thank you to the Board of Health, Tricia Smith and her team, and Rosalind Davis and her team. In speaking with the Board of Health, we were looking to ensure that everyone is healthy. Can we test all the kids going to prom? The answer was yes and before we knew it everything was organized and they were tested not once but twice. The Prom will have more than traditional Proms and is going to be an extraordinary event. It has every event of a traditional Prom with a couple of surprises. The kids have been instrumental in making this happen. These Seniors lost out in a couple of events late last year. There is a half-day the Friday before so the kids have time to prepare for the big event. It will be held at the High School. The space will be beautiful and it is utilized to the fullest. In recognition of events missed, we will have a town-wide car parade on Thursday, May 20th. It will depart from the high school at 6:30 PM. We kept the same route as last year because it worked well. The official last day for the Senior class is Friday, May 21. Senior week kicks off on May 24 and May 25 with cap and gown distribution and guidance closeouts. The real events happen on May 26, May 27, and May 28 with various events and a couple of surprises.

Friday, May 28 is Zero-day. June 1st through June 3rd are graduation rehearsals days. June 1st and June 2nd, we want to hold the senior scholarship and awards ceremony in person this year but have to do it with safety in mind. It looks like we will be able to break it out in two days on June 1st and June 2nd. It will be nice with a sense of normalcy. Last year was successful virtually. We did a great job with graduation last year and this year we have similar guidelines as of right now. We are going to do everything we did well like last year and even better if we can. It is going to be a beautiful June 4th graduation!

Mrs. Lawrence: Celebrate a Senior is back. Thank you to all those families and community members who have already sponsored a senior. Tonight, a reminder went out to all of the families in our community. There is still time to claim your senior. We will kick off Celebrate a Senior the weekend of the May 22nd and May 23rd when we will be decorating the homes. Some of our sponsors will commemorate their declarations with pictures and socially distant selfies and this will be put together in a video to share with the community. Our sponsors will be delivering a Hanover Swag bag to our graduates. We are excited to be able to bring this back to celebrate and honor the seniors in this class and all they have endured this year. Thank you to everyone who is supporting Celebrate a Senior!

Mrs. Miller: This class had a rough junior year as well so they are really deserving of this celebration. Community members can contact Kelly Lawrence with any questions.

Questions:

Mrs. Corbo: People can just donate as well, correct?

Mrs. Lawrence: Donations can be made and our celebration team will be a proxy and celebrate a senior for them. There has been such a great response. Members in the community that don't have students in the school system have reached out and just want to help.

Mrs. Corbo: Mr. Paquette, can you talk about the graduation parameters for inviting family and friends? How does this look different if we have the ceremony inside or outside?

Mr. Paquette: As of right now, the parameters are very similar to last year with a maximum of six guests. We will set up pods for each of the graduates with signs as markers for family and friends. We will make every effort to avoid an indoor graduation ceremony. We may have to adjust the time or move it a day. We will try to avoid moving the ceremony inside. We want to make it as celebratory as possible and an outdoor graduation will afford us to do that.

Mrs. Lynch: I'm excited after listening to all the planned activities and to remind our seniors that these events are not just for them, but for the entire Hanover community. It will be a very exciting day. Thank you for everything. It is very exciting that you are having the prom at the High School. It will be interesting to hear what the seniors have to say when it is over. Having worked in a High School in the past, it became a tradition to have the Prom at the High School. It was amazing to see the number of people who would come and watch the students arrive. If we continue to do it at the High School, it is a wonderful way to involve the community. It became such an event that students would try and come up with original and unique ideas.

Report of Finance Department presented by Dr. Raab:

FY '22 Budget Update: A huge thank you to the Town of Hanover. Our budget passed as written and it is a solid level services budget for next year. It sets us up to begin the recovery. It was 6 months of hard work for our Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Advisory Committee, School Committee, our faculty, and administration to put together a comprehensive budget in an era of uncertainty. We started back in December/January and we were not sure what September was going to look like. At the same time, we were able to add \$350,000 to our Special Education reserve budget which is critical for our unanticipated needs next year. It allows us to manage those needs as they come up without having to pit Special Education against other expenses. The reserve account

allows us for that flexibility. Also, we were able to add \$75,000 in an article for Technology not only to help Cedar School but also to help the Fire and Police Department. At our meeting in June, we will give an FY '21 budget close-out report.

Questions: None

Report on Teaching and Learning

Preliminary COVID Recovery Update presented by Mrs. St. Ives: We started to sketch out a priority list if we get certain funding and how we can best support our students for recovery. We are going to start with a two-week summer academic camp that will be open to everyone who wants to participate. We are not going to select students based on iReady scores, etc. We are anticipating it will be the last week in July and the first week of August. This will give teachers a little time to regroup and parents to organize their summer. We will then provide two weeks of instruction five days a week for three hours. We are trying to recruit teachers now. If necessary, we will go outside the district as we do not want to miss the opportunity to run this type of program. It will be for students entering grades one through eight. It will be run camp style for both reading and math. At the High school, we are trying to be creative as possible with credit recovery. We have reached out to surrounding districts to see if we can team up. If we offer a course here, we can bring in other students that might need it or if another town is offering a different course our students can go there as well. We are doing our best to be as creative as possible to provide the opportunity for students. It has been a hard year so they might need a little break. We are trying to balance that too. There is a zoom meeting on Monday with talk to our staff and answer any questions they may have. Looking at ESSER III and Title One money, we are starting to prioritize intervention, curriculum resources, SEL, Health support, and Professional Development to try and be ready if we do receive this funding.

Dr. Raab: We talk about ESSER I, II & III as the primary source of funding we received this year. ESSER I and II, we used in FY '21. ESSER III will be available for us in FY '22 which will be our primary source of funding. We are still waiting for the instructions on that. We have to concurrently plan. We are doing this all at the same time to get ready for it. We are just watching the Recovery Act and if any funding becomes available. We will report back to the Committee as we hear more. The ESSER III is secure but we have to work out the details.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo: The program that was run with Andrea Hurley was the Saturday program. You are talking about staff. Is there any chance of running that program again for children who are at risk?

Mrs. St. Ives: Once we get responses from families, we will do our best to place the classes as appropriately as possible. If there is a cohort that has a specific need, we will make sure that we put them together. It is hard now. Usually, we put it out to families first, then staff. This time we want to be able to make sure we have the staff, so we are doing it reverse. We are running a program at the Middle School right now and we hope to continue to run this type of program next year for students who are identified with certain needs.

Mrs. Miller: This does not take the place of summer services?

Mrs. St. Ives: No, it does not. ESY is still running. This is on top of that.

Mrs. Corbo: Was there a Federal or State Relief package coming to the municipalities? Can we get any of that money?

Dr. Raab: We have been talking to the Town Manager about that. We do not have a number yet. He was been working with the county and executives to make sure Hanover is properly represented in any Federal money in addition to the ESSER III. As soon as we have more information, we will share it.

Mrs. Corbo: The Town Manager might designate some of that to the school, correct?

Dr. Raab: Absolutely.

Mrs. Lynch: Typically, at the High School level you have offered summer school for students for a variety of reasons. Are you saying that this year because of the funding, students will be able to go at no charge? Is it only for courses they have already taken during the school year?

Mrs. St. Ives: Yes, that is what we are trying to do? We are trying to take one thing at a time and see if we can staff it.

Mrs. Miller: The money has to be used for recovery and not for enrichment.

Mrs. Corbo: Would those be in person?

Mrs. St. Ives: Yes, in person. We want kids in front of teachers.

Comments:

Action Items: None

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for May 26, 2021. Expected agenda items will be COVID Health Update, Fiscal FY '22 budget update, FY '21 budget closeout, Student Handbooks, Science Fair Participants, and advocate as a Committee to create a statement of endorsement for not wearing masks.

Motion by Lynch to adjourn the open session at 7:51 PM. The motion was seconded by Corbo. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary