

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
JANUARY 18, 2023
MEETING MINUTES**

A meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 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
Kate Stoll, Secretary
Tom Enright
Beth Janine Williams
Cindy VanCoughnett
Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Linda Sherwood, Senior Assistant Business Administrator
Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
Austyn Kump, Student Body President
Gracie Dortona, Student Body Vice President
Lance Flamino, Teacher, Hollis Brookline High School

Live streaming of the meeting malfunctioned at the start. A portion of the minutes was compiled through notes provided by the Board Secretary and Administration.

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Cindy VanCoughnett volunteered to serve as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

There being no objection, the agenda was adjusted to add a non-public session prior to Nominations/Resignations/Retirements, and Correspondence.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board [December 14, 2022](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 3, Line 26 correct the spelling of “Leavitt”
- Page 5, Line 17; replace “second” with “seconds”
- Page 5, Line 35; replace “between” with “better”
- Page 8, Line 3; insert “or” before “not”
- Page 8, Line 22; replace “discussion” with “discussed”

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

5-1-1

*Member Solon voted in Opposition
Member Williams Abstained*

PUBLIC INPUT

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public input at 6:05 p.m.

No input was offered.

There being no objection, the Board went out of the regular order of business to take up the update from Student Council.

Austyn Kump, Student Body President, spoke of Spirit Week and events each of the grades participated in.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, GO INTO NON-PUBLIC SESSION PURSUANT TO RSA 91-A:3 II (a) THE DISMISSAL, PROMOTION OR COMPENSATION OF ANY PUBLIC EMPLOYEE, (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF, AND (I) 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 VANCOUGHNETT

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

Yea: Kate Stoll, Tom Enright, Beth Janine Williams, Tom Solon, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Krista Whalen,
Cindy VanCoughnett

7

Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 6:09 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 6:58 p.m.

NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / RETIREMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE

A letter of Resignation was received from Nicole Perry, Teacher at the Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS).

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF NICOLE PERRY AS A TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

A Letter of Resignation was received from Melissa Palmer, School Psychologist at the Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS) effective January 1, 2023.

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF MELISSA PALMER AS A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JANUARY 1, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

A Letter of Resignation was received from George Minott from his position as Science Teacher at the HBMS effective January 20, 2023.

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT RESIGNATION OF GEORGE MINOTT AS A SCIENCE TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JANUARY 20, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

A Letter of Resignation was received from Scott Turcotte from the position of Computer Science Teacher at the HBMS, effective immediately.

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF SCOTT TURCOTTE AS A COMPUTER SCIENCE TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

A Letter of Resignation was received from Allison Piec from her position as Math Teacher at the Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS).

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ALLISON PIEC AS A MATH TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug informed the Board of the nomination of Mark Illingworth for a 0.8 FTE Math position at the HBHS. Mark has a bachelor's in mechanical engineering from the University of Virginia and a master's in digital photography from Savannah College of Art. He has been serving as a long-term

substitute in the math department at the HBHS. Salary is pro-rated for the 0.8 FTE position and 89 days remaining at \$33,148.

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE NOMINATION OF MARK ILLINGWORTH FOR THE POSITION OF 0.8 MATH TEACHER AT A MASTERS PLUS 30 STEP 20 AND A PRO-RATED SALARY OF THIRTY THREE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED FORTY EIGHT DOLLARS (\$33,148) WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JANUARY 30th
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug explained Mr. Illingworth has been present since the start of the school year as a long-term substitute. This is a nomination for an employee position.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if this action now puts him back into the mode of continuing contract and was told it is a 0.8 position for the remainder of the school year; it does not.

Vice Chairman Solon asked if this action resets in terms of what will need to happen if there is an opportunity next year or if there is any kind of guarantee of employment if there is an opening and was told there is not.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Jessica Strassburg was nominated for the position of Special Education English one-year interim for the 2022-2023 school year at the HBHS. She comes to the district with a Bachelors in English and Education from Franklin Pierce. The recommendation is a Bachelors, Step 3, and a salary of \$27,663 (pro-rated for the 107 school days).

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO ACCEPT THE NOMINATION OF JESSICA STRASSBURG FOR THE POSITION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ENGLISH ONE-YEAR INTERIM FOR THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR (EFFECTIVE DATE OF JANUARY 3, 2023) AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL AT A BACHELORS, STEP 2, AND A PRO-RATED SALARY OF TWENTY SEVEN THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED SIXTY THREE DOLLARS (\$27,663)
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Asked if the individual is certified so that they could continue to teach should there be a need for a second year, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded the individual is certified. The position is for this year and would be posted allowing the individual to be eligible.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the floor had been open for public input for over an hour, and no members of the public have expressed a desire to provide input.

The public input period was declared closed at 7:15 p.m.

MATHEMATICS REVIEW COMMITTEE – Update

Lance Flamino, Math Teacher, HBHS, provided a PowerPoint presentation (copy provided as part of agenda packet), which can be viewed [here](#) (beginning at tape counter 5:06).

Mr. Flamino spoke of working with the Assistant Superintendent on math curriculum K-12. In addition to the review itself, the desired outcomes and goals include K-12 alignment & communication both horizontal and vertical, examination of accelerated math curriculum including examination of placement tests, 6th grade curriculum (pace, essential topics, possible gaps created through acceleration), and review of common courses taught at multiple grade levels, e.g., algebra.

Findings will be presented to the Board regarding programming/curriculum, options/flexibility regarding entrance and exit of the accelerated math programs and recommendations for next steps.

According to the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, in order to improve learning experiences and outcomes for students, time should be spent analyzing and evaluating curriculum, systemic policies, practices, and procedures that may restrict student access to or success in mathematics. The important take away from that quote is experience and outcomes for students. Everything we do in school should come back to the students and creating opportunities for success in learning.

For him that meant the curriculum review being viewed not as a product to be created but rather a process of continual improvement to be engaged with in order to better meet the needs of students. He began by asking questions and allowing the answers to drive the process. He believes it important to view curriculum as part of what drives and defines what happens in schools.

The process involved research; looking at the current curriculum documents on file within the district, reviewing test data and acceleration models within and outside of our schools, and taking time to interview and talk to building administrators, math specialists, teachers, and students. Also involved are observations and explorations in the classrooms; spending time across grade levels in classrooms to watch students learning and engaging in mathematics as well as problem solving techniques.

Data collection and sorting involves quantitative and qualitative data; looking at outcomes of students based on what math pathway they may have taken.

A timeline for the process was displayed; in September/October began review of curriculum documents, explored testing results, and researched acceleration models. Moved into meeting with building administrators, etc. in the November/December timeframe. In January/February period will continue meetings with staff, spend more time observing students, look into problem solving strategies that are happening with our students as they engage in mathematics, and look into placement data.

In March/April, will follow up with teachers and administrators with questions that come up and will dive more into the differences in common courses that are being taught at multiple stages, look at challenges that arise with acceleration, and compile findings, explore themes, and create and present a report.

The intent is to present findings and recommendations in the May/June timeframe.

To date, he has conducted the research reviewing curriculum documents, testing data, and acceleration models. He has had the opportunity to meet with all building Principals, curriculum administrators, math specialists and many teachers. Has reached out to all teachers through a survey and is letting them opt into a meeting with him.

He has been able to attend a faculty meeting to introduce himself, explain the process, and share the survey. He has been able to take some of the content and themes from those interviews and start putting that information together.

Will continue interviewing teachers and follow up with administrators as questions pop up, spend time with students, including the first cohort that has moved through the acceleration program, and examining problem solving strategies there. He continues collecting data and looking at how students perform based on the pathway they chose through mathematics in high school.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated appreciation for the update provided.

Vice Chairman Solon thanked Mr. Flamino for the presentation and of his paving the way as the hope is that this process is one the district will be able to utilize for other subject matters.

Asked about the types of questions being asked, Mr. Flamino responded he has found that most of the time if starting with a question along the lines of talk to me about math teaching, learning, and instruction in your school, they hit almost everything. In his list of questions he ensures he is asking about what drives instruction in the classroom whether it is curriculum documents, a textbook, teacher resources, etc., what opportunities there are for enrichment, remediation, and how that is building into the school day as well as how much time is spent on math at different levels in different schools.

Vice Chairman Solon asked if he sees an opportunity to explore the subject matter and emphasis of the curriculum. For example, there is a State requirement now around Algebra, but there has been a lot of conversation around other elements perhaps being of equal or greater use to our student population. He has heard suggestions around probability and statistics being a very useful tool, but it often gets missed because it is considered a higher level elective, another example is managing a budget or finances in general. He asked if there is an avenue where he can collect any sort of impression or provide a recommendation of whether we should be looking at adjustments to the curriculum as far as emphasis or content.

Mr. Flamino responded that is definitely important and something that will be explored through this process. A piece of that is creating the best opportunities for students to continue engaging in math while meeting requirements that are laid out by the State. Specifically when looking at some of our students who take accelerated, if they want to get off that path something like a non-advanced placement such as a statistics course might be ideal and is actually a great option for a lot of students as they move into college courses but maybe not specifically math focused. It is a common course that students of all major studies have to be involved in in their first year in college. That is certainly something that should be looked into as part of this.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the lack of opportunity to speak with parents. Although high school students can advocate for themselves, when trying to explore the elementary experience in math students may seem one way in a classroom and are seen differently by parents at home. She questioned if there is an opportunity to open it up to a few select people to provide input. Mr. Flamino stated there certainly could be and that is something that came up when he said we have to get all stakeholders involved. Originally that was on there and some of the sticking points were logistically how does that work and how do we make sure the information is accurate to what is happening in the schools. As he moves forward and builds that picture K-12 of what is happening through conversations with administrators, teachers and students, he could look into a way to gather that input.

Member Enright urged him to return 2-3 times and bring the Board along.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug added coincidentally she is doing an elementary math curriculum review. Mr. Flamino has offered to be part of that. In looking at new materials for both Hollis and Brookline, he is a part of that conversation reviewing the materials to see how, if at all, would a particular resource impact instruction in the COOP, what would COOP teachers need to know about the language that is used along the way, etc.

PRINCIPAL/ATHLETIC REPORTS

Patrick West, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS) and Tim Girzone, Principal, HBHS, highlighted items from the reports provided as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

Regarding ROCK (advisory program), the goal is to support the social emotional needs of our students by building strong positive adult student relationships. Research shows that the number one factor in student success is ensuring they have positive connections at school and promoting a sense of community for all.

Principal Girzone stated, for students and staff, with ROCK, we meet every day, Monday through Thursday (14 minutes) and a five-minute check-in on Friday. It is a place for students to hopefully build connections and relationships not only with staff but with each other. The hope is that every student in the building has at least one adult that they feel comfortable is in their corner, that they can go to for just about anything.

Teachers have some freedom and flexibility with what they do during ROCK. This year we are looking into refining the curriculum for ROCK to have a little more fidelity for all of our students. It is treated as Tier I universal support. In this student population we are not focusing so much on the emotional support but more of the relationship building, being a good citizen, an active community member, and then we leave the Tier II and III, more of the emotional support, to other services outside of ROCK.

Teachers have access to different games and activities that try to create an environment to allow them to build and strengthen that student-teacher relationship and the student-student relationship as well.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug has helped them gain access to the one trusted adult resource, which is being looked at to see if it is a resource they want to build into the curriculum. They are finding it useful and are sprinkling it in for the rest of the year to see if it is something they really want to use more often in ROCK next year.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned if ROCK continues to stand for Reading, Organization, Communication and Knowledge, and was told SSR is now done during skills because of research that shows that 45 minutes of reading per week really benefits our students. A number of students have an appetite to change the term ROCK. That is being looked into.

The Garden Club has been working to improve recycling efforts in the building. They have welcomed classes into the greenhouse to make classroom connections with the vegetation that is being grown on campus.

Alex Ponce won the HBMS Spelling Bee and will represent HBMS at the State level competition in Concord on February 25th.

Addyson Olszewski was awarded first place for the Daughters of the American Revolution Essay contest. Addyson will work with her social studies teacher, Mr. Morrill, and English teacher, Ms. MacLeod, to prepare for her presentation on February 14th at the Wheeler House.

All 8th grade students will be participating in the STEM project sponsored by the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS).

HBMS is thrilled that Sam Boudreau will be taking over Computer Science for the remainder of the school year. Sam is coming from Hollis Upper Elementary School where she has been a Technology Integration Teacher for several years.

Member Enright commented on being pleased to see the SeaPerch Program with the PNS.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Deurloo Babcock extended congratulations to Alex Ponce and Addyson Olszewski.

Principal Girzone congratulated all of the talented musicians that took part in the HB Guitar Night and special thanks to Mr. Illingworth for stepping back into the role of advisor.

HBHS will once again be offering a winter SAT Prep Class for Juniors. The course will run for six weeks with Math classes being taught on Monday evenings and English classes on Thursday evenings. The course will begin on Monday, January 30th and run through Thursday, March 16th. The school day SAT will be administered after the course completes in late March.

Congratulations to senior Will Longtin for his outstanding performance on the American Mathematics Competition Exam taken in November which has qualified him to take the American Invitational Mathematics Examination. The last time we had a student qualify for this was in 2014. It is quite an honor.

Congrats to Trevor Duval and our AP Gov. students who finished in second place on Friday January 6th in Concord at the annual "We the People" competition.

On Monday January 9th HBHS held a HomeBase CavBlock for teachers to review with students important information about our upcoming midterm exams as well as to support and guide students with their CavBlock assignments for the remaining two weeks of the semester. This model came out of the Instructional Practices Advisory Sub-Committee. It was implemented at a time in the year where it was much needed.

The Special Education Paraprofessional position has been filled.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if the district is able to offer financial assistance for the SAT Prep class and was told that is the case. He requested that be communicated. Principal Girzone stated his belief the course is full. It was full within a week of opening. If a student came with a need, the district would be responsive to that need. Vice Chairman Solon suggested, in the future, that ability be part of any initial publication.

On the HomeBase CavBlock, he questioned if the 17 minutes were acquired by shortening each of the other periods by a small amount, and was told that was the case. When the Friday PLC was instituted, the result was essentially that the Friday schedule is about 25 minutes shorter than a Monday schedule. They start the Monday schedule at 7:40 a.m. and the Friday schedule at 8:05 a.m. When you have a 17 minute block and passing time before and after, it results in 25 minutes. It would be the equivalent of a Friday meeting time for all 7 periods.

Vice Chairman Solon commented on a discussion that has occurred around what the impact would be of doing this once a week. Asked if he has been made aware of any impact that has been a hardship as a result of that either in this context or on an ongoing basis with the Friday schedules, Principal Girzone responded no, the only

input he received concerning the 17 minute CavBlock was given what was asked of teachers to cover, they were able to do that fairly easily within that timeframe.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock extended congratulations to Will Longtin and Trevor Duval. She commented on enjoying the idea of the music program and the high school students recruiting middle school students. She would love to see that in other areas as well.

Principal Girzone provided highlights from the Athletic Coordinator's report including information on current standings for sports teams in the HBHS and HBMS, tournaments participated in, and the Hoops for Hunger can drive, which resulted in collecting over 100 pounds of food, and a cash donation of \$316.00 to the Milford SHARE and Brookline Town food pantries in advance of the holiday season.

TOUR OF SCIENCE CLASSROOMS

*There being no objection, the Board recessed at 7:49 p.m. to participate in the classroom tour.
The Board reconvened at 8:07 p.m.*

Member Stoll commented on the tour being eye-opening. The Board discusses plans and conceptualizes what will be, but it was great to see the actual physical space and have a chance to discuss placing 24 students plus a teacher into one of those classrooms. There are some real shortcomings with most of them.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked certainly in terms of the furnishings and tools provided, which could be better.

DISCUSSION

- Facilities Update – Renovations Future Planning; Superintendent's Memo

A communication from Superintendent Corey was provided as part of the agenda packet.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the Administration has been looking at both the middle and high schools to identify what next projects could and should be based on the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). The Board just completed a tour of the middle school science wing, which is a project that needs to be considered. The question is whether this is the time or if that is something that can be delayed.

The focus is on the aging infrastructure related to boilers, lighting, and the transition from oil to propane. Superintendent Corey has recommended that we proceed with a lease warrant article to address the boilers at both buildings, control systems at both buildings, the removal of our underground oil tanks to be replaced with propane, and the transition to LED lighting across both buildings.

The boiler systems at the high school are original to the building and are reaching end of useful life. The middle school boilers range in age from 25-30 years of service. State environmental laws have been updated and will require us to upgrade the piping that connects the underground tanks to both the middle school and high school boilers. This piping upgrade is mandated and will cost the COOP approximately \$150,000 per building should this renovation project not move forward. That mandatory expense of approx. \$300,000 will result in nothing new except for piping.

By moving to propane boilers, we eliminate our underground oil tanks and the potential environmental risks while also leveraging our buying power as the COOP would be bidding with the Hollis School District and the Town of Hollis to secure propane. The LED lighting will enhance the learning environment as well as reduce electrical consumption.

Also reviewed was a renovation to the middle school science wing. After multiple discussions and reviewing multiple options, the decision was reached to delay these renovations until we have more time to review designs while determining our future curriculum needs.

In his memo, Superintendent Corey stated he envisions the science wing and the expansion of the high school cafeteria and the development of increased instructional space at the high school to be brought forward in the coming budget cycles. He would also expect to provide the communities with an update of eventually expanding our discussions to include the use of solar arrays to reduce energy consumption.

The chart provided identifies cost estimates for the infrastructure renovations as well as the potential savings these projects will most likely generate. Moving the high school to LED lighting comes at a cost of approx. \$558,603 with projected yearly savings of \$42,036 and eligibility of a \$40,000 rebate. The high school boiler cost is expected to be \$1,180,000 with a projected yearly savings of \$47,670 and a \$16,000 rebate. The high school boiler has three major components; remove oil tank (\$52,000), furnish and install new propane tanks (\$75,000) and furnish and install boilers (\$1,053,000).

LED lighting at the middle school has an anticipated cost of \$423,702 with a projected yearly savings of \$26,810 and a rebate of \$30,000. The middle school boiler has three major components; remove oil tank (\$48,500), furnish and install new propane tanks (\$60,000) and furnish and install boilers (\$806,000). The total cost is \$914,500 with anticipated savings of \$30,921 and rebate of \$16,000.

The middle school science wing has an anticipated cost of \$1,209,508 and is recommended for a future budget cycle.

By not moving forward with the renovations to the middle school science labs, we reduce the overall cost of the lease warrant article to \$3,076,805 (LED lighting and new boilers at both schools). This is the recommendation of the Superintendent.

Restated was the belief the science lab renovations need further discussion and refinement prior to being brought forward.

The associated savings, once renovations are complete, would result in cost avoidance of approximately \$147,437 on an annual basis. An annual lease payment on \$3,076,805 (5% interest rate and a 15-year term) is estimated at \$291,272 or a 10-year lease payment on \$3,076,805 (3.8% interest rate) estimated at \$364,000.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock questioned when the Board is required to take a position on whether or not to recommend. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the need for conducting a public hearing on a bond or lease. Vice Chairman Solon noted Board action on this is not identified on the agenda under Deliberations. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted if the Board supports moving forward with the recommendation, it will appear on the warrant as Article 1, as required.

Vice Chairman Solon stated his belief the Board was reviewing the articles, but would not take a position until following the public hearing. Member Enright stated his belief the desire was to gain a sense of the Board.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted the Board has the ability, following the public hearing, to decide to amend the warrant (has to be noticed). The Board did not have to deliberate on the item at this time in order for it to appear on the proposed warrant for the public hearing. If there is support for bringing it forward at a bond hearing, it is okay as is as Article 1.

The date of the Public Hearing is February 2, 2023 (joint meeting with the COOP Budget Committee) at the middle school. The bond or lease public hearing would be conducted on the same date.

Asked what the projected yearly savings identified is relative to, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded consumption for the past two years was compared to data from the Hollis School District, which has already converted to LED. Vice Chairman Solon restated the Administration forecasted what the usage will be after the conversion. He questioned what was used for a price differential, e.g., comparison to what was actually paid or what is believed would be paid under the two different scenarios, and was told it was the two different scenarios, and when looking at the boilers they looked at what the contracted rate is and what the contracted rate is for propane right now.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the concern he has, particularly when comparing oil with propane, is that propane, on a BTU level, has generally been the most expensive fuel source with natural gas being the lowest and oil in the middle; if comparing it to what the cost is with our current boiler as opposed to a high efficiency oil boiler versus the projected use with a propane. He questioned if the savings would still be seen if upgrading and continuing with oil.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of the regulations that are in place, which change without any notification to a group like us that needs to budget 18 months in advance. There are quite a few regulations on oil tanks that we have seen where it hits our budget and we have to act immediately, this being one of them. She noted the success the SAU has seen with the transition from oil to propane in Hollis. When engaging in the process in Hollis many different options were investigated, and propane rose to the top. For this, that was the direction desired.

Asked if a comparison was done of upgrading oil versus upgrading propane, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated she has not but is uncertain whether EEI has. Member Enright stated his assumption that is what the numbers represent. Vice Chairman Solon stated his assumption it is in comparison to our existing baseline.

Member Enright remarked what is being brought up is one of the problems that he has with where we are today. These savings numbers of \$150,000 are significant. We need to know how those figures were derived. It appears that we are required to place this article first. With \$150,000 savings we haven't taken anything out of our budget, and presumably if Article 1 passes and then we do this installation, we will take at least a piece out of our budget. He would like to hear how that would be handled.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded the same would be true should this article fail; we will have to allocate \$300,000 to change the piping. There would be a number of things that we would do later on whether that is amending the budget on the floor to include the underground piping, identify that we are not doing that, and we will not do some of the items that were identified as new items such as the theatre upgrade, etc. or another option would be to amend the maintenance expendable trust. Currently, as a proposal it is \$300,000 and her understanding was that would be tied to if article 1 failed so that the maintenance trust would pick that up. Those would all be contingent upon the outcome of article 1.

Member Enright stated his point to be we need to deal with article 1 as the first agenda item. If he had his choice, he would rather get the more important articles like the budget and support staff contract addressed. Article 1 has to be done because it has ramifications on the budget. It was stated legally the article has to appear first. Member Enright clarified it has to be listed first but could be moved during the meeting.

Member Whalen questioned if the article has to be open for 60 minutes. Member Enright stated his belief it does not as it is a lease vote, which requires a majority.

Vice Chairman Solon stated a concern he has is confirmation that a municipal lease will be handled in apportionment in the same manner a bond would. Our language specifically talks about bond payment and bond interest. He started at the SAU then went to DRA and is now talking to DOE; people seem to agree these are the right people, but the individual he spoke with did not know the answer. If the bond and leases are handled differently that brings in a question of whether there would be support for it because of the apportionment impact.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on having a municipal lease last year and confirmation is being sought on that. Our understanding is that it is long-term debt. Vice Chairman Solon remarked it is not a question of whether it is long-term debt, but whether or not it turns out the DOE tells the DRA how to plug the number into apportionment when the bills go out to the towns. When he asked the question, the answer was "That is a good question, I don't know the answer".

Member Enright questioned if the Superintendent has been asked. Vice Chairman Solon stated he asked the Business Administrator who said she was uncertain and would look into it.

Asked if there is competition with the other two districts for bonding/leasing, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated there to be a teachers' contract in Brookline, but no bond. Member Enright commented that does not happen very often and it is hard for the COOP to compete with the elementary districts as they are usually favored. This year we don't have any competition, which is one of the reasons he thinks the Board should take a shot at this. Noted was that next year the COOP will be looking at a teacher contract.

Member VanCoughnett remarked, timing wise she believes that to be why the Superintendent brought this forward at this time.

Vice Chairman Solon commented ignoring the bond versus lease issue, even though a higher interest, he favors the longer period because of the lower impact annually and the fact that one of the reasons we are looking at lease is they are easier to refinance. Interest rates are already dropping. There is a reasonable possibility that, in short time, the 5% could easily be under 3%.

Member Enright echoed the comments stating agreement we should keep our payment as low as we can. We also have a major bond that retires in three years that has somewhere around a \$500,000 - \$600,000 net to it. If we are going to do work at the schools and we can get rid of a bond and keep our payment low we will have more of an opportunity to be successful.

Member Whalen remarked we have been looking at energy consumption for quite a while and the energy committee in Hollis has been promoting it. She assumes that this came out because we have to change the pipes and because we were working on that. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the Administration had been working on this prior to that. It has been talked about at meetings, it is just that when that information came forward it became a priority to look at replacing both of them.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her recollection the regulation came out in November (effective immediately). Because we are in New England there is not a lot of underground work we can do right now. The expectation is that it is completed in the spring with the thaw. If this article were to pass, starting the work July 1 becomes acceptable to the State because the funds have been committed and we are moving forward.

Member Enright commented the way we are struggling with our conversation tonight says something about the process, which he does not think has been as good as it could have been. He provided the example of being on the Hollis School Board when they were doing some of this work. Tammy Fareed, who is a very thorough individual, was the Board representative at all of the meetings, which is an aspect this Board has not been a part of. When Tammy spoke during the Hollis project, he understood that she had done the due diligence, and he was satisfied with that. We cannot say that here. He does not think that is a good spot to be in because none of the Board members have participated in any of this. Moving forward, there should be a School Board representative to do that due diligence for the Board as a whole.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of the Facilities Sub-Committee that was formed, including representation from the Board and community, during discussions of the turf field and STEM center. She suggested that sub-committee should be permanent.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he is in favor of supporting this with two caveats: 1) that we confirm that the municipal lease structure falls under the same apportionment formula as bond payments and 2) with the 15-year term.

Members of the Board expressed agreement with the fifteen year term. Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented how it is apportioned isn't as much a sticking point for her, but she would prefer that it be apportioned as a bond is.

Member Enright stated his support reiterating we have a moment in time that will not repeat itself in the near future. This is work that needs to be done.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if there is support of the removal of the science wing from it this year. Member Whalen stated the only reason she supports doing that is because she feels there are other ideas coming forward. Asked if it is a matter of not wanting to expend the funds right now or that we are not certain what is desired, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded it is some of both. There is only so much you can do with the space that we have and the space we have isn't ideal. Part of the conversation is do you take a bigger step back and think more broadly; coupling a possible high school renovation and moving robotics back given you more physical real estate here.

Member Enright commented because he was part of the elementary project and is aware of how successful that has been, he wishes there would be a conversation now about solar and heat pumps and whether or not they are candidates for at least this building so that the Board could get an overview of instead of a piece of the energy work, to really know what the end goal is.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked he is happy to hear him say that as that was his position last month; we are missing a big part of the picture which is where we really want to be and should we be investing in that now. He does not completely understand the reason that it was essentially discounted as not viable.

Member Enright commented on having a conversation with the Superintendent the prior week, and has the belief that he may put that behind addressing the science rooms and getting the cafeteria. Although his

impression may be incorrect, he does not believe there has been a lot of homework on the issues of solar and heat pumps.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked when looking at all of the possibilities in Hollis, it was determined that the Hollis Primary School (HPS) was more suitable to utilize the air source heat pumps than the Hollis Upper Elementary School, which has what is being proposed here. That was based on the size, scope and layout of the building. HPS has better access to the exterior at a reasonable height. The high school is definitely not suitable for that feature. The middle school is closed to the first floor especially in the north wing, but the size is a concern. Another concern she heard from EEI (consultant) is the cost barrier (15-year lease); those units have a useful life of 15 years. It doesn't make sense to do that for a building of this size as it becomes really expensive, and you would immediately have to replace it once it is paid off.

Member Enright commented we have two tremendous facilities for solar. We have plenty of space and space that faces in good directions. It seems we should at least know how and whether it fits in, and when we will attempt to accomplish that. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated agreement and suggested that would be a good conversation to involve the energy committee on. Talks have been around solar array and not rooftop units like we have in Hollis. She has assumptions for why that is the case but does not really have a lot of reasoning to back that up. She agrees there is the need to have that group work with us to provide more solid recommendations based on this actual facility.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented what she is hearing is concern that the priority is this boiler project now, which is fine, but the priority that she heard from the Superintendent is next would be the science wing, cafeteria and construction. Member Enright remarked he may have misinterpreted. What he wants most is for the Board to participate in these discussions so that he would be more comfortable that a Board member has done the due diligence on behalf of the Board.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked the full picture would have explained why we specifically are going with propane versus solar versus another option. It would define the basis for cost comparison (how numbers were generated), what the best and worst case scenarios are, etc. It is a very difficult position to be asked to propose and defend a decision to ask for \$3 million. He is uncertain he can support the article without those answers.

The consensus of the Board was to support the article with the 15-year lease term.

Member Williams departed at 8:55 p.m.

- Revenue and Expense Report

Linda Sherwood, Senior Assistant Business Administrator, stated as of 1-9-23, the projected fund balance is \$316,571. On the expense side of the ledger, areas where savings are being seen include teacher vacancies, hiring savings, unpaid leaves, and savings in special education (\$550,377 savings in out-of-district services). Also included are the corresponding benefits, taxes, insurance, and retirement due to vacancies and lower salaries. We are over-budget in areas of facilities; higher than expected electric and oil costs. Under transportation, the cost of gasoline is higher than anticipated. We are using outside vendors because the van driving positions are both vacant. On the expense side, a balance is identified of \$739,519.

On the revenue side, we're showing \$90,000 more in revenue than budgeted. The one thing new on the report is under State, NHRS reimbursement. That is a new line and was an unexpected reimbursement from the State. House Bill 1221, enacted in 2022, requires the State to reimburse 7.5% of local employer contributions to NHRS made in FY22. That is a one and done deal (\$135,000).

Were the district to fund the Maintenance Trust at \$300,000, Special Education Trust at \$25,000, and Retained Fund Balance at \$188,559, the total reductions would be \$513,559 resulting in the projected fund balance.

In looking at the numbers, month by month, week by week, she is of the opinion the fund balance will increase.

Asked what is believed will make it rise, she stated what is being seen with expenses is that we place purchase orders and encumber monies, and then, for whatever reason, the money does not get spent. She proactively reaches out to the schools monthly informing them where funds remain allocated in the budget. They then reach out to staff members to place the necessary orders.

Vice Chairman Solon commented a lot of it is that we are not able to operate at the level of completeness that we want to.

Ms. Sherwood remarked it is unfortunate that we have the vacancies we do. There is a savings as a result, which is how that is impacting the bottom line.

- FY24 Update – Draft Warrant Articles
 - Contingency Fund or Increase the Percentage regarding the Unreserved Fund Balance

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the discussion that already occurred around the draft warrant articles. Being debated was whether or not the Board request voters approve a contingency fund.

Noted was a change in State law around how to access the retained fund balance. Previously, in order to expend, a request had to be put forth to the Budget Committee and State to utilize for emergency purposes. Currently there is a requirement to conduct a public hearing.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted should the article to increase the amount of the retained fund balance to 2.5% fail, it would not revert back to the 1%. A contingency article would be needed to request it remain at 1% should the article fail. There is no requirement that a district have an article to approve the new wording of this law. Legal counsel was consulted on this matter.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the way the article is worded, it does not indicate passage would rescind the current article. The current article also stated: “until rescinded”. Were the proposed article to state “to rescind the current and replace with” that would be the expected outcome. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the need for a legal opinion.

Member VanCoughnett noted it would not be a unanimous vote from the Budget Committee (likely 5-2) to put both articles in the warrant. She stated the desire to see both remain on the draft warrant for the public hearing. If additional feedback is provided, it can be discussed at that time.

The Hollis School District has both. The Brookline School District has the higher percentage in the Retained Fund Balance (2.5%). When that article was passed in Brookline, the Contingency Fund article was pulled.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he is not supportive of having both. His preference is for the increased percentage for the Retained Fund Balance. He spoke of his high level of confidence in the Business Office and understanding if there are funds available, they will find a way to fund it. Contingencies are not utilized much and draw a lot of bad attention.

Member Enright remarked historically we run a big surplus regardless. He agrees with Vice Chairman Solon. He does not support both, is not certain he supports either, but prefers the Retained Fund Balance.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug pointed out the Superintendent had remarked increasing the Retained Fund Balance to 2.5% works out to about \$475,000. If a major piece of equipment were to go the cost would be in the area of \$600,000 (rooftop unit). The \$475,000 plus the \$125,000 in contingency would get you to the \$600,000.

Member Enright noted the district is asking for a lot; we have a budget that is at 6%, we're looking for an increase to support staff salaries, which he is in complete support of, then we are asking for \$2-3 million, and supposedly we are all short of funds. At some point, we overreach.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented she can see the case for not including the contingency article. She would rather see the Retained Fund Balance article. On a budget the size of the COOP, having that 2.5% makes a good deal of sense, and is the responsible action to take.

Asked, of the two, which is more supported by the Budget Committee, Member VanCoughnett responded she believes it to be the Retained Fund Balance; however, she was uncertain there was consensus on the percentage.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the desire to hear from members of the Budget Committee.

The Board agreed to leave the articles on the draft warrant for the Public Hearing so that input could be received from the public before deciding what will be put forth on the Warrant.

Asked if the Budget Committee is supportive of the lease article, Member VanCoughnett responded that is the case so far. There is a meeting scheduled for next week. She noted the Administration has come forward with a draft budget that is under guidance.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of staffing issues, specifically at the middle school, and questioned if the Board would like to direct the Superintendent to make a larger communication to the entire COOP related to some of the concerns being heard.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he put forth a question to the Chairman of whether the Board should make the request of the Superintendent to put a communication out to the community, to get out in front of the communication and likely misinformation. As soon as we start sending things to some parents, which we do about a specific event, that gets posted. We cannot communicate through social media. The Superintendent can communicate to the parents and provide factual information about a situation and the district's response to it as opposed to someone who may or may not be well meaning posting something and starting a gossip line about it. He suggested the district put facts out there and let them disseminate before the rumor mill churns too much.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated letters have gone out to parents of students in particular classes related to the absences and vacancies. There has not been a broad letter to all parents in the COOP related to the fact that we are seeing staffing turnover, and what the district is doing to mitigate that.

Member Enright commented he does not have enough of a frame of reference to offer an opinion but can say that he trusts both superintendents to make a decision like this. Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked that is where she falls on the issue as well. Vice Chairman Solon commented he does not only from the standpoint that it hasn't happened. That is where his concern is that it hasn't happened, and he believes it should. We have been criticized and critical of insufficient communication with the public and we are faced with a situation where that function itself, which we supported, is now, to some degree, gone through a staffing loss. We need to prioritize it. This is his way of asking to make it a priority.

If we don't specifically say what is occurring people's imaginations go all over the place. Member Stoll stated agreement. She sees where there is merit to sending something out to all parents. Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented it has been an unprecedented amount of turnover. This goes back to last year. It is certainly in the news. It wouldn't be out of the ordinary for the Superintendent to take a moment and explain that to families as well as some of the things that are being done regularly like the increases in the mentor program. We are kind of dealing with a bit of a crisis and when you are in a crisis you want to communicate about that. That would be the role of the Communications and Compliance person, but unfortunately that person has resigned their position.

Vice Chairman Solon noted he has never seen 5 resignations in a single meeting in the middle of a school year. Chairman Deurloo Babcock agreed it is unprecedented, and she would like to see a communication go out to the COOP, not focused on the negative but instead on what the team is doing to create a comfort level and keep staff in the building.

Member Whalen agreed a communication should relay the facts of what is occurring and the solutions. There are some unfortunate things that are happening with teachers resigning in the middle of the year, but she can honestly say the Administration has done an outstanding job putting it all together and making it happen.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the remaining staff have stepped up really well too, and we have got to let them know that the school is not collapsing.

The Board agreed with requesting the Superintendent put out a communication, and that Board members be copied.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **JLCB** – Immunizations of Students
1st Reading – 12-14-22
Given its second reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE SECOND READING OF POLICY JLCB – IMMUNIZATIONS OF STUDENTS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the policy is before the Board for a second reading with no changes proposed since the time of the first reading. Last month the change was to reflect a change in the law that previously required a notarized form. That is no longer the case. The Policy Committee looked into whether or not the form has changed and learned it has not.

Vice Chairman Solon noted some of the items in the form are specified in policy. It is not a question of us simply saying follow State RSA. Some of the language of the form states “In the event of an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease for which immunization is required, an exempt student shall be excluded from school attendance.” He would like to see that information in the policy so that people understand that if they claim this exemption and there is an outbreak, the school has the requirement, not just the ability, to exclude those students.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding Policy **GEA** – Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Advisors and Athletic Coaches

1st Reading – 11-16-22

2nd Reading – 12-14-22

Given its third reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO ACCEPT THE THIRD READING AND ADOPT POLICY GEA – EXTRA-CURRICULAR AND CO-CURRICULAR ADVISORS AND ATHLETIC COACHES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT

ON THE QUESTION

No changes have been proposed since the time of the last reading.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding increasing the percentage with regards to the unreserved fund balance.

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO PUT FORTH A WARRANT ARTICLE TO SEE IF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL VOTE TO AUTHORIZE, INDEFINITELY, UNTIL RESCINDED, TO RETAIN YEAR-END UNASSIGNED GENERAL FUNDS IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED, IN ANY FISCAL YEAR, TWO AND A HALF PERCENT (2.5%) OF THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR’S NET ASSESSMENT IN ACCORDANCE WITH RSA 198:4-B II

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon reiterated he would like clarification on the issue of should this article fail. He is concerned should the article fail the previously approved article that cited 1% may no longer be in place.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Board putting forth a warrant article to establish a contingency fund – FY 2024

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO PUT FORTH A WARRANT ARTICLE TO ESTABLISH A CONTINGENCY FUND FOR THE CURRENT YEAR FOR UNANTICIPATED EXPENSES THAT MAY ARISE AND FURTHER TO RAISE AND APPROPRIATE A SUM OF UP TO ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$125,000) TO GO INTO THE FUND. THE SUM TO COME FROM YEAR-END UNASSIGNED FUND BALANCE

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

MOTION CARRIED

5-1-0

Vice Chairman Solon voted in opposition

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Member VanCoughnett commented on the length of the non-public session being more than anticipated.

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 (c) TO DISCUSS A MATTER, WHICH IF DISCUSSED IN PUBLIC, WOULD LIKELY AFFECT ADVERSELY THE REPUTATION OF A PERSON, OTHER THAN A MEMBER OF THE BODY OR AGENCY ITSELF

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT

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

Yea: Tom Enright, Krista Whalen, Cindy VanCoughnett, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Tom Solon, Kate Stoll

6

Nay:

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MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 9:21 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 9:53 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ADJOURN

SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

The January 18, 2023 meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 9:53 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____