

**SPECIAL HOLLIS SCHOOL BOARD
MARCH 9, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

A special meeting of the Hollis School Board was conducted on Monday, March 9, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis Primary School.

Robert Mann, Chairman, presided:

Members of the Board Present: Tammy Fareed, Vice Chairman
 Brooke Arthur, Secretary
 Amy Kellner
 Carryl Roy

Members of the Board Absent:

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

Superintendent Corey spoke of the technical defect in the bond article for the barn. The Nashua Telegraph was provided the information necessary to post the bond hearing. That information did not get printed, which is a requirement of a bond article. They took responsibility for not running the notice. The reality is it was not printed/publicly noticed in that way.

There is a remedy; proceed with the District Meeting on March 11th, and if the voters, through secret ballot, by a 2/3 majority, approve the article, the District would then advertise a bond hearing, and a special meeting would be conducted for the community to affirm the action taken on March 11th. That second vote would require a simple majority.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned, in light of current events, if the building would be available for a meeting. Superintendent Corey stated voting would be conducted the following day at the Lawrence Barn and within the schools in Brookline. The Administration has discussed that with the State.

The likelihood that it would impact folks is low. School was cancelled for the following day in an over-abundance of caution. He stated the intent to be to go through the buildings again; clean doorknobs, crash bars, water bubblers, bathrooms, and other high-traffic/risk areas. This type of news gives families who could be potentially impacted (having members with underlying conditions) 24 hours to consider what they want to do, as a family, regarding sending their child to school. The person has not taken the test; they were referred today. A school nurse received a call from the emergency room in Concord. That is not the procedure the Administration was told would happen, but is what the reality was. The Administration moved forward with the information provided (approximately 2:00 - 2:15 p.m.).

Superintendent Corey stated an update would be provided the following day. Any staff who could be compromised would be notified. The intent, at this time, was for schools to be open on Wednesday. Superintendent Corey spoke of the level of detail involved in the cleaning that is occurring and will continue.

Chairman Mann remarked, at this point, these are precautionary measures that are being taken. There is no confirmation that there is something we need to concern ourselves about other than the possibilities.

Superintendent Corey commented a school of thought relayed to him today was to just be open tomorrow. However, that would not provide the opportunity to contact the families and individuals who may need to make alternative arrangements. The SAU has some students who, because of their conditions, may not be attending school with us if this virus were to be in their building. That 24 hours gets us a much better cleaning, buys us time, and allows us to get more information.

Superintendent Corey stated the District cancelled the basketball game this evening. In his conversation with the Superintendent in Laconia, he expressed concern that there is not yet enough known about the virus, and we would not want their players to come down and create a scenario where we've now indirectly given it to another district when by simply postponing a game until tomorrow night we will know more. If we have to cancel the game tomorrow night, we will do that.

The Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board is trying to schedule a meeting; working diligently to discuss the Washington, DC trip, and trips over April vacation that go out of the country. All of those pieces are in discussion.

Superintendent Corey stated he would meet the following day with the Town's emergency management team. They meet regularly and talk about a variety of emergency scenarios that could impact the Town in a negative way. Asked if there is anything the Administration requires of the Board, he indicated there is not. He used the example of a staff member having to be out because of a compromised condition noting he has already been in contact with the unions; there are sick banks and mechanisms in place to take care of their health, ensure they continue to generate an income, but at the same time, from a budget standpoint, we are providing services to students.

Ms. Roy questioned when the test results for the affected employee are anticipated, and was informed it can be as quick as 24 hours, but more likely 48. Asked if the District would be informed of the results, he spoke of how public results have been, e.g., if you go to WMUR and click on Coronavirus in NH, after you go through the numbers it tells you; Person 1 lives in Hillsborough County, etc.

Vice Chairman Fareed questioned if the intent, at this time, is to move forward with the Annual District Meeting, and was informed that is the intent.

Ms. Arthur questioned whether any of the districts have policies concerning long-term school closures and distance learning. Superintendent Corey stated there is not specifically a policy. The SAU began discussing instructional practices a few weeks back. In a lot of ways, our students get their information from Google through Google Docs, many of our teachers have teacher web pages, etc. If we were to go into a long-term closure, what we would probably do is request permission for a staff day that would be used to determine the last pieces of how instruction would be delivered and then put information out to the community on how the students would access the curriculum.

Ms. Arthur commented on the level of anxiety being seen from adults and children. She questioned what types of things are being put in place in the schools to address that. Superintendent Corey stated they are using their resident experts. Our nurses have some of the greatest relationships with our students. They have been going to classrooms talking about handwashing and all of the different components, so the children feel more comfortable. From watching the students, he can tell you that they feel very comfortable.

that when they are sick that is their expert. At the upper levels it is a little easier. The biggest concern is the smallest students. There are 3 and 4-year-olds in preschool. They are not aware anything is going on.

PUBLIC INPUT

Drew Mason, 61 Baxter Road, Moderator

Received a news release from the New Hampshire Attorney General regarding COVID-19. In brief, it states there are only 4 identified cases in the State; 2 in Rockingham County and 2 in Grafton County.

New Hampshire Public Health is not recommending the cancellation of events at this time. They encourage people to continue with everyday activities, but take precautions to protect themselves.

With respect to the election, we will proceed and take suitable accommodation. They don't specifically address district meetings on subsequent days, but he is aware they have it on their minds.

Tom Gehan, 104 Broad Street

Requested clarification the issue with the warrant article only applies to the barn. Superintendent Corey stated that to be correct. He remarked there is no requirement on a municipal lease to hold a public hearing as there is for a bond. A lease must contain an escape clause and voters have the ability, at any point during a lease, to reject it.

Asked if that is the opinion provided by legal counsel or from the Department of Revenue Administration, Superintendent Corey stated it to be that of legal counsel.

DISCUSSION

- SAU 41 Facilities – The Board will discuss Warrant Article 1 regarding the renovations to the property at 4 Lund Lane.

Ms. Roy remarked State RSA that requires public notice run in newsprint mentions bonds and notes. She questioned the meaning of note if it is not a lease. Mr. Gehan responded a note could be a tax anticipation note. That has been done at the Town level. He is uncertain if a school district can issue notes. It is basically an advance on property tax payments. Another suggestion was that the term note relates to the duration of the borrowing (note is shorter term).

Vice Chairman Fareed spoke of the Town having used these purchases for fire trucks and other types of equipment, and questioned if there has ever been, to his knowledge, a notice requirement of these purchases. Mr. Gehan responded he does not recall any special lease notice requirement; they handle it as part of the public hearing. Vice Chairman Fareed commented there have been years of municipal lease purchases for durable equipment for the Town, and she does not recall ever having a notice for a hearing.

Jim Belanger, 32 Plain Road / Town Moderator

Were this error not to have occurred, following the election, the annual meeting of the Board would occur, and new Board members would be sworn in as well as the new Moderator. If that progresses, this special meeting to approve of the bond vote taken could be titled as a special meeting, which is a special meeting for raising money. That would require Superior Court approval. He suggested Wednesday night's meeting

not be concluded, but instead adjourned to a future date so that all of the officers and Moderator currently seated continue in office until that meeting is adjourned.

Superintendent Corey stated if moving forward on Wednesday night, should the bond fail, then it fails. If it passes, you do not need to go back to the Superior Court because you have a technical difficulty that has a remedy.

Mr. Belanger reiterated the meeting should be continued.

Superintendent Corey stated it could be closed because everything that has been done is now officially closed, the budget is passed, etc. If you continue the meeting you still have an open meeting.

Mr. Belanger remarked he understands there are no contended positions on the Board, but there will be a new Moderator. There will be some differences. Superintendent Corey stated his desire to ensure the Board is aware we would not be headed to Superior Court should the article pass on Wednesday night. If it passes, there is a procedural issue that requires the holding of a public hearing and a second meeting where a simple majority is required for approval.

There is the option of tabling the article and conducting a special meeting. Then we would have to go to Superior Court. He remarked he would be very surprised if a Judge would authorize a special meeting for something like that as there is no hardship. There would only be 10 months before the next annual meeting. Whether the desired direction is to simply table it for a year, to get the sense of the voters at the meeting, or move forward, the direction of the Board is supported by the SAU.

Chairman Mann reiterated the Board could decide to table the article, could look to the Moderator to gain a sense of the room regarding the desire for a special meeting, or simply move forward.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action, if any, the Board will take regarding the proposed renovation of the SAU facilities – Warrant Article 1

MOTION MADE BY MEMBER FAREED TO TABLE ARTICLES 1 AND 2 MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ROY

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Fareed stated her rationale to be that the District may well find out in a matter of days that a staff member has COVID-19, and that we have much bigger issues to address than a special meeting. Although she is not anxious or nervous about the virus, it is a significant added complication and distraction. She feels the newspaper needs to be dealt with on a legal basis for its failure to meet its 1st Amendment obligations to report on government, and that the public often feels that government agencies are trying to play fast and loose with opportunities to exploit openings, etc., which she is firmly confident we are not and would not be doing.

Under the current circumstances, and with all of the upset that is going on, there could be an economic factor that enters because of all of the disruptions the virus is causing. Scheduling a special meeting would be pretty tough, and getting attendance to it with people worrying about large gatherings could be pretty tough. She feels this project doesn't rise above all of those concerns.

Chairman Mann commented he is on the fence about it. He is generally not in support of the motion. He is supportive of tabling the article. For him, it would be helpful to understand the sense of the community. Vice Chairman Fareed offered to amend her motion to that of a recommendation.

Chairman Mann noted there would be the need for the Board to explain to the public the complications around Article 1; why it is in defect and that the Board has a process to remedy.

Ms. Roy questioned if the Board or the community would vote to table the article. Chairman Mann stated the Board motions to bring each article to the floor. The Board could decide not to motion to bring it to the floor. Mr. Mason remarked, under the Warrant Article, all kinds of different motions are in order, but in order to table something, you have to bring it to the floor in the first place. Mr. Belanger cautioned not making a motion to table too quickly as that motion is non-debatable. Mr. Mason noted he would make a special exception in this case to allow for debate.

The Board could put forth a motion, and the voters vote to table.

Ms. Roy spoke of the number of meetings residents are asked to participate in, and of her hesitancy in exercising an option that asks them to come back again, especially for one thing. She questioned the possibility of moving the district meeting in its entirety to allow sufficient time for proper notification.

Vice Chairman Fareed commented on people's awareness that these type of meetings occur in this timeframe, and a concern with scheduling beyond this period. Ms. Roy commented on there being a need for a special meeting if the article is not tabled. Vice Chairman Fareed noted the other items being addressed such as the operating budget, second year of the HESSA contract, and other issues that need to be settled. The gap between mid-March and the end of the fiscal year is small for the Administrators to address the required processes. If there was any risk of having the meeting not be robust, she feels it would be devastating.

Mr. Mason remarked he does not believe the Board can, in good conscience, not have the annual meeting, and do everything in a special meeting. That would require involvement of the Superior Court. It is not entirely clear to him if the annual meeting could be adjourned without a budget. If this is the course the Board wished to take, the proper way to do it would be to adjourn the meeting to a time and date specific so that you would still be in a properly noticed annual meeting, but you have decided nothing.

Superintendent Corey encouraged the Board not to do that. There is a contractual obligation to staff. In Accordance with the CBA, he needs to notify them by April 15th. We cannot consider a date until after April 1st just on the bond alone. Were the entire meeting to be moved, he would most likely, because he would not know his budget, have to RIF every staff meeting as a means of protecting the District. That is absolutely the worst thing you can do.

As much as he would love a new place at the SAU, the most important article is the one about the two buildings as those house our students; sprinkler system, heating devices, and a host of things that will provide a better educational environment. We have 16 adults in very cramped spaces. We have done it for 6 years and can do it for 7.

Ms. Arthur questioned the amount of information provided to the public prior to a motion to table. Vice Chairman Fareed commented she would be very interested in taking advantage of the presence of the community by providing the presentation.

Tom Gehan, 104 Broad Street

Suggested bringing the article to the floor and voting on it is really the ultimate sense of the meeting. The voters will decide whether they want to have another meeting if you make clear what the remedy procedure is, and that it involves an additional meeting.

Superintendent Corey commented the ten-year treasurer note today moved down to 0.5. We would probably be looking at a bond of about 2%. The last thing we want to do is jeopardize the HSTEP 2nd phase and the CIP components. He reiterated he has no problem if the Board recommends to the voters not to touch Articles 1 or 2, and move forward from there. If the voters pass everything else, they will have once again given us an incredible allocation for our schools to do the things we need to do.

Ms. Roy commented on discussion during previous meetings regarding the need to present a bond warrant first and the ability to change the order. Vice Chairman Fareed stated it has to be placed on the warrant first and the first thing spoken of is a motion to change the order.

Chairman Mann commented should the voters approve the bond after being provided the necessary information and understanding there would be the need for a second meeting at which a simple majority would be the requirement, then that is the will of the community. The simple thing would be to pull the article and put it forward next year. We could do that, or do we want to run it and show them the work that we've done because, after all, they paid for it with Article 3 last year.

It was suggested, after the information and explanation is presented, the Moderator could remind the voters of their options to move forward. Perhaps the first question put forward is do the voters wish to proceed with a vote on the bond or table it.

Ms. Roy questioned what would occur with Article 2 should Article 1 be tabled. Chairman Mann stated it would be his hope, in that scenario, that Article 2 would be tabled as well. Vice Chairman Fareed stated her intent to move to table each of those two articles regardless of how the Board votes at this time. Chairman Mann remarked if tabling the renovation, we need to move all of that off the table.

Ms. Arthur questioned, if in the scenario where Article 1 is voted down, you would want Article 2 voted on? Vice Chairman Fareed responded no. Ms. Arthur questioned bringing Article 2 forward. Chairman Mann stated if the order was changed and the bond came after the outcome of the municipal lease was known, he would understand whether or not he had to be concerned with the lease article. In the event both contingency articles passed, that would represent \$800,000 worth of appropriation in one year, which is a big tax impact, which could, in many ways, damage the trust we have with the community.

Vice Chairman Fareed asked if she could go to the microphone, as a citizen, and motion to change the order of articles 3 and 4 to come before articles 1 and 2 as a single motion or if that would have to be addressed one at a time. Mr. Mason stated his recommendation to be that he read Article 1, it is moved and seconded, and at that point, someone makes a motion to postpone articles 1 and 2 until after article 4. That moves both. Then we deal with 3 and 4 and then come to the presentation on 1.

Superintendent Corey stated a Warrant has been posted. All of the articles need to be discussed even if they are tabled. For the Board to take any action tonight, other than this discussion, is almost taking the authority of the legislative body.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

Chairman Mann questioned the will of the Board in regard to the direction recommended by the Moderator. Vice Chairman Fareed reiterated her intent to motion to table articles 1 and 2 after the information has been provided to the voters.

Ms. Arthur stated her support for changing the order of the articles and for tabling of articles 1 and 2. Ms. Roy stated her support for changing the order and for allowing the voters to determine whether or not to move forward with the bond. Ms. Kellner stated she is in favor of bringing all information forward and presenting the voters with all of their options.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER ROY TO ADJOURN
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER KELLNER
MOTION CARRIED
5-0-0

The March 9, 2020 special meeting of the Hollis School Board was adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Date _____

Signed _____