

**JOINT MEETING BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
BROOKLINE FINANCE COMMITTEE
JANUARY 12, 2022
MEETING MINUTES**

A joint meeting of the Brookline School Board and Brookline Finance Committee was conducted on Wednesday, January 12, 2022, at 6:03 p.m. at the Captain Samuel Douglass Academy.

Kenneth Haag, Chairman, presided:

Members of the School Board Present: Erin Sarris, Vice Chairman
Karen Jew, Secretary
Rebecca Howie
Alison Marsano (arrived at 6:20 p.m.)

Members of the School Board Absent:

Members of the Finance Cmte. Present: Brian Rater, Chair
Cindy LaCroix
Adam Goff (arrived at 6:21 p.m.)

Members of the Finance Cmte. Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Kelly Seeley, Business Administrator
Daniel Molinari, Principal, Richard Maghakian Memorial School
Patricia Bouley, Principal, Captain Samuel Douglass Academy

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Superintendent Corey provided the Board (copies attached) with four Petition Warrant Articles one of which will require a public hearing. The Board will be asked to set a date for that public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

- Capital Lease/Bond Hearing
- Proposed FY23 Budget

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC HEARINGS

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

MOTION CARRIED

4-0-0

The joint meeting recessed at 6:07 p.m.

The joint meeting reconvened at 7:27 p.m.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the proposed capital lease and contingent Bond Warrant Articles for the Brookline School District for 2022-2023.

Article 2 – Capital Lease

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to authorize the School Board to enter into a 18-year lease purchase agreement for **\$2,485,280** to finance the acquisition and installation of energy conservation equipment and related energy, ADA and security improvements at Richard Maghakian Memorial School and Captain Samuel Douglass Academy as recommended by the Brookline School District Facilities Committee; and to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$177,500** for payments due under the lease purchase agreement during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This lease purchase agreement will contain an escape (non-appropriation) clause. (Majority vote required.).

Estimated Net Tax Impact - \$0.25/\$1,000

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2, AS PRESENTED MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

ON THE QUESTION

Finance Chair Rater commented it seems the efficiency controls for RMMS is not necessarily needed in phase 1. He requested the School Board eliminate that one item from the article.

Member Marsano responded the only reason for them to remain in phase 1 is because they have to be included for phase 2. The cost of bonds right now being as low as it is, favors the district doing the work it can at this point.

Finance Chair Rater commented to him, phase 2 does not feel well thought through. It has not been discussed in any great detail. There will be a few more years of discussion regarding that during which plans could change. To include a quarter of a million dollar commitment to one part of something that could change over the next few years is a concern.

Finance Cmte. Member LaCroix remarked the boilers will typically last 20 years. Being residential in this environment, perhaps not. She questioned if by putting in the controls now, are we locking ourselves into a very specific system.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented the opposite side of that argument is if putting the boiler system into CSDA that requires those controls, do we want the controls to be the same in both schools. Does having the boiler system at CSDA necessitate having to have those being controlled?

Superintendent Corey spoke of his recollection EEI felt strongly that RMMS needed to gain some control over their heating system as there are multiple boiler plants that are not synced. At times, the district has run into issues of burst pipes, etc.

He noted the district has about \$10 million worth of work to do. The current interest rates are favorable. If what is being stated is that the preference is to expend the difference between the cost of doing and not doing

the controls on something else, that he could support. He commented on the starting point of \$11 million for RMMS and approx. \$7 million for CSDA. That work was reduced over and over. This approach is putting the work into multiple phases. He spoke of the continued ability to find technology for RMMS and the Hollis Primary School some of which has not been produced for 20-25 years. He does not believe the controls would become obsolete in 5 years.

Although aware of the tax impact, these are things that have to be addressed. RMMS is a very old building and needs upgrades. A lot of the reasons we have had so much success is Principal Molinari's skillset and expertise in a field other than education and the addition of the Lance Finamore, Facilities Director.

Vice Chairman Sarris stated the conversation started with the identification of the need for energy controls. It was the urgent need of RMMS that was the most immediate need. The question was do we just put forth a cost that would address the urgent need or put something before the voters that will allow the district to scale the technology to what will be needed in the future. She is uncertain what the worst case scenario is if they are not addressed in the next five years, but it sounds as though the potential cost and damage could put us in a difficult position.

Finance Chair Rater stated the boilers themselves are relatively new and in good shape. This is basically a new system. It is a quarter of a million dollars. We need to ask ourselves if the problem we are solving is worth spending that much money on. He is all for energy efficiency, but this project does not make sense in regard to energy savings on its own. It might very well with whatever we end up with in future phases. He reiterated it is a large sum that would lock the district into something that will be determined later.

Chairman Haag noted included in the project description for the \$1.5 million is ventilation. The DDC controls will focus on the ventilation. It is not just boilers it is also the air handler system. The ventilation system is the largest focus in the Capital Improvement Plan. There are some high costs in future years, e.g., ground units, roof units that need repair because of the age of the building. That would be included in Phase 2. It is also the kitchen. Phase 2 is pretty well thought out.

Asked what the distinction is between the ventilation called out in Phase 1 and that in Phase 2, Superintendent Corey responded in Phase 2 they would start to replace the larger air handlers (rooftop units). Those units are generally in the range of \$300,000 - \$400,000 each. This control system is the system that speaks to the boilers, ventilation units, ventilation ducts (opening/closing), monitors CO₂, is constantly adjusting for fresh air, and dehumidifies. It is a significant piece to the overall system. The savings will be small initially and greater down the line. With the installation of the air handler units is where the greater savings will come into play. Those units were just too large, from a cost standpoint, for Phase 1.

Member Marsano reflected on when she moved into town and would attend meetings to learn year after year that there was the need to replace a boiler. It seemed as soon as a new one came in, another was needed. There are the huge air handlers and then there is the fact that every third room has its own mini-air handling system. To replace all of that was not feasible at this point as it involved the running of all of the ductwork as well. We have looked at doing the entirety of the project scope, which was the \$17 million price tag. Chairman Haag stated the central energy recovery system was \$2.3 million, central boiler \$665,000 (tied to DDC), electrical upgrade was \$250,000, solar is \$225,000. Member Marsano reiterated the Board has looked at all of the different facets and said there is no chance that we can go to the voters with a request for the entirety of the project at this time. We knew going in that the controls were going bad. Whatever small control set we did have on some of the boilers was aging out. That was how this whole thing started. We learned the lighting aspect of the project would provide the biggest energy return. Chairman Haag agreed lighting and controls is

where the discussions began. The Board met with two different firms on this and then the enrollment growth became an aspect. He stated the \$1.5 million to be critical. He spoke of the low cost of borrowing and suggested the discussion be brought up at the public hearing. From the position of the Board and understanding where this process began, he supports the proposal.

Vice Chairman Sarris spoke of appreciation for the concern with the amount of energy savings identified for this and spoke of the savings that could be gained from this once the larger ventilation system project is addressed.

Finance Member LaCroix remarked you are replacing an aging boiler here and will start to see additional returns when replacing the air handler unit. Right now the efficiency controls will control 9 not terribly efficient residential boilers and some air handlers. When controlling more efficient equipment, the energy savings will increase.

Member Marsano stated her understanding the controls are designed to integrate with a variety of systems. It is not limited to the boilers.

Finance Committee Chair Rater commented it seems they should be done as part of the next phase where the ventilation system is addressed so that whatever efficiency control system that is purchased is one that is built for whatever we end up getting in terms of the systems it would be controlling.

Member Jew spoke of being in favor of putting the central aspect of the system in now. As we phase things in, there is no guarantee that all of the systems will be the same. Asked if the COOP just put in a control system they had not had previously, Superintendent Corey stated the COOP School District is looking at a similar type of thing for their air handler units. The Hollis school District just finished theirs up. They met earlier in the day to iron out how every single thing is now connected to the building management system.

Superintendent Corey commented what will be approved is a dollar amount. A facilities company will be selected to move forward with. What we approve might not be the identical item that is purchased. If we put this in front of a company this summer and the price that comes back is \$2.8 million, some cuts will have to be made. That has happened every time we have entered into a project.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 1-2-0 (members Rater and Goff voted in opposition)

Article 3 – (Contingent Article) – ADA Elevator/Security Improvements

In the event that Article 2 is not approved, to see if the Brookline School District will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$1,500,000** for the purchase and installation of an ADA compliant elevator and related entry-way/security improvements for Richard Maghakian Memorial School as recommended by the Brookline School District Facilities Committee; and to authorize the issuance of \$1,500,000 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 raise and appropriate an additional sum of **\$37,500** from taxation for debt service payments payable on such bonds or notes during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. (2/3 ballot vote required).

**MOTION BY MEMBER MARSANO TO AMEND BY REPLACING “AND” WITH “AN” BEFORE
“ADDITIONAL SUM” AND RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HAAG**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag spoke of the critical nature of the article.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the proposed School District Budget for 2022-2023.

Article 4 – Support Staff Contract

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to approve the cost of items included in a four-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Brookline School Board and the Brookline Education Support Staff Association for the 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, which calls for the following increase in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Estimated Increase</u>
2022-2023	\$58,299
2023-2024	\$58,520
2024-2025	\$38,616
2025-2026	\$46,043
Total: \$201,478	

and further to raise and appropriate a sum of \$58,299 for the first fiscal year (2022- 2023 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.

Estimated Net Tax Impact - \$0.08/\$1,000

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4, AS PRESENTED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

Article 5 – Operating Budget

To see if the Brookline School District will vote to raise and appropriate as an operating budget, not including appropriations by special warrant articles and other appropriations voted separately, the amounts set forth on the budget posted with the warrant or as amended by vote of the first session, for the purposes set forth therein, totaling \$10,429,549. Should this article be defeated, the default budget shall be \$10,397,099 which is the same as last year, with certain adjustments required by previous action of the school district or by law or the

governing body may hold one special meeting, in accordance with RSA 40:13, X and XVI, to take up the issue of a revised operating budget only.

Estimated Net Tax Impact - \$9.49/\$1,000

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag noted the district was able to return \$517,000 to the tax base in FY21. What is requested is roughly a \$467,000 increase noting the \$569,000 increase in special education costs. Some relief will be seen in the following year when catastrophic aid is received for the special education costs.

Member Marsano questioned the second slide for Article 5, which identifies regular education personnel at an increase of \$51,074. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated sections had to be added due to enrollment and to address a need. To maintain the section that had to be funded out of grant funds this year, there was the need to transfer the cost into the budget.

Chairman Haag commented monies were removed during the last round of review. He recognized the efforts to arrive at what is a lean budget.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

Article 6 – Special Education Reserve Trust

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$25,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance available for transfer on July 1, 2023 to be added to the previously established SPECIAL EDUCATION EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND. No amount to be raised from taxation.

Estimated Net Tax Impact

• No rate increase in FY22. The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$25,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue, equates to **foregoing a potential rate reduction: \$0.04/\$1,000.**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Sarris remarked she appreciates hearing from the voters on matters and is pleased with continuing with the standard request. Although it does not feel very comfortable to have that low of a reserve, if the voters wish to see a greater amount allocated, a motion to that affect can be put forward at the Deliberative Session.

Chairman Haag asked if the Retained Fund Balance could be shown as part of the presentation during the Deliberative Session. Ms. Seeley stated her belief the balance is approx. \$124,000.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

Article 7 – Maintenance Trust

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of up to **\$75,000** from the June 30 unassigned fund balance (surplus) available for transfer on July 1, 2023 to be added to the previously established SCHOOL FACILITIES MAINTENANCE FUND.

Estimated Net Tax Impact

• No rate increase in FY22. The Unassigned Fund Balance is the sum of unspent taxes and revenues. Expending \$75,000, that could potentially be returned as revenue, equates to **foregoing a potential rate reduction: \$0.11/\$1,000.**

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 7, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER MARSANO**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag spoke of prior discussion around this, and his support of the article.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

Article 8 – SAU Budget

Shall the voters of the Brookline School District adopt a school administrative unit budget of \$2,103,176 for the forthcoming fiscal year in which **\$407,208** is assigned to the school budget of this school district? This year's adjusted budget of \$2,014,210 with \$389,983 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.

Estimated Net Tax Impact - \$.58/\$1,000

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 8, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Haag stated his support of the new position and recognition of the need. Financially, he believes this to be a difficult year for the addition of a position. He did vote against this at the SAU 41 Governing Board meeting knowing the impacts the Brookline School District will see.

Member Marsano commented on her understanding of the necessity of the position. It is simply a matter of the financial impact the district is seeing this year; particularly special education costs. Were that not the case, she would have no hesitation.

Vice Chairman Sarris commented when looking at the cost aspect, the point made by the Finance Committee Chair is important to consider; senior level administrative staff performing these functions rather than the duties they were hired to fulfill. The tasks are required by law. In addition to that, we are answering a request we have had from the community for a long time in regard to the need for additional information from the SAU on a regular basis. The bandwidth simply is not there.

Finance Committee Chair Rater stated one of the things that concerns him is the enormous amount of work placed on SAU staff. He is concerned with retention and burnout. This sort of assistance is a good long-term investment.

Superintendent Corey noted it was following the SAU 41 Governing Board meeting, that cuts were made to the Brookline School District budget (\$175,869). At the time of the Governing Board meeting, the Brookline district budget was at a 6.1% increase whereas now it is at the 4% increase.

Member Howie remarked the position is being driven by a need and requests from the community-at-large.

Member Marsano questioned if it is believed an individual can be located to fill this position. She commented on the psychological aspect and remarked if existing staff can actually take vacation time afforded them, that alone would make it worthwhile.

Superintendent Corey commented on the efforts of the Assistant Superintendent to obtain \$82,680 in grant funding for computers. There is the potential for more grant applications if time were available. Chairman Haag commented on the opportunity cost.

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee recommends: 3-0-0

OTHER BUSINESS

Superintendent Corey spoke of receipt of four (4) Petition Warrant Articles:

“Shall the Brookline School District pursuant to RSA 194-C, I, create a planning committee to study the advisability of the withdrawal of the Brookline School District from SAU 41 in accordance with RSA 194-C:2, IV(a), for its organization, operation and control, and the advisability of constructing, maintaining, and operating a School Administrative Unit to serve the needs of the Brookline School District?”

Out of the four, this is the only one that requires a public hearing. He recommended posting a public hearing for Monday, February 7th with a start time of 5:30 p.m.

The other three do not require a separate public hearing. The first is about the availability of textbooks and other assigned books for public inspection:

“Shall the Brookline School District direct the Brookline School Board to adopt and implement a policy to ensure that each textbook or other assigned book used in the Brookline School District as well as a copy of all professional training materials provided to teachers, administrators, and staff of the district paid for with school district funds be made available to the public at the Brookline Public Library in hard copy or electronic form organized by grade and teacher.”

That article is a legal article and is advisory in nature. The legislative body cannot dictate policy to the Board. It will go on the warrant but is advisory in nature.

The next is equality, justice, and unity:

“Shall the Brookline School District hereby affirm our support for each student’s growth and enrichment. In doing so, we, the Legislative Body, hereby state the following as general principles: The Brookline School District values all students as individuals and welcomes students of all races. We affirm that no race or sex is inherently superior or inferior to another race or sex. No individual or group, by virtue of race or sex is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive consciously or unconsciously. No individual or group should be discriminated against or receive preferential treatment based on race or sex. Each person shall be treated and respected as a unique individual without respect to race, sex, political or religious affiliation. An individual’s moral character shall not be assumed because of race or sex. Each individual is responsible for his/her own actions. Assignment of fault, blame, bias or accusation of oppression upon individuals races or sexes due to actions of others in the present or in the past is unjust. Virtues such as punctuality, accountability, and hard work are not racist nor were they created by a particular race or sex to oppress another race or sex. The Brookline schools shall provide equality of opportunity not equality of outcomes to each of our students regardless of race, sex, national origin, religion or disability. Therefore, we the Legislative Body of the Brookline School District, with our vote, hereby direct that these principles be incorporated into the relevant policies, resolutions and curricular of the school district.”

Superintendent Corey noted the article is advisory in nature. It is a legal petition and will go on the ballot.

The last one is return 100% of the Unassigned General Fund to taxpayers:

“Shall the Brookline School District rescind authorization of RSA 198:4-b(2) so that the Brookline School District returns 100% of year end unassigned general funds to the taxpayers.”

It is a legal petition that will be on the ballot.

Asked, Superintendent Corey stated a simple majority is required to rescind.

Vice Chairman Sarris questioned if something that was passed by a majority of the voters in one year could come forward as a petition warrant article to be rescind the next year. Superintendent Corey stated that to be the case.

Chairman Haag spoke of the Board taking positions on the three articles that do not require a public hearing. Finance Committee Chair Rater remarked traditionally the Finance Committee only takes positions on articles having a direct financial impact.

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND THE PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE
AVAILABILITY OF TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER ASSIGNED BOOKS FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Marsano spoke of the burden this would place on the district and the library as well as the cost involved. She questioned if the district would have to pay to have an extra copy of materials should the professional development be online and would that be a possibility as some of those courses are proprietary. She does not believe it to be a legitimate request based on some of the educational materials that are out there.

Vice Chairman Sarris stated her big picture concerns to be what is the spirit of the request and it is telling her it has something to do with distrust for our teachers and educators. It is very cynical, and, in the environment we have put our teachers through in the past couple of years, she believes any sort of support of something like this would be a cruel slap in their face. She cannot strongly enough vote in opposition of this. On a practical level, if the spirit is we have concerns about what is being offered in the classroom, our policies cover that.

The only value of this would be to absolutely insult our entire education system in the Town.

Member Jew commented it may also drive up the compliance paperwork. Chairman Haag commented he would hope that everyone named on the petition is voting for a compliance specialist position as that is an undue burden where we have policy in place to address this already.

Finance Committee Chair Rater stated agreement with the remarks made. What struck him was the expansion to administration and staff training. Were there to be a policy to do this, depending on how broadly it is, you have to consider your IT staff, their training involves what sort of software you are using to protect the networks, etc.

Member Marsano commented it seems like the epitome of the taxpayer wanting to micromanage absolutely everything that goes on. In her opinion, if that is the steps to which you want to manage things then please step up for election and attend all of the meetings.

MOTION FAILED

0-5-0

Members Haag, Sarris, Howie, Jew, and Marsano voted in opposition

**MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND THE PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE
AROUND EQUALITY, JUSTICE, AND UNITY
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER HOWIE**

ON THE QUESTION

Noted was the article was brought before the Hollis School District as well as the COOP School District last year.

Member Marsano stated her belief this is already covered under the non-discrimination policies. Chairman Haag stated concurrence.

Member Jew spoke of the DEI committee and stakeholders who worked on statements. She will not support something that is put before her without the same level of rigor, discussion, and perspectives from multiple stakeholders.

MOTION FAILED

0-5-0

Members Haag, Sarris, Howie, Jew, and Marsano voted in opposition

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO RECOMMEND THE PETITION WARRANT ARTICLE TO RETURN ONE HUNDRED PERCENT (100%) OF THE UNASSIGNED GENERAL FUND TO TAXPAYERS

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Sarris stated the voters took a position on this last year, and this feels like a way to put something in, and hope people are not paying attention.

Member Marsano commented it feels very subversive. It leaves you feeling there is the need to put in an article that says should this be rescinded the contingency article would be reinstated.

Chairman Haag questioned the language around the Retained Fund Balance and if a public hearing is required to expend and was told it is not. He suggested that may be the spirit of this.

Member Marsano questioned if the Board could write into its procedures the desire that a public hearing be required to expend. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented with the trusts that we have, information is provided every step of the way on what we think we might use, what we are going to use, etc. Superintendent Corey stated if the Board wishes to conduct a public hearing, it can. Member Marsano spoke of the change in makeup of the Board over time.

Chairman Haag commented if that is the concern being expressed, it can be discussed at the Deliberative Session, and if that is the overwhelming response, the Board can request the Policy Committee consider language.

MOTION FAILED

0-5-0

Members Haag, Sarris, Howie, Jew, and Marsano voted in opposition

Finance Committee Chair Rater stated this to be a fiscally related issue the Committee could take a position on. He commented he does not believe he was in favor of this change the last time because of the transparency issue. With a Contingency Fund it is more clear what funds are available. This is not reflected in the Town Reports. He does not personally feel the Committee needs to take a position.

Members expressed the preference not to take a position.

Chairman Haag questioned the need to conduct the meeting scheduled for January 26th noting there are likely only 3 of the 5 members available.

Superintendent Corey commented the Board had discussed previously the possibility of students returning to school the Tuesday following the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday to a mask optional environment. At this time,

he would not be recommending removing the mask mandate because of the spike in cases. We appear as Hollis and Brookline, in the schools, to be getting a little better, but he does not have enough days to make him comfortable saying that yet. People have told him that he should not be worried about children getting sick. That bothers him and he cannot take that position. At the same time, the biggest piece is also staffing. He is trying to stay in school and open and believes masks will assist in that regard.

He noted the emails he has received are overwhelmingly in support of keeping the mask mandate in place.

Superintendent Corey stated he would speak with Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug and Ms. Seeley to determine if there are actions required by the Board, and, if so, if they could be addressed following the Deliberative Session.

Chairman Haag stated agreement with the mask mandate remaining in place commenting every major city in the State has gone to mask mandates. He believes the masks have helped keep students in the buildings and the staffing issue needs to be heard.

Member Marsano commented on NH DHHS policy; 5 days of quarantine and then can return as long as wearing a tight fitting mask. They direct you to the CDC site for additional guidance. That site says as long as wearing a tight-fitting mask, but do not eat, drink or take that mask off at all in public. There is an inherent issue with being in school and going to lunch, especially in an elementary school where we are having snack in the classroom and given the age of the students. She questioned how the district will manage this.

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug responded DHHS guidelines state they should do X, Y, and Z. We want to ensure we are maintaining the health and safety of all of our students. If you recall when CSDA underwent a bit of a difficult time with some clusters, half of the students are now in the gym for lunch. We have increased spacing between students at lunch for that purpose. In some of our schools we have opened up additional spots for lunch to allow for greater distance because you cannot segregate those who are unable to eat and not allow students to eat throughout the whole school day. We are using mitigation strategies that include increasing the spacing.

Chairman Haag remarked we have followed the recommendations of NH DHHS, and they are recommending masks in counties of substantial transmission as well.

Superintendent Corey stated the district has not yet dealt with that issue. There are potential solutions as there are multiple spaces to accommodate students. It is the balancing act between the child being in school because they are now asymptomatic, a parent's need to work, a need to get educated but at the same time to deliver lunch, etc. The administration is prepared to review this and continue to adjust to be successful. One of the things that has changed with NH DHHS is they are not providing mandates or recommendations. He provided the example of a conversation with DHHS prior to vacation about the cases at the COOP district, they would only suggest to him to move to a mask environment. They would not provide anything in writing. They will not make decisions at the state level.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER HAAG TO ADJOURN

SECONDED BY MEMBER SARRIS

MOTION CARRIED

5-0-0

The Finance Committee adjourned.

The January 12, 2022 joint meeting was adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____