

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
FEBRUARY 12, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, February 12, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis/Brookline Middle School Library.

Chairman, Holly Deurloo Babcock, presided:

Members of the School Board present: Tom Solon, Vice Chairman
 Beth Janine Williams, Secretary
 Elizabeth Brown (arrived at 6:07 p.m.)
 Melanie Levesque (arrived at 6:25 p.m.)
 Cindy VanCoughnett
 Krista Whalen

Members of the School Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
 Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services
 Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator
 Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
 Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
 Amanda Zeller, Assistant Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
 Mary Martin, Student Council Representative (arrived at 6:46 p.m.)

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Chairman Deurloo Babcock appointed Krista Whalen as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Chairman Deurloo Babcock requested the agenda be amended by removing, from Deliberations, Board action on the Middle School Master Schedule. An opportunity to comment on the proposed schedule would be provided during discussion of the Principals’ Report.

Also requested was a discussion on the order in which articles appear on the Warrant, and the March and April meeting dates.

Also requested was a change in the order of the agenda items appearing under the Principals Report.

There being no objection, the agenda was amended as requested.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board [January 22, 2020](#)

The following amendments were offered:

Page 2, Line 27; replace “Principals Dobe and Molinari” with “Principals Girzone and Barnes”
Page 4, Line 9, replace “time” with “team” following “on that”

Page 5, Line 23; replace “Ms. Maher” with “Ms. Sherwood”
Page 6, Line 40; replace “Chairman Deurloo” with ‘Chairman Deurloo Babcock’
Page 7, Line 39; replace “then” with “the” before “activity”
Page 12, Line 18; replace “Then” with “The”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED**

4-0-1

Member VanCoughnett Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Non-Public**. [January 22, 2020](#)

The following amendment was offered:

Page 1, Line 47; correct the spelling of “written”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED**

5-0-0

NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

A letter of resignation received from Gregory O’Brien informed of his intent to resign at the conclusion of his current contract (June 30, 2020). In his letter, Mr. O’Brien thanked the SAU for the opportunity to be of service to the Hollis Brookline community for the past three years.

**MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF GREGORY
O’BRIEN AS A SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL
WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2020**

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the current District calendar identifies a proposed graduation date of June 13, 2020. The “Tentative” nature of the date has caused confusion.

The consensus of the Board was to confirm the date.

PUBLIC INPUT - None

PRINCIPAL REPORTS/ATHLETIC REPORT

- NEASC Five Year Report

Amanda Zeller, Assistant Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS), provided an explanation of the format of the information provided. The first part lists out the recommendations for which responses were required.

With the responses, a great deal of detail is provided at the onset and any time thereafter that a response is similar to the initial detail, the initial response is referenced. In the second part of the draft, narratives were clustered and identified which requests they responded to. When the information is placed in the actual NEASC portal (report), it won't look like the draft, but the language will not change.

Assistant Principal Zeller stated the largest section of the report applies to instructional practices work. A large piece of the two-year report was around core values, and was the work that resulted in having instructional practices work done. We had a bit of a shift and needed to be very clear about why we are doing that and what it addresses. It really directly speaks to a lot of the NEASC recommendations.

She spoke of how the work of looking closely at grading and assessment, ranking of students, measures of success for students and practices and how they support that feeds right into the standards. She commented on the amount of overlap providing the following examples:

Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations

Standard 1, Request 1 - Create a process and timeline that engages all stakeholders, including students, parents, board members, and all staff, in the process of regularly reviewing, revising, and implementing core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations.

Standard 1, Request 4 - Use the core values, beliefs, and 21st century learning expectations to guide the school's policies, procedures, decisions, and resource allocations.

Standard 3, Request 2 - Create and implement practices that ensure alignment with the Statement of Core Values and Beliefs about Learning and 21st Century Learning Expectations.

The examples are of three separate requests, and there is a great deal of overlap.

The narrative provided explains why we convened the Instructional Practices Committee and what is hoped will be achieved as an assessment of how we have our students meet what we have stated as our core values, and not only meet those, but demonstrate that they are part of our ongoing school culture, answers quite a bit of the different requests in the NEASC five-year report. That is the longest narrative piece when talking about the Instructional Practices Committee, its objectives, and the three-step process where first we are addressing our top 10, etc.

Another topic that comes up in the five-year report is vertical alignment. The District has been doing more 7-12 work in the past few years. What is discussed in that area is joint department meetings, work with colleagues to align the transition from 8 to 9, but to reach beyond that and do 7-12, to look top down and bottom up to get things lined up for our students to ensure a good transition from middle to high school.

The cross-disciplinary work is something the District continues to work on; identifying where we can have classes, procedures, and structures that overlap. A few good areas for that are library and media work to bring together a lot of the humanities research work to have the same basis, tools, resources, structure. The fitness and wellness classes for freshmen are working to integrate their curriculum to be more cross-disciplinary. A new piece is the Social and Emotional Learning. Those practices are supposed to permeate all classrooms not be relegated to when you are writing about something in English or doing a reflective piece in one of your Humanities classes.

Heterogeneous Grouping

There is a heterogeneous offering for each grade level: 9th grade - fitness & wellness, 10th - writing, 11th - Civics & Economics, 12th - senior electives. Senior year plays out a little differently, but in each grade level there is one grouping of classes that students go through that is not designated honors and not designated topics.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the 10th grade Running Start (college credit) writing program, and was told it remains, but there is no requirement to take the Running Start option (keeps an integrated nature). It maintains the heterogeneous nature of writing class because it doesn't pull the same population that an AP or honors class does.

Technology

Great strides have been made; updated Wi-Fi to accommodate thousands more devices.

Assistant Principal Zeller remarked all responses were identified as either completed or in process. One piece that was moved from "in process" to "planned for the future" was an advisory piece.

The District is exploring the need and the role of advisory. There is a tool in place that will allow for putting something that functions like an advisory into the schedule without blowing up the whole schedule. With the new adaptive scheduler, there is the ability to plug in an advisory CavBlock once in a while and have a set group of students with the ability to do a check-in process to align themselves with an adult in the building on a regular basis. That is planned for the future because we have the tool, but have not started doing it at this point.

Community and Business Partnerships

The ELO program has started to grow and create connections with community businesses; internships and mentoring relationships. Work has been done to establish programs that enable the relationships that have been created with the Rotary and BAE Systems.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is a mechanism/allowance to disagree with or dispute a recommendation. Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS), spoke of the ease of back and forth dialogue. Assistant Principal Zeller commented there is an option in the reporting that indicates declining a recommendation.

Asked if, when discussing vertical alignment, the focus is specifically on 7-12, Assistant Principal Zeller responded they put K-12, but the specific wording for the high school tends to be more 7-12. The report does identify that some of our K-12 content areas are meeting the mark.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented the NEASC is accrediting the high school. It is great that they want to see vertical alignment, but their focus is really on 9-12. She commented she is not opposed to advisory, and she believes the way it is addressed in the report is appropriate. If the Administrators believe it to be a necessary component she would support that effort, but we don't necessarily have to pigeonhole ourselves into something that works for a lot of other schools. She spoke of being an advocate for social and emotional learning. However, just because this is one way of doing it, does not mean it is the only way.

Principal Barnes remarked where he can see that playing out more is through the Instructional Practices Committee.

Assistant Principal Zeller departed.

Principal Barnes stated the Instructional Practices Committee will provide a presentation and specific recommendations regarding class rank and the top ten at the April School Board meeting.

Principal Barnes spoke of the report provided by the District Athletic Coordinator highlighting the accomplishments of the various athletic teams.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of being pleased that a committee has been formed to review foreign travel.

Tim Girzone, Principal, HBMS, commented on the SeaPerch Build; an innovative underwater robotics program that equips teachers and students with the resources they need to build an underwater Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV). The two-part activity, which includes participation by the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, culminates in the testing of the ROVs at UNH on Thursday and Friday.

The Wrestling for Change meet, an event organized by the wrestling team and the HBMS anti-bullying club, took place last week. Together they raised awareness around suicide prevention. Over \$650 was raised and donated to the National and New Hampshire Suicide Prevention Hotlines.

Several musicians have qualified for the 2020 South Central District Music Festival being held on May 16th.

The Robotics Teams are preparing for the State meet on Sunday. They recently had their first ever tournament championship to qualify for States. Both teams have qualified.

- Committee Update on Master Schedule at the Middle School

Principal Girzone noted since last presented, there have been a few minor adjustments in the schedule. With 6 out of 8 periods running each day (dropping 2 periods/day) was the general format. The change is in the switching of which periods are dropping Monday through Thursday. A discussion was had in a meeting with some of the related service providers who work across buildings. It was suggested if they were to drop the same periods as the HBHS on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, it would be more in line for individuals crossing schools. For scheduling purposes it seemed to make sense. On Tuesday they will drop 3 and 7, Wednesday 1 and 5, and Thursday 2 and 6. On Monday the high school doesn't drop a 4th period and does not have an 8th period. The middle school would drop the 4th period and 8th.

Vice Chairman Solon commented on discussion of the possibility of running this year's class through the schedule to see how it would map. Principal Girzone responded they took the current offerings with the intent and goal being to hit some of the main points discussed earlier in the year; access to students during skills time. The current schedule is straightforward. The last point they talked about was predictability and having consistent access to students for related services. On paper, they were able to come up with a format that would work for targeting those specific areas of concern that are not currently hit with the present setup.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock requested clarification that the entire staff has seen the schedule, given feedback, and are generally okay, and was told that is the case.

DISCUSSION

- Proposed Calendar 2020 – 2021

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented on the draft calendar provided with the [agenda](#).

Noted was the lateness of Labor Day, and the election on September 8th (high school will be used).

Language in the Collective Bargaining Agreement dictates the school year cannot start any earlier than the Monday prior to Labor Day. That would put the last day for teachers as June 28th. Union Presidents came together and requested to meet with the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent to discuss different alternatives. After multiple versions of a potential calendar, what was before the Board had support by all three union presidents, and seems to be acceptable to the Administration.

The draft shows Thursday, August 27th as the day all staff would return. Friday would have no staff (other than year-round employees). The following Monday would be grades 7 and 9 orientation. All students return for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, which is followed by a four-day weekend with Labor Day plus the Tuesday off. That Tuesday (September 8th), would be a Professional Development Day. Instead of having 3 professional development days prior to the start of school, 1 of those days would be moved to September 8th.

There are no student days in August as orientation is not considered a student day. A certain percentage of the total population must be present to count as a day.

November 3rd is the professional development day for the entire SAU. Asked if that is considered a closed school day, Principal Barnes stated historically athletic practices have been run during professional development days. With voting occurring, practices could conceivably be at the middle school.

The proposed high school graduation date is June 12th. June 22nd is the last day of school, if having 5 snow days. The last day of work for teachers would be June 25th.

Asked if it is typical to go right up to the 24th of December having a full day on the 23rd, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it is. She commented on being reminded of the situation that occurred several years ago when the area experienced an ice storm and the December vacation period was extended. Such a situation can result in financial hardship when teachers go for such a long period absent pay and for students who rely upon the free and reduced lunch program.

When asked, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the change has been voted on by all the unions. If the Board moves forward with the proposed calendar, there is a written statement on hand indicating this is what they are requesting, and they would agree to a sidebar. Were the Board to go by the contract language, the week of August 24th would remain as it is in the current schedule, August 31st would be all staff return, September 1st a PD day, the 2nd would be orientation, and the 3rd and 4th would be the first two days of school. Another thing to consider is the number of instructional days prior to AP exam. The rest of the world starts in the middle of August or earlier. At this point, they would have 3-4 weeks or more of instruction than our students; AP exams are always the 1st 2 weeks in May.

One option was not having the March professional day (swapping the March and September). That would put the last day of school on June 23rd with teachers going to school until the 28th.

Asked about the requirement for staff to be onsite during orientation day, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked in the traditional calendar, the Wednesday before Labor Day is a professional development day where 7th and 9th grade students are onsite for the morning.

Vice Chairman Solon commented on prior attempts to build flexibility into the schedule being blocked.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there to be an aspect that goes against language in all three CBAs. If the calendar began on the 24th and the language was amended to say two Mondays prior to Labor Day, but everything looks the same with Wednesday as orientation, etc., that calendar would only violate COOP CBA language. But because we are moving around the PD days, it changes language in all three.

Vice Chairman Solon requested further discussion occur in a non-meeting setting.

Ms. Brown commented on the pressure related to a start date prior to Labor Day, the September 8th closure, and the difficulties it places on working parents. As a parent, she finds the schedule very difficult to work around. August is a disaster, September, once she finally needs to go back to work because it is after Labor Day, she has to take another day off of work, and there is a Monday off in October. In December, she cannot travel to see family because they are going to school up until the afternoon of the 23rd, and then March 9th the kids are off after having already been off for an entire week. She finds the schedule to be exceptionally difficult for the public to swallow.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted fall sports would begin August 10th.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the challenges of Labor Day being on the 7th. She does not understand why the Town needs to utilize the high school on September 8th and who controls that decision. It is a State primary, which she believes could be done at the Lawrence Barn. She stated her desire to see that day changed if there is a way to do that.

Ms. Levesque questioned if the primary is typically at the Lawrence Barn, and was told all State events are at the barn and all Federal at the high school. Asked how the location is determined, Principal Barnes remarked typically it is by request. Noted was that one of the elementary schools cannot be closed off for such an event, and is unable to be used. Concerns at the high school have centered around safety and parking.

- Portrait of a “Cavalier”

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of work that is beginning in the spring around the Strategic Plan. Work will begin with creating the portrait of a Cavalier. Over the past few years, a lot has been done in regard to conversations around what our graduate looks like, what is a successful graduate and what those qualities and characteristics would be. By the creation of a vision that comes from that work, the intent would be to then look at the vision and see how the Strategic Plan supports or conflicts with it. If in conflict, they will look at how those parts can be changed so that the Strategic Plan can support the vision.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock, a board member from Brookline and Hollis, Principal Barnes, Assistant Superintendent Thompson, Paula Izbicki, Principal, Hollis Primary School, Kristen Roy, teacher at the high school, and a student will participate in this work. The work will be led by a consultant and will begin on March 5th.

Asked if there is a committee charter summarizing the anticipated deliverables, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded the Charter would be developed during the first meeting. The deliverables have been identified, but were not readily available. Vice Chairman Solon spoke of concern with matching up with the Strategic Plan given it is essentially two years expired. The Superintendent has voiced his belief that a new Strategic Plan would have a very different content focusing more on student outcomes. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her belief the categories of the Strategic Plan are likely to remain valid. She would like to change the focus so that it is focused more on students and student outcomes. That vision would inform that. In terms of the direct goals, they will be in the same categories, but the individual strategies of how we will act to support the vision would be different and more student focused.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked this is an attempt to create that hypothetical ideal outcome graduate, and questioned if it is envisioned that would span multiple types of outcomes, e.g., college bound, work bound. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated that to be the case. The existing Strategic Plan has a focus on scores, academic excellence, and placement afterwards. With an expanded vision the desire is to identify the vision and adjust.

- Update on the SAU and School District Web Pages

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the process undertaken to update the SAU website. She touched upon feedback received regarding the level of user friendliness, and the legal requirement for the site to be accessible. The current site does not have the necessary capacity. The Administration has been working with a company that is creating a fully-accessible site. They are in the process of content transfer and fully developing the site map.

Some of the features of the new site are the ability to post content on the home page with an expiration date. Home pages are being made for all 6 of the schools to provide for continuity.

Suggested was that the link for the Program of Studies be prominent, that the school profile and budgetary information be more easily accessed/visible. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the search criteria features that will be available on the calendar.

- Warrant Articles

Two Petition Warrant Articles have been placed on the Warrant; SB2 and Tax Cap. The Moderator expressed concerns with having the article regarding SB2 so far down in the listing as he believes it will be a ballot vote. He believes it likely the meeting will span two nights. Because SB2 needs to be voted on in the meeting, it would be preferred for it to come up on the first night.

Vice Chairman Solon stated his belief the order the articles appear could be altered. He questioned if Articles 1 or 2 would likely also be ballot votes. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated Article 1 could be, but is not required to be. It is unknown what will turn into ballot votes. Article 2 will most likely be a ballot vote. Article 3 is always a ballot vote.

Vice Chairman Solon stated his support for moving the SB2 article to appear between the current article 3 and 4. Chairman Deurloo Babcock agreed, and noted the Moderator pointed out while people are voting, we can move on with other business.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO REORDER THE ARTICLES OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT SO THAT THE CURRENT ARTICLE 8 IS LISTED AS ARTICLE 4 AND ALL SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES RENUMBERED ACCORDINGLY
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

The idea is to try to get as many people who are in the room voting, and to hopefully expedite the meeting.

Ms. Brown stated concern if moving the article up, it could be that voters feel, once completing that article, they can depart, which would leave the tax cap as it would be the last piece. She suggested leaving the order as it is or moving both of those items forward. Vice Chairman Solon stated concern with moving them to the top. Often times the first article is one of the most difficult ones to get into as people are still arriving. He agrees with the intent and expressed a willingness to withdraw the motion if the will of the Board.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if the contract is required to be the first item. She suggested the contract could be first and the SB2 and tax cap articles could follow.

Stated was the desire to ensure the majority of taxpayers have the opportunity to vote on these issues. As petition warrant articles, they have not been fully vetted or supported by the boards. It is believed beneficial to

have as large a contingent of taxpayers as possible present to hear discussion of the articles and to cast a vote. There is the potential that participation will lessen towards the end of the meeting or on the second day of a meeting. It could be that the current articles 8 and 9 become articles 2 and 3.

Ms. Levesque suggested the budget items be addressed first.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock suggested another compromise would be that the articles for SB2 and the tax cap become articles 4 and 5.

Ms. VanCoughnett agreed there is the likelihood someone will ask for ballot votes. Anything that would be a ballot vote, if coming before the SAU (always a ballot vote), would garner the greatest participation. She suggested the petition articles be moved to 2 and 3.

AMENDED MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO REORDER THE ARTICLES OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT WARRANT SO THAT THE CURRENT ARTICLES 8 AND 9 ARE LISTED AS ARTICLES 2 AND 3 RESPECTIVELY, AND THAT ALL SUBSEQUENT ARTICLES BE RENUMBERED ACCORDINGLY
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Vote on the main motion

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- Meeting Dates

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of the requirement for the Board to vote on the NEASC Five-Year Report prior to March 31st. The Board does not typically meet, as a Board, in March. Past practice dictates that the Board review such items at one meeting and consider approval at a subsequent meeting. Principal Barnes was able to obtain an extension on the submittal date to March 31st.

The Board could choose to meet a half hour in advance of the Annual Meeting to address that single topic, could deliberate on the report this evening, conduct a standalone March meeting, or combine the March and April meetings and conduct a meeting on March 25th.

The consensus of the Board was to meet at 5:30 p.m. on March 17th.

Currently, the April Board meeting is scheduled for the 15th. Contract renewals are due on that date. Being considered is an earlier April meeting.

The consensus of the Board was to move the April meeting date to April 1st.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Petition Warrant Article 1 – Shall the Citizens Adopt RSA 40:13 – Known as SB2

“Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District on the second Tuesday of March?”

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the renumbering of the article.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE 2
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Ms. Whalen spoke of having been raised in the suburbs of Chicago where voting was by ballot. Unless you really went to a lot of length to understand what was on the ballot, you simply reviewed what was included and voted up or down. You didn't get the opportunity to participate and be a part of it. She believes the way the process works here is unique and is working. Although she understands the concept of the Deliberative Session, the reality is, because the opportunity to vote does not take place at the Deliberative Session, people don't attend. They don't hear the pros and cons and don't participate.

Vice Chairman Solon reminded folks that if an SB2 town, apportionment would be by SB2 as well. The large percentage of voters at the ballot would likely not have seen anything other than what can be put into the ballot for language or whatever paperwork is handed out at the polls. Chairman Deurloo Babcock added apportionment is a complicated issue, and she believes people who attend the town meeting learn what it all means. Historically numbers reduce at Deliberative Sessions and there is the opportunity for a small group of people to amend the language that will appear on the ballot.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

- To see what action the board will take regarding Petition Warrant Article 2 – Shall the Citizens Adopt RSA 32:5-b a 2% tax cap on the recommended budget

“Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year's actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 2%?”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE 3
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon stated this would essentially handcuff the Budget Committee from doing their due diligence. They have been elected to create a responsible budget. Regardless of what they believe to be the correct budget, they would be constrained. It would likely put the District in a situation where meetings would involve a Budget Committee proposed budget and then a School Board proposed amended budget. We would be back in the situation where, at the meeting, we would be presenting two separate budgets and leaving it up to the Legislative Body (voters) to try and decipher why it is different and which is done because it is believed to be the right thing and which is done because it is restricted by the cap. He believes it would be a disservice to the community to not let them see the Budget Committee's work in a less restricted manner.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

- To see what position the Board will take regarding a Brookline Town Warrant Article – RSA 195:25 – Feasibility and suitability study to withdraw Brookline from the Cooperative School District

“To see if the Town will vote to direct the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board, pursuant to RSA 195:25, to undertake a study of the feasibility and suitability of the withdrawal of the pre-existing Brookline School District from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District.”

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO EXPRESS THE OPINION OF THE BOARD IN OPPOSITION TO THE BROOKLINE TOWN WARRANT ARTICLE TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY AND SUITABILITY STUDY TO WITHDRAW BROOKLINE FROM THE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LEVESQUE

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon stated it to have been brought to his attention by others that if Brookline were to follow through with this, and withdraw from the COOP, Brookline would forfeit all equity it has in the COOP and would remain liable for its share of any current bonds for the duration of the bonds. Brookline would not only not have a school, but would be paying for someone else’s school on top of all other expenses related to educating its students.

He believes for Brookline to voluntarily walk away is an irresponsible act from a financial standpoint let alone the educational disaster it could be.

Ms. Whalen commented the COOP provides an amazing education for the community, and at a below average cost per student. The District just completed an apportionment meeting where 73% of those in attendance supported the proposed formula. This petition was brought forward by a citizen who understands this as the first step in dissolution. She stated her assumption all who signed the petition are equally aware.

She joined the School Board to be an advocate for the taxpayers and students. She believes the COOP does a wonderful job educating our students. It would not benefit a single child in the community to dissolve the COOP. The study has been done programmatically by Drs. Moody and DeBenedictis. Not much has changed in the years since that was done in terms of the number of students in the District. At the end of that study, the question was why anyone would want to do that. When you bring the financial aspect into it, it simply does not make any sense.

Ms. Brown commented first you have to start with what was this motion. The Statute has changed a little since the last time this issue was brought up. It deals with who is in charge of this study. Fundamentally, the COOP School Board and the Administrators have their hands full with managing a district, and to put the burden of doing this study on the Board and these Administrators is irresponsible. It is clearly irresponsible from a standpoint of we know how this is going to end; it is going to be a lot of work so that we can reaffirm to ourselves that the model we are doing here in the COOP is an excellent model, and people are very envious of our ability to educate kids at this high quality at the low cost per pupil that we have. Why we would want to take our administrators off task for 180 days so they can prove that to us once again is ridiculous.

As a Hollis taxpayer, if Brookline really wants to do this, it is a gift to Hollis. From the standpoint of looking at what the warrant is, she believes, as a school board, we need to be very protective of the administrators, the jobs they have to do, and the very act of taking these people off task to do this study once again is counter-productive to the Mission of the District.

Ms. Williams commented initially this was done based on curriculum and courses whereas she believes this has more of a financial spin on it. Whether just a look to gather information or the first step and that is the intention, it does not matter to her as she is concerned with the amount of resources and time involved. She

cannot support something without understanding all costs. She spoke of being supportive of a study that provides more information; however, that cost has not been made known.

Ms. Levesque commented she was reflecting on the situation some 10-15 years prior when consideration of dissolution of the COOP came about. She believes there to have been a study at that time, and questioned if that information is available to be shared with the taxpayers.

Ms. Whalen stated the study done by Drs. Moody and DeBenedictis was done about 5 years ago. The Selectmen in Hollis conducted a study as well.

The study concluded that in 2025 it might be appropriate. Ms. Brown commented it depends on who initiates the withdrawal. When Hollis initiated the withdrawal 6 years ago it was based upon a movement regarding the apportionment formula and a shifting of tax dollars, and it was a question of math; at which point does it make more sense for Hollis to withdraw. A number of individuals fought that on the Town standpoint because we did not want to withdraw. The original motion at Town meeting was to initiate the withdrawal process. It was amended at Town Meeting to become a study with 12 members of the community. At the same time, the School Board requested that this study be done by Drs. Moody and DeBenedictis to look at it from an educational standpoint because the Hollis study group was looking at it from a financial standpoint, and there was concern the education piece would get lost in the conversation.

The Hollis study concluded that, at least at that time, it was not financially advantageous to the Town of Hollis and we all concluded, based upon the report received from the prior Superintendents, that from an education standpoint, it would be detrimental to the District.

Ms. Levesque stated she would not support the article.

Vice Chairman Solon commented despite the descriptive title, this is the official first step of initiating an attempt to withdraw from the COOP, and it puts Brookline specifically in the position of being the initiator and requires it go all the way through to the State disposition of the proposal. It sets Hollis up with a bit of a conundrum because they may think the COOP is great, but all of a sudden they have a subsidized additional school capacity that by their own study would fulfill their needs at Town buildout.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock agreed this triggers dissolution. She stated her focus to be what is in the best interest of the students. The COOP District is what is best for our students; two towns combined to form a right sized school, economy of scale, ability to offer phenomenal programming. Both towns would lose a great deal if becoming a smaller school community. Both towns would have to pay a great deal more per student to provide close to what is provided today. She spoke of the need to protect the investment of the taxpayers. They have bought homes in these two towns and the Hollis Brookline High School and Middle School are highly ranked. The property value of our townfolks is based on what the school is.

She commented on the cost to the District, the time that would be required of the Administrator, the distraction for the students and communities, etc.

Mary Martin, Student Council Representative, noted high school students are being organized and plan on attending the meeting to show support for the COOP.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **KF-Community Use of School Facilities**
 - 1st Reading; 11-13-19
 - 2nd reading 1-22-20 (as amended)

Given its third reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE THIRD READING AND ADOPT POLICY KF – COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

ON THE QUESTION

The note “Language needs to match form” should have been removed. There remain questions about whether reference to “protesting” carries with it a concern regarding First Amendment rights. Language was amended so that a decision to deny use of the facility will be made by the Principal *in consultation with the Superintendent and local law enforcement*. Added to the 8th paragraph is the sentence “The Principal or their designee reserves the right to cancel or reschedule events as circumstances dictate.”

It was reiterated that the entirety of the 7th paragraph needs to be reviewed by legal counsel.

MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO TABLE POLICY KF UNTIL THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy IIB-Class Size**
 - 1st Reading; 11-13-19
 - 2nd Reading; 12-11-19
 - 3rd Reading 1-22-20 (as amended)

Given its fourth reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO AMEND POLICY IIB-CLASS SIZE BY REPLACING IT WITH THE COPY PROVIDED WITH THE AGENDA, ACCEPT THE FOURTH READING, AND ADOPT, AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Ms. Williams commented on the prior discussion around minimum and maximum numbers. Since the time of the last reading, some changes have been made to allow for ease of reading. The next to last sentence was amended so that the Superintendent is required to notify the School Board of projected course enrollment numbers each year.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted prior discussion of whether the sentence “Recommended maximum class size for Mathematics, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Foreign Languages should be targeted at twenty students.” is necessary. The Policy Committee determined the sentence should remain; however, replaced “recommended” with “preferred”. The idea of targeting 20 students is nice practice. We have a maximum and a minimum and a paragraph that addresses when someone exceeds or falls below, a process in place for how to address it should it happen, and for the reporting back to the School Board.

Vice Chairman Solon recommended “maximum” should remain following “preferred”.

Noted was that the requirement for annual review falls upon the School Administration.

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO FURTHER AMEND BY INSERTING
“MAXIMUM” FOLLOWING “PREFERRED”
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

Ms. Brown stated she would vote against the policy having a fundamental issue with adopting a policy she knows the District will never comply with.

**MOTION CARRIED
5-2-0**

Member Brown and Solon voted in opposition

- To see what action the Board will take regarding **Policy JICK** – Pupil Safety and Violence Prevention – Bullying
 - 1st Reading; 12-11-19
 - 2nd Reading 1-22-20

Given its third reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE THIRD READING AND ADOPT POLICY
JICK – PUPIL SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION – BULLYING, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON**

ON THE QUESTION

Principal Girzone noted the grammatical change in #8 under Section XI. The only other change was in capturing the date of the third reading. Noted was that the dates should be further amended as the first reading did not occur until December 11th.

Noted was the intent for “his/her” to be replaced with “their” in each instance it appears.

**MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **DAF** – Administration of Federal Grant Funds
Given its first reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY DAF –
ADMINISTRATION OF FEDERAL GRANT FUNDS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON**

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the policy to be required if receiving Federal funds. The policy outlines all procedures surrounding receiving Federal funds, what the District is agreeing to do when receiving said funds, and how equipment and personnel funded through those grants are managed.

Some of the language addresses grants exceeding a dollar amount the District does not currently receive. There was question as to whether that language should be removed or remain not knowing what the future could bring. The decision was reached to leave it in. The policy reflects current practice. Having the policy in place identifies the District follows Federal regulations.

Ms. Williams noted reference to “his/her” that should be replaced with “their”.

Ms. Brown noted existing policy around the requirement for sealed bids for purchases and contracts exceeding \$10,000 in value.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the District has to follow their requirement for the use of Federal funds, and would follow District policies for use of taxpayer funds.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the language on the first page of the policy which states: “NOTICE: Notwithstanding any other policy of the District, all funds awarded directly or indirectly through any Federal grant or subsidy programs shall be administered in accordance with this Policy, and any administrative procedures adopted implementing this Policy.”

This does not intend to supersede District policy; would only come into play if the District did not otherwise constrain it (District policy is more stringent). Ms. Brown questioned how one would understand what is and is not under Federal funding. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there are some positions that are funded partially and some fully under a Federal grant. There are account lines that are only for Federal grants. They do not come before the Board as the positions are not funded through the operating budget.

Asked about the origin of the policy language, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the template to have come from the New Hampshire School Board Association noting other districts that have undergone an audit have been instructed to adopt this policy language.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if adoption of the policy would impact the manner in which grants are administered, and was informed it would not. The practices are already in place. Putting the policy in place would simply formalize the process.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is any particular area of the policy that warrants in-depth review. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the amount of review the policy has been put through. It is a straightforward procedure and one that is already being followed.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **GADA** - Employment References and Verification
Given its first reading;

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY GADA -
EMPLOYMENT REFERENCES AND VERIFICATION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of the efforts of the Policy Committee to catch up with policies brought forward by the New Hampshire School Board Association’s policy updates. The Policy Committee reviewed the template provided and did not note any particular concerns. Since that initial review, it has been seen that other districts have removed #s 1 and 2 from the listing of items the prohibition does not apply to.

The concern expressed is that the prohibition does not apply unless it has been reported in 1 and 2, which doesn’t mean that there has been any determination. It is likely the Policy Committee will recommend removal of the language.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the desire for language that provides for some sort of determination as to whether the conditions of #3 apply. If removing the language, there should be an obligation to discover whether a reported incident has been closed.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **IHAMA** - Teaching About Alcohol, Drugs and Tobacco

Given its first reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY IHAMA - TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LEVESQUE

ON THE QUESTION

Principal Girzone noted the proposed addition of language (first paragraph) to address health education curriculum in grades 7-12.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the need to add a legal reference.

Vice Chairman Solon suggested the word “and” be added in the first sentence following “abuse thereof.”

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COOP

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on looking forward to viewing The HBHS Theater performance of The Music Man.

Ms. Williams spoke of having attended the Monadnock Valley Musical Festival students from the high school participated in, and of how phenomenal the performance was. The band and choir performed with 10-12 other schools having that single day to practice.

She commented on the activities occurring at the Middle School noting her favorite event is the Veterans’ visit, which is something she is looking forward to.

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Ms. Whalen commented the meeting ran ahead of schedule, and included forward movement with policy.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (e) CONSIDERATION OR NEGOTIATION OF PENDING CLAIMS OR LITIGATION WHICH HAS BEEN THREATENED IN WRITING OR FILED BY OR AGAINST THE PUBLIC BODY AND (l) CONSIDERATION OF LEGAL ADVICE PROVIDED BY LEGAL COUNSEL, EITHER IN WRITING OR ORALLY, TO ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC BODY, EVEN WHERE LEGAL COUNSEL IS NOT PRESENT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

A Viva Voce Roll Call was conducted, which resulted as follows:

Yea: Elizabeth Brown, Cindy VanCoughnett, Krista Whalen, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon,
Beth Janine Williams, Melanie Levesque

7

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 8:31 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 9:18 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER BROWN TO ADJOURN

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

The February 12, 2020 meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board adjourned at 9:19 p.m.

Date: _____

Signed: _____