

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD  
SEPTEMBER 15, 2021  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, September 15, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present:            Tom Solon, Vice Chairman  
   Beth Janine Williams, Secretary  
   Elizabeth Brown (arrived at 6:04 p.m.)  
   Kate Stoll  
   Cindy VanCoughnett  
   Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance:                        Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
   Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
   Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator  
   Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School  
   Samantha Shepard, President, Student Council

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**APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock appointed Tom Solon as Process Observer.

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS** - None

**NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE**

A Letter of Intent to Retire was received from Frank Tkaczyk. In his letter he states, it is with mixed emotions that he has come to this decision after having served the district for over 25 years. He goes on to say “It has always been his personal mission in life to do the very best at his work and to treat everyone that he has come into contact with, in that endeavor, with dignity, respect, an open mind, and a positive attitude.” “It has been an honor and blessing to have been able to serve the communities of Hollis and Brookline over these past years. During that time the educational system of the two towns has come a long way. I have tried my best to play a small part in that effort at the COOP district and I feel content that my decision to work here for most of my professional life was the right one.”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT, WITH APPRECIATION FOR ALL OF HIS 25 YEARS OF SERVICE, THE LETTER OF INTENT TO RETIRE RECEIVED FROM FRANK TKACZYK WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2022**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

The Board was provided a copy of a study from a community member who requested it be distributed to both the COOP and Brookline School Boards.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the President’s mandate regarding vaccines noting the language from the Federal Government has not yet arrived at the State level. When received by the State, it will be evaluated and sent to the New Hampshire Department of Education, which will then send out a Technical Advisory to all Superintendents. At that point, it will be added to an agenda for discussion.

Superintendent Corey noted he has spoken with Brian Bumpus, Athletic Coordinator, and been advised things are going tremendously well; however, there will be a few conflicts regarding transportation. Mr. Bumpus and Rhon Rupp, Athletic Director, HBHS, are working with Student Transportation of America (STA), the bus company and on the potential for parent-drivers for some of our closer contacts, e.g. Amherst.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board . . . . . [August 18, 2021](#)

*The following amendment was offered:*

- Page 4, Line 32; replace “off” with “of”
- Page 8, Line 17; replace forward slash with a period
- Page 11, Line 7; insert a period between “U” and “S”
- Page 11, Line 26; replace “M95” with “N95”
- Page 12, Line 25; replace the period with a comma
- Page 13, Line 47; replace “antidotal” with “anecdotal”
- Page 16, Line 36; replace “for” with “to”
- Page 18, Line 39; replace “contract” with “contact”
- Page 22, Line 14; replace “followed” with “follow”
- Page 23, Line 32; replace “in” with “on”
- Page 27, Line 36; correct the spelling of “be”
- Page 28, Line 2; correct the spelling of “wearing”
- Page 31, Line 40; replace “supply” with “supplying”

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-1**  
*Member Solon Abstained*

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Non-Public** . . . . . [August 18, 2021](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL  
MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

## **PRINCIPAL AND ATHLETIC REPORTS**

Tim Girzone, Principal, HBHS, highlighted items from his report and those of Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS) and Brian Bumpus, District Athletic Coordinator. The reports were included as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

The Athletic Coordinator's report notes participation has returned to pre-COVID numbers. Principal Girzone noted he, Mr. Bumpus and Mr. Rupp recently attended the NHIAA Annual Meeting where two of our coaches, Jake Balfour and Milton Robinson, were recognized for having coached for 25 years in the State. We are back up and running full steam ahead with games across all levels and have had several games under the lights.

Principal West's report noted student open house days, 7<sup>th</sup> grade orientation, and first days were amazing. Students have been respectful of everyone's comfort level in regard to masks. The first dance/activities night in over a year is scheduled for October 1<sup>st</sup> and will be held outdoors on the field behind the HBMS.

Principal Girzone's report touched on the very positive return to school for the students and staff. Freshmen were welcomed and new student orientation went very well.

The Flex PE numbers were noted as 30 for 2019-2020 and 32 for 2020-2021.

Homecoming weekend is 9/24 – 9/26. The weekend will kick off with the first ever carnival.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the photo taken of the Class of 2025 and asked if the Class of 2024 had the same opportunity. Principal Girzone was uncertain, and stated if they were not provided that opportunity, it could be done this year.

Asked if enrollment numbers would be included in next month's report, Principal Girzone stated that information would be provided (the May projections will be included as well). A request was made for the information to be distributed in spreadsheet form.

Asked what the waiting list for parking spaces looks like for juniors, Principal Girzone stated his belief it is under 20 at this time. Member Brown commented she does not like that we have juniors who cannot access the parking lot and spoke of three different models that have been discussed that would have resulted in additional parking spaces. She questioned if there is any possibility the lower teacher's lot could open up some spaces. Chairman Deurloo Babcock suggested that to be a discussion that could occur during the budget process.

### **Student Council Report**

Samantha Shepard, President, Student Council, stated Old Home Day was a great success. Each Student Council had their own booth, which helped generate funds for everyone. They will begin working on policy work and other activity planning for the year.

The carnival is next Friday and will take place after all sports games; 8:00-10:00 p.m. on the softball fields up by the turf field. Offered will be lawn games, the Kona Ice truck and other food items, temporary tattoo parlor, etc. Ticket cost (\$15) will cover the events. Food items will be available for purchase.

***There being no objection, the Board went out of the regular order of business to allow the Superintendent to introduce the informational discussion items.***

- Review of Memorandum of Understanding Regarding School Resource Officer (SRO) - Informational

Included with the agenda is a copy of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Hollis-Brookline Cooperative School District and the Hollis Police Department. Superintendent Corey noted he and the Police Chief typically meet every August to review the MOU. The document was before the Board due to a change in the language whereby the School Resource Officer (SRO) will be full-time in the COOP District (position previously shared with Hollis School District). The Hollis School District has added a School Resource and Community Policing Officer (SRCPO).

The change is in #4 of Section D, which states: “In the event that an SRO is absent from the campus, the School Resource and Community Policing Officer (SRCPO) assigned to the Hollis Primary School and Hollis Upper Elementary School will be responsible for and have the authority to handle any incidents or emergencies at the Hollis Brookline High School or Hollis Brookline Middle School. The opposite is also true in that the SRO assigned to the Hollis Cooperative School District shall have the responsibility and authority to handle incidents or emergencies within Hollis Primary School and the Hollis Upper Elementary School.”

- Transportation Contract - Informational

Included as part of the agenda packet is a copy of the contract between SAU #41 and Student Transportation of America.

The SAU is coming up to the optional two-years in the bus contract with STA. Rather than opting to look at the two additional years that were part of the last contract, STA requested the SAU consider a new contract. There is difficulty in obtaining drivers, and for them to be able to go to their drivers and say they are guaranteed 5 more years of employment would benefit driver retention.

Currently, we are fully staffed plus 1 with the Dispatcher also able to drive. Superintendent Corey praised STA for the way they have gone about recruiting drivers, e.g., maintaining competitive wages.

There is very little that changed in the language of the agreement. A change that can be seen (page 8) is the replacement of “Assistant Superintendent of Student Services” with “Director of Student Services”.

The cost proposal indicates what was proposed (\$1,255,102.70) for 2021-2022 versus the actual (\$1,146,187.78) results is a savings of \$108,915. STA has worked to consolidate routes. The SAU has been able to reduce the number of buses by 1 in the Hollis School District.

Increases for the new contract are 4% for the first three years and 3% for the last two years.

Also provided was a scope of the daily runs needed for special education and those approximate costs.

The Regional Manager for STA will attend the October 14<sup>th</sup> SAU41 Governing Board meeting to go over the contract and answer any questions.

Superintendent Corey commented since STA purchased Hollis Transportation, there have been significant upgrades fulfilled, by STA. We now have an appropriate bus barn (1<sup>st</sup> indoor bathroom added 3 years ago, etc.). They do many events for drivers to celebrate longevity and have put out an extensive recruiting program, which has served us well. A few years ago we lost drivers to other local terminals. We have seen drivers return

to us because of the family-type nature of our two communities. They have complied with agreements in the contract regarding updating buses; vast majority of fleet is new. They have moved a number of the buses from 71 passenger to 77 passenger. When you do that across the fleet it results in considerably more seats for students, which is part of why we have been able to reduce runs. They have an onsite mechanic and dispatcher who only drives under emergency situations.

This is the earliest the SAU has ever had a contract to review. The intent was to get it to each of the individual school boards to provide time for review prior to the October 14th SAU41 Governing Board meeting.

The Administration is looking at the date for the December SAU41 Governing Board meeting. The meeting had been scheduled for the 9<sup>th</sup>. The hope is to delay that one week from a budget preparation point of view.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned where the current contract ends and was told if not choosing the two optional years or going with this company, the existing contract will end this year. Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is a cost difference between accepting the new contract versus taking the two-year option. Member Whalen stated her belief there is not. Asked if there is a copy of the contract that tracks changes between the current and proposed, Superintendent Corey stated if one was created it will be provided to the school boards in advance of the October meeting.

Member Brown remarked the contracting party is the SAU, but that is not how the funds roll, e.g., the COOP School District does not pay the SAU to provide busing. This cannot be voted upon at the SAU Governing Board meeting unless each of the boards notice that meeting, which has been done in the past. Each board has to vote on the contract.

Member Whalen reiterated the desire for the contract to be voted on in October.

*The Board returned to the regular order of business.*

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

*The Board recessed at 6:34 p.m.*

*The Board reconvened at 7:07 p.m.*

## **PUBLIC INPUT**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock read into the record the language of policy [BEDH](#) – Public Participation at Board Meetings:

*“The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA [91-A:3](#).”*

*In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, it may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:*

- 1. The first 15 minutes will be set aside for citizens to address the Board. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. Speakers must provide their name and address and will be allotted three minutes per person.*
- 2. Consistent with RSA [91-A:3](#), Policy [BEDB](#), and the laws pertaining to student and family privacy rights, the Board will not place any matter on the public agenda that is to be properly discussed in a non-public session. Complaints regarding individual employees, personnel or students will be directed to the Superintendent in accord with Policies KE and KEB.*
- 3. All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, libelous, defamatory or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow this rule of order.*

*Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Questions shall be directed to the Board Chair.”*

Policy BEDB reads in part:

*“Additionally, the Board reserves the right to limit public discussion at Board meetings to agenda items only.”*

***Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public input at 7:09 p.m.***

Joe Garruba, 28 Winchester Dive, Hollis

Spoke of the proposed changes to policy BEDH stating they reduce the ability of residents to communicate with the Board at its meetings. Although he understands, at times, public input can add an hour or so to a meeting, the extra time spent listening to constituents serves to inform the Board and reassure citizens that the Board members are responsive to their concerns.

Public input should not be limited to agenda items only. That is unrealistic as many times there are issues which need to be brought to the Board’s attention that may not be on the agenda. The proposed language would serve to limit the range of input the Board could receive. His recommendation was to strike the language “The Board reserves the right to limit public discussion at Board meetings to agenda items only.”.

Often people prepare written comments. Last minute changes to the allotted time are hard to react to. Three minutes per speaker should be guaranteed. He recommended striking the language “For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the board may at the outset of the public comment period increase or decrease the individual time limit for all speakers.”.

Public input should normally occur at the beginning of the meeting. He recommended removing the language that would move public input away from the beginning of the meeting. By having public input at the start of the meeting the Board would be respectful of the time constraints parents face. Holding public input at the beginning of the meeting is common to other boards in Town.

*The public input period was declared closed at 7:13 p.m.*

## **DISCUSSION**

- Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Discussion

The budget process has begun. By September 30<sup>th</sup> the Administration will have received all information from the middle and high schools and will have the complete Round 1 information to start discussions with the Board in October.

Superintendent Corey highlighted some of the items that will drive the budget. Between the end of last year and this year, growth has been seen in retirement numbers. Individuals who meet the requirement under the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) are entitled to a benefit at the end of their contract. For the long haul it is good as staff turnover yields a curve in the overall salary line (bringing it down). But in years like this where we will likely, for the first time in a long time, approach the maximum number of retirees in a single year, it will be a significant number.

Asked what the process is for determining whether requests in excess of the maximum number would be accepted, Superintendent Corey stated he would come to the Board informing of the individual's intent to retire, there would be a discussion to determine if the maximum would be exceeded.

There were 2 or 3 in May and June of last year that were not budgeted for. In the contract they are entitled to the stipend one year after. Asked for additional clarification, Superintendent Corey explained the Board could decide to accept more than 8 (believed to be the number cited in the CBA) and pay the stipend or if not accepting any in excess of that number, the individual(s) would have the option of retiring and receiving the stipend one year later or working one more year until they were eligible for the retirement benefit.

Superintendent Corey noted Principal Girzone is recommending the 0.8 Guidance Counselor position become a Full Time Equivalent (FTE). The same is being considered for a 0.8 math position. Principal Girzone is watching the numbers associated with students opting for P.E. at some other venue (lowered). A recommendation may come forward to move the existing .0.6 position to FTE.

As we moved into COVID and a one-on-one environment, we have found that an IT person in each building is very difficult. We are now taking care of 1,200 devices plus what is in the computer labs. Being considered is transitioning that position, which is presently funded under ESSER II grant funding, into the operating budget. It may be that they look to put half of the position into the operating budget next year and the remainder the following year.

In terms of computer requests, those will most likely be a cost reduction as ESSER funds were able to be allocated to those resources. Many of the purchases that were on the computer technology schedule for purchase will be done through ESSER funds. The district was also able to accelerate the schedule for 3 roof sections and paving projects.

There will be discussions on whether to accelerate items identified to be addressed in the outyears. That will be done based on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Every project is reviewed/rated yearly to see if something has deteriorated more quickly than anticipated.

One area of discussion that will be brought forward is steps that can be used to mitigate the heat issue in the third floor classrooms during the hot days of the spring and fall.

Member Brown spoke of public comment provided in favor of allowing additional public input noting it is the middle of September, and we are now having a conversation, that in the last four years we have had in July. This is happening in September because the meetings during the summer were largely derailed by a couple of political issues. When there is lengthy public input, the amount of business that can occur at these meetings is impacted. Having these discussions in July allows the Board to start thinking, as a whole, of what the priorities are. The lengthy public input provided during the last two meetings was counter to the Board being able to govern well, and that is what they were elected to do.

She is pleased to hear of the recommendation to move the 0.8 Guidance position to an FTE and questioned if that is enough. There is a need to identify a replacement for the Harbor Homes component that we no longer have, which will impact the budget.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of concerns raised from all sides of the political isle around the mental health of our students. We have a good Guidance Department, and the structure of that department can work really well, but one student in crisis can impact a Guidance Counselor's whole day. We need a plan, potentially a mental health professional, who is solely there to do crisis management whether that be one individual in each building or one individual for the two buildings. The educators know the best way to do this. She would support an increase in the budget to allow for a licensed clinical mental health professional to be serving our students regularly.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked HB Elevates is still asking for ideas for areas they might use as platforms to pursue external donations and funding. It is not intended to be a budget funder but is viewed as an opportunity to provide enhancements to our operations whether that be through facilities or programs. He asked the Board to consider, early on in the discussion, that things that may not be viewed as doable or feasible for the budget may be appropriate for potential fundraising opportunities. He requested the current status of the project list/five-year plan be circulated as soon as possible believing that will generate discussion.

- Review of Memorandum of Understanding Regarding School Resource Officer (SRO) - Informational

Vice Chairman Solon questioned the distribution of time for the SRO and was told the prior arrangement was an 80/20. The full amount was put in last year's budget in anticipation of it becoming a full position. The current budget funds an SRO at 100%.

- Transportation Contract – Informational

Superintendent Corey stated he would speak with legal counsel and design the SAU41 Governing Board meeting to be able to address not only discussing the contract as an SAU Board but posting a meeting of each of the school boards so that they can vote individually, if the desire is to proceed in October.

Vice Chairman Solon commented it is tough to see the cost increasing, but it is amazing to hear of the success they have had in meeting our needs.

Member Whalen spoke of STA's efforts in retaining employees and gaining back some who left. They are very conscious of the students; trying to keep length of bus time to 30 minutes, etc. They truly believe if we can give them a five-year contract it allows them opportunities to go to the bank and talk about more buses, etc.

Vice Chairman Solon spoke of being involved with the Milford Engineering Program and of discussions he has had with the Director of the High School. She has indicated the State has authorized funding (\$4 million) for transportation for CTE. The problem is they don't have a way to spend it because they cannot buy the transportation they funded.

Member Brown suggested the Policy Committee conduct a review of Policy JKAA - Use of Physical Restraint, Seclusion and Intentional Physical Contact.

- Policy BCB - Board Member Conflict of Interest

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the desire to gain a sense of the Board regarding Policy BCB. As the public is aware, last year 3 members of the Board performed substitute duties to assist during COVID. Upon further investigation it was noted the RSA allows for Board members to act as substitutes, but it is a little grey, and the policy seems to indicate we cannot, e.g., #3 states "No member of the Board may be employed by the Board in any capacity for which a salary is paid during the term for which he or she was elected or for six months after the expiration of the term. It is not the intent of this policy to prevent any Board member from volunteering his/her services within the school community." She questioned interpretation of the language and whether Board members felt the need for clarification.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the RSA is very clear on the limitation. We have language that he believes was intended to support that but is phrased a little differently. We have received mixed legal interpretations, which is concerning. He suggested the language be clarified. His interpretation has been that salary does not specifically refer to a salaried position but a position that is compensated like an employee. It is clear in his interpretation of what is and is not allowed. He does not think the language represents that. He would advocate to change the language to clarify that it is compensation based.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated she was told there are districts that allow someone to coach/sub and that can be done as long as it is not a permanent salaried position (per RSA). However, there are districts that don't allow anything. She stated her interpretation of salary to be any compensation.

Member Whalen spoke of the need to avoid policy language being open to interpretation by current or future boards. She feels Board members working within the district puts the administrators in a difficult position. As a Board member she does want to have access to the building and would never want to stop people from volunteering. Because we cannot predict every scenario, she would be interested in seeing language that would allow the Board, the opportunity to vote on an exception to the policy.

Member Stoll commented she also views salary as any kind of payment and does see where there can be the potential for conflict or perceived conflict having Board members in the schools whether paid or unpaid. She would like to look at the volunteer aspect as well. As a mother of a student in the district she would like to be able to attend field trips, etc. but that seems to be different than if she were volunteering every day in the building. There is the potential for things to be misconstrued and could make for an uncomfortable situation for administration/staff and even potentially coming back to the Board and having conversations about things that are happening in the schools. It has the potential to cloud a Board member's decision making. Understanding the recent situation and the need to have substitutes in the buildings, she questioned if language could be added to address such a need.

Member Brown remarked we are elected, it is our duty of loyalty to the public, and anytime you are getting paid by the district you have a conflicted duty of loyalty. She does not believe people who are paid by the district can come before the Board and vote for budgets because they are getting paid out of that budget. We know of instances on other boards where members have recused themselves when a family member might be impacted by a budget decision. It concerns her that this had to come before the Board at all, that the Board has had to dig for the information, and that the Board member who has had a lot of experience and time in the buildings didn't necessarily identify the issue and make the proper recusal.

Vice Chairman Solon spoke of the point Member Whalen brought up regarding the creation of a duality of the individual's role. On the flip side, we experienced, long ago, where a Board member who was active in the schools was being heavily lobbied by staff for items. It became a real issue as there was a sort of rift between staff's position and administration's position in the building and because of the frequency that this Board member was in the building, they were coming back to the Board and relaying things thinking that they were presenting fact, but there was information that the administrators had that they could not share, at least not in public. It created a very untenable position that things were being advocated for publicly that couldn't be refuted in public. At that point in time, there was a proposal to put limitations on the volunteering aspect just because the frequency of participation in the building has the ability to put them in compromised positions where their objectivity is violated.

Member Brown asked for additional feedback on the aspect of volunteering.

Member VanCoughnett stated her belief you cannot stop parents/Board members from volunteering. In regard to the current policy language the wording "for six months after the expiration of the term" should be removed. Member Brown noted it may be that that wording comes from State RSA. Member VanCoughnett noted the language reads "employed by the Board" and the individual would be employed by the SAU. Vice Chairman Solon stated they are technically employed by the Board. If you look at the paystub it is from the district not the SAU, and technically we are the employer in that regard.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated had there been the inability for a Board member to volunteer in the schools 6 years ago, she would not have wanted to be on the Board. As part of who she is, when her children are involved in certain things be it sports, etc., she feels it is her obligation to participate. Perhaps language could be added to address situations where volunteering is solicited.

Vice Chairman Solon suggested language be added around frequency.

## **DELIBERATIONS**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **JLDBB** – Suicide Prevention  
*Given its 1<sup>st</sup> reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY JLDBB – SUICIDE PREVENTION, AS PRESENTED**  
**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

This policy is new and references RSA 193-J:2. In 2019 new requirements were put in place. The district has followed suit by re-examining suicide prevention procedures. This policy is needed to tie everything together. Both the Hollis and Brookline school boards have been going through a similar process.

The policy addresses the need for a plan to be in place to comply with State law, the plan needs to be reviewed every 2 years, and the Superintendent will designate a Suicide Prevention Liaison to assist with the tasks.

School counselors are identified as having key roles in addressing these concerns, but all staff and volunteers should be trained to address these situations. There is feedback the committee is still hoping to receive, but because of the nature, importance, and legality of this, the desire was to put the policy forward for 1<sup>st</sup> reading. The Committee will reach out to school counselors, nurses, and crisis management teams for feedback.

The plan is developed by the Superintendent and used across all of the districts. The process of approval by the Board is new. As a result, the plan will be presented at the October meeting and put before the Board for approval at a subsequent meeting.

Asked if the Committee is of the belief the policy will need adjustment, Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked the sample policy is very extensive. The Committee consolidated it and removed a lot of pieces that are included in the plan. Member Williams commented the adjusting that might need to happen is in section 1A. In the template it had lot of different steps. The Committee chose instead to refer to the components required by RSA understanding that language could change over time. The remainder of the policy is language recommended by the New Hampshire School Board Association (NHSBA).

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO TAKE FROM THE TABLE POLICY IMG – ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **IMG** - Animals in the classroom

Tabled 8-18-21

*Given its 1<sup>st</sup> reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO AMEND POLICY IMG – ANIMALS IN THE CLASSROOM, IN ITS ENTIRETY, BY REPLACING IT WITH THE COPY PROVIDED WITH THE AGENDA AND ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

The Policy Committee had extensive discussion of the current policy, which does not allow animals at all, but yet that is not in fact what happens on our campuses. The Committee researched policy language of other districts. Principal Girzone went through the practice of what occurs in the classroom and the Committee language that allows animals on school grounds only outside of school hours, that they must be leashed, and that owners are responsible for cleanup, etc. It states signage will be posted and that no animals are permitted on the turf field, track or any playing surfaces.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the language states “Children, parents, and staff will be instructed to keep their own animals off the school grounds during school hours” but does not identify the general public.

Vice Chairman Solon stated his impression the policy was directed towards those attending school not that it was intended to restrict someone walking up the sidewalk with their dog on a leash. Chairman Deurloo Babcock suggested the language could be made clearer.

Ms. Whalen noted a question raised around the language requiring animals brought onto school grounds being leashed; does that include buildings, e.g., if someone is coming to an open house or basketball game, can they just walk in with their dog because it is after school hours. Perhaps that language should state not in school buildings.

Vice Chairman Solon suggested the following amendments:

#5 replace “in an appropriate cage or container,” with “caged or contained.” and begin the next sentence with “Fecal material”.

#7 replace “The principal shall be advised of” with “The principal must approve in writing”.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the district’s insurance carrier does not allow animals to be housed in the classroom. That could be clarified.

Under the heading “Animals on School Grounds”, replace “Any animal brought onto school grounds must be leashed. Owners are responsible....” with “Any animal brought onto school grounds must be accompanied by a responsible adult who is responsible....”. Replace “Owners asked to remove....” With “, and if asked to remove ...”. That prompts the question of asked by whom. Replace “or any playing surfaces.” with “any delineated areas.” The date of the first reading needs to be updated.

Asked for a sense of the Board with regard to support for the policy language, Member Brown stated she would not support the language. Asked if the reasoning is based on the waste or safety issue, she stated it is all of the above and respect for the property. She does not see anything that it adds to the events at the school. Asked if she was in support of a full ban of animals on the property at all times, she stated she likes the policy as it was written and thinks it is unfortunate it was not being enforced.

Vice Chairman Solon asked Principal Girzone, if the policy stood as is, how might he propose enforcing it. Principal Girzone stated it would be a very challenging policy to enforce 24 hours/day. Asked what it would take to adhere to the policy, he stated he could not foresee, with current staffing, the ability to enforce that policy across the board be it 6:30 a.m., 3:30 p.m. at the soccer game, 7:00 p.m. at the baseball practice, or 4:00 p.m. on a Sunday.

Vice Chairman Solon commented what he does not like is a situation where people who are observing and abiding by the policy witnessing others not doing it. That creates a lot of animosity. Member Brown remarked if you apply that standard to many other policies, we will come up with the same conclusion; that we are not

capable of enforcing the policy. The policy sets the standard of conduct that we would like to see.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-1**

*Member Brown voted in opposition*

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **BEDH** – Public Participation at Board Meetings  
*Given its 1<sup>st</sup> reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO AMEND POLICY BEDH – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS, IN ITS ENTIRETY, BY REPLACING IT WITH THE COPY PROVIDED WITH THE AGENDA, AND ACCEPT THE FIRST READING, AS AMENDED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the amendments are intended to ensure the policy aligns with current practice. She appreciates public input provided around the proposed amendment to #1, which would replace “The first 15 minutes will be set aside for citizens to address the Board” with “The Board will set aside 15 minutes on the agenda for citizens to address the Board”. The reason for the change is that it is not usually during the first 15 minutes of the meeting that this occurs. The language could be changed to state the beginning of the meeting.

She also agrees with the input provided around removing the language in #3 that reads “For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the board may at the outset of the public comment period increase or decrease the individual time limit for all speakers.” or giving the ability to increase not decrease.

#5 is basically pulling from policy BEDB. The reference to policy “BEDH” should state “BEDB”. As a result of participation in the webinar conducted earlier in the day (put on by the NHSBA), she feels it even more important to keep the topics of public input to agenda items only.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if it would become practice that 15 minutes be identified on the agenda for public input. The suggestion was made that the language be amended to indicate “at least” 15 minutes.

He suggested the language could identify the Board will set aside the first X number of minutes of the meeting. Member Brown stated the Board would be better served to leave that language vague understanding there have been instances where it best served the Board and public to move the public input period closer to the item of particular interest to those in attendance.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on having learned not only can the Board limit public discussion at meetings to an agenda item only but it could also be limited to a certain portion of the agenda.

Vice Chairman Solon noted that to have been one of the things that was added during the 2011 amendment; limiting it. It was done on the advice of the NHSBA. Legal counsel discussed situations that were occurring, e.g., meetings were becoming highly politicized by those who viewed it as a televised public forum. There were issues unrelated to the schools coming forward, and when the Board tried to stop it there was no language permitting that. He also wants to be cognizant of the point made during public comment. We are fortunate that we have a very involved and diverse community. We would do ourselves a disservice if we use the language

that we create to undermine the spirit of the activity. We need to keep it appropriate for the Board without isolating ourselves from the general public.

Member Whalen stated agreement adding it is important for the Board to be able to understand what will be discussed during the meeting. Vice Chairman Solon stated he is completely supportive of limiting input to agenda items. Member Whalen commented on the communications received by the Board. There are times when those communications result in agenda items. Input from the public is not limited as there are means of communicating with the Board outside of meetings. There are times, particularly over the past few months, where there have been participants who typically attend the annual meeting and are not as familiar with the process followed during School Board meetings. These are meetings of the School Board conducted in public. Sometimes when we indicate that, it somehow creates distrust with the public.

There is the need to limit the discussion to agenda items to avoid having members of the public come forward to discuss an item the Board cannot respond to, which results in the statement being out in the public eye as if it is a true statement. She would prefer those having concerns/comments communicate those to the Board via email. Vice Chairman Solon spoke of a question asked during the webinar of whether emails have to be read into the record, and the response was no, you don't have to do anything, but one of the things they talked about as an option is having the Board Chair summarize the communications so that it publicly acknowledges that the input was received and for those who may not have caught up with their email, it may inform a Board member that there was sentiment expressed. He would not be opposed to including language in the policy indicating public emails will be summarized during the meeting, etc.

Member Brown suggested the language indicate they "may" be read into the record. She would not want a large amount of time during the meetings spent reading or summarizing every email communication received. If you look at the dates when the policy was addressed last, email was not quite as mainstream as it is now. The emails that are specifically for School Board communication give the public another avenue to reach the Board that did not exist when this policy was originally adopted. Those emails are read and considered.

Member Williams stated she would not support the policy believing it does not send the right message. She acknowledges and agrees with the comments made by her colleagues regarding the redundancy and concerns for being able to conduct the work of the Board. However, she believes it to be important to allow members of the public to come before the Board to provide input. Although other means of communication are available, appearing in person before the Board is a unique way of relaying opinions.

Asked what she would like to see changed in the language from what has been proposed, she stated it is not that she is not okay with limiting comments, but believes things like special meetings, annual meetings, public hearings are meetings for a specific purpose, and she is 100% supportive of limiting comments to the agenda, however, regular meetings are for policies, programs, and operations, and we miss out on comments and concerns if limiting input. In theory, she likes the idea of being able to put on the record concerns received through other means of communication but understands it could be a lengthy process. She is uncertain how that could be done efficiently.

Vice Chairman Solon stated an interest in understanding if there is proposed wording that would help us operate better but still keep it on topic.

Member Williams commented she thinks this committee is very unique and has a history of how things are done. She has seen things done for public comment in other areas that she really liked, e.g., people had to be

here in advance of a meeting and in some areas, you had to sign up beforehand providing your name, address, and topic of discussion. That information allowed the Chair to rearrange an agenda if needed.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the matter of signing up was discussed during the webinar and it was pretty clear that if you were going to cut off when someone could sign up to speak it was not a week ahead it was up until 4:00 p.m. the day of the meeting. The problem she has with not limiting topics is the concern that a member of the public who would have liked the opportunity to speak on a particular topic was unaware it would be discussed at the meeting because it was not identified on the agenda. She feels it is more transparent to publish an agenda and allow for public comment on items appearing on the agenda. Members of the public can email the Board to discuss other issues or request a particular item be placed on a future agenda. She would not want to put the Administration or the Board in a position where an issue is brought forward that was not anticipated and could not be addressed/refuted.

Member Brown remarked it is not intended to squash out people's opinions but to be limiting to allow the Board to get the business of the meeting done. She is very concerned about someone coming to the podium and speaking to a subject that maybe the Administration doesn't know anything about at all. They cannot be ready nor expected to respond to every public comment at any point in time. It is intended to protect the Administration from things that are unknown or things that should be handled in private and not during a public meeting.

Vice Chairman Solon requested the Policy Committee look at the wording in that section (5) and somehow enhance that without trying to duplicate BEDB so that when the policy is reviewed it becomes very clear that there is a mechanism to get a topic on the agenda.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **JICD** – Student Discipline and Due Process  
- 1<sup>st</sup> Reading; 5-19-21

*Given its second reading;*

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO AMEND POLICY JICD – STUDENT DISCIPLINE AND DUE PROCESS, IN ITS ENTIRETY, BY REPLACING IT WITH THE COPY PROVIDED WITH THE AGENDA, AND ACCEPT THE SECOND READING, AS AMENDED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON**

ON THE QUESTION

Principal Girzone noted the policy has gone through a few iterations during Committee meetings and was sent to legal counsel for review. Legal counsel cross-referenced the language with the RSA. There are a number of different additions and deletions. The version received from legal counsel went back before the Committee where it was reviewed and amended again based on current practice.

Asked to highlight changes the Board should be particularly aware of, Principal Girzone stated it is essentially three policies; student conduct, student discipline, and due process. The policy more clearly defines what each of those are within one document. When addressing student conduct, the policy identifies the expectations of student behaviors, what the discipline will be if the rules are not followed, and the due process that students are owed if in fact there is a disciplinary situation that comes up.

There is a lot of language around short and long-term suspensions and expulsions. The Committee discussed that at great length. During his tenure, he has not seen those come into play.

Asked if he feels the policy prior to the proposed amendments is in conflict or just not as clear relative to what our practices are, Principal Girzone responded he believes the policy, as proposed, more clearly defines the process. Asked if he believes students or parents will find anything in the new language to be concerning or surprising, Principal Girzone responded he does not. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated what was really important for her was to include the due process as part of the student conduct because when it was a separate policy it could be construed that it wasn't part of the other pieces. They are tied together and having them in the same policy allows for review of both simultaneously.

#### **MOTION CARRIED**

**7-0-0**

#### **HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGHLIGHTS**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of having been at the Friday night game and found it to be a special experience. It was a community event following a year and a half of not having community events. She was there for the football game, but has heard there was a great soccer game that week, people at the girls soccer game in the rain, etc. It is nice to see that people can gather.

She is thrilled to hear that the Student Council is putting together a Homecoming event and that the HBMS is hosting an outdoor dance.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there has been an official grand opening of the turf field and was told there has not. There has been discussion of doing something a bit more formal for this year's Homecoming. Vice Chairman Solon suggested getting the community, particularly the non-parental community, to see what they have supported. It is pretty phenomenal.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the incredible donations from community members. Principal Girzone noted the Boosters are using it on Homecoming weekend (Sunday) for a community cornhole competition.

Member Williams spoke of having been able to witness some of the club signups at the HBHS. The excitement during that and open house days was undeniable.

Regarding the virtual open house, Member Brown commented it was not as well attended as in prior years. It was early in the year. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of difficulties with accommodating the schedules for all events.

#### **REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER**

Vice Chairman Solon stated from a schedule standpoint the meeting ran within a minute of the expected timeline. The discussions went well. He is really pleased to see the Board is having healthy interaction with the community. It is setting a new pattern and expectation of the community to view us as an interactive group. There was good discussion with great leadership.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ADJOURN  
SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL  
MOTION CARRIED  
7-0-0**

*The September 15, 2021, meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.*

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_