

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
January 3, 2024, 7:00 PM
In-Person and Virtual Meeting
Hanover High School; Media Center

Present: Mr. Pete Miraglia, Mrs. Ryan Hall, Mrs. Kristen Cervantes, Mrs. Libby Corbo, and Jaclyn Jorgensen

Absent: None.

Also Present: Mr. Matt Ferron, Mrs. Debbie St. Ives, Mr. Michael Oates, Ms. Kaitlin Morelli, Mr. Matthew Plummer, Jesse Craddock, Mr. Dan Birolini, Mr. Michael Wildrick, Mr. Brian Ciccolo, Ms. Julieann Thornell, Mr. Matthew Harden, Ms. Brook Miller, Mrs. Jillian Miller, Mr. Matt Miller, Mrs. Mary MacNeil, Ms. Paulina Leskow **Present via Zoom:** Mrs. Jane DeGrenier, Mrs. Nancy Dutton

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Cervantes. Mrs. Cervantes requested a motion to open the *January 3, 2024, School Committee meeting*. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

Pledge of Allegiance: Brook Miller, 1st Grader at Cedar School, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Craddock gave a brief introduction to Ms. Miller. Cedar School is the foundation of learning in the Hanover public schools and, as a result, is the building that supports the youngest learners in the district. Although the students may be young, there are many strong leaders, and a student leader makes others feel better. Miss Brooke Miller has been selected as the next cedar student to lead the School Committee in the pledge of allegiance. Brook is a first-grade student in Mrs. McNeil's homeroom. Mr. Craddock thanked Mrs. McNeil for being there to support Brooke and help acknowledge all of her achievements. Brook is a very kind and caring student. She is enthusiastic about assisting classmates regardless of the task or the responsibility. Brooke wants the best for others and is willing to go out of her way to serve those in need. A student leader is someone who stands up for everyone. Brock is a student who consistently demonstrates integrity, a leadership trait that is sometimes hard to establish at such a young age. She can do the right thing even when others are not looking right. Mrs. McNeil, a student leader, is not afraid to let themselves be vulnerable by sharing their experiences with others. Brooke is eager to share her thoughts with the class, especially if she knows it will help others. She takes the time to listen to the thoughts and concerns of her classmates. Brooke has built the trust of her classmates through her honesty, empathy, kindness, and selflessness. Brooke comes from a wonderful family who represents Hanover in a positive light. As a school, we aspire to build a bridge between the community and Cedar School. We ask that families provide encouragement and feedback and celebrate their child's accomplishments. The Miller family has done an excellent job of demonstrating these elements.

School Band Orchestra Magazine - Julienne Thornell, HMS Teacher, chosen as the MA Director for "50 Directors Who Make a Difference" Presented by Mr. Dan Birolini:

Mr. Birolini shared that the School Band Orchestra magazine, a national publication, chooses one director from each state to be included in their annual "50 Directors Who Make a Difference." Julienne Thornell was chosen this year as the director from Massachusetts. After being selected, the magazine asked each teacher the same three questions, including their proudest teaching moments, how they hope to make a difference in students' lives, and the most important lesson they try to teach each of their students.

Ms. Thornell thanked the Hanover Public Schools, who have worked for her all these years and have given her the opportunity with the program and music matters. She added it has been a great experience, and she is honored.

Mrs. Corbo commented that the one thing that stands out is the relationships Mrs. Thornell built with many students in the arts. She added that students must feel safe and vulnerable and take risks to be their best selves. Mrs. Corbo shared that Mrs. Thornell allowed students to do that, which is remarkable.

Public Comment: None at this time.

Approval of Minutes:

October 25, 2023: Mrs. Cervantes requested a motion to approve *October 25, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

November 15, 2023: Mrs. Cervantes requested a motion to approve *November 15, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- **Student Advisory Committee Update Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:**

Mr. Ferron introduced Ms. Paulina Leskow, who sits in for Chair Dante Heffron. Ms. Leskow shared that the term is closing, which raises the question of midterm exams and what that will look like. Ms. Leskow knows that there have been some sparks of debates between students and teachers in regards to what specific courses require exams and what that is supposed to look like, especially in the more challenging courses such as APS, where the curriculum is already so challenging, and how to balance the midterm exams. She added that in addition to that, they feel like the music department, not just here but all around the country, needs more funding and support. Ms. Leskow suggests finding a method to bring up that support of Performing Arts.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Jorgenson inquired about mid-year exams. Ms. Leskow replied that, at this time, teachers have yet to communicate any information regarding mid-year exams, even though they are coming up in the next few weeks. She added that last year, they only had exams for math and English classes. However, regardless of the difficulty of the class, we still had to take the courses or the midterms.

Mr. Ferron added that Mr. Plummer is in attendance and will take in the feedback and do some follow-up.

- **Events and Updates Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:**

- Athletics are in full swing.
- Student tests and exams are coming up.
- Reminder for the Community to keep checking their School Calendars for upcoming events.
- Reviewed the weather process and that communication will go out to update the School Community.

REPORT OF FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- **FY25 Budget Changes and Update Presented by Mr. Michael Oates:**

Mr. Oates provided a brief overview of the handouts in the SC packets. He explained that the images of the two slides were used in previous presentations with the School Committee meeting, staff, the Advisory Committee, and the Select Board. Mr. Oates noted that these slides are to provide an update to the figures prior the next budget presentation and potential vote in a few weeks. He spoke with the Town Manager prior to the break and was asked to adjust the levy limit budget by \$150,000 and as a result, by reducing the levy budget by this amount, that the gap between the projected level services budget and levy limit budget has been expanded. Mr. Oates added that more will be provided thorough an overview with the line items at the next meeting. Mr. Ferron recommended that the Budget Committee meet next week to

- **Transportation Bid Update Presented by Mr. Michael Oates:**

Mr. Oates explained that the formal bid for the FY25-FY27 Hanover Public Schools transportation contract was held from generating the bid documents to advertising the bid to conducting the question and answer session through the bid submission event. He is pleased to report that it was a successful journey. Mr. Oates added that he was fortunate to work on the bid process with his formal mentor, Mr. John Ferris, the former longtime business manager for the Hingham Public Schools, who was very helpful with all elements of the public procurement process. Mr. Oates noted the next steps will be a thorough review of the bid submission, and if all checks are completed, a contract draft will be shared at an upcoming meeting. He shared that years 4 and 5 were built into the bid. Mr. Ferron clarified the Transportation Bid is for the yellow buses.

Questions/Comments:

Mr. Miraglia asked for clarification on whether there is one more School Committee meeting this month and if the Town manager is to submit a budget by the end of the month. Mr. Ferron replied, yes. Mr. Miraglia asked if the final budget needed to be presented by the end of the month. Mr. Ferron responded that, ideally, the budget would be voted on at the next meeting, but that is in the air. Mr. Miraglia asked if it is fair to say everything has been laid out and that potential increases are predictable. Mr. Ferron replied that is fair to say. Mr. Miraglia inquired on the town side if there are going to be two budgets, one being the levy and one being the override, and if there is going to be a vote on what the override would look like. Mr. Ferron responded that the Committee has a decision to make, and his recommendation would be to vote on the budget the Committee wants. He added that we work it from there, and there might be another vote down the road.

Mrs. Corbo requested additional information on a healthy, solid staffing plan for the schools. She asked because the more research she does into staffing levels for comparable school districts, the more information she gets about how understaffed the Hanover schools are compared to the state average and similar districts. She adds that she is concerned that focusing on healthy staff is insufficient. Mrs. Corbo also wants more information on bus fees and what income that could generate.

Mrs. Hall shared that conversation has also come up in our Academic Working Group, and having those numbers would be helpful.

Mrs. Jorgenson thinks that the concept of transparency needs to show where we are. Here is what all the towns around us are doing in level services. She wonders how much strain has been put on the system. She added it would be better to know what led to the verbiage used and what healthy staffing looked like.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **Tiered Focus Monitoring (TFM) Update Presented by Ms. Kaitlin Morelli:**

Ms. Morelli shared an overview of the tiered focus monitoring process and where it stands. You can click on [Tiered Focus Monitoring \(TFM\) Update](#) to view this update.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Jorgenson, Mr. Miraglia, and Mrs. Corbo recognized the work done for the tiered focus monitoring. Mrs. Corbo also thanked SEPAC for ensuring a healthy parent/guardian response and involvement. Ms. Morelli added that SEPAC was instrumental in getting feedback from the surveys and communicating with her. She shared that the DESE representative regarding parents/guardians receiving surveys and ensuring the communication went out.

Mrs. Cervantes asked how DESE plans to share the information on the report with families so they know their feedback is heard. Ms. Morelli responded that it would be outlined in the final report, and any corrective action had to be submitted with an official plan with a timeline that must show

compliance. She added that it should be facilitated in the responses for each standard from DESE. Mrs. Cervantes then asked if it would be emailed or if there would be forums. Mrs. St. Ives replied that the district's responsibility is to share it as a committee to take the final report and share the findings with parents/guardians.

Mrs. Hall commented that she and Ms. Morelli will work together with SEPAC to ensure that it is communicated through them once the committee gets the report. She added that it was posted as a public document.

- **Five Year Instructional Technology Strategy Presented by Mr. Michael Wildrick, Mr. Brian Ciccolo, Mr. Matthew Plummer, and Mr. Michael Oates:**

Mr. Michael Wildrick, Mr. Brian Ciccolo, Mr. Matthew Plummer, and Mr. Michael Oates shared the Five-Year Instruction Technology Strategy by the Town Technology Committee, which includes an update on the work being looked at, where the district is now, in regards to technology, specifically in regards to devices across the district, what does the renewal cycle look like and what that is all about, and how would that impact us. They stated this was done to ensure the district has the equipment to support teaching and learning.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Cervantes acknowledged that this was a challenging task and added that it is obvious what has to be done and that there are options for the paths to get there.

Mrs. Hall appreciates that the Committee reached out to surrounding towns. She asked what is needed, what we have, and what the district's expectations are. Mr. Ciccolo replied that they reached out to other districts regarding how they manage those student devices and their policies. He added that based on that information and on-site interviews that will be done on Tuesday with teachers across the schools, is to figure out the right mix of devices, as there are numbers that could come down and numbers that might shift from one bucket to another which could potentially save some costs. Mr. Ciccolo stated that those results will be shared.

Mr. Miraglia commented that there is what you need and the policy around it, so it lasts as long as possible. He also wanted to know that students can still bring in their own devices as before COVID, which might lower the cost overall, and what security measures are in place to take care of that. Mr. Ciccolo replied that the high school has a BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) scenario. He added that when the districts were surveyed, they inquired about one-on-one: is it BYOD, is insurance charged, is there a technology user fee, and how does that play out with repairs, etc.? Mr. Ciccolo shared that this information was gathered and will be used to inform the decisions made and the proposal that will be shared with the Committee soon.

Mrs. Jorgenson expressed concern with Bring Your Own Device is equity because if the curriculum is web-based or computer-based, it is not accessible to every single kid the same way.

Mrs. Corbo appreciates the initiative put into the report and the conversation with HP about the warranty, digging deep, and finding that information. She commented that this is the same as the vehicle replacement schedule for our public safety department and thinks delivering our service to our students is necessary. It should be treated like a warrant article that they do yearly to replace equipment and vehicles. Mrs. Corbo hopes that doing something like this is considered, and she looks forward to receiving the proposal. She added that it is not only a method to provide services to our students, but it is also responsible for budgeting to have this on a replacement schedule. Mr. Ferron responded that all the information would be gathered, all options would be put on the table, and we would start with plan A and work our way down.

Mr. Miraglia inquired about the device's network. Mr. Wildrick replied that the network part would be a different conversation and that he feels comfortable with the current state of the infrastructure.

Action Items: None at this time.

Public Comments: None at this time.

The next School Committee meeting is **on January 17, 2024**. FY25 Budget Update and Vote, FY25 MCAS Presentation, Transportation Bid Vote, and others TBD.

Mrs. Cervantes entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:36 p.m. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The vote carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary

Documents Used:

FY25 Budget Changes and Update 1-3-24
Hanover Town & Municipality (Proposed Replacement Schedule) 1-3-24