

HADLEY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**HADLEY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HADLEY, MASSACHUSETTS 01035
Minutes March 26, 2018 Music Room Hopkins Academy**

5:30 PM

Hadley Public Schools – We are guided by the mission to provide a safe and supportive environment that fosters cooperation, critical thinking, creativity, and integrity; and educating students to contribute positively to a global society.

Call to Order/Members Present

Klesch calls the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present: Klesch, Phifer, Brugger, Shannon. Fasihuddin entered meeting at 5:33.

Record of Votes

- *Enter Executive Session – Phifer moves to enter executive session to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with non union personnel and to discuss the deployment of security personnel or devices, or strategies with respect thereto and to reconvene in open session. Shannon seconds. Roll Call Vote – Fasihuddin-yes; Phifer-yes; Brugger-yes; Shannon-yes; Klesch-yes.*
- *Extend Public Comment – Fasihuddin moves to allow five minutes for public comments. Shannon seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *HA Program of Studies – Fasihuddin moves to approve the HA Program of Studies; Phifer seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *Approval of AP warrants submitted in March 2018 – Phifer moves to approve AP warrants submitted in February 2018; Fasihuddin seconds. Vote 4-0-1.*
- *Approval of February 26, 2018 School Committee minutes – Shannon moves to approve February 26, 2018 School Committee minutes; Fasihuddin seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *Approval of warrants submitted in February 2018 – Phifer moves to approve warrants submitted March 2018; Fasihuddin seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *Creation of Student Activity Fund for the Arts – Brugger moves to approve the creation of a student activity fund for the arts; Shannon seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *RFP for School Business Services – Fasihuddin moves request proposals for school business services for FY19-FY21; Shannon seconds. Vote 5-0-0.*
- *Enter Executive Session- Fasihuddin moves to enter executive session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining as she has determined an open meeting will have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the public body and not to reconvene in open session. Shannon seconds. Roll call vote – Brugger-yes, Shannon-yes, Phifer-yes, Klesch-yes; Fasihuddin-yes.*

Summary of Discussion on Each Subject Presented to Committee for Consideration

Adjustments to the Agenda

Klesch stated public comment would be moved to the beginning of the meeting. McKenzie said the committee would need to go back into executive session at the end of the meeting and not reconvene in open session.

Public Comment

Castronovo presented on ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting will be a warrant article at the Town Meeting in May. Registered voters in Hadley will be able to vote on whether or not they would like

to see ranked voting in Hadley. Castronovo will be presenting at Select Board and at Hadley Mothers Club. Phifer asked

School Safety and Security Recommendations

McKenzie stated that the school department will integrate public safety recommendations into the district capital plan and bring the capital plan to School Committee for approval at a future meeting. Phifer acknowledged the important work public safety does for the schools. Klesch echoed this sentiment.

Special Education Stabilization Fund

Klesch thanked Nixon and Tri Board members for the chance to discuss the stabilization fund at the last Tri Board meeting. Klesch asked Nixon to give the Committee an overview of the two warrant articles pertaining to the special education stabilization fund. Nixon stated that the goal of the Select Board was to improve the accuracy of budget projections. Nixon noted that some expenses such as health insurance are difficult to predict; insured individuals could have a qualifying event; the number of people using the plan changes during open enrollment periods; and up until recently the health insurance calendar did not coincide with the fiscal year. Nixon said the town has had to budget with generous margins for health insurance and in some cases Nixon has had to return \$100,000 of unexpended funds to the town. Nixon said the school department budget is the same. Nixon said if a family moves in mid-year and the costs associated with educating the student is prohibitive, the school department could benefit from a fund designed for this purpose. Nixon said the town is looking to create a fund, that the School Committee could appropriate funds from mid-year, to meet unanticipated expenses (e.g., vocational tuitions, special education). Nixon said the item still needs to be discussed with the Select Board. Nixon said he has written two articles but he might combine it into one article. This could be done at annual Town Meeting or at a future Town Meeting. Phifer asked if the proposal was "not to exceed 2% of Net School Spending." McKenzie said that language is in the law. Nixon said the Select Board has no interest in approving School Committee expenditures. Nixon said for that reason, the town would not follow the law pertaining to special education stabilization funds (Ch. 40 Section 13E); rather they would find another law to follow for this particular stabilization fund. Brugger stated in the law for special education stabilization funds it states that the fund requires support from both the Select Board and the School Committee. Nixon said this would be like other funds in town. The town routinely identifies people who are responsible for determining and approving expenditures from special purpose funds, like the library funds. Shannon asked where the money to set up the fund would come from. Nixon said it would come from the Town Stabilization fund. Nixon said there is over 2 million dollars in that fund currently. McKenzie asked if the minimum for Town Stabilization is 10% of total operating budget and if the minimum for Free Cash was the same. Select Board Chair Keegan said the 10% minimum only applies to Town Stabilization. Free Cash has a dollar amount minimum. Nixon said that minimum dollar amount per policy in Free Cash is \$75,000. McKenzie asked if the Town could utilize excess stabilization funds for other one time capital or equipment expenses. Nixon said yes. The town has special purpose stabilization funds such as the capital stabilization fund which receives around \$300,000 per year from the meals tax revenue. Keegan clarified that the Select Board and Finance Committee would have a visceral reaction to spending down the stabilization fund. Keegan said there had not been a full discussion of the Select Board about creating a special education stabilization fund. Keegan acknowledged that the current Town Stabilization Fund is in excess of the 10% minimum per policy; but, that as the budget grows, the amount needed in Town Stabilization will also increase. McKenzie asked if there is a ceiling on what the Town can set aside in Town Stabilization. Keegan said no. McKenzie asked if there were other departments or needs determined by the townspeople, the town could set up a special stabilization fund for these needs. Keegan asked if it would be possible to use stabilization funds for transportation expenses. McKenzie read the statutory language of Ch. 40

Section 13E which defines the procedures for setting up and administering a special education stabilization fund. McKenzie underscored that any fund set up under Ch. 40 Section 13E can only be used for costs associated with special education, not vocational education or other educational expenses. Nixon said for that reason he would like to call the fund an "Education Contingency Account." Keegan said the town is trying to get creative and manage the balance sheet of the town. Keegan said they are very open minded for other ideas. McKenzie clarified that the example provided with health insurance, in which the town budgeted \$100,000 more than it needed for health insurance and returned this money (Nixon stated that only happened once) is not similar to what has happened historically with the school department budget. The school department has not over-budgeted its special education line. Data demonstrate that the expenses have exceeded revenues in special education and the school department and School Committee have addressed this through the use of its school choice stabilization fund. Klesch stated that when the Committee has been asked to use more school choice funds to balance the operating budget, the Committee has done this. Klesch went on to say that she struggles with the idea of setting up a contingency plan or "what if" plan when there are other departments with pressing, identified needs. Keegan said we are talking about a balance sheet item and many of the needs that departments have are recurring operating expenses. Klesch asked what amount is being considered for the warrant article. Nixon suggested \$100,000 or perhaps more. Klesch asked Desjardins asked what the Committee needed to retain in School Choice. Desjardins stated the amount had to equal total amount received in grants in the prior fiscal year. McKenzie said the school department estimates this will be approximately \$340,000. Phifer asked about the current school choice balance. McKenzie said the projected ending balance in FY18 will be \$555,000 and \$344,000 in FY18. Phifer asked to what degree this had been discussed with Select Board and Finance Committee. Keegan said she does not believe that there would be unanimity about this item among Select Board members. Fyden stated the Finance Committee is trying to balance the budget and that this might be a way to do this. Finance is not looking to spend any part of stabilization but if it will help balance the budget they would consider it. Shannon asked the effect these have had in other towns on school choice funds and school department budgets. McKenzie said she would ask MASC for this information. Fasihuddin asked if school choice went below the amount defined in policy how would the school department get the needed funds. McKenzie said the School Committee would request these funds from the Town, providing special education services is the legal obligation of the town. Klesch asked if the school department has ever had to go to the town to request additional funds. McKenzie said not to her knowledge. Klesch said the question is whether or not the Committee is being asked to reexamine its school choice policy and retain less money in school choice/apply more money to the operating budget. Brugger said the part that concerns her is that there is no mechanism for replenishing the stabilization fund. Fasihuddin does not want to change the School Committee school choice policy at all. She does not want an emergency backup plan to affect school choice funds. Klesch acknowledged that school choice reserves have declined each year but she does not want school choice to dip below the amount stated in policy. Keegan said she wants to be clear that she does not want to affect some sort of "swap." Keegan says the Select Board worries about the school choice balance and the challenges all town departments are facing. The town is trying to figure out a way to manage uncertainty. Nixon said the town is open to other ideas. Klesch asked what law would apply to the establishment of the fund and what percentage would the town apply. Nixon said since the town would be making it up on its own, the town would apply municipal finance law and not be beholden to percentages except those that are delineated in the law for special municipal stabilization funds. Klesch asked McKenzie what laws/guidelines other towns organize these funds under. Phifer asked Fyden if the town were to set up a stabilization fund would the town expect to see a commensurate reduction in the school department budget. Fyden said yes. Fyden said instead of funding the schools with additional local contribution, the school department would use more school choice funding. Klesch asked if this topic would be discussed at the next Tri Board meeting. McKenzie

said the School Committee would vote at its next regularly scheduled meeting in April. Phifer thanked the representatives from the town, Select Board, and Finance Committee.

FY19 Budget Update

McKenzie stated she and Klesch had presented revenue and expenditure assumptions for FY19 to the Finance Committee on March 1st. Those assumptions projected a \$158,000 or 2.28% to local contribution. McKenzie said the most recent revenue and expenditure assumptions for FY19 use more school choice funds. These assumptions project \$134,000 or 1.93% increase to local contribution. These assumptions are still subject to change since state law requires the district to pay all expenses associated with students who move into the district before April 1st. McKenzie said the initial budget projection provided to the town in January of 2018, projected a \$216,000 increase to local contribution. The school department was instructed to develop a level services not a level funded budget. McKenzie reviewed the budget summary sheet and stated that all contracts had been settled. Klesch said the instructions to the school department were to provide a level service budget, but at Tri Board Keegan had stated that the school department had submitted a budget over what the town had requested. Keegan clarified that the school department had not submitted a budget over what the town had instructed. The point she was making was to hone in on the number Nixon had kept in the budget which was level funded. Keegan said the Town Administrator presented a balanced budget that did not include the school department request but a level funded budget for the schools. Keegan said this is typically not the final budget. Keegan said that the Finance Committee is reviewing all requests. Keegan acknowledged that the Finance Committee had been pleased with the school department presentation but being pleased does not address how to balance the budget. Keegan acknowledged that there is a \$158,000 difference between the school department request and the figure in the FY19 town budget. Keegan said the town is dealing with a wild card with regards to ambulance services and its contract with Amherst. Keegan said the reason she made the statement about the school department presenting a number higher than the town expected was because she did not want the school department lulled into a sense of complacency. McKenzie said she was grateful Keegan had brought up the difference in the school department request and the current town budget. McKenzie was not aware that the town had level funded the schools. McKenzie said if the school department budget is level funded it will result in cuts to the school department. Keegan said no one is recommending that the town stay with a level funded budget. Shannon said that it is also important for the public to know that the school department is losing funding in grants. McKenzie reminded the School Committee that funds for Title IIA may not be available next year. McKenzie would like to get as much information regarding grants as possible before finalizing the FY19 Budget request. Klesch asked if there were any additional unknowns. McKenzie reviewed the variables listed on the expenditure and revenue summary sheet in the packet.

HA Program of Studies

Beck reviewed additional updates and revisions to the HA Program of Studies for 2018-19. Revisions include updated course descriptions and minor corrections.

NEASC Decennial Report

Beck reviewed the NEASC follow up process. Beck said accreditation is a three stage process: self-study, the site visit, and follow up. In order to remain accredited, schools need to engage in a process of continuous improvement. Beck said the HA faculty will create targeted work plans for each recommendation. Beck invited the School Committee to provide input regarding priorities from the Accreditation Report or work plans. Beck said HA has five years to complete all recommendations listed in the report. HA will need to provide a progress update in two years as part of a two year progress report. NEASC expects about one third of all recommendations to be complete in two years. CPSS reviewed the accreditation report at its meeting the week of March 19th. HA can expect to hear from CPSS in four to five weeks. Beck anticipates HA will need to do a special progress report regarding school

wide expectations for student learning. For each recommendation the school responds, completed, in progress, no action, or rejected.

HA School Strategy and Improvement Plan Update

Beck thanked his faculty, students, and others for supporting social justice initiatives at HA. Beck reviewed progress to date on initiatives associated with the HA school strategy and school improvement plan. He also reviewed survey results from a survey students did indicating their ideas about core values and beliefs. Beck said he would be sending a survey to parents to get their input. Klesch asked when the survey would be distributed. Beck expects to administer the survey within the next two weeks. Shannon requested to see a copy of the survey so the School Committee would not use the same questions in its survey to parents and families. Beck highlighted work HA middle school math teachers are doing to improve student performance in mathematics.

Student Council Reports

McKenzie stated the HES Student Council had completed its survey regarding playground equipment. Students would like to have swings and additional air pumps for the equipment cart.

Personnel Report

McKenzie reviewed personnel changes and open positions since last committee meeting.

Business Manager Reports

Expense Report

Desjardins stated there had been a number of transfers since the last report presented to the School Committee. All transfers have been made in accordance with School Committee policy per Desjardins. Desjardins said there had been a glitch in the accounting software. The system was not reducing encumbrances when expenses were posted. The next report will reflect the correction.

Grant Report

Desjardins reported that a substantial number of the grants have been expended in full. Desjardins would like to carryover \$135,000.

Revolving Accounts

Desjardins stated payments from the state for the lunch revolving account have been coming later which affects the account balance. Desjardins said that every year he typically transfers about \$30,000 from the operating budget into the lunch revolving account. He will wait until June to make this transfer. Phifer asked if the School Committee would need to increase the price of lunches. Desjardins said the school department will review recommendations from the state and let the committee know.

Capital Plan/Air Conditioning Project

Desjardins reviewed the bids he received for the HES air conditioning project. The lowest bidder overall was not the lowest bidder if the job is done in stages. Phifer asked what the \$338k price included. Desjardins said it included two wings and the electrical work. If the work is done in stages it will not include one wing or the cafeteria. Phifer asked which wings would be done first. Desjardins said he would recommend doing the wing with the youngest children first. Fasihuddin asked if the project could be awarded to be done in stages but if the town were able to identify additional funds the contractor could be asked to complete the entire project. McKenzie and Desjardins said that would be a violation of Chapter 30b so that approach would not be possible. The School Committee asked Desjardins if he could get more information from the Town about the possibility of additional funds in order to award the bid to the lowest bidder for the entire job. The School Committee decided they would meet on April 9th to vote on awarding the bid after getting more information from the town.

Water Quality and Drinking Fountains

Desjardins said that the district will install at least one fountain with filtered bottle dispensers at each school.

School Committee Reports (2:11:00)

Family and Community Engagement Survey

Klesch stated Brugger and Shannon will lead the development of the survey. Brugger and Shannon will bring a draft of the survey to the entire committee.

Policy

Klesch stated the subcommittee had met. McKenzie said the entire committee had a list of policies that the subcommittee had reviewed but did not include the policies with tracked changes. McKenzie asked the committee what documents they would like in the packet for second reading. Fasihuddin stated she would like all revised policies with tracked changes. Shannon and Klesch said that the majority of changes were minor and involved updating language. McKenzie will include all policies with tracked changes in the packet for the second reading. Brugger would like to receive the revised policies in advance of the School Committee packet. McKenzie will ask her office to send out the tracked changes this week.

Finance/Tri-Board

Klesch reported that she and Brugger had attended Tri Board. Klesch said that the town is still considering hiring three positions, HR, IT, and finance. Select Board discussed if the need had been clearly identified and if job descriptions had been created. Klesch said there was a comment made that the school department had not given an answer regarding sharing financial services. McKenzie said the committee would vote this evening to post an RFP for business services because its current contract would end on June 30th. McKenzie said she had sent a draft copy of the RFP to Nixon. McKenzie said the town could choose to participate in an RFP for business services. Fasihuddin asked if adding the town to the RFP would change the type of vendor who would respond and would it impede the school department's ability to attract the right kind of service provider. The committee discussed whether or not they wanted to limit the time period of the RFP to one year rather than three years. The committee decided to keep the RFP to three years and ask the town if they would like to participate in the RFP.

Fields

Phifer thanked Florence Bank for its donation of \$5,000.

CES

Fasihuddin will attend a board meeting this week. She will update the School Committee at its next meeting.

SAF for Arts

Art and music teachers in the district would like to create a student activity fund to support various activities in the district.

Next Regular Meeting Date:

April 9, 2018 at 5:30 pm.

List of Documents and Exhibits Presented at Meeting

- Minutes February 26, 2018
- Test Ballot Ranked Voting
- Draft Special Education Articles
- Chapter 40 Section 13E
- Advisory on Special Education Stabilization Fund DESE
- Expenditure and Revenue Assumptions FY19 as of 3/21/2018
- FY19 Budget Projection 3/21/2018
- HA Program of Studies Updates 2018-2019
- Principal's Identification of Critical Strengths and Priorities
- HA 17-18 Progress Report on Strategy Document
- Student Thoughts on Core Values and Beliefs About Learning Results
- Sample Individual Student IXL Learning Plan

- Personnel Report March 26, 2018
- March 21, 2018 Expense Report
- March 21, 2018 Grant Allocation Report
- FY18 Revolving Accounts Report
- Hadley Elementary School Air Conditioning Project
- Minutes Policy Subcommittee March 9, 2018
- School Choice Spending Policy