

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
October 28, 2015
Hanover High School

Present: John Geary, Ruth Lynch, Michael Phillips, Libby Corbo and Kimberly Booker

Also Present: Matthew Ferron, Thomas Raab, Debbie St. Ives

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Geary.

Recognition Ceremony for Judy Schneider

- **Chairperson Geary** turned the floor over to Scott Hutchinson, Athletic Director. He congratulated Judy Schneider on her 500th field hockey win on October 9, 2015. He overviewed the highlights of the game with a final score of 1-0 and the celebration after the game. Judy Schneider's record of 500 wins, 180 ties and 186 losses is difficult to match. He congratulated Judy on this milestone.
- **Vice Chairperson Lynch** spoke on behalf of the School Committee. She congratulated Judy Schneider on her accomplishment and praised her for her dedication, time and commitment to Hanover High School and the community during the past 55 years. Judy teaches her team members on what it means to care for each other and to be responsible for each other. Lynch said how proud she was that her own daughter had Judy as a coach. Judy helped her be a better person and helped her become a mature woman. On behalf of the School Committee Lynch conveyed their thanks and gratitude and presented Schneider with a plaque.
- **Teacher's Association President, John Hopkins** then spoke. "Judy has many great sayings - one is - Talent is important but dependability is critical. Judy, you are both and you are committed to the cause." He discussed her advice on keeping a notebook and they proved how hard she worked as a coach.
- **Judy Schneider:** "Thank you School Committee, team, John and Scott. Hanover has been fantastic to me. I love my job. Some days I am tired, but when I get to the field or get to the court I love it. I feel lucky I ended up in Hanover. The students you have here are kind, work hard and want to be the best. This town is fantastic, the school is fantastic and it is a wonderful place to be."
- **Chairperson Geary** thanked Judy for everything she has done and continues to do. Opened the floor for public comment

Public Comment

- Three current field hockey team members spoke on behalf how lucky they are to have Schneider as a coach. Thanked her for being there every single day "We love you and congratulations." They presented Schneider with flowers.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Coach Schneider, it is an honor to have you here. Thank you.

Cedar School Memorial

- **Chairperson Geary** invited the Cedar School teachers to present their project for a teacher memorial. Maryann Johnson, Mindy Simmons Beth Lucharelli presented the memorial project for Wendy Maxwell. Wendy Maxwell began teaching in 1970 and taught for over thirty years. She was diagnosed with cancer in January of this year

- and she passed away on Labor Day of this year. She was a caring person that loved teaching and was well liked. Many present and retired teachers have discussed how best to honor Wendy. It was decided that it would be fitting if a stained glass window is placed at the entrance of Cedar School. Presenters provided pictures to the School Committee of placement of the window and samples of designs. Teachers will fundraise to cover the cost which they estimate to be between \$500-\$1000. Asked school committee for approval to create "Wendy's Window" and to place it at Cedar School. Considering a ceremony in May once the project is completed.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Wonderful idea. I ask once you have final design that it is sent to the administration for approval. Opened the floor to the Committee for any questions.
 - **Corbo:** Touching effort and thought that went into the designs. It shows your love for Wendy.
 - **Chairman Geary** asked for any further questions or comments.
 - Motion by Lynch to approve the Cedar School Memorial Window with final approval by the administration. The motion was seconded by Phillips. The motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of 10/14/15:

- Motion by Lynch to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2015 meeting as written. The motion was seconded by Booker. The motion carried with a majority vote with abstention by John Geary and Michael Phillips.

Action Items:

Center/Sylvester Building Project Preferred Design Vote

Chairperson Geary turned the floor over to Corbo and Booker to discuss their proposal.

- Corbo: The task before the Committee is to narrow down the building options to send to the MSBA. Previously narrowed down to:
 - Option 1 & 1A, which were the options to retain Sylvester School with upgrades to code.
 - Options 4, 5 & 5A these are the neighborhood options. Maintain neighborhood schools and each elementary would be grades K – 4. Center would be renovated with a population of 415 students.
 - Options 7 & 8. These options are the town wide options. Center School would be renovated to a population of 560 students housing grades 2-4. Cedar School would house Pre-K, K and grade 1.
- Narrow the plan to be submitted to the MSBA to Option 1 & 1A. The state requires we submit these options. We need to then choose between Options 4, 5, 5A or Options 7 & 8. The project is moving fast and we need to provide focus to the architects. We need to discuss tonight the alternatives of neighborhood or the town wide alternative.
- If we retain neighborhood schools - Center will be built to a population of 415. MSBA will let us build to a population of 890 total.
- Redistricting 80 – 100 into Cedar District. What this means is that Cedar will be at max capacity. Some specialty rooms will be lost. If we move forward, something will have to change. There is no option to keep Cedar School the way it is. If we choose town wide model, Cedar School will be at 330 not including the pre-school program.
- We would then build Center to a population of 560 students. On another consideration, if we pursue a town wide option is we will be building a larger

building approximately 91,000 to 96,000 square feet. If we retain our neighborhood schools, the square footage is between 77,000 – 80,000 square feet. Another consideration is the infrastructure. Technology will be maxed out at Cedar. What we will be building at Center will be a state of the art building. Cedar does not support advanced technology. One of the things we discussed in the building committee is equity for resources. One school will be maxed out of technology and the other school will have state of the art technology. Educational goals - weigh Cedar as an early learning center and Cedar a project based school for older students. The School Reconfiguration Subcommittee of which Kim Booker is a member reviewed the pros and cons of transitioning and transportation. Emphasize that the town will have to redistrict students. We are required to build and maximize population at Cedar before we build Center School.

- Capacity numbers. If neighborhood model – future Cedar proposal could handle 475 students and Center 415 students for design number of 890. Booker – since we cannot receive reimbursement for Cedar, we have to take it as it is. Town wide Center can be built to 560 students.
- **Corbo:** Held forums with parents. Some of the concerns by parents regarding a town wide schools transition from 1st grade to 2nd grade too much of a transition and create anxiety for students. We looked at other schools that transitioned from neighborhood schools to town wide schools. Example of a community is Sandwich. To ease anxiety for students assigned learning buddies to students – a friend is assigned to student. Touring the new school would also ease anxiety. Hosting socials. All these are examples to ease student anxiety.
- Transportation concerns. Parents are concerned of having to pick up school at three different schools. An example to address this concern is keeping after school programs open one-half earlier and one-half later.
- Traffic concerns. A proposal to ease traffic concerns it to build an access road. Building an exiting route not to the center of town but move it towards Hanover Street. These are all preliminary ideas to address and ease concerns.
- There are ways to construct onto Center that will facilitate project based learning and technology. For example: take a virtual field trip. Build into Center so older students can take advantage of these resources. Build Cedar to focus on younger learners and focus on their needs.
- **Ferron:** Our focus is looking to be sure all students have current equitable education experience and making sure technology resources are age appropriate. Committee work has demonstrated there is no bad option but have to weigh every option. The goal has to be about the educational program. We have time to work on transportation and transition issues.
- **St. Ives:** Teachers and staff ensure that we have the best educational opportunities to our children. The three key goals are equity, access and alignment of the education. Town wide has more opportunities for professional development. Professional survey reveals the teachers want more opportunities to work with other teachers.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Tell me about how you can see our current model two groups of 4 graders transiting in to one group of 5 graders vs. one group of 4 grade transiting into one group of 5 grade.
- **St Ives:** Alignment and consistency. Smoother transition.
- **Lynch:** Transition is always a concern for parents. Some examples and strategies of easing transitions open houses, field days, cookouts or sundae parties. People will

be relieved when they hear your ideas of transition. It is not solid to make a decision on neighborhood schools vs. town wide based on transition concerns.

- **Chairperson Geary:** Has the MSBA provided specific feedback to us on what they prefer as a configuration?
- **Corbo:** Unless it affects the design plan, MSBA does not direct the educational program for our town. They want to see what we bring forward for educational goals and how the building facilitates the goals.
- **Ferron:** The MSBA is looking for this committee to take a vote as to the educational vision for Hanover. Then we will have time to discuss with them building size and the operation side of the project. What is before us tonight is the educational vision then we can move forward working with MSBA working on a design.
- **Chairperson Geary:** We have eight alternatives
- **Corbo:** We started with 12. Building committee narrowed it down.
Chairperson Geary: Tonight we are to determine a direction on where we are going and the building option will be determined after we determine a direction?
Corbo: Yes, neighborhood schools vs. town wide. Direction by school committee as to what we will present to MSBA as our educational vision.
Chairperson Geary: Any comments?
- **Corbo:** Asked parents how do we solve class size bubbles in a neighborhood school? Comes down managing classroom behavior is difficult to deliver effective instruction. Come up with class size issue while remaining in neighborhood model. Could not come up with an equitable way to manage class size issue in the neighborhood model.
- **Chairperson Geary:** District wide education is sound. Are there any positives to stay with neighborhood schools?
- **Booker:** Neighborhood schools provide continuity knowing all the teachers and administrators. It gives a feeling of pride in your neighborhood school – these are all the benefits. But we need to look at what is beneficial to all of our students.
- **Lynch:** We cannot let the operation issues over take the educational benefits.
- **Booker:** This administration is very accommodating to parent concerns. We have time to look at the strategies to solve the operational issues.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Libby & Kim turned over every stone. We have taken time to look at these issues.
- **Corbo:** It is not an easy decision. Good planning and good communication can make the transitions smooth. Educationally the town wide school offers a better option.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Thank you. Any more comments? Open the floor to public comment

PUBLIC COMMENT

Judy Higginbottom:

Q: How are you going to address Cedar and bring it up to standard?

A: **Corbo:** Cedar is up to code. Yes, it should be spruced up. As we go forward we will have to make some adaptations at Cedar regardless on what direction we go.

Judy: Will the inside be adapted to younger kids?

Corbo: Have to address that going forward. We would like to be able to spruce up Cedar as much as we can depending where the budget stands in May.

Judy: Where does that money come from? Does it come from the project or separate article?

Corbo: It would have to be part of the project or have to be a separate article at town meeting.

Stephanie - Cedar Parent

Appreciate the work of the Committee. Concern is 1st grade. Favor neighborhood school and the informal interaction between 1st grade and 4th grade are important. Early learning center is a step backwards for 1st grade. Neighborhood schools give teachers the opportunity to see the students grow over the five years.

Kirsten Barret - Center School Parent

From a teacher's perspective as well as a parent's perspective decision should be based on education and what is best for students. Jobs of the schools are to educate the kids. You need to push operational concerns aside. Town wide will provide more resources and collaboration surrounding one grade level for the benefit of the students.

- Motion by Lynch to support the educational vision of a district wide option anticipated to be implemented for the 2018 – 2019 school year. The motion was seconded by Phillips. The motion carried unanimously.
- **Chairperson Geary:** Let me close this topic by saying every decision is important but not every decision is hard. This is a hard decision for all of us. Libby and Kim have spent years evaluating the pros and the cons and have informed us as a committee and we have done individual research as well to be sure we make a decision to the educational benefit for the town. Commend each of you. Thank you Matt, Tom and Debbie for all your hard work.

Report of Superintendent

Updates and Events:

- Superintendent Ferron asked for the next School Committee meeting to start at 6:30 p.m. as we have student awards.
- Class size configurations are included in the packets for your information. These figures will be posted online. The High School is based on course, teacher and section to show the different class size.
- Scheduling our math curriculum nights related to Vision 2020. Looking at second week of December for the Middle School Schedule and the elementary schools in the middle of November.
- Tomorrow is the Cedar Halloween parade at the High School track.
- Middle School Harvest Fest and Harvest Jam will be held this Friday. Mr. Birolionl is looking forward to his first Harvest Fest/Jam.
- Middle school held today the Middle School Cross Country Invitational. Roughly 15 communities representing 700 students. I will have results at our next meeting.
- The Fall High School Choral concert is tomorrow night here at the High School.

North River Collaborative Budget Update

- Chairperson Geary presented an update and the budget will be posted online.

Report of the Finance Department

FY2016 Q1 Revolving Account Update

- 1st Quarter ended September 30th.
- Lunch program \$58,000 in black – it is paying for itself.
- Athletic \$94,000 balance and \$85,000 in receipts consistent with predictions.
- The FACE program is the combined before and after and enrichment program. The Cedar/Center programs are doing very well. The enrichment program is losing money. The before/after running in the black.
- Summer enrichment program ending balance of \$13,000
- Hanover Cultural grant of \$1,800 will be a reimbursement.
- **Lynch:** \$12,000 in books account?
- **Raab:** Accumulated over several years. In past it was used to make up deficit for high school texts.

Public Comment: None presented.

Motion to adjourn by Lynch at 8:34 p.m. The motion was seconded by Phillips and carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted

Marjorie Morrison

Documents Used:
Minutes 10-14-15
FY2016 Q1 Account Update