

HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
APRIL 12, 2023
MEETING MINUTES

The Organizational Meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, April 12, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Andrew Corey, Superintendent presided:

Members of the Board Present: Holly Deurloo Babcock
Robert Mann
Kate Stoll
Tom Solon (arrived at 6:16 p.m.)
Cindy VanCoughnett
Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent: Beth Janine Williams

Also in Attendance: Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Tim Girzone, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
Austyn Kump, Student Body President
Gracie Dortona, Student Body Vice President

ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL BOARD

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Superintendent Corey called for nominations for Chairman of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

**MEMBER STOLL NOMINATED MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK
SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Stoll commented Holly has a proven track record for leadership. She has a very level head and provides a good balance to the meetings.

**VOTE ON ELECTION OF HOLLY DEURLOO BABCOCK TO THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN
OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE 2023-2024 TERM
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

Superintendent Corey declared Holly Deurloo Babcock Chairman of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

Superintendent Corey stepped down and Chairman Deurloo Babcock presided.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock called for nominations for Vice-Chairman of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

**MEMBER WHALEN NOMINATED MEMBER STOLL
SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Whalen commented Kate has been on the Board for the past 3 years, is ready to take on different roles, and she would like to see her move into the role of Vice Chair.

**VOTE ON ELECTION OF KATE STOLL TO THE POSITION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE
HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE 2023-2024 TERM
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock declared Kate Stoll Vice-Chairman of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock called for nominations for Secretary of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

**MEMBER WHALEN NOMINATED MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT
SECONDED BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK**

**VOTE ON ELECTION OF CINDY VANCOUGHNETT TO THE POSITION OF SECRETARY OF
THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE 2023-2024 TERM
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0**

Chairman Deurloo Babcock declared Cindy VanCoughnett Secretary of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board for the 2023-2024 term.

Members Stoll and Mann were appointed as signers of the manifests and Member VanCoughnett as an alternate signer.

NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

A letter of resignation was received from Erin White from the position of Health Teacher at the Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS) effective June 30, 2023. In her letter she states “As an alum of the Hollis Brookline School District, it was my great honor to join SAU 41 as faculty. Over the last 20 years, I have had the pleasure of working with an exceptionally talented and dedicated staff, many of whom have become dear friends.”

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ERIN WHITE AS A HEALTH TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

A letter of resignation was received from Elissa McCormick, French Teacher at the HBHS, with an effective date of June 30, 2023. In her letter, she states “I will complete my current contract year but will not be renewing my contract for 2023-2024.”

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF ELISSA MCCORMICK AS A FRENCH TEACHER AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

A letter of resignation was received from Susan Joyce, School Counselor, HBHS, effective June 30, 2023.

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO ACCEPT THE RESIGNATION OF SUSAN JOYCE AS A SCHOOL COUNSELOR AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL WITH AN EFFECTIVE DATE OF JUNE 30, 2023

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

Superintendent Corey noted Adam Wilcox, Teacher, HBHS, will return from leave next fall in a 0.6 position, which will work very well with the science schedule. The Administration and Board expressed excitement to welcome Mr. Wilcox back to the district.

NON-PUBLIC SESSION

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN 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

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

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

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

6

Nay:

0

MOTION CARRIED

The Board went into non-public session at 6:17 p.m.

The Board came out of non-public session at 7:25 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Tom Solon volunteered to serve as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Superintendent Corey noted the information included in the Principal’s report concerning the overnight travel request to the First Robotics Competition World Championship taking place in Houston, TX. Principal Girzone informed the Board the students opted not to participate in the trip.

A copy of Policy GADA was not available due to server issues; therefore, Board action will not be addressed at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board. [January 18, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 4, Line 37; replace “teacher” with “teach”
- Page 6, Line 34; replace “the” with “they”
- Page 7, Line 25; replace “II” with “III”

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

5-0-1

Member Mann Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **1st Non-Public**. [January 18, 2023](#)

The following amendment was offered:

- Page 1, Line 2; replace “223” with “2023”

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

5-0-1

Member Mann Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **2nd Non-Public**. [January 18, 2023](#)

Member(s) Absent: Williams

The following amendment was offered:

- Page 1, Line 2; replace “223” with “2023”

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

4-0-1

Member Mann Abstained

Jt. Mtg. Hollis Brookline COOP School Bd. / COOP Budget Committee. [February 2, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 2, Line 26; insert “to the public” following “return”
- Page 2, Line 30; replace “change” with “decrease”
- Page 4, Line 44; replace “so” with “of”
- Page 14, Line 43; delete “to” before “the extent”
- Page 17, Line 34; correct spelling of “moot”

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

5-0-1

Member Mann Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District – **Public Hearing FY24 Budget** [February 2, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Correct page numbering in the header
- Page 2, Line 30; replace “\$15/hour” with “\$15 hourly rate”

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

5-0-1

Member Mann Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District – **Public Hrg. – Pet. Warrant Article.** [February 16, 2023](#)

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

1-0-5

Members Mann, Solon, Stoll, VanCoughnett, and Whalen Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District – **Public Hearing – Bond** [February 20, 2023](#)

The following amendment was offered:

- Correct page numbering in the header

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

3-0-2

Members VanCoughnett and Mann Abstained

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District – **Public Hrg. – Pet. Warrant Article.** [February 20, 2023](#)

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ACCEPT, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL**

4-0-2

Members VanCoughnett and Mann Abstained

Special Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board. [February 20, 2023](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 2, Line 4; replace “A” with “He”
- Page 4, Line 4; replace “extensive” with “extensively”

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

4-0-2

Members VanCoughnett and Mann Abstained

PUBLIC INPUT

Residents providing input were asked to state their name and address for the record and that input be focused on items included on the agenda. The public input period is not intended to be a back and forth discussion, but rather an opportunity for the Board to hear from residents before acting on agenda items.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock opened the floor for public input at 7:29 p.m.

Agatha Connelly, 14 Sawmill Road, Hollis

The mother of a 7th grade student spoke in support of dugouts for the Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS) softball team. Her child has played softball for 5 years. At every field there were dugouts. She was surprised to learn there are no dugouts for softball when they are available for baseball. She noted the report of the Athletic Coordinator addresses this issue. She wished to state they are a routine/normal part of softball and baseball fields to provide protection from the sun and inclement weather. She asked when the process for acquiring dugouts would be completed.

Andrea Seddon, 50 Wheeler Road, Hollis

Has a 7th grade student on the softball team. She has coached her child’s team for 5 years and every field they have ever played on or traveled to has been equipped with a dugout. As a mother of a daughter she is asked why the boys have dugouts and the girls do not.

Wonders if the reasoning is related to funding or an afterthought. It is a sense of pride and confidence when traveling to another location and seeing the other team has dugouts. She touched upon the practicality of the dugouts.

Clint Leonard, 40 Jewett Lane, Hollis

His daughter is a 7th grade student on the softball team. He requested the Board consider dugouts to protect the students when playing.

Tom Enright, 41 Orchard Drive, Hollis

Like many, he had to sit through the 5 hour Annual Meeting. He cannot endure a five-hour meeting, and neither can parents as they cannot leave their home for that long of a period of time to endure the meeting. The year prior, the meeting lasted 4.5 hours. He requested the Board look to turn it around and move in a different direction. He suggested four ways the meeting could be improved upon:

1. The Hollis meeting gaveled in their first article in about half an hour whereas we did ours in an hour. We should be able to reach that point in the meeting within half an hour.
2. He has never been in favor of sanbornizing contracts but is in favor of that as it is a piece that can be addressed at one time and removed from future agendas. He requested the Board sanbornize labor contracts.
3. One person has presented 13 petition warrant articles, which have all failed. At this last meeting, almost an hour was spent on a petition warrant article that failed 2-1. We need to pay attention. They have rights, but so does he. We need to be tougher on petition warrant articles. A 3-minute presentation is sufficient. The fact that we had the other 4 articles tabled this year says we are ready to turn a corner there.
4. We need to take back the floor microphone with supportive speakers. Thirty years ago when the high school was constructed the first 4 bond issues failed. One of the important things the school board did was recognize the need for more supportive speakers. There was an organized effort to make that happen. The next 4 bond issues passed. It is not to say that was because the Board in any way controlled the floor microphone, but we did have supportive speakers there. There is an atmosphere that he found at this meeting. When certain people get up and speak in a negative way, it creates a negative atmosphere. He will be one of the needed 10-15 supportive speakers.

He noted the meeting did not go as long as it did because of anything done by the Board or Administration. The presentations made by those individuals were excellent.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the floor would remain open for public input until 7:59 p.m.

PRINCIPAL AND ATHLETIC REPORTS

Austyn Kump, Student Body President, stated the Student Council completed a successful year having brought back more spirit that was lost due to COVID. They have just finalized ideas for a Teacher Appreciation Week.

Asked if she noticed, while in middle school, that there were no dugouts for the softball team, she responded that was a big thing where you pass by those everyday and wonder why your team does not have them. Even at the high school they are not at the same level leaving players wondering why they are not equal. They are getting funding to repaint as there is some explicit graffiti on the dugouts.

Member Whalen stated her support for dugouts. Superintendent Corey remarked this is his 9th year. He became aware of the situation through the Athletic Coordinator. As someone who goes through the campus all the time, he drove over to look and was surprised by it. That will be taken care of. There should not be any disparities. He is thankful the parents brought it up and the student spoke to it as it is something that can be addressed and fixed, and that will be done.

Member Solon questioned if there are any issues with construction due to the water table in the area where they would be. He is aware of wetlands in the area and sometimes putting in true dugouts, which require excavation, might be a problem from a terrain standpoint. You may call them dugouts but may have to do something different because of groundwater.

Superintendent Corey noted the Athletic Coordinator is working on the situation and an update will likely be available in May. He wished to make it known he is uncertain why or when the disparity occurred, but he knows the Board and Administration and that it will be taken care of.

Member Solon questioned if it is likely, it can be resolved with the current budget and in time for the next need and was told it is.

Highlighted were items noted in the reports of the Principals and Athletic Coordinator, which were provided as part of the [agenda](#) packet.

Congratulations were extended to the student athletes. The Athletic Coordinator is looking to implement a new communication tool with the goal of uniformity across all sports this coming year.

Member Solon noted an opening for head and assistant coaches for fishing, and remarked when last reviewed, enrollment was really low in that area. There was discussion of the potential of it going back to a club sport, and questioned if that continues to be supported as an NHIAA activity and if so if there are only a handful enrolled, is an assistant coach necessary.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug noted there were cuts to bass fishing based solely on the number of boats you have and the number of participants you can fit in the boat. If they are a club, they are not able to participate in the event for the year. Asked how many students can be supported, she stated her belief it is 4. Superintendent Corey noted it depends on the number of boats. Community members supply the boat(s), which controls the number of participants in the competition. The boat that was provided could only accommodate 4. That is why the activity had to be capped at 4 participants.

Member Solon questioned the current situation. The response was with the positions (now vacated) went the boats. Asked if there is a team at this time, Chairman Deurloo Babcock responded it sounds like without a coach or a boat, you do not have a team. Member Solon asked and was told the season for bass fishing is in the fall.

Superintendent Corey stated he would follow up with the Athletic Coordinator and request that be addressed in next month's report.

Member Solon questioned if someone has to be a coach to be in a boat and was told that is the case. He continued by asking for clarification if wanting 3 boats you have to have 3 coaches.

Tim Girzone, Principal, HBHS, stated his understanding last year when we had a handful of students, 2 would go out in the boat and 2 would stay ashore. You could only fish 2 at a time based on the capacity of the boat.

Member Solon questioned the wisdom of having this as one of our sports in the conditions that exist. Principal Girzone stated what he was describing is the one State competition. Member Solon remarked it does not seem to fit with the objectives of athletics in our school environment. If we are putting all of this in to only allow them to fish once. That, to him, is not a school sport. If this is an activity where there is significant interest, we should be able to find a way to let those who want to participate in it participate. The way it is being conducted right now does not seem fair and does not seem particularly viable.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock added it does make her uncomfortable that we have to find a boat every year and find someone who will loan us a boat and how conditions regarding number of occupants can change. However, she does understand that there is a pretty passionate group of parents and students who really care about it.

Principal Girzone spoke of Principal West being in Washington, DC with the 8th grade trip. He communicated with him earlier in the day and learned the students got to see the President who waived as he was passing by the HB buses and students. He wanted him to mention that all 4 teams (8th and 7th grade teams) have field trips scheduled for the spring.

The Robotics Team put 3 teams in the recent meet and all 3 finished in the top 10.

Asked about the number of students who did not participate in the Washington, D.C. trip, Superintendent Corey stated 188 attended and 10 stayed back for their own reasons. Asked if the staff members who stayed back are all involved with 8th grade students or if there are more staff than students in district, Superintendent Corey stated there are staff members from both 7th and 8th grade. Some attended the trip. If an 8th grade teacher stayed back, they would be covering for the classes.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug spoke of a new activity this year when the 6th grade students from CSDA came up to the middle school for a tour and discussion with teachers after which they stayed for lunch. HUES students came for lunch with the CSDA 6th graders and ate lunch together as a new cohort. CSDA students returned to their district and the HUES students stayed for the same tour/discussion. It was a new and unique way to utilize staff in an opportunity when the building was half as full. Asked if that is in addition to any formal step-up program, she stated it is.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock congratulated the students highlighted in the report.

Principal Girzone noted the student accomplishments cited in his report.

The school day SAT was administered to all juniors on March 22nd. This is a computer based assessment and was administered on school issued Chromebooks this year. That was done last year as well, but this year the format was changed, and we administered it back in the classrooms with the one-to-one environment being new this year. That worked out well and he was pleased with the transition. Results are expected later this spring.

Included in the report is the Grading and Assessment Subcommittee's purpose of grading statement. By putting out the statement they all have a common understanding of where the work could begin from.

The Advisory Subcommittee reports that HBHS has made use of that Home Base Cav Block four times this year including the Monday schedule where it was discussed to allow students to schedule their Cav Blocks with the support of a staff member. Principal Girzone and Mr. Ballou participated in a state-wide PLC that included teachers and administrators from around the State to evaluate effective master schedule models to implement advisories and flex blocks.

While the Weighted and Unweighted Subcommittee has not continued to meet, the steering committee has recommended that the high school leadership team review the following points at the conclusion of the upcoming scheduling process: 1. Course enrollment trends in weighted courses (since removing class rank). 2. Current practices in weighting courses offered to students in grades 9 and 10 to determine if adjustments need to be made in offering courses such as Accelerated vs. Honors.

Noted were upcoming events such as NHSAS Science test for all juniors on April 20th. Asked if the test is a national test, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it to be a consortium. Asked if it is used outside of the State, she indicated it is. The question was asked of whether there is an alternative similar to what we are able to do with SATs that has greater value than just providing data to the State.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of the many students recognized for achievements and extended her congratulations.

Member Solon spoke of the purpose of the grading statement, and questioned the impact of making the statement, e.g., does this become a starting point for additional activity. Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted this was presented to the Instructional Practices Steering Committee. Asked if the steering committee word smithed the document, she stated it did not.

Member Whalen stated her belief the intent is to put it in the student handbook so students can see it, and the staff handbook so that staff will be using this as a guideline for when they are setting up their grading.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked there was a lot of back and forth conversation. It took some time for the committee to find direction. Step 1 was why do we grade; define that first, identify some core beliefs that would be part of both the student and staff handbooks, and then from there assess how we are doing in comparison to the purpose, what changes do we need to implement, how far are we from where we say we would like to be, and then what is the timeline and steps that need to be taken. The next step would be assessment; where does assessment fall into all of this?

The easiest point to consider is “Application of grading practices will be consistent by course and provide a wide range of data points.” For example if looking at accelerated Algebra II, all of the accelerated Algebra II courses should have the same grading practices meaning if we allow retakes then we allow retakes for all of the sections regardless of the teacher. That might be different for an Algebra II class because the agreement will be the same for a course but not necessarily for all of the versions of that course. A math course could have a very specific grading practice that is agreed upon and that could and should look very different from a humanities course.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock corrected her prior statement noting the Instructional Practice Committee did wordsmith the document slightly.

Principal Girzone commented to go along with what was stated around practicality and use and implementation into the handbooks was also the efficacy of certain assessment practices like mid-terms and

finals, why they stand the way they do, and is there room for improvement. Part of the feedback from the Steering Committee to the Grading and Assessment Subcommittee was to look at some of our practices to include how we grade quarters, semesters, mid-terms, finals.

Asked if the statement is intended to pertain primarily to quarterly or reported grades or if it is on the level of assignment grades, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented this is sort of when the committee was getting caught in the weeds; there is a grade, there is grading, there is assessments, assessments are graded, and what is the purpose of that report card or transcript. That is a communication tool, and the finality of it, if it is a semester long course it is the end of the semester that we are looking toward. With quarter 1 and quarter 2, it should be a continuum of learning so that both the student and teacher can assess what needs to be done to continue to help that student meet that targeted end goal. This is really that grade as opposed to grading, which is an important step that we also have to look to and the committee has to do that. She believes there had to be a starting point identified.

Member Solon stated his understanding of the remarks is that it is viewed as essentially taking some snapshots at periods through the year and looking at how that progresses. That relates to the third bullet in the statement “inform teachers and educators about the next steps for appropriate and successful instruction.” that is where that connection occurs, e.g., the student did great in the first and second quarter, but the 3rd quarter the grade was poor, which indicates there is some change in the performance of a student in the continuum. Asked if that is an accurate understanding of that, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated it is; what do we have to do to ensure that learning takes place because if we have a set of standards, we are trying to teach for a course the student should learn them by the end of the course.

Member Whalen spoke of the surveys put out to students, staff, and parents, and how everyone looks at this differently. The subcommittee was trying to take all the information and everyone’s perspective and put it into a summary that everyone could easily understand. They want to put it in places where everyone sees it and can refer to it.

Member Solon noted the language “Application of grading practices will be consistent by course” and a further statement “Variation in grading practices and assessment methods will be allowed between subjects”. Those two seem to be a little disconnected in that the second implies a broader scope of consistency versus what was addressed by the Assistant Superintendent; the two different levels of the same subject matter may have different methodologies. He suggested that language be reviewed to gain alignment believing it sends a mixed message. More importantly is the question of how that can be monitored and ensured.

Member Whalen responded she believes by courses what was meant was for example an Algebra II course which would stay consistent. A subject would be math, science, etc. Member Solon replied the second one seems to say you are going to allow variation by subject which to him says that within a subject it will be consistent but the prior one says that within a subject it may not be consistent.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated she reads that as a variation between subjects meaning that the math assessment and grading process might look very different than a humanities grading and assessment process. Asked how she interprets the prior statement, she stated she is interpreting that across a course in a subject area. The course will have a consistent grading mechanism meaning when a teacher lays out their grade book the teacher of an Algebra I course will have the same percentage grades and the same look and policies about grading as another teacher teaching the same course, but the math department, in general, may have a different way of looking at grading and breaking down grades than a humanities class.

Asked if she thinks Algebra I should be graded and assessed differently than advanced Algebra I, Member Whalen noted that to be two different courses.

Member Solon provided the example of Honors English versus AP English. When his children were in school the uproar was that AP English got you a whole bunch of benefits, but Honors English was graded with so much more difficulty and there was an assumption of a hierarchy in difficulty. Some students avoid the AP thinking it would be a much higher workload. If course to course within the same subject matter does not have consistency of grading that needs to be understood. He questioned how you can ensure consistency within a course when having inconsistency course to course especially when having a staff member teaching both courses.

Member Solon stated his belief that the statement is not clear with those two different paragraphs. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented that you get lost in some of the words sometimes trying to clean it up and make it clear, but now that she is hearing Member Solon's interpretation, not having been part of all of those conversations, we say grading practices twice. We are using a consistent term but mean something different. She does think additional clarity is needed.

Member Solon commented on the three reports provided the Board, which covered a broad spectrum of the COOP with just amazing achievements.

DISCUSSION

- Revenue and Expense Report

As of 4-3-23, on the expense side of the ledger, the district is running at a positive balance of \$1,255,902. The FY22 carryover was \$43,201 resulting in a total of \$1,299,103. Reduced from that is the \$88,427 for the food service unreserved fund balance and added is the revenue balance of \$147,164. The result is an Unreserved Fund Balance of \$1,357,840.

Reducing from that voter approved allocations to the Maintenance Trust (\$300,000), Special Education Trust (\$25,000), Retained Fund Balance (2% or \$398,433), and Contingency Fund (\$125,000) results in a projected fund balance of \$509,407. It is believed that the number will continue to grow with positions remaining unfilled.

In May, the Board will discuss the dugouts mentioned earlier in the evening and will have a better sense of the projected fund balance. If funds are available, it is likely the Superintendent will recommend accelerating the middle school entrance (similar to the high school) as well as upgrading the buzzer systems. Discussions have occurred over the successful implementation of flat panels, which are being installed across the SAU.

Member Solon noted the explanation page identifies nearly \$22,000 of additional legal expenses, and questioned if that is driven heavily by citizen triggered activities around district meetings, etc. Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of legal review and communications around the Petition Warrant Articles. Superintendent Corey agreed there is an expense there. Expenses have also been incurred as a result of advertising costs incurred through attempts to obtain staffing, e.g., forums such as Indeed.com. The recount for the SAU budget was another area where legal expenses were incurred. Legal fees are running about \$289/hour (favorable rate).

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the recount being a nuisance recount; the original vote passed by 65%. Asked if the recount produced a difference, she stated it switched one vote in the SB2 district (in the affirmative). The two ballot votes at the Hollis and COOP district meetings were perfect.

In addition to legal fees, the district pays the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and their office to facilitate our schools and provide for our students. Every time their energy has to be redirected to something like that it is a cost to the students, district, and community. Member Solon stated it to be an opportunity cost of things they cannot do.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on public input provided concerning petition warrant articles that regularly come up and are defeated. For the benefit of the viewing audience, she reminded residents that it is acceptable to table those articles. Although understanding the desire to ensure everyone is heard, a petition warrant article only requires 25 signatures. It is truly acceptable for the legislative body (voters) who are going to vote against an article to move to table it. Member Solon added particularly after 5 consecutive evaluations.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of the volunteers who took time away from their families to do their duty in regard to the recount. The moderators are required to be there. Our Moderator had to take time off from work in order to do that.

Member Mann stated the desire to understand the opportunities to approach the State legislature requesting legislation placing increased requirements for petition warrant articles, e.g., perhaps doubling the number of signatures required and possibly placing limits excluding perennial articles when they have been defeated. It is clear it is being weaponized and causing this body to almost be hindered in getting its work done.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock agreed commenting when we look at our warrant, we specifically try to keep our items down to as few as possible because we do not want the meeting to be five hours and are careful in what we ask for every year. She thought the point made around sanbornizing contracts was a good one, although not something that should be done to avoid dealing with a vote every year but instead because it is the right thing to do for the contract.

Member Solon noted another item on the explanation page; site improvements – press box and platform. The press box was an unanticipated expense, but there was offsetting revenue for that. Superintendent Corey stated there was limited revenue for what was directly related to completion, e.g., items that went well beyond anticipated costs.

- School Calendar 2023-2024

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the draft calendar is similar to those of prior years with teachers returning the Monday prior to Labor Day, 7th and 9th grade orientation on the Wednesday before Labor Day with all students returning on August 31st.

The calendar includes four (4) early release dates (utilized for professional development). The October 5th early release day includes Suicide Prevention Planning, which is mandatory for all staff. October 9th is Columbus Day. November 1st is professional development day and the 10th Veterans Day. An early release is scheduled for November 21st leading into the Thanksgiving holiday November 22nd through the 24th. The December holiday is from the 25th through January 1st. January has Martin Luther King Jr. Day on the 15th and an early release date on January 29th followed by another on February 7th.

The budget includes literacy and math training. There will be very intensive math instructional training and literacy pieces (intensive literacy training in the following year) during professional development days. The early release dates were scheduled early in the year so that these efforts can be frontloaded, and student data reviewed along the way.

Winter vacation is planned for February 26th through March 1st. March has a professional day on the 12th (voting day). April vacation is from the 22nd through the 26th. The Massachusetts April vacation always begins on the third Monday in April. Usually that bumps us into the fourth week of April into May, but the way the calendar falls ours will be the 22nd through 26th. Memorial Day is May 27th.

June 8th is the proposed date for high school graduation. With 5 snow days, June 18th is the last day for students and the 21st as the last day for teachers.

Asked if there are any updates for the current year's calendar, Superintendent Corey stated, at this time, graduation continues to be planned for the date approved by the Board, June 10th. The district is currently looking at Friday, June 16th (half day) as the last day for students. They are also looking at professional development to determine what is best. A definitive answer on the last day will be known in the next week.

Member Solon spoke of being at a CTE meeting the prior night during which an update was provided that they are breaking down the regions. We are now in a region that only includes Milford, Nashua, and Hudson. We are dropping the one out west. State law requires no more than 10 scheduling days difference. He questioned if anything has been done to ensure that is adhered to. The start of school itself is one of the biggest offenders of that.

Superintendent Corey spoke of the number of regional meetings with CTE centers and Superintendents and how they have made significant improvements to aligning calendars. Some districts used to have a problem with their start date. What they are doing is simply starting their CTE students when the CTE centers start. Superintendents reported on improvements to the State Board of Education. It is believed they were thinking of passing that as more of a legislative action. The problem with that is there are some CBAs that are very strict about start and stop dates. From our perspective, we said we felt we could meet the requirement and are making nice progress. We typically did not have a lot of the dates, e.g., really only brought back early release days to catch up from COVID and do professional development. There remain districts that have one of those a month. Those are the dates we really have to look at. Typically CTE students are going in the afternoon, and if having an early release each month you have lost 10 days of CTE instruction. In our relationships with Nashua, Milford and Hudson, we have pretty good communication. He feels comfortable our region is heading in the right direction.

Asked if it is fair to say that the start date and through the year, we have alignment that is believed to be supportive of our students, Superintendent Corey stated it to be supportive of our students and within those 10 days, but then the reality of snowstorms, cancellations, etc. still exist.

Member Solon questioned if he needs to go back to Milford and say they need to fix some stuff. Superintendent Corey stated his belief progress is being made and that is not necessary. Principal Girzone commented in addition to the district calendars there are also building level days, SAT day, e.g., if your students are taking the SAT, you are likely not receiving students as a CTE center and when our students are having an SAT day, they do not get to attend CTE. Even something like a pep rally day where you would allow students to remain in your school for their school spirit day has to be considered.

Member Solon stated the desire to hear from Principal Girzone if he feels the district is in good shape. The law requires that you fix those things, e.g., SAT days etc. are planned. They simply cannot say we have decided we are going to be closed on this day and shut the students out. If they do, they are now forcing a violation of State law. He wants to ensure they understand that. It takes away some of the flexibility for us but also for them. People have to agree to that, or they are going to be in violation. The sad part of it is the students who are already in the district of those centers are not going to be the ones to complain because their students are not harmed. It is those who are in sending districts that are harmed and they are the minority.

We may only have 3 students who get harmed by a decision by Milford, Nashua, or Hudson; however, he does not want to leave it to those students' parents to make the point. We as a school and school board have a responsibility to up front hold the centers accountable, to put out a schedule and do their best to coordinate with our school and others and stick to it. If they are not, he wants to know about it now rather than find out about it at the end of the year.

Superintendent Corey stated additional follow up will be done. Discussions have evolved around scenarios such as if a student is attending a course in Hudson that will impact their ability to get English on their HB schedule, Hudson is now talking to us about whether that student would take English in Hudson. Those are discussions that have never happened before. CTE is tuition based. We have been discussing that these classes are more about running CTE, can we figure out a relationship where we are not necessarily nickel and diming us because again CTE centers function off the federal dollars that come in and those are allocated to centers by just population so as population starts to dwindle across the State, in a lot of districts, they will become more in need of our students. Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked they might be more willing to accommodate them to take an English class that we do not have to pay them to teach to them. Superintendent Corey added those scenarios are still in discussion, but those discussions did not occur 5-10 years ago.

Member Solon commented to be fair he does not believe that they made conscious decisions to ignore, it just really was not on their radar.

- Creation of a COOP Facilities Committee

He wished to gain a sense of the Board regarding the formation of a Facilities Committee whose membership would include representation from the Board as well as community members from both towns. He envisions the committee would meet quarterly and be chaired by the Facilities Director. Regular discussion and/or reporting on work being performed and planned for would be provided to the Board.

Member Solon spoke of appreciation for this task being taken on and noted he had originally asked for it to be on the agenda after the vote to not support the bond and hearing community input. He is very supportive of this and believes the need to be immediate unless something has changed since District meeting that we no longer have any concerns about our heating systems. He is supportive of it and believes it can serve two purposes; 1) to do the tasks such as looking at the CIP and getting into that and 2) become an outreach and P.R. program so that we have community stakeholders that are outside of the official school system partnering with the school to garner support. Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the facility committee that was in place for the turf field and STEM center.

Member Mann stated his support for the committee commenting on the work that was done for the elementary schools and the efforts that brought the community along for the journey. It also gives that body the ability to do the long work that is involved whether that includes studies, reaching out to subject matter experts, etc.

Superintendent Corey will bring this back to the Board with the hope of being able to arrive at something to move forward with. He noted a discussion occurred with the consultant, EEI, informing them the vote was not favorable and of the need to go back and review to look at everything we can do, e.g., how can we change it, update it, to get something because we do need boilers.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented on the need to begin with a monthly meeting in the first year. The idea is to keep this as a standing committee.

Member Solon asked the Superintendent if it is his opinion that based on the last minute work done prior to the District meeting the State is willing to give us a little bit of time to take a second cut at this or if we are now in pure recovery mode where we are back to having to have something done by this fall. Superintendent Corey stated the inspection will be done, and if we fail, we will not have to do something until the summer of 2024. We will continue to dialogue with them because there is the potential that one set of pipes is better than the other. The Administration may have to come back to the Board stating we will prioritize building X and here is why. Getting this Facilities Committee running so there is a wider breath of people discussing it in both communities is beneficial.

Member Solon stated he had heard concerns expressed that the testing in November could in and of itself trigger an event that might require immediate action. Superintendent Corey responded there is that potential, but the Administration will work with the consultant who has been working with our boilers for a long time. If we thought there was that risk going into the heating system, we would take the hit and probably not do the testing until the spring. The reality is we know from some of our work on a variety of different facility projects, getting equipment and materials remains very difficult.

- General Assurances

The agenda packet includes the FY24 School District General Assurances. Board action on this has been a yearly event for the past 4-5 years. Member Solon stated there to be differences this year, e.g., the opening statement that the school board deferring to the Superintendent is no longer considered an acceptable response. That means that the Chair of the School Board is now signing, and it says right in it that they become liable, personally liable, if these things are not done.

Superintendent Corey noted there to be a variety of subtle differences, which is why the document was placed first under discussion to allow for Board review. He will reach out to legal counsel as there are some parts where the obligation is already covered under the licenses of the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent.

Member Solon stated his belief a big part of the purpose is in districts that are not as professionally staffed as ours, there have been intentional and unintentional violations. What this is doing is putting districts on notice that just saying you hired someone does not absolve you of responsibility for meeting the legal needs.

He would like to inquire of legal counsel what would be the result if the Board decided not to sign the document, e.g., does that mean you cannot receive the grants? There are some types of grants that the district chose not to participate in because of the baggage that came with them. One of the things he would like to understand is not only reviewing this but what monies are impacted by this agreement; the scope of the dollars.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated this would impact all of the IDEA special education funding, which is the most significant (few hundred thousand), Title I (which we do not accept), Title II (approx. \$20,000) Title IV (elementaries get the bare minimum; \$10,000 and the COOP receives about \$14,000). This also includes robotics grants, etc.

He asked if the form is a State form or Federal form, and was told it came out from the State as a result of the audits at the State level when the Federal Government came in. Superintendent Corey remarked he worries about it because this seems to be what he calls the creep every year. A few minor differences to him are not necessarily minor because they are putting an onus on the Chair that he does not think the Chair, in a volunteer situation, which we basically are, has the time or the knowledge to address. Member Solon stated uncertainty the Chair has the ability to force it to happen because it is day to day operational oversight, which is not the role of the Board.

Member Solon commented some of the requirements are obvious, but some of the details in the document are so minor yet we know in our communities it would not be hard to believe that some resident would notice a very minor detail and bring suit against the district, and that concerns him.

Superintendent Corey stated he would gather the information on the dollar amounts, ask legal counsel for additional input, and will bring that information back to the Board in May. Member Solon responded that the Assistant Superintendent answered his question in regard to the dollar amounts to his satisfaction. He was uncertain if this were just a small change and we could do without or if it is a big deal, and it is clearly something that cannot be ignored.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **BCA** – Board Member Code of Ethics

**MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT THAT THE BOARD, BY ROLL CALL, STATE AGREEMENT TO ADHERE TO POLICY BCA – BOARD MEMBER CODE OF ETHICS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL**

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

Yea: Robert Mann, Kate Stoll, Holly Deurloo Babcock, Krista Whalen, Cindy VanCoughnett, Tom Solon
6
Nay: 0

MOTION CARRIED

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **DFA** – Investments

The Board was informed of the State requirement to review the policy on a yearly basis. The intent is to provide an opportunity, at least yearly, to consider investments. In large districts that receive tax dollars in a single transfer, there may be a decision to invest as a means of generating revenue. As identified within the current policy, the School District Treasurer working in conjunction with the Superintendent and his/her designee and pursuant to RSA 197:23-a, is authorized to invest the funds of the District subject to specified objectives and standards of care.

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ADOPT POLICY DFA - INVESTMENTS
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Solon questioned if changes have occurred such that there are sums of money that the district is investing that would be impacted by this. Superintendent Corey responded there are not. The environment is becoming more favorable for short-term investments. It would be a matter discussed with the District Treasurer before starting down that road and it would come back before the Board to inform of any action(s).

Member Solon commented, had the District, for instance, passed the bond and was in a position of having \$3 million come in, would those monies likely have been invested in this context. Superintendent Corey responded that would be something looked at especially had we passed a bond that required work to be completed over a period of multiple summer breaks. That would be a good opportunity to consider how to invest the dollars to help offset costs.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Administration’s Recommendation Regarding the School Calendar for 2023-2024

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO APPROVE THE 2023-2024 SCHOOL CALENDAR, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the Superintendent’s recommendation for teacher nominations

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ACCEPT THE SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION FOR TEACHER NOMINATIONS, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **JF** – Enrollment
Given its first reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY JF – ENROLLMENT

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Principal Girzone stated this policy was reviewed last year. In August, the Board adopted the existing language. Prior to last year, the policy was outdated and general. The desire was to define what a full-time student meant. Local school districts were collaborated with prior to Board approval. The belief was that full-time student was a student enrolled in 6 approved courses and/or credits.

The district was not going to disqualify students for not being full-time students for athletic purposes based on this policy as the fall season had already begun. The enrollment language only exists in handbooks and was identified as 4.5.

In this current school year, he continued to work with the enrollment policy sub-committee. In his Principals' PLC he worked with a variety of colleagues. This came up. He had not heard this when the work was done last year, but most schools have a different definition for seniors who are on pace to graduate.

Being proposed is the addition of the following language at the end of the second paragraph: for students in grades 9-11 and a minimum of 5 approved (in accordance with Policy IMBC: Alternative Credit Options) courses and/or credits for students in grade 12.”.

If a senior is on pace to graduate it was felt appropriate to have a requirement of 5 approved credits as opposed to 6. If a student is full time for grades 9-11 hypothetically, they would have at least 18 credits and if on pace to graduate for the 23 credit, 5 approved would allow them to do so in maintaining the full-time enrollment status particularly for athletic participation.

Member Solon asked for clarification the impetus is that in order to participate in a sport the student needs to be enrolled full-time and was told that is the case. He questioned if the full-time student implies anything else and was told Average Daily Membership (funding) is dependent on full-time student status as well as honor-roll status.

Asked if this would have the unintended consequence of encouraging students/seniors to take fewer courses, Principal Girzone noted this is an increase from the previous 4.5 practice. Asked if codifying this language would have the affect of officially sanctioning a reduced courseload for seniors, Principal Girzone stated it would not.

Member Solon questioned, if a student is on pace, does the district currently encourage them to take more than 23 credits in a four-year period. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug replied they often will do that. Another thing that this provides for is the opportunity for an internship. Asked if that is considered a valid alternative credit, she remarked it depends on whether the student applies for an extended learning opportunity. Some students will do that, and others want it to be counted as part of their transcript or just work experience. There are a lot of things to consider for each individual student and that is part of the conversation they would have with their school counselor when selecting courses for the following year. This is an increase and a good balance between increasing that requirement for all of the other years and then allowing for greater flexibility if appropriate.

Principal Girzone commented on the language “in accordance with policy IMBC” the 4.5 was previously limited to Hollis Brookline courses. The credit extension now allows for that internship that might be credit based or an ELO that might be credit based.

Member Solon reiterated the policy that was approved in August called for 24 credits to graduate. This represents a decrease. Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted the diploma requires 23. Member Solon remarked the Board went through a lot of discussion around what the number should be.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding policy **IMBD** - High School credit for 7th/8th grade coursework

Given its first reading;

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO ACCEPT THE FIRST READING OF POLICY IMBD - HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT FOR 7TH/8TH GRADE COURSEWORK

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

ON THE QUESTION

Principal Girzone stated this is something that comes across in practice pretty regularly and is a required policy. He noted State law cited, which includes the language: “The local school board shall develop a policy that grants acknowledgement of achievement to students taking coursework in the seventh or eighth grade toward high school graduation, if the course demonstrates district or graduation competencies consistent with related high school course(s) and the student achieves satisfactory standards of performance.”

At the high school, we currently do not award credit for coursework completed prior to high school. We acknowledge achievement often times awarding student prerequisite not dissimilar to how some colleges or universities might take an AP course.

The language of the current practices was put into policy. The discussion might be does the Board want to have specific language about practice or does it make sense to have a general statement. Sometimes we have a policy that is generalized, and then more specific language exists in the Program of Studies that goes for annual review.

In his Principals’ PLC, he poled the group and any of the schools who have awarded credit for coursework done regret the decision because you cannot go back. It is something that has become problematic for the schools that have chosen to go that route.

Principal Girzone stated he does not have any thoughts on changing what our current practices are, but this is something that is a policy the district is required to have and reflects the current practice.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock and Member Solon expressed the desire for the language around current practice to be included in the policy as proposed. The current practice is deemed appropriate and one that should be captured in policy.

Member Solon questioned what the Principal does in making that decision, e.g., is there a desire to include anyone else in the approval process and/or provide any appeal. He was not advocating for that. Principal Girzone responded that when it comes down to students coming from our middle school taking our middle school coursework it is much simpler. The one that is difficult is a student coming in from another district who might have had a course that does not match perfectly with a particular curriculum. The student might have the ability, but not necessarily the background and then a prerequisite would not necessarily have been met based on a review of the program of studies from the sending district.

Member Solon questioned if there is the desire for the entirety of the responsibility on the Principal. Principal Girzone remarked if there was something different at the end of the day it would be appealed to him.

Member Stoll questioned if it is the Principal who conducts the review of every student that comes through for those prerequisites or if it is more a matter of these are the parameters for which we know a student already took Algebra 1 at the middle school, etc. Principal Girzone commented about 95% of the time we are talking math, and that often will involve collaboration with the department chair. Often times it is in the summer when students are transferring in. That is internal workings. It is always going to involve that individual.

Asked if he signs off on every instance or is it known that if someone came in with this recommendation does Guidance automatically allow them to schedule it, Principal Girzone stated that is not what occurs.

Superintendent Corey recommended, given the majority of this work occurs over the summer, the language state the high school principal or designee.

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

Member Solon commented he believes the language, as proposed, is really close. He suggested, at the time of the second reading, the Board consider waiving a third reading and adoption. The sooner this can be established the better it will serve the students.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock requested a future agenda include a report out from the Liaison to RSEC. She also requested a presentation on CAVBlock noting a presentation that was done pre COVID on the adaptive scheduler and data that would be gathered. Superintendent Corey remarked on another discussion that had occurred around receiving an update on Guidance. That can all be put together in a single presentation.

Principal Girzone noted information on course enrollment projections would be available for the May meeting.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock spoke of having a list of all policies that trigger Board action (yearly review, etc.), and offered to work on creating such a list.

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Member Solon commented on the non-public session lasting a little longer than anticipated. The Board tends to take longer than the allocated time when discussing the reports. A lot of the information is presented for the benefit of the public as the Board sees the reports with the agenda. The question that needs to be asked is do we see the value in doing that, and if so, schedule more time for it or say we are more concerned with shortening the length of the meetings in which case what we have done in previous years is acknowledge receipt of the reports and inquire if Board members have any questions pertaining to them. The meeting was well run.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ADJOURN

SECONDED BY MEMBER MANN

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-0

The April 12, 2023 Organizational Meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 9:41 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____