

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD**

**JOINT MEETING OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD  
AND HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET COMMITTEE**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**BOND HEARING**

**FEBRUARY 8, 2018  
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was called to order on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at 5:45 p.m. at the Hollis/Brookline Middle School Library.

Chairman Elizabeth Brown presided:

Members of the Board present: Cindy VanCoughnett, Vice Chairman  
Melanie Levesque, Secretary (arrived at 6:00 p.m.)  
Holly Deurloo Babcock  
John Cross  
Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent: Tom Solon

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent  
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent  
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator

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**APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER**

Chairman Brown appointed Krista Whelan to serve as Process Observer.

**AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS**

Chairman Brown made the Board aware of the need for a non-public session, under RSA 91-A:3 II (a), and requested it be the first item of business following Agenda Adjustments.

A request was made to further amend the agenda to include consideration of a tentative agreement with the Hollis Education Association.

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK THAT THE AGENDA BE ADJUSTED AS REQUESTED**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-0**

**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 DEURLOO BABCOCK**

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

Yea: Holly Deurloo Babcock, Krista Whalen, Elizabeth Brown, Cindy VanCoughnett, John Cross

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Nay:

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**MOTION CARRIED**

*The Board went into non-public session at 5:46 p.m.*

*The Board came out of non-public session at 6:49 p.m.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO RATIFY THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HOLLIS/BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD AND THE HOLLIS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2021**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

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*The Board entered a joint meeting with the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School (COOP) District Budget Committee.*

Members of the COOP Budget Cmte. Present: Darlene Mann, Chairman  
Raul Blanche, Vice Chair  
Jim Solinas  
Lorin Rydstrom  
Brian Rater  
Krista Whalen

Members of the COOP Budget Cmte. Absent: David Blinn  
Tom Enright

Chairman Mann led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Mann appointed Raul Blanche to serve as Process Observer for the Budget Committee.

Chairman Mann stated the purpose of the Public Hearing was to present and seek public input on the proposed FY19 Budget, and indicated the Public Hearing was properly noticed.

### PRESENTATIONS

Chairman Mann summarized the Warrant Articles, and the process that would be followed. She noted the Warrant Articles included two bond articles, which would be taken out of order, and discussed at the Bond Hearing.

The remainder of the Warrant Articles include a Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) for the Hollis Education Association (HEA) that has an associated cost of \$302,962 for FY19, a CBA with the Hollis Education Support Staff Association (HESSA) that has an associated cost of \$78,813 for FY19, the school operating budget at \$21,294,000, contingency allocation of \$100,000, the District's portion of the SAU41 Budget at \$806,808, an Expendable Athletic Trust allocation of \$70,000, Facilities Maintenance Trust allocation of \$40,000, and a Special Education Trust with an allocation of \$25,000. If passed, as written, the

total would be \$26,410,920. It was noted, if passed, \$3.64 million of that would be bonded, which would bring the remaining total to \$22,770,920.

A chart was displayed showing a comparison of approved budgets versus actual expenditures for the period of FY07 through FY17. Noted was the larger than anticipated underrun in FY17 resulting from unanticipated savings in the area of special education. A chart was displayed that broke down the percentages of the budget expended in each area, e.g., salaries and benefits (56%), Student Services (20%).

An overview was provided of the current bonding for the District. A large drop is shown from FY17 to FY18 where bonds for the High School were retired. The bond for the Middle School expansion will retire in FY25.

Information was provided on NESDEC projected enrollment for FY19 through FY23. Current enrollment is 1225. Projected for FY19 is 1231. Were the projections to look further out, an increase would be noted given increased enrollment in the K-6 grades. Enrollment composition was discussed given its importance as it contributes to apportionment formula between Hollis and Brookline. Over time, based on the five-year NESDEC projection, the proportions change, and indicate a lesser number attributed to Hollis.

Chairman Mann noted the projected reduction in revenue and State Aid (20.9%) for FY19. This is most significantly due to the amount of money that was returned to the taxbase; a significant savings in the area of special education resulted in monies being returned to the taxbase, which positively affects the tax rate for 2018, but in FY19 that same type of return will not occur. In terms of State Aid, the Adequacy Grant (based on Average Daily Membership (ADM) of the two communities) will be reduced by 1.3% for Hollis and 3.8% for Brookline. Contributing to Brookline's is a portion of a stabilization grant that Brookline receives on top of the normal Adequacy Grant formula. That grant is reducing, based on recent legislation, by 4% annually for the next 25 years. Regarding Statewide Education Property Tax reimbursement, for Hollis that is decreasing by 1.4% and for Brookline it is increasing 2.5%.

A chart was depicted highlighting budget and resulting tax efforts for the period FY07 through FY19. The amount that must be raised through taxes is the result of the expenditures less revenue.

FY19 apportionment is the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the current formula. It is based on a distribution of 95% utilizing ADM and equalized value on non-capital costs and 100% equalized value on bonded costs. The anticipated net apportionment is 52.1% for Hollis and 47.9% for Brookline. Numbers are not fixed, and information is pending on FY18 enrollment (determined June 30<sup>th</sup>).

In terms of financial impact, total proposed budget of \$22,770,920 represents a 1.95% increase over the FY18 approved budget. From there, is a reduction of revenue (\$2,167,562 or 20.9%) resulting in a 5.2% increase in the amount to be apportioned. From there the SWEPT reimbursement and adequacy grants are removed resulting in a local tax effort of \$15,392,615 or 7.7%.

Estimated tax impacts by Town; Hollis \$8,301,343 (6.9% increase), which results in an estimated tax rate of \$6.87/\$1,000 and Brookline \$7,091,272 (6.6% increase) and an estimated tax rate of \$13.37/\$1,000. A chart was displayed depicting the estimated tax impact of each article. Chairman Mann noted the \$0.01 and \$0.02 increases represent the interest only portion, which is the first-year payment on the bond.

*The Public Hearing was declared open at 7:08 p.m.*

### **Article 3**

*To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to approve the cost of items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board*

*and the Hollis Education Association for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, which calls for the following increase in professional staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:*

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-19	\$302,962	2019-20	\$342,447	2020-21	\$359,464

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$302,962** for the first fiscal year (2018-2019 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in professional staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.*

Chairman Brown explained, through good faith negotiations with the union, this contract would be sanbornized, e.g., all three years would be approved through this District Meeting, and in subsequent years the education contract would be included as part of the budget. A separate Warrant Article would not be required for each subsequent year of the contract. The advantage of this is it allows for better budgeting as the increase would be known. The contract would not have been brought forward but for the fact that it was sanbornized. The District was able to eliminate (over the three-year period) a professional development stipend.

One of the goals in the negotiation was to ensure parity with pay of the elementary feeder districts within the SAU. The contract tries to anticipate future staffing efforts. There were two tables for teacher salaries; on-step and off-step. With the passage of this contract, there would be a single salary table, and teachers reaching the end of the salary table would remain there, and, and only received COLA adjustments.

Extra-curricular and co-curricular language was removed. There were stipend tables attached to the back of the contracts in a very awkward fashion for coaches' salaries and co-curricular salaries. All of that has been removed.

Salary table increases are 1.5% year over year. The last steps, which were formerly off-step, is a 2% increase. The merit bonus pool has been eliminated from the contract. The professional development stipend will be phased out. Teachers will have to indicate their intent to participate in that stipend by April of 2019 or it won't be available. The stipend had become an administrative difficulty; funds would be encumbered with the anticipation teachers would participate. Approx. 30% of the those who indicated they planned on being eligible were, which resulted in the District encumbering more than needed.

Chairman Brown spoke of the high level of experience of the staff. In FY19, there are 31 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) on the last step. Next year there will be 51, and the following year 52. She spoke of the stipend table, which had a compression; new table has a smaller step between each step. It was compressed from the bottom up so no one ended up being paid less. Part-time employees working 15-30 hours/week can access healthcare at no cost to the District.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Requested additional information on bottom up compression of the salary table. Superintendent Corey responded presently there is a 3.5% increase between each step on the table. They went from the top salary and worked their way backwards. Next year instead of a 3.5% increase between steps it will be 2.8%, and in year 3 of the contract it will be 2.5%.

It was indicated there are approx. 20 steps on the table. Ms. Fareed questioned what the District gained by the change and was informed it reduces the increase that a staff member would receive when moving from step to step. Ms. Fareed requested clarification of the change in off-step.

Superintendent Corey stated, in the past, experienced staff could go off the salary table/scale. The change caps movement at the top of the salary table after which only COLA increases are received.

Chairman Brown remarked previously the District had essentially two salary tables; on-step and off-step. For those on the off-step table there were two steps. The change will allow the tables to be merged, and those reaching the end of the table will remain there.

Deborah Pucci, 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Questioned what was stated regarding the merit pool. Chairman Brown explained what was eliminated is the merit pool, which is the pool of funds bonuses were paid out of.

Ms. Pucci questioned the advantages of not providing merit bonuses for superior performance. Superintendent Corey remarked in terms of merit performance it was one half a percent of the overall salaries that would be split up between the Middle School and the High School. The Administration was finding that was not accomplishing what had been hoped. As a result, it was believed better to take away that half a percent (approx. \$35,000).

When asked for additional clarification, he stated the District was recognizing individuals, but when in a very high-performing district it is very difficult to recognize those that deserve it each year, those who deserve it occasionally, and those who are working towards it. It was becoming a very cumbersome process and something that was not working to the level hoped.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Spoke of the number of FTEs that will be at the last step on the table and questioned if any of the numbers are offset by expected retirements. She also questioned the total number of employees within the contract.

Superintendent Corey stated there to be approx. 110 professional staff. Retirements are anticipated in the coming years.

***Chairman Mann closed public input.***

#### **Article 4**

*To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items for the first year of a three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis Education Support Staff Association for the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, which calls for the following increases in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:*

<b><u>Fiscal Year</u></b>	<b><u>Estimated Increase</u></b>
<b>2018-19</b>	<b>\$78,813</b>

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of \$78,813 for the first fiscal year (2018-19 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in support staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This is the first year of a three year agreement. Negotiated cost item increases for the next fiscal year (2019-20) will require approval of a specific warrant article at the 2019 annual meeting.*

Ms. Whalen noted support staff includes custodians, secretaries, food service employees, and para-educators. There are 56 employees under this contract. Highlights of the three-year contract, which is not sanbornized,

include wage increases; year 1 is a step increase plus 3%, year 2 is a step plus 2.5%, and year 3 is a step plus 2%, and 3% for all employees off the salary table. Surrounding areas as well as the primary districts were reviewed, which noted, other than Hollis and Brookline, the surrounding areas do not have all the separate jobs in a single support staff contract. Another issue found is difficulty in hiring. The desire was to give a greater jump in the step table plus 3% in year 1 so that it would bump everyone and allow it to be brought down in the following years.

Health insurance sees no changes in the caps for the first two years. In the third year, there is a \$50 increase in the cap (resulting is \$760/single, \$1,210/2-person, and \$1,260/family).

In addition, the salary schedule was consolidated. In Categories 3 and 4 there were a number of different para-educators. That was consolidated so that in Category 3 there is a Para-Educator and a Special Education Para-Educator. Eliminated was a Special Education Classroom Support Para-Educator, and in Category 4 eliminated was a Special Education Personal Care Para-Educator. The intent was to ensure the Para-Educator was working with the appropriate student (when 1 on 1) and was being paid the appropriate stipend for the job being done.

Added in an effort to help attract employees, is an education wage adjustment; \$1/hr. for BA or BS and \$2/hr. for MA or MS in addition to what would be paid in accordance with the table.

Current staff distribution is 42% on-step and 58% off-step. Were that to remain, at the end of 3 years there would be 27% of the support staff on step and 72% off-step.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

No public comment was offered.

***Chairman Mann closed public input.***

## **Article 5**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$21,294,000** for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.*

*Chairman Mann noted the proposed budget represents a reduction of \$538 from the FY18 budget. The FY18 budget listed of \$21,294,538 is a combination of the actual operating budget article and the approved sports support staff article that was approved last year. Once that article is approved the costs associated with it become part of the standard operating budget, and is added in for comparative purposes when looking at the next year's operating budget.*

New initiatives total \$401,442 and include:

- 1 Math FTE split between the Middle and High School
- Academic purchases for textbooks, instruments, science
- Shift of software expense from SAU, updating software subscriptions/licenses
- Update High School phone system
- MS LAX program, football and volleyball equipment
- Facilities maintenance

Chairman Mann spoke of the age of the infrastructure, and provided examples of some of the facility maintenance planned for FY19, which includes, at the High School, HVAC upgrades, plumbing fixture

upgrades, restroom upgrades, beginning repairs on roof sections, addressing the relining of a water tank, and at the Middle School, new carpet in the Library, repairs to gym bathrooms, tile flooring in main hallway, elevator services, etc.

### Major Increases

- Computer equipment; FY19 proposed \$136,160, which represents an increase of \$69,684 or 104.8%.

Replacement technology for staff laptops, projectors, Smartboards, 1<sup>st</sup> year of a lease agreement for a copier, Chromebooks in both schools, and expanding the wireless network in the High School.

- Retirement benefit; FY19 proposed \$91,468, which represents an increase of \$48,320 or 111.98%.

Related specifically to staff retirements.

- Principal office salaries; FY19 proposed \$736,441, which represents an increase of \$45,135 or 32.5%.

Administrative and non-union employee agreements.

- Principal Office expense; FY19 proposed \$262,882, which represents an increase of \$30,586 or 13.2%.

Adjustment for network services through Charter. This used to be reimbursed and the net reported to the budget. This is an accounting adjustment that identifies the cost in the budget where it should be, and associated revenue offsets on the revenue side. There are some changes to the rates at which we are being reimbursed.

- Building maintenance; FY19 proposed \$688,011, which represents an increase of \$24,758 or 3.73%.

Increases in trash removal, snow plowing, HVAC, lighting, etc.

### Major Decreases

- Student Services; FY19 proposed \$4,478,874, which represents a decrease of \$226,896 or 4.8%.

Due to changes in programming needs and transportation costs.

- Transfers; FY19 proposed \$789,000, which represents a decrease of \$59,000 or 7.0%.

Reduction of food service sales and lower contribution to the special education trust.

- Transportation-Vocational; FY19 proposed \$105,000, which represents a decrease of \$55,000 or 34.4%.

Due to lease of District van.

- Guidance; FY19 proposed \$523,590, which represents a decrease of \$41,566 or 7.4%.

Salary savings due to a retiring employee and a shift of some expense in data management from the COOP to other schools in the District.

- Regular education equipment; FY19 proposed \$15,559, which represents a decrease of \$21,128 or 63.1%.

There were one-time purchases in FY18 that are not anticipated in FY19.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

Steve Pucci 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Remarked based on the chart, in the last year or two the District has expired about \$1.2 million/year of principal and interest payments associated with bonds.

He questioned if there are any water supply issues between the Middle and High Schools at this time. Superintendent Corey responded the Middle School's water supply still comes from the Hollis School District. The only other piece that is experienced is regarding irrigation of the fields. When the swamp and those elements are impacted we run the risk of losing the fields because of not having an ample water supply. The wells must be looked at to determine internal versus external needs. Mr. Pucci questioned, and was informed the capacity of the wells is fine in terms of feeding the building.

Asked for clarification of the cost (has heard varying amounts), timing, and funding source(s) for the roof, Superintendent Corey stated the \$1.2 million estimate is an old estimate. The Business Administrator received an estimate approx. 18 months ago, of \$500,000-\$600,000. With that estimate came the recommendation to phase in the roofs. The first phase is in this year's budget (approx. \$26,000). Although a small piece, it is one that needs to be addressed. From there the cost would be \$120,000 - \$150,000 over the next few years. The District has been contributing to the Maintenance Trust Fund without expenditure. That is being looked to as a source of funding for the roof projects. It is likely a portion of the cost will come from the trust and a portion from the operating budget.

These repairs are captured in the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP), which is provided to the Budget Committee and School Board. Unless something unexpected were to occur, it is believed there to be a quality plan to address the roof without needing to see the project bonded.

Mr. Pucci questioned if there is a line item in the operating budget intended to replenish the fund and was informed the Maintenance Trust Fund is funded through a Warrant Article.

***Chairman Mann closed public input.***

## **Article 6**

*To see if the school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate up to **\$100,000** to go into the fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2018, and no amount to be raised from taxation. Any appropriation left at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund.*

Chairman Mann explained the contingency article began 4± years ago, and at a time when we were closing actuals extremely close to budgets. The funds would only be accessed for emergency purposes. Expenditures require approval of both the School Board and Budget Committee.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

Deborah Pucci, 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Questioned the balance and was informed it is \$100,000. The funds, having not been used, lapse to the general fund at year end.

*Chairman Mann closed public input.*

### **Article 7**

*Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$806,808** as the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's portion of the SAU budget of **\$1,577,723** for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget of **\$1,543,057** with **\$792,386** assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit.*

The amounts cannot be amended. The entire SAU budget is allocated to the three districts; \$806,808 is the portion attributed to the COOP School District. Each District votes at their meetings or in Brookline via the SB2 Ballot. Once the voting is complete in all three districts the votes are tabulated, and it is determined whether the proposed budget is approved, or the adjusted budget put in place.

*Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.*

Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive

Stated her support of the proposed budget as she believes it to be a step in the right direction for the SAU staff.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Spoke of the comments made regarding the changes in the table with respect to the designations of para-educators, reduction in the number of job categories, and the number of categories in Hollis. She remarked it is difficult to appreciate the amount of work it takes to process almost anything that has to do with the para-educators because the para-educators custom fit different students who have different needs. As a result, there are many different certifications, educational qualifications, experience requirements that create differentials in pay depending on the tasks they are assigned given the students they are assigned to support.

The change in job classifications significantly reduces the amount of actual manhours spent in the SAU processing that documentation. Every single minute must be accounted for in an audit in August, should that be the audit focus.

When you look at the amount of money being spent, you are seeing a tremendous amount of efficiency being gained this year through these contracts. In addition, she has learned of a new software being brought in to help make it even more efficient.

Andrew Mason, 61 Baxter Road, Hollis (District Moderator)

Noted there to be two bond issues that will need secret ballot votes. This Article will also be by secret ballot. He suggested it may facilitate a smooth flow of the meeting if this Article was renumbered to Article 3.

*Chairman Mann closed public input.*

### **Article 8**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$70,000** to be added to the previously established Athletic Program and Services Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2018 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2018.*

This trust allows the District to ensure the Pay-to-Play fees that are paid to participate in sports are used for athletic purposes. In the past, the fees have been collected, and there was no real means of effectively managing and knowing whether they were going to athletics or simply being returned to the taxpayer as year-end unexpended appropriations. What this Article allows the District to do is put those fees aside in an account and ensure they can be allocated back to athletic costs.

In the past, the funds have been used for personnel, dues, busing, etc. Moving into FY19, the distribution of costs is spread throughout the athletics budget. Some of the trust could be used for field maintenance, new equipment, etc. It was noted before any funds are expended out of the trust a Public Hearing is conducted to obtain public input.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

No public input was offered.

***Chairman Mann closed public input.***

### **Article 9**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$40,000** to be added to the previously established School Building and Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2018 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2018.*

Chairman Mann stated the fund was established as a savings mechanism for anticipated costs. The current fund balance is \$80,000. Provided was information on planned expenditures for FY19 and up to and including FY23 for both the Middle and High School. The FY19 items are captured in the budget this year. There are outstanding items moving into FY20. Projects are spread out over a period to avoid fluctuations in the budget from year to year.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

No public input was offered.

***Chairman Mann closed public input.***

### **Article 10**

*To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to **\$25,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2018 to be added to the previously established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. No amount to be raised from taxation.*

Chairman Mann stated the fund was established last year. The request had been for an allocation of \$50,000. The voters funded it at \$100,000. The current balance is \$100,000.

***Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.***

Drew Mason, 61 Baxter Road, Hollis

Commented, if the amount of the year end unassigned fund balance is not sufficient to cover all Warrant Articles, should they be approved, they would be funded, in the order they appear, until the funds are depleted. He suggested consideration be given to the order of the Articles.

*Chairman Mann closed public input.*

### **Article 11**

*To see if the school district will authorize the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.*

Chairman Mann stated the Budget Committee can take a position on this; however, she is uncertain if it has done so consistently.

This allows the District to receive what was previously called Catastrophic Aide. Funding levels and limits change, but approving the Article allows the District to accept that funding if it becomes available.

*Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.*

No public input was offered.

*Chairman Mann closed public input.*

### **Article 12**

*To transact any other business which may legally come before said meeting.*

*Chairman Mann opened the floor for public input.*

No public input was offered.

*Chairman Mann closed public input.*

*Chairman Mann declared the Public Hearing closed at 8:11 p.m.*

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*The Bond Hearing was declared open at 8:11 p.m.*

Chairman Brown stated the District has two bond articles being brought before the voters. State law requires a hearing be conducted. This is the Public Hearing that was noticed for today with a start time of 7:30 p.m. She stated the purpose of the hearing to be to review the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District bonds for the proposed 2018-2019 facility renovation project fitness center/STEM lab and an athletic field addition.

### **Article 1 Special Warrant Article – Long Term Borrowing**

*To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,660,000 (gross budget)** for installation of an artificial turf athletic field and related improvements at the Hollis Brookline High School (the “Project”); and to authorize the issuance of \$1,660,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33); and to authorize the School Board to issue and negotiate such bonds*

*or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and to authorize the School Board to accept on behalf of the District any federal, state, or private funds that may become available for any part of the Project and to use such funds to reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued for the Project and/or offset future debt service costs; and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$24,324 for the first year's principal and interest payment on the bonds or notes issued.*

Superintendent Corey stated the high school has a long tradition in competitive athletics both through community programs and the NHIAA team competition. Athletics are an important part of our students' education; athletes learn to compete with peers, negotiate face to face, and understand their own strengths and weaknesses. They learn not only what it takes to win, but also how to carry on after defeat or disappointment. They learn to lead, to respect others, and how to work together as a team.

As the programs have grown, teams have faced challenges in finding adequate practice and competition fields. Field Hockey, Soccer, Lacrosse, and Football will all benefit directly from this field. Baseball will also gain more flexibility in the use of the outfield space. Track and Field will gain more time to practice on the track area. With lights, a synthetic turf field could be used continually, even after sunset, allowing several teams to practice in the same space.

The District offers 13 varsity and junior varsity rectangular field teams. The number is significantly larger than the number of teams that competed 20 years ago when the high school opened. We are severely overusing the fields our teams play on. The rocky New Hampshire soil is evident on these fields, and there is not enough down time to repair them properly. Our teams currently rent turf time, when available, from other schools and facilities in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. When they can't do that, they practice in the parking lot around the cars. Teams play on the Middle School and Town fields to alleviate the burden.

Synthetic turf preserves our local water resources while also providing a high-volume field. A field like the one proposed, would require 2,268,000 gallons of water. We simply don't have that. We could try to drill a well, which would be dependent on potentially hitting water, and that would be at an impact to our already taxed well system and our neighbors. Synthetic turf preserves our local water and could be used in cold weather months.

Superintendent Corey stated Souhegan, Bedford, Portsmouth, Hanover, Exeter, and Oyster River are among the many New Hampshire schools with synthetic fields. It is those same schools that we typically compare ourselves to academically. He stated his opinion we need to make that same comparison athletically. He requested support of the bond article for a synthetic turf field.

***Chairman Brown opened the floor for public input.***

Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive

Stated her support of the bond article noting her belief the District is in desperate need of the field. She spoke of the work done by the Facilities Committee, and thanked members for their effort.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Echoed the comments of the previous speaker. She spoke of having learned, were the same field to be grass instead of turf, the supporting well(s) would not only have to be dug, they would have to be run. It is not just the water cost, there is electric cost, which is large. If looking at comparative costs she would like that to include an estimate of electric bills.

Deborah Pucci, 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Remarked the voters are being presented this year with requests for a series of fields. The Town is proposing to purchase land for two fields, and the COOP is putting this proposal forward. She questioned if there has been any coordination with the Selectmen regarding number of fields needed.

Dave Belanger, 31 Rocky Pond Road, Hollis

Noted he is Chair of the Hollis Recreation Commission. He spoke of the approx. 300 students playing flag football, the Girls Lacrosse, and Boys Lacrosse noting the fields have not been expanded for that. The school comes to the Recreation Department every fall with a request to utilize fields. The Recreation Department does not anticipate it would get a lot of time on the synthetic field, if constructed, because of the lack of facilities at the High School. The Recreation Department needs the two fields it has proposed for its participants (15 and under) and to give the fields a break.

The requests are distinctive and are both needed. Mr. Belanger stated his hope the voters will approve the turf field as he is hopeful a program could be put together between the two groups that would allow for resting of some fields.

Deborah Pucci, 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Questioned if efforts are being coordinated, e.g., how it would be handled were 1 or 2 fields approved, but not all 3.

Mr. Belanger responded the Athletic Director at the High School and the Town's Recreation Coordinator coordinate use of the fields on a continual basis.

Ms. Pucci stated she understands the reactive discussions take place but wished to understand if proactive discussions are taking place.

Superintendent Corey stated the Town and schools communicate constantly. As part of that communication they have had discussions, the first of which began shortly after he arrived in the District, and four years later we are moving forward with a plan. He stated his belief the Town will get ample use out of their two fields just with their Recreation Department programs alone.

He stated concern he would need to bus students about 4 miles down the road and bus back every day, which comes at a cost. Presently, at the High School level there is a Trainer that covers both properties. That person would not be available 4 miles down the road, and he would have serious concerns about injuries. He envisions, as we move forward, working with the Town and the Recreation Department, that we will be able to rest fields. He also envisions allowing the Town, whenever it is available, to use the turf field.

Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

Remarked living next to the current athletic fields, she can attest to their overuse, and stated her opinion the additional fields are needed. She commented on the importance of both academics and athletics for today's youth. As was stated, it provides opportunities to hone in on leadership skills, social relationships, ability to handle stress, etc. She stated her hope when this is presented to the community-at-large, that some of those elements are brought into the discussion.

Mike Coutu, 1 Peterson Road, Brookline

Stated his support of the additional fields. He spoke of being a Youth Lacrosse coach for the past 5 years, and of being pleased each year to receive a schedule that includes more away than home games because that means he does not have to have his daughter play on Love Lane Field more than 3 times. His Sophomore son plays Varsity Soccer, and reminds him, after the first frost, that we're going to lose our fields, because that is when the annual rye grass dies.

The bond will continue long after his children have left the District. He supports this not because of his children, but because of the children that are in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade who would benefit from it.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Questioned the number of students in the COOP involved in athletics.

Superintendent Corey stated there to be about 300 athletes per season, which grows to a size of about 50% of the school population during peak seasons. When asked, he stated the count is reported to the Board by season, and commented there is not a significant overlap, e.g., less and less 2-3 sport athletes.

Richard Macdonough, 83 Worcester Road

Spoke of having personal experience playing Lacrosse on a field that was painted concrete, fields that were grass, etc. He questioned if the crumb rubber is safe.

Superintendent Corey stated there to be a number of studies ongoing. There are 7 different fills that can be used. You do not have to go with the crumb rubber. He spoke of having information on all 7 that he could provide. He stated his belief Oyster River is the newest in the State to put a turf field in, and they didn't use the crumb rubber. If the bond is passed by the voters, the Facilities Committee will look at that aspect critically.

Richard Macdonough, 83 Worcester Road

Spoke of injuries that result from students playing Lacrosse in a parking lot, and of having witnessed one of the best players he has ever seen blow out a knee on the gravel in the parking lot. He spoke of the inability to utilize the current field at the start of the season because of the condition of the field, and commented on the need to practice in the gym, which is a very slippery surface, and the parking lot.

Steve Pucci 25 Nartoff Road, Hollis

Questioned the interest rate associated with the bond, if it would be fixed, and what the total cost would be.

Chairman Mann stated the interest rate is 2.496%. Given fluctuating interest rates, they cannot guarantee that will be the rate at the time the bond is let. The bond rate will be fixed for the ten-year period. For the \$1.66 million bond, the total cost, at a 2.5% interest rate, would be \$1,890,724.

Chairman Brown stated approval of the bond article would give the District the legal authority to borrow up to the maximum. The other factors regarding the terms should not be in the Warrant Article itself.

Barbara King, 15 Barton Road, Hollis

Stated there to be a good deal of coordination between the Town and the School District. As a parent who has been involved in Soccer and Lacrosse she knows it to be a Tetris game played between the parents who run the

fields to figure out who can work. She spoke of carrying a shovel in her car to fill in holes at the Middle School field. She has also experienced eight-year old kids playing soccer games at 6:45 p.m. on a Sunday night due to the lack of fields.

She remarked it is a very well thought out field proposal. The water issue is pretty much unsolvable. She commented on the increased utilization that will occur with the number of teams that will be able to play on this field.

Peter Walker, 57 Pepperell Road

Questioned if there is concern with light pollution. Superintendent Corey stated, at this point, he has not heard any concerns. He has spoken with the direct abutter who has indicated he is okay with it. Automatic shut-off for the lights would be established. The only time that would be exceeded would be if a particular sporting event went into over-time, etc.

*Chairman Brown closed public input.*

## **Article 2 - Special Warrant Article – Long Term Borrowing**

*To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,980,000** (gross budget) for renovations at the Hollis Brookline High School to create and equip a new fitness center and STEM lab (the “Project”); and to authorize the issuance of \$1,980,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33); and to authorize the School Board to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and to authorize the School Board to accept on behalf of the District any federal, state, or private funds that may become available for any part of the Project and to use such funds to reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued for the Project and/or offset future debt service costs; and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$29,013** for the first year’s principal and interest payment on the bonds or notes issued.*

Superintendent Corey stated the SAU has moved to a STEM focus. The elementary students presently sitting in 4<sup>th</sup> grade have been extensively exposed to STEM since they started Kindergarten. The elementary students have MakerSpace, which is what he would refer to as robotics for that age group. The Libraries have switched to Learning Commons so they become more of a tech/hub center for both acceleration and remediation in the school.

At the Middle and High Schools, they are working to advance pathways for acceleration. Last spring the School Board agreed to allow him to swap a Math teacher, who was retiring, for a new Computer Science Teacher so they could bring forth the first computer science courses around coding. Those have started and are believed will grow as students move through the grades.

The District is focusing not only on STEM, but a product of STEM, which is Robotics. The intent is to construct a STEM lab for the daily curriculum as we create a tech center and a fabrication room that could be utilized for many aspects of STEM. The byproduct is the High School Robotics Team moving back to the High School.

Four years ago, the decision was made to move them to the Middle School because of overcrowding, and equipment that was not appropriate to be on the third floor because of its weight. A positive aspect of that move was Middle School students seeing the High School students around, watching them, etc. There are now two Middle School teams. They are different and do not work together.

Superintendent Corey commented when the High School started 20 years ago STEM did not exist. At a recent meeting, he was asked if this is a want or need, and he replied with his youngest son being a Junior in high school, for him it is a want as he is uncertain what he would gain from this. But for a parent of children entering the elementary level, this is absolutely a need.

He spoke of having met with representatives from companies in our and surrounding communities. One source, a company in Hollis, sponsors the elementary robotics teams. These companies are looking for skilled employees. BAE recently reached out to Nashua Community College to develop a course so that when students graduate from Nashua they are trained for BAE. Because they couldn't wait for them to be cultivated, they had to put something in place. Everything in industry says this is the right move to make.

The Facilities Committee began work on this well over a year ago. The result is what is believed to be a very effective design using space that already exists. By renovating the weight room and adding a second floor, we start with four walls, plumbing, heating, electric, HVAC. It is more of a reconfiguration and an enhancement through Tech and STEM via a fabrication room and what is called a dirty room for the cutting and those aspects as well as a room for just 3D printers.

By moving Robotics back to the High School, space is gained at the Middle School to eventually provide a more appropriate space for the Middle School STEM students. The room presently used is overcrowded and cluttered, which has the potential for a safety concern.

The new robotics room, STEM Lab, and Tech Center will have clear sightlines through the use of glass walls. An instructor in one room would be able to see the entire structure.

A major factor considered in this project is storage. We have very little storage for both robotics equipment and fitness center equipment. The Crew Team has 65 members, and they are constantly working on their equipment. This is a wonderful program the District was able to start, but again, not necessarily with the proper space. The proposed Fitness Center will allow for more cross training.

Superintendent Corey commented athletics have changed. It is about stretching, plyometrics, developing flexibility, etc. It is contrary to what we did 30 some odd years ago.

We realize education will change again so we are not building structures that are filled with walls and concrete, we are building flexible spaces; putting the electric in the ceiling because it is cost effective and because it is better educationally. The Fitness Center would be a wide-open space where we could begin to offer a variety of other alternatives to those students who may not be interested in athletics. At the same time, we can offer a proper training facility for those students who are training for sport specific events.

Also gained by creating this space in our present building is an additional classroom. It does allow for flexibility for future growth. As shown, NESDEC projections are relatively stagnant for the next five years. Following that, the projection is a sharp uptick in growth. Having these three additional spaces will provide flexibility for enrollment to grow.

Superintendent Corey remarked some have mentioned there are teachers on carts. There have always been teachers on carts. It is what the new teacher gets. That is not going to change, and a room for every teacher in your building is simply not realistic. With the potential for a new classroom, the Assistant Superintendent is looking at potential offerings in Biomedical Science, Aerospace Engineering, Civil Engineering or Computer Integrated Manufacturing. All these courses are offered through Project Lead the Way, which allows the students to take the course at the High School and gain 3 college credits. The State of New Hampshire recently changed the funding for that, and it will now be free for a parent.

The STEM lab would increase the opportunities for students. When we combine the STEM lab and Fitness Center, we start to address what he believes to be one of the critical needs we have as a society; work/life balance. We have a responsibility to train our students how to manage that work/life balance if we intend to have a better society in 20 years.

Chairman Mann displayed a chart outlining the financing associated with the proposal. The loan principal is \$1.98 million, and total principal and interest payments over the ten-year life of the bond would be approx. \$2.3M. The first year's payment would be approx. \$29,013 split between Hollis and Brookline. The FY19 impact on the tax rate would be \$0.02/\$1,000. Average annual payment for FY20 and remaining years is approx. \$222,600 resulting in an approx. impact on the tax rate of \$0.13/\$1,000.

***Chairman Brown opened the floor for public input.***

Maryanne Shanley, 7 Buttonwood Drive

Stated her support of the bond proposal commenting the District has done a good job balancing what can be sustained with what the students need. She spoke of having read a comment by someone that stated you really need to focus on having the best curricular and the best teaching practices in your District, and thought she is not concerned with that; what we are going to do with this STEM center is give our teachers and staff the ability to really apply all of the stuff they want to do with our students, and it will simply explode. It will explode for a bunch of different levels of students.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Spoke of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade robotics 8<sup>th</sup> program and commented 4 out of the 13 team members have 3D printers at home. We can't wait until the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students get to the high school to provide these opportunities.

Ken St. Hilaire, 44 Hayden Road, Hollis

Spoke of being a member of the Facilities Committee and commented for the last 15 months or so the committee has been building this plan. What he likes about it is that it addresses multiple needs with every dollar. It would address needs on the athletic side as well as the needs on the technology side. Building a steady progression K-12 on the technology side is extremely important. We need to provide the expanse in the curriculum so that we challenge these students.

He also works with the 1<sup>st</sup> Robotics Team at the High School. In the last few years as they have brought new students in through the Middle School program, when they arrive, they already know so much. Part of the challenge is how to challenge them further. He sees that in what they are doing in classwork as well; not getting some of the variation of the curriculum they are looking for. Providing this space is hugely important. The side effect is we are also addressing some of the other needs with the same investment.

Richard Macdonough, 83 Worcester Road

Commented his wife is a Veteran of the Air Force, a Physicist, a BAE employee, etc. She is responsible for keeping a lot of people safe. Their biggest need is people with applied physics knowledge and a depth of physics knowledge. There is not the depth of education within our graduates. His wife has indicated they can't get enough American citizens to staff these positions. We have holes in the system, and it is because we don't have enough knowledge. We have seen foreign nations with public/private partnerships, which is an amazing example.

Tammy Fareed, 9 Winding Valley Road, Hollis

Stated the Robotics Team at the Middle School has had to limit the number of students that can participate because of manpower and cost. Last year 30 students had to be turned away. There are dozens of students in the Middle School alone who are hungry for all these opportunities to learn and practice these 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills.

The Robotics teams may pay a single coach a small stipend, but there is an army of high-tech parents who volunteer as mentors for multiple disciplines on each team. You are getting a lot of free direct community support to the students from highly qualified people, and it is that community/school partnership that enhances the entire community experience. The dollars' worth has a good will line that may not be quantifiable, but it is a qualitative addition.

Michelle St. John, 29 Orchard Drive, Hollis

Stated she is excited about the curriculum aspects; the opportunities that will be afforded our students.

Santo Perisarmy, South Depot Road, Hollis

Commented we have a very talented community that is interested in building the STEM program, and questioned if the space could be utilized by the community for students.

Superintendent Corey responded the goal is to continue to expand both in-school and after-school offerings. The SAU would be happy to consider all proposals presented providing they include the appropriate supervision, appropriate safety checks that are performed for anyone spending time in the building, etc. are in place.

*Chairman Brown closed public input.*

*Chairman Brown declared the Bond Hearing closed at 9:04 p.m.*

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*There being no objection, the Boards took a five-minute recess at 9:04 p.m.*

*The Joint Meeting reconvened at 9:09 p.m.*

## DELIBERATIONS

### **Article 1 Special Warrant Article – Long Term Borrowing**

*To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,660,000** (gross budget) for installation of an artificial turf athletic field and related improvements at the Hollis Brookline High School (the "Project"); and to authorize the issuance of \$1,660,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33); and to authorize the School Board to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and to authorize the School Board to accept on behalf of the District any federal, state, or private funds that may become available for any part of the Project and to use such funds to reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued for the Project and/or offset future debt service costs; and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$24,324** for the first year's principal and interest payment on the bonds or notes issued.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RATER TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 1, AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

## ON THE QUESTION

When asked about the prior language relative to private funding, Superintendent Corey stated private funds are being solicited. Bond Council recommended against the language because you cannot intentionally underfund a project. One of the big concerns he had was if we didn't raise the funding, and we had pulled the bond, we would be asking taxpayers, a year from now, to make up the difference.

The School Board adopted an 85/15 split and is actively looking to get the \$249,000 for the field and the \$297,000 for the STEM center. The District has received and has earmarked \$150,000 towards the field. When asked, he stated funds raised would come into the District as revenue, which would offset the expense of the Article in that given year.

Vice Chairman Blanche asked for clarification, any funds received would be earmarked towards bond payments. Superintendent Corey responded the goal was to achieve the 15% private funding contribution for both projects. When that goal is reached, the intent would be for additional funds raised to be utilized towards funding equipment and other items.

Vice Chairman Blanche questioned, if a grass field, how large a pump would have to be to accommodate the needs. Superintendent Corey stated he has not yet looked at what would be required in terms of the size of a pump, but could look to gain that information prior to the Annual Meeting. He reiterated the larger concern to be water usage.

Mr. Rydstrom remarked 20-25 years ago the District constructed an auditorium that was 100% funded with private donations. He questioned if the Town has changed so much so that that cannot be done again. Superintendent Corey responded it is not that the Town has changed that much. What he has heard from many is the desire to understand whether the community supports the proposal prior to committing to it. That has been conveyed to him by a few select individuals who are very successful, and who, if they chose, could make a significant difference. He clarified the 15% private donation discussed is the minimum.

Vice Chairman Blanche spoke of discussion of the type of material for the field, and questioned if a table could be provided that outlines the schools in the State that have synthetic fields, the type of materials used, when the fields were constructed, lifespan, etc. Superintendent Corey stated that information would be posted to the website.

When asked about payments in the out years, Chairman Mann stated the amortization schedule would be provided at the Annual Meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 1**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

## **Article 2 - Special Warrant Article – Long Term Borrowing**

*To see if the District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,980,000** (gross budget) for renovations at the Hollis Brookline High School to create and equip a new fitness center and STEM lab (the "Project"); and to authorize the issuance of \$1,980,000 of bonds or notes in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Finance Act (RSA Chapter 33); and to authorize the School Board to issue and negotiate such bonds or notes and to determine the rate of interest thereon; and to authorize the School Board to accept on behalf of the*

*District any federal, state, or private funds that may become available for any part of the Project and to use such funds to reduce the amount of bonds or notes issued for the Project and/or offset future debt service costs; and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$29,013 for the first year's principal and interest payment on the bonds or notes issued.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RATER TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2 AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Blanche asked for clarification and was informed this bond would be at a fixed term and rate. The Article identifies the total amount that could be borrowed.

Mr. Rydstrom questioned whether the bonds would have a pre-payment penalty. Superintendent Corey stated revenue could be used to offset the bond payment. The pre-payment option was a significantly higher rate of interest. In the Warrant Article, there is wording that allows the District to accept donations that would go into the budget on the revenue side, which would offset the amount that has to be raised through taxes for the bond payment.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-1-0**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2 AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

Article 3

*To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to approve the cost of items included in the three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis Education Association for the 2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years, which calls for the following increase in professional staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:*

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-19	\$302,962	2019-20	\$342,447	2020-21	\$359,464

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of \$302,962 for the first fiscal year (2018-2019 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in professional staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RYDSTROM TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3 AS PRESENTED  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

ON THE QUESTION

Mr. Rydstrom stated he is troubled by this. Back in September when the subject was brought up, the Budget Committee was explicit that it wanted the contract delivered in January so that it could be reviewed. The Committee specifically asked that the contract not come forward the night of the Public Hearing. He stated it to be a million-dollar contract that the Committee is expected to vote on 10 minutes after receiving it.

The last time a contract was done it was sanbornized because of structural changes made to it. At the time, the comment made was that the Committee did not wish to get in the habit of sanbornizing contracts, and all agreed. Now we have a sanbornized contract, which he cannot support.

He commented when considering the amount of the contract, which is \$1 million over three years, that is so far over guidance as he understood it, that he cannot support it based on its cost.

Chairman Mann stated she is not certain how a Budget Committee, without the ability to conduct its own analysis of proposed changes, could be expected to move forward particularly with a sanbornized agreement.

Vice Chairman Blanche questioned if the Budget Committee could delay taking a vote, and an additional meeting be scheduled prior to the Annual Meeting to consider the Article.

Chairman Mann stated her understanding traditionally articles with financial implications are put forward and posted with Budget Committee and School Board recommendations attached. She stated she would be reluctant to post a Warrant without a Budget Committee recommendation associated with it. If the Committee agrees it would like to have a meeting right before the Town meeting, and potentially change its position, that is a possibility.

Drew Mason, 61 Baxter Road, Hollis

When asked, stated his belief the Budget Committee and School Board both must make their recommendations, which appear on the Warrant. The Committee has an open microphone at the Annual Meeting. If people have second thoughts, they can make them known.

Mr. Rydstrom stated his belief the conversation in September with the negotiating representative from the School Board, was if we don't get the contract in January, we are not supporting it.

Vice Chairman Blanche remarked prior to the negotiations, the Committee wrote a document to provide suggested guidelines or thoughts. He questioned if this topic was included and was informed it was. Mr. Solinas stated agreement with Mr. Rydstrom's position. He is uncertain what the expectations are in putting this contract forward given what was requested in terms of a timeframe. He can understand there are issues associated with negotiating, but to be provided a contract in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour, he cannot support.

When asked how much time is needed to review, Mr. Solinas stated the time has passed, and had been made quite clear.

Ms. Whalen stated, as the representative to the Budget Committee, she can say she is aware both parties were working diligently and in good faith. It was certainly not intentional. It was stressful for the members of the negotiating team and the teachers as well. She spoke of the time and effort that went into the negotiations, and the end result of having a contract to bring forward.

Mr. Rater stated his agreement with the earlier statements regarding being provided the contract when walking into the final meeting. No time was afforded to evaluate the contract. There is no way the Committee can make a recommendation.

It was noted the publication deadline is February 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Ms. Whalen questioned if there is time for the Committee to review the proposed contract. Mr. Rydstrom remarked it is not a Budget Committee issue. The Committee could not have been more clear about what its expectations were or more clear about what the consequences would be if the expectations were not met. He

suggested it would be helpful in future negotiations if this does not receive the Committee's recommendation. He added it was one of the reasons the statements were made in September; to help facilitate moving the process along.

Ms. Whalen reiterated time and effort was put into many meetings. She does not believe there to have been procrastinating to not bring something forward. She spoke of the good faith effort on both sides to bring the contract forward today. Chairman Mann commented if it were not brought in today it would not have been brought forward at all.

Mr. Solinas commented the Committee respects the process, but also recognizes it is not a part of that process other than the recommendations it makes. The Committee is in the dark until a contract is put forth. He stated his displeasure.

Vice Chairman Blanche stated the desire to reach some sort of an agreement for moving this forward. He questioned what the give and take was regarding the sanbornization language, and how the numbers were arrived at.

Chairman Mann noted the agreement put forward has been ratified by both parties.

Vice Chairman Blanche requested clarification of the phase out of the stipend for professional development (Article 7.4) combined with the elimination of the merit bonus. He wished to understand the total amount per year over the next three years. It does not appear the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> year numbers were adjusted to account for that phase out.

Superintendent Corey stated they were not. He spoke of the timing of the ratification of the contract and how the Administration was rapidly working to put things together working around a Monday night Brookline Deliberative Session, Tuesday night Hollis Budget Committee, and now a Thursday night Public Hearing. He stated he too would have liked to have it before the Committee sooner. However, assured the Board it was in an effort to arrive at an agreement believed to be appropriate.

The merit pay piece is a concept that went in a number of years back that is not believed to have been working as effectively as hoped. Rather than simply having that ½ percent of the overall salary awarded every year, it was believed better to get that out of the agreement and defray the cost. The Professional Development stipend is an administrative headache; employees are required to indicate their intent to qualify for that, that forces the District to budget for that potential. There have been years where the District has budgeted for 30 people (\$90,000) and 11 have earned it. That resulted in the budget being over-inflated. The high in the last three years has been 23, but they have always worked the budget off the number of people that would be eligible. Getting this language out of the contract provides for better stability at the SAU office, gives back a lot of administrative hours on this, allows this to be phased out. He commented once you put a number out to the public it can go down but cannot go up. He believes the second and third years' figures will be adjusted. There simply was not the ability to put that together and call it an accurate piece.

Superintendent Corey stated they tried mediation and failed. They went back at it again and spent two 5±/hour nights after about 10 months' worth of negotiation to hammer out a deal. He stated his understanding of the position and the fact that the Committee may have to vote a certain way, but ultimately the question will move to the voters and the voters will decide the outcome of the contract.

When asked if that could be phased out in the first year, he stated it could not because people would be eligible for it. It is set up to be over a three-year period so that people already working towards it could achieve it. He stated a conservative number to be \$30,000 - \$35,000/year for those three years.

Mr. Solinas commented negotiated cost items are not subject to the 10% rule. He noted you can insert the contingent article that says if this does not pass we can call a special meeting for a contract, which would allow the Budget Committee time to review it. He did not see an issue with the School Board adding such an article to the Warrant.

Vice Chairman Blanche remarked if inflation were to run wild, capping the increases is probably a good idea. Mr. Rydstrom stated his belief some of the logic behind dropping that verbiage was there seemed to be an unfair burden on the taxpayers in that they made a decision, and then would have to come back and readdress it.

Chairman Mann questioned if there was any discussion of changing the amount of employee contribution to the healthcare premiums noting that was part of the guidance provided by the Budget Committee.

Mr. Cross commented what he was hearing was the desire for time to review; however, what was being discussed were specific details. He stated his belief the fundamental question is how do we get the Committee time to review it.

Chairman Mann stated the desire to understand the details of the contract.

Mr. Cross stated what he was hearing was even if those details are explained, the Committee is taking the position there is not time to review. Chairman Brown commented she is not sure the position is they don't have time to review because they don't have to make a recommendation until the 22<sup>nd</sup>. She stated her understanding the position of at least two is we missed the January deadline, it is simply too late, don't bring it to us.

Mr. Solinas reiterated the issue of sanbornization, and the total dollar amount. Chairman Brown stated it to be clearly within the guidance numbers that were provided. Guidance numbers were only provided for the first year. Mr. Solinas remarked had the conversation been about sanbornization that could have been addressed.

Chairman Mann stated concern with estimates for the outer years. Now, not only is it a million-dollar contract, but it is a million-dollar contract that is kind of being acknowledged as being high. She stated understanding of the timelines and the pressure everyone is under.

Mr. Rydstrom commented there is a credibility piece that we cannot avoid. Two years ago, the Committee said the sanbornization of that contract would not set a precedent and would not be an issue. We got up at Town meeting and said that.

Chairman Brown stated what is clear to her is the Board has not been able to express how that sanbornization got added in.

Mr. Rydstrom responded it does not matter, we told them we wouldn't do it.

Chairman Brown stated it was added at the last minute in exchange for language that would phase out the professional development stipends. It was an exchange; one would not have happened without the other. Chairman Mann responded for a \$30,000 annual phase out, we are sanbornizing a million-dollar contract.

Chairman Brown remarked the dollar amount being placed on it does not consider that in some years the District encumbers as much as \$90,000. She remarked loud and clear the Board has heard the Budget Committee complain that budgets are run having a large discrepancy between projected and actuals. This is an area where we know that our contract has wiggle room the Committee does not like about the contracts.

The Board has heard a critical need from the Superintendent and other administrators in the SAU about how over taxed they are and the number of things that are being done in the SAU that are not necessarily

procedurally optimal or leading to the best outcomes in our schools because we are draining the SAU staff immensely. What was heard was that this was a huge drain on the time of the Business Administrator's and Assistant Superintendent's resources in the process by which she approves the courses that are allowable. It is a non-monetary thing, but in the long-term she believes will impact the SAU budget. To say it is a \$30,000 piece really understates the impact.

Chairman Brown commented, as a community involved in supporting the schools, we must listen to the SAU staff when they describe what the critical needs are, and she believes this to have been an effort to address some of those issues. It was really believed this would be something the Budget Committee would appreciate coming out of the contract, and; therefore, was worth sanbornizing.

Chairman Brown stated the Board has been listening to what the Budget Committee states it wants, and really negotiated this contract in an effort to give it what was asked for. She apologized for not being able to do it by the deadline commenting she doesn't believe any of the parties involved believed it would be a hard fast if it wasn't provided on time it would be rejected. She added the negotiating teams were working up until the last minute, and she hoped they would respect the number of hours put in by all parties to try to get this one done.

Superintendent Corey remarked over his time in the District he has seen developed a great respect between the Budget Committee and the School Board and the working relationship has been fabulous. This is one of those times where he believes there to be a disagreement based on sound reasoning. He respects everything that has been said and knows what the School Board has done to get to the point of having a contract. He believes it to be one of those items that will go before the voters with disagreement, which does not change the level of respect between the two groups. He suggested positions be taken, and explanations provided at the Annual Meeting.

Mr. Solinas stated agreement, and his hope all parties learn communication is missing. Chairman Brown noted, when negotiating, care must be taken in regard to what is communicated. There are laws that cover the inability to pass that information along.

Mr. Solinas remarked this also exemplifies some of what goes on in the education system; if you had to spend that much time, if there was that much disagreement along the way, there is a bigger problem than not being able to get the contract to the Committee in January. He stated appreciation for the difficulties/complexities involved in the Administration having to run three different districts.

Superintendent Corey stated there to have been five contracts this year, which the Administration does not govern. Those five contracts are also governed by 6 unions.

Vice Chairman Blanche stated the desire to see a not-to-exceed number for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years. Superintendent Corey stated it to be the worst-case scenario.

When asked what would occur if the contract is voted down, Chairman Brown stated there would be no contract/no raises.

Ms. Levesque commented what she was hearing was that we are at an impasse and questioned why the two groups could not come back together after another week during which the Committee can pose questions and the Administration can sharpen the numbers and do the work necessary to reach agreement. She spoke of the obligation to the staff and communities.

Mr. Rydstrom stated he has issues with the contract from what he has seen of it. He made a commitment to the voters the next contract would not be sanbornized. He cannot support it. He stated his agreement with the

remarks of the Superintendent that the Budget Committee will take a vote, the School Board will take a vote, and the voters will decide.

**MOTION FAILED**

**2-4-0**

*Members Mann, Rydstrom, Solinas, and Rater voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER TO DEURLOO BABCOCK RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 4**

*To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items for the first year of a three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis Education Support Staff Association for the 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, which calls for the following increases in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:*

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2018-19	\$78,813

*and further to raise and appropriate a sum of \$78,813 for the first fiscal year (2018-19 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in support staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels. This is the first year of a three year agreement. Negotiated cost item increases for the next fiscal year (2019-20) will require approval of a specific warrant article at the 2019 annual meeting.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER RATER**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-1-1**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

*Member Blanche abstained*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 5**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of \$21,294,000 for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER RATER**

**ON THE QUESTION**

When asked about the estimated year end unexpended appropriations, Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator stated it to be approx. \$120,000.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-2-0**

*Members Rydstrom and Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LEVESQUE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 6**

*To see if the school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate up to \$100,000 to go into the fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2018, and no amount to be raised from taxation. Any appropriation left at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RATER TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-1-0**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 7**

*Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$806,808 as the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's portion of the SAU budget of \$1,577,723 for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget of \$1,543,057 with \$792,386 assigned to the school budget of this school district will be adopted if the article does not receive a majority vote of all the school district voters voting in this school administrative unit.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 7 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER RATER**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**4-2-0**

*Members Rydstrom and Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 7 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER LEVESQUE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 8**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$70,000** to be added to the previously established Athletic Program and Services Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2018 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2018.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RATER TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 8 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-1-0**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 8 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 9**

*To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$40,000** to be added to the previously established School Building and Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2018 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2018.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RYDSTROM TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 9 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**ON THE QUESTION**

Vice Chairman Blanche stated it would be useful if the presentation covered the items addressed through the operating budget and those which would be addressed through the Trust.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-1-0**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 9 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**Article 10**

*To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District will vote to raise and appropriate up to **\$25,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2018 to be added to the previously established Special Education Expendable Trust Fund. No amount to be raised from taxation.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER RYDSTROM TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 10 AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**ON THE QUESTION**

Chairman Mann commented last year the Budget Committee recommended a cap of \$125,000 primarily because it was felt between the contingency, the retained fund balance, and this trust, the District would be adequately covered. That language was stricken at the meeting, and the amount doubled from a \$50,000 requested allocation to an actual allocation of \$100,000. She stated her opinion \$125,000 is an appropriate amount. She stated she would reluctantly support this request as it would get the Trust to a balance of \$125,000, but that she would not support it next year if it were to come back at an amount that would raise the balance beyond that.

Vice Chairman Blanche stated his support of the Chairman's position.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-1-0**

*Member Solinas voted in opposition*

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 10 AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Brown commented on being open to a discussion of the appropriate funding level.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

Article 11

*To see if the school district will authorize the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.*

**MOTION BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 11 AS WRITTEN  
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

Chairman Brown stated the need for the School Board to discuss whether to add a contingent warrant article that would provide for a special meeting should Article 3 not pass. RSA 31:5 allows a contingent warrant; which would allow the School District, if the current Article 3 is defeated, to authorize the governing body to call one special meeting at its option to address the cost items of what is currently Article 3.

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO AMEND THE WARRANT TO INCLUDE CONTINGENT  
LANGUAGE, PURSUANT TO RSA 31:5, RELATIVE TO ARTICLE 3**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

ON THE QUESTION

When asked for additional clarification, Superintendent Corey stated if the contract were to not pass a vote of the voters, the negotiating teams would come back to the table to see if they could arrive at an agreement. From there a special meeting would be able to be called to take up that single question.

Chairman Brown stated her opinion it is an option that should be put on the Warrant as it gives the control to the taxpayers.

When asked if it would be beneficial to include a specific date for the special meeting, Mr. Mason added the language of the Article states it is at the discretion of the School Board when and whether to conduct a special meeting. Chairman Brown commented the language in RSA states "shall read as follows". She recommended wording it in accordance with the language in the RSA. Superintendent Corey noted there to be time to seek a legal opinion.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO AMEND THE WARRANT TO INCLUDE CONTINGENT LANGUAGE, PURSUANT TO RSA 31:5, RELATIVE TO ARTICLE 4**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER RYDSTROM TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE BUDGET COMMITTEE'S MEETING OF JANUARY 24, 2018, AS WRITTEN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**5-0-1**

*Member Solinas Abstained*

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER LEVESQUE TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER DEURLOO BABCOCK**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER RYDSTROM LEVESQUE TO ADJOURN**

**MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLANCHE**

**MOTION CARRIED**

**6-0-0**

The February 8, 2018 meeting was adjourned at 10:27 p.m.

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