

Hanover School Committee Meeting Minutes
December 6, 2023, 7:00 PM
In-Person and Virtual Meeting
Hanover High School; Media Center

Present: Mrs. Libby Corbo, Mrs. Ryan Hall, Mr. Pete Miraglia, and Mrs. Kristen Cervantes

Absent: Jaclyn Jorgenson

Also Present: Mr. Matt Ferron, Mrs. Debbie St. Ives, Mr. Michael Oates, Ms. Kaitlin Morelli, Mr. Matthew Mattos, Mr. Matthew Plummer, Mrs. Jane DeGrenier, Mr. Jesse Craddock, Mr. Dan Birolini, Mrs. Nancy Dutton, Mr. Matty Apfel, Mr. Dante Heffron, Mr. Mike File, Ms. Claire Bliss, Mr. Mark Lancaster

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 7:01 PM by Chair Cervantes. Mrs. Cervantes requested a motion to open the *December 6, 2023, School Committee meeting*. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – Matty Apfel, 4th Grader, led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Mrs. DeGrenier introduced Matty Apfel, a fourth grader at Center School. She shared that Mr. Apfel is a joyful and amazing student who is hard-working, always has a smile, and has a kind word for adults and students.

Student Advisory Committee:

Mrs. Cervantes shared that having students come to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance is new this year, and she thanked the teachers and the principals of each building who have exceeded expectations and made this the most joyful part of the meeting. Mrs. Cervantes asked Mr. Mattos to discuss the new face at the table.

Mr. Mattos introduced Dante Heffron, an 11th grader at the High School and a member of the Student Advisory Committee. Mr. Mattos shared that Mr. Heffron is a product of Hanover Public Schools, having gone from Cedar through High School, and is on the HHS Jazz Band, Drum Major, which is an exceptional position to attain, the Vice President of the Tri M Music Honor Society, and the chairperson of the new Student Advisory Committee. Mr. Mattos said Mr. Heffron will now be seated with the Committee at the meetings. He noted that the Committee will be incredibly impressed with Mr. Heffron, who is well-versed and will significantly contribute to this community.

Mrs. Cervantes added the Student Advisory Council was started this year and they already had a couple of meetings and Mr. Heffron was elected by his peers to be the chair to represent at the School Committee meetings.

Mr. Heffron share the below details from the Student Advisory Committee.

Mr. Ferron and Mr. Plummer created the Student Advisory Committee, a student-run committee or council dedicated to improving things for students via Student Voices, which is the most effective and efficient way to achieve that. The goal is to improve things overall for the average student life. The Student Advisory Committee suggests some things that effort could be put towards to improve things. One of those suggestions is HHS recycling. Many students on the Student Advisory Committee have noticed that many classrooms still need recycling bins and/or trash bins, which becomes a problem, especially as people bring in water bottles and buy water and other beverages from the vending machine. It is essential to have these things accessible because high school students do not usually go out of their way to recycle. They feel it needs to be right in the classroom where people can go and put their bottles, so recycling and reusing bottles and paper is more effective. Another suggestion is regarding the student section at the football

games, which is essential to our school spirit and football games. The problem is they are standing behind the endzone on rusty old bleachers that could be safer. They believe it makes the high school look more polished when there is an organized student section with built-in bleachers, just like their home bleachers. The safety issue is a little scary when someone stands on the podium and conducts the marching band; they have to stand on the back end of those bleachers where there is nothing behind them but a five-foot drop, and one of the most important reasons is when Dante is conducting the marching band and the football team scores and they do the fight song "Victors" with a chant, the student section and cheerleaders cannot hear it because they are in the back. There are cheers and chants that the parents and especially the band love to take part in, and if students are right there with the band and cheerleaders, it will improve school spirit and everybody's experience because Friday Night Lights is just one of the best things to experience as a Hanover student.

Public Comment: None at this time.

Approval of Minutes:

October 11, 2023: Mrs. Cervantes requested a motion to approve *October 11, 2023, School Committee Open Session Minutes* as written. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

ACTION ITEM:

- **Student Activity Account Authorization – Fashion Club Presented by Mr. Mike File and Ms. Claire Bliss:**

Mr. File requested authorization for a new club at the high school, which was a club in the past and was run by Mrs. Curley. He added Miss. Bliss brought the Fashion Club idea to his attention, and he is excited to team up with her. He shared her passion and knew he had to get the proposals sent in. Mr. File stated he is not the most fashion-knowledgeable, so he will defer to Miss Bliss on what she is thinking, hoping for, and what she is looking forward to. Mr. File hopes they can provide this experience and build the art department at the high school in more ways than just drawing, painting, and ceramics.

Ms. Bliss shared that many students want to join a fashion club again. She believes it will help the school by collaborating with the drama department to design costumes, having a thrift clothing drive, and having college guest speakers talk to the club members.

Question/Comments:

Mrs. Corbo commented she remembers the previous club advisor, how the club had great fun events, and was sad to see it fizzle out.

Mrs. Hall added great job advocating for a club that you wanted to see kind of come back.

Mrs. Cervantes asked for a motion to approve the student authorization for the *Fashion Club* as presented. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:

- **Events and Updates Presented by Mr. Matthew Ferron:**
Mr. Ferron shared the following events and updates:

- Inclusive Schools Week
 - Theme: Draw Me In
 - Artwork is displayed
 - Daily announcements

- SEPAC
- School Events
 - HMS
 - Center School
 - Cedar School
- Congratulations to Anne Judge on her Retirement
 - Celebration at the Middle School Today
 - Fun Fact: Served over 2.1 million lunches
- Athletics Update
 - Varsity Football
 - Superbowl in Foxboro
 - 1000 or more Hanover Fans
 - Varsity Soccer
 - Championship Game in Scituate
 - Large number of Hanover Fans
 - Shout out to the Band and Cheerleaders
 - Join collaboration by the Hanover and Foxboro Bands, who played the National Anthem together
- Mamma Mia The Musical
 - Ran November 17 - 19
 - Great show
 - Congratulations to everybody who helped make the show a success
- Tri-M National Honor Society
 - Modern Music Masters
 - Inducted 20 students
 - Mr. Plummer was an honoree inductee
- Check School Calendars
 - Winter Concert Events
 - 8th Grade Open House at the High School
- Budget Presentation
 - Brief presentation and listing session on Wednesday night, December 13
 - More details to follow on Friday
 - Via Zoom
 - Presented by:
 - Joe Colangelo, Town Manager
 - Chelsea Stevens, Town CFO
 - Superintendent Ferron
 - Mr. Oates

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Cervantes asked if the meeting would be for feedback from the community and students. Mr. Ferron that responded it is open to everyone and that feedback is welcome.

REPORT OF FINANCE DEPARTMENT

- **FY24 Student Activity Account Reauthorization Presented by Mr. Michael Oates:**
Mr. Oates requests that the School Committee reauthorize the attached Student Activity Accounts in each building. Though not explicitly required by statute, the School Committee strongly recommends an annual reauthorization of the Student Activity Accounts.

The memo is a comprehensive list of all Student Activity Accounts in each building. The accounts highlighted in green have been added, and those highlighted in red last year have been deleted.

Questions/Comments: None at this time.

Mrs. Cervantes asked for a motion to approve the *FY24 Student Activity Account Reauthorization* as presented. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

- **FY24 Donations as of December 1, 2023 Presented by Mr. Michael Oates:**

Mr. Oates requests approval of the donations received from Bay State Textiles, Hanover PTA, Friends of Hanover, and Horace Mann (Commonwealth Educators) totaling **\$16,072.46** as of December 1, 2023. You can see the [FY24 Donations](#) in full on our Hanover Public Schools website.

Questions/Comments: None at this time.

Mrs. Cervantes asked for a motion to approve the *FY24 Donations of \$16,072.46 as of December 1, 2023* as presented. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The motion carried unanimously.

- **FY25 Budget Impact Analysis Presented by Mr. Michael Oates and Mr. Matthew Ferron:**

Mr. Oates and Mr. Ferron reviewed the FY25 Budget Impact Analysis posted under Public Comment on the School Committee website. They explained that the Town of Hanover faces a significant budget shortfall for the 2025 fiscal year (FY25) and beyond. As a result, the Hanover Public School District (HPS) is actively evaluating the impact of the current level of available funding and the service reductions that would likely occur if not addressed. Maintaining the current level of services (level-services budget) expected by our students, staff, and the community will require a considerable increase in funding to the HPS operating budget beginning in FY25. This analysis provides context to the challenges ahead if the HPS cannot secure the funding required to maintain our community's expected level of services for FY25+. The analysis shared with the Committee and posted on the HPS website outlines the impact that a budget shortfall of the projected magnitude would have on the school community beginning in September 2024.

Two essential terms need to be commonly understood for this analysis:

1. **Levy Budget:** This is the funding level that can be generated by the Town's current capacity to raise revenue via property tax. The projected levy budget allocation for FY25 is approximately \$1.9 million (5.5%). The base of the triangle represents this level of funding.
2. **Override Budget:** This is the funding level required to maintain (at minimum) "level services" to preserve our current level of services and resources available to students, staff, and families. The entire triangle represents this. This level of funding is approximately \$4.5 million (12.9%) for FY25. This level of funding would require a Proposition 2.5 override. The MA Division of Local Services (DLS) has a Primer on Proposition 2.5 that is helpful to understand this process.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Cervantes commented that she appreciates the time taken and how it was presented. She also thinks the slide was beneficial.

Mrs. Hall noted that even with a level services budget, many needs still need to be met, so providing what we have currently will not allow us to offer more for students. She added that it is not a growth budget, and Hanover has been very thoughtful and creative with meeting the needs the best we can for all of the students with what we have, but it is as trim as possible. Mrs. Cervantes noted that looking at the numbers and where we are in our spending doesn't leave a lot of room, and without the ability to do essential things that our students need, like updating and modernizing curriculum and hiring staff that has been identified that is required. She said if this does not go through, the number of impacts on our students, staff, and families is even more significant than the map.

Mrs. Corbo added that the state data for fiscal year 22 showed, compared with the state average, for full-time teachers, the district is 15 teachers under the state average for a district our size already, and adding cuts on top of that will be significantly detrimental. Mrs. Corbo noted that the fact that the district can function with that deficit of teaching staff is a credit to the building leadership, administrators, and teachers who go above and beyond every day to make up for that, so the district is already behind and cutting further. She understands the reaction from people when they hear override and the idea that nobody wants to pay more taxes, and there are some ways to mitigate that effect for residents. Mrs. Corbo commented that the concept of tax base needs to be normalized as communities throughout Massachusetts reset their tax base by using an override. She stated that in the last 20 years, a vast majority of communities in Massachusetts have done it; approximately 190 communities have successfully utilized an override to do that, including many of our neighbors: Norwell, Abington, Rockland, Hingham, Cohasset, Hanson, Marshfield, Pembroke, Whitman, and Scituate but Hanover has not, and as a result, the district is at a more significant deficit than other communities.

Mr. Miraglia added that by talking a lot about numbers, budgets, deficits, and earnings, people always ask how the district is accomplishing this by being so lean in the budget. He explained that it needs to account for leadership, teachers teaching high quality, department heads, and principles, and there is already a good base. Mr. Miraglia's message to the voters is to look at the facts, weigh them out, and come to the forums, where it will be explained well and laid out in simple terms.

Mrs. Cervantes reminded the community that if the budget meeting is intimidating, reach out to any of the School Committee members via email or set up a one-on-one meeting, and they will be happy to help people understand and connect to the personnel and what that means for each individual.

Report on Teaching and Learning:

- **School Improvement Plans Update: All Schools presented by Mrs. Debbie St. Ives, Mr. Jesse Craddock, Mrs. Jane DeGrenier, Mr. Dan Birolini, and Mr. Matthew Mattos:**

Mrs. St. Ives invited the Principal of each school to present their School Improvement Plans. She explained that as each building reviews the school improvement plans, an update was put together to give some insight into the work going on and a few highlights from each building.

Mr. Craddock, Mrs. DeGrenier, Mr. Birolini, and Mr. Mattos presented, reviewed, and highlighted each of their School Improvement Plans.

The [School Improvement Plans document](#) can be found on the School Committee website under Public Meeting Documents for December 6, 2023. For more details, please watch the [December 6, 2023, School Committee Meeting](#) on the Hanover Public Schools website.

Questions/Comments:

Mrs. Cervantes asked Mrs. St. Ives to explain how the School Improvement Plans are created and the work that goes into them. Mrs. St. Ives explained that they use the District's Strategic Objectives and the previous School Improvement Plan as a guide. She discussed that the plans are for two years; an update is given after year one, and then they discuss as a leadership team and start talking about the primary focus areas. Then, they break off into school-based teams and school councils. In some instances, some of the schools have students who participate in some of the discussions. Each of the school improvement plans is personalized based on the feedback from all stakeholders. She said that some rough graphs are done, they come back together as a leadership team and present them to the School Committee for feedback, and then the plan is finalized and presented to the community for two years. Ms. St. Ives added that sometimes things are adjusted, and sometimes things do not go as planned, so modifications or revisions are made. Much momentum and movement were enabled, so in this case, a lot was accomplished in the plan's first year.

Mr. Miraglia asked if that was the science of reading, and Mrs. St. Ives responded that it is the K to 5 programs. Mr. Miraglia then wondered if that is something we started tracking about two years ago.

Mrs. St. Ives replied Yes. that last year was the first year of implementation, and the review and pilot program was done quickly because of some of the situations we were in with the availability of some funding and resources.

Mrs. Corbo inquired about how long it would be before we could measure the vertical alignment in the curriculum going from fourth to fifth. Mrs. St. Ives replied that if Mrs. Corbo is asking for an assessment score, it may take three to five years.

Mrs. Cervantes asked if the template was updated from last year, and Mrs. St. Ives responded that yes, as they wanted to make sure it was easy for everyone to understand.

Public Comments: None at this time.

The next School Committee meeting is **on January 3, 2024**. Expected agenda items: Events and Updates, FY24 Budget Update, FY25 Budget 3.0 Presentation and Vote, and others TBD.

Mrs. Cervantes entertained the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:56 p.m. The motion was moved by Mrs. Hall and seconded by Mr. Miraglia. The vote carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Tahnee Warner

Tahnee Warner
Executive Assistant/ Recording Secretary

Documents Used:

[Appendix A - Student Activity Account Authorization \(HHS Fashion Club\)](#)

[Appendix B - FY24 Reauthorization of Student Activity Accounts](#)

[Appendix C - FY24 Donations](#)

[Appendix D - Budget Impact Analysis](#)

[Appendix E - Cedar School Improvement Plan Progress 2022-2024](#)

[Appendix F - Center School Improvement Plan Progress 2022-2024](#)

[Appendix G - Middle School Improvement Plan Progress 2022-2024](#)

[Appendix H - High School Improvement Plan Progress 2022-2024](#)

[Budget Impact Analysis Presentation December 6, 2023](#)