

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
FEBRUARY 10, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was conducted on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 6:03 p.m. at the Hollis Brookline Middle School.

Holly Deurloo Babcock, Chairman, presided:

Members of the School Board Present: Tom Solon, Vice Chairman
Kate Stoll, Secretary
Elizabeth Brown
Cindy VanCoughnett
Krista Whalen
Beth Janine Williams

Members of the School Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent
Gina Bergskaug, Asst. Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Bob Thompson, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

On February 2nd, a joint meeting of the School Board and the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District Budget Committee was conducted. Also conducted on February 2nd was the Public Hearing on the proposed FY22 budget. The Board and Committee reviewed the warrant articles that have been submitted by the School Board and Budget Committee as well as one Petition Warrant Article that had been submitted earlier in the process.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted this evening public input would be taken at two different points; first during the regular Board meeting. At that time, public input will need to pertain to items on the posted agenda.

As stated on the agenda, the Board will recess to conduct the Public Hearing on the Petition Warrant Articles. It is during the Public Hearing that the second opportunity for public comment will take place. Each article will be read into the record and the floor opened for public comment before moving on to the next.

Upon completion of the Public Hearing, the School Board will reconvene its regular meeting. It is at that point, when the School Board will take positions on each of the warrant articles.

An additional Public Hearing will be conducted (Zoom) on February 11th to meet the requirement of holding a meeting in Brookline.

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Chairman Deurloo Babcock appointed Beth Janine Williams as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

Superintendent Corey noted Brian Bumpus, Athletic Director, was unable to attend, and that he would present the Administrative reports.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having received a call from one of the presenters for the Public Hearing. A petition article was incorrectly identified as Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. He was informed it should be titled Racial Discrimination.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board. [January 20, 2021](#)

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 10, Line 11; replace “know” with “known”
- Page 11, Line 27; delete “What was”
- Page 15, Line 42; replace “coaches” with “athletics”

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO ACCEPT, AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **1st Non-Public** January 20, 2021

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **2nd Non-Public** January 20, 2021

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO TABLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE NON-PUBLIC
MINUTES OF JANUARY 20, 2021 UNTIL THE NEXT REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0

NOMINATIONS/RESIGNATIONS/CORRESPONDENCE

Superintendent Corey addressed the February vacation period noting, if he had to make the decision today, the COOP district would be remote the week after break, returning on the 10th. He has been working closely with the Principals, and the matter truly comes down to staffing. The district is currently experiencing 5 maternity leaves and 3 pending. Many of the long-term substitutes that started with us in the beginning of the year have now become our permanent teachers because of these maternity leaves. In some cases, we have been able to hire staff and in other cases the pool just isn’t there. When our college students returned to school, it had a severe impact to the middle school. A number of them were doing duty for us, which freed up other options.

Because some of the other districts are now starting to open, they are realizing that some of their teaches will not be able to come back. They have put out ads for long-term teaching positions. Some of our staff, who are certified and have been working as substitutes, will see the opportunity to get a pay increase and gain experience, which will allow them to eventually get a teaching job.

We have had a number of instances of staff having to quarantine; not necessarily because of things that have happened on our campus or anything to do with Hollis-Brookline, but their family member is COVID positive, which forces them into quarantine. At the COOP, it is slightly easier because we are 100% Room In Zoom. When we look at that period of education, as much as we don’t want to go remote again, it is believed the best way to deliver instruction for that short period of time.

It is not envisioned that this would have to occur again in April. We are rolling out the vaccine, and working with our teachers who do want to get the vaccine, but it is just a matter of when they can get scheduled. If everything goes well, there will be a roll out at the beginning of March. Being remote may help us because then

the teachers could post that they are taking a few hours and going to get their vaccine. We would not be covering for them in the building, which would be very difficult.

The Administration will make families aware of the decision by the end of this week. He and the Assistant Superintendents have a discussion scheduled on the topic. By going remote at the COOP, it may allow us to keep the elementary districts open because some of the substitutes assigned here can be moved into the elementary districts.

PUBLIC INPUT

Tiffany Testa, 101 Mooar Hill Road, Hollis

Spoke in support of the faculty and the decision to go remote for a week. She is unbelievably gracious for this district and everything that everyone is doing. She believes it to be a really fair compromise.

PRINCIPAL AND ATHLETIC REPORTS

At the Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS), Math Counts is up and holding their weekly meetings. They recently held their first competition. In his report, Principal Girzone notes that the PE teachers have thought outside the box this year to provide for students safe, fun and physically active games and activities. The Debate Club has recently started meeting remotely.

Superintendent Corey congratulated Ava Imbrogno, this year's DAR Essay Contest winner.

At the Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS), Principal Barnes notes in his report that we have finished the first semester. Superintendent Corey commented we are one of the few schools in the State and region that is in-person five days/week. He thanked the staff, and spoke of how fantastic the student body has been.

Spirit Week will be the week prior to vacation. Notification came that the HBHS received the Female Diversity Award for AP Computer Science.

Megan McLaughlin '21 was awarded the Silver Key in the Scholastic Writing Contest sponsored by Plymouth State University and the National Writing Project.

Course selection for grades 9-11 opened on February 9th. A Zoom session for 8th grade parents is on the 10th.

In the area of athletics, the district is geared and ready for the spring. Recent hires include Allie Buschmann as the HBHS Girls Lacrosse Asst. Coach, and Steven Stark as the HBMS Girls Lacrosse Coach.

An overview was provided for the spring athletics. Superintendent Corey noted the protocols to be the same that have served for the winter and fall; adapted to specific sports.

Should the trend continue to move in a positive direction, being considered is the possibility of reaching out to Amherst and Milford during the last week of the season and letting middle school students play games in baseball, softball, and potentially track.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock commented it appears that everything is going well. She is happy to see such positive news coming out of all of our schools. She wished to highlight the middle school as it is one of those places that is pretty special, and they have been doing a really great job.

RECESS

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO RECESS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CITIZEN PETITION WARRANT ARTICLES

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

The Board recessed at 6:27 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 9:19 p.m.

DISCUSSION

- Draft School Calendar 2021-2022

Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent, remarked in preparing the calendar they looked to remain consistent with what is normally done; teachers return the Monday prior to Labor Day. The start of the school year looks very typical; 7th and 9th grade orientation on the Wednesday before Labor day. Moving into November, we have Veterans Day on November 11th, which is a Thursday. The thought is to put the professional development day on that Friday so families would have a four-day weekend. Looking into December, the 24th is a Friday. Proposed is to put the 2nd professional development day on December 23rd, and just extend that December vacation a little for families. The reason she looked to December for that 2nd professional development day is if looking at February, Presidents Day is late this year, and would put our vacation for New Hampshire on the 4th Monday of February. That means the bulk of our vacation would actually be in March. Sometimes she looks at voting day as a professional development day, but it seems silly to have a week off, come back for one day, and then take a day off.

April is typical as is May. This puts the last day of school (including 5 snow days) as June 21st for students and June 24th for teachers.

Asked if the proposed calendar adheres to all requirements of the professional staff as well as student days, she stated it does.

- Articles of Agreement for the Cooperative School District

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated a small group has been working on potential changes to clean up language in the Articles of Agreement. This effort is completely separate from the petition warrant article related to the Articles of Agreement.

Superintendent Corey noted the letter provided by legal counsel. The work has been done to update the Articles of Agreement. Legal counsel has provided his thoughts in regard to the best approach for making the necessary changes. In speaking with the Chairman, one of the things that has been found to be very effective with significant items is the potential of scheduling a separate meeting with a single focus. Were it to be done at this year's Annual Meeting there would be time constraints and the potential for confusion given the Citizen Petition Warrant Article.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated there to be a few questions to be addressed; 1) do we want to present the proposed changes to the voters, 2) would the Board be amenable to doing this at a special meeting that is separate from the Annual Meeting, and 3) the format that would be used to present the proposed amendments.

She stated her preference for a special meeting and to place the proposed amendments on separate warrant articles.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the Board voted at the last meeting that we would put forth these changes. The question at hand is how. The default would be to add it to our Annual Meeting and sometime between now and whenever that meeting is we would have to have a hearing. What has been proposed by the Superintendent and supported by the Chairman is that it is allowed within the Articles of Agreement to have a separate standalone meeting specifically to address the Articles of Agreement.

He does not have a particular objection to that as he is not overly worried about how large an audience we get as he does not feel we are looking to make any substantive changes. It doesn't change anything about what we are doing or how we are run. Conversely, it makes the Articles of Agreement agree with what we are doing and how we are run. He has no objection to breaking it out, but if we are going to do that, particularly if we are looking at an in-person meeting for our district meeting, he would like to have this done before that.

Member Brown spoke of concern with getting folks at another meeting this year and that it could result in the Articles of Agreement being amended to be vastly different than intended.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if the concern is that other amendments would be proposed. Member Brown questioned if there could be new petition warrant articles heard at the special meeting resulting in a need to debate changes that are in addition to what we are proposing. Vice Chairman Solon remarked if that is the case then he is very much opposed to that approach.

Member Brown stated concern with the possibility a special meeting could become disruptive and may not achieve the desired outcome. The problem is our meetings are too long, they are a huge burden upon the Administration, Board, and the public. When we add one more thing to the warrant that actually needs to get done it becomes just one more burden.

At this point, she does not think that means having another meeting. We suck it up and hope that some of the stuff that we have already discussed tonight gets tabled. The feeling in the room may be that those are issues that shouldn't get discussed and the cleanup on this particular article should get discussed. We haven't done some of this stuff the entire time she has been on the Board, e.g., joint meeting with the elementary district school boards.

She understands the concern; however, believes doing it as a separate meeting will only make it worse.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if the same concern would exist if legal counsel were to provide the opinion it would simply be a matter of conducting the public hearing and a separate meeting, and then it is an up/down vote.

Member Brown questioned if the decision had to be reached at this time, and was told it did not. Superintendent Corey added the Board will decide tonight on moving the date of the Annual meeting. The warrant needs to be posted 14 days before the meeting. The Board could look to legal counsel for an opinion before deciding.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked the question is, if a stand-alone meeting, what action is permissible at that meeting. Can an article be amended and can other changes to the Articles of Agreement be added to that meeting by petition. He is not concerned with getting people out for the vote if it is simply an up or down vote, but if an amendable warrant, it is very important that the largest portion of our voting population is present.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock agreed information should be sought; however, noted she would argue pretty heavily, unless she can be convinced otherwise, that putting this on our warrant this year, given the fact that we just spent 2 hours at a public hearing on 4 warrant articles that will bring out more people, could put us into that place where we have a meeting that goes 2-3 days. If people can amend this in any way you will have a few hundred sets of eyes looking at this and wordsmithing it. That is okay, but she would rather do that in a stand-alone meeting.

Member Williams stated agreement with seeking a legal opinion. She worries with the pandemic and finding a way to make a big meeting safe and then having to do more than one big meeting. That is one of her other reservations.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the Board voted that this will be presented as a warrant article. It either is a separate meeting or is on the warrant for the Annual Meeting. Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked it could be tabled and addressed in 2022. Vice Chairman Solon was uncertain if tabling could occur in advance of the meeting.

Member VanCoughnett commented if the petition warrant article passes the Articles of Agreement would have to be revisited. If it is only a housekeeping matter she would be fine with putting it on the warrant this year.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked if this article and the Petition Warrant Article were to pass it would simply mean that the document that is published/posted would incorporate both changes.

Vice Chairman Solon asked if the question has been posed of whether the petition warrant articles could be amended from the floor. Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated the question could be asked. She has the sense the Legislative Body can amend anything. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug commented you can only amend them or table them. In SB2 you can only amend the amounts, but you can't table them or take them off. Superintendent Corey will seek a legal opinion as to whether Petition Warrant Articles can be amended on the floor of the Annual Meeting.

DELIBERATIONS

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the recommendations for the Fiscal Year 2022 warrant articles (including those submitted by citizens petition)

Article 1

To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items for the first year of a three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis Education Support Staff Association for the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, which calls for the following increases in support staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2021-22	\$117,065

and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$117,065** for the first fiscal year (2021-22 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.

Budget Committee recommends: 6-0-1
Vice Chair Blanche Abstained

MOTION BY MEMBER WILLIAMS TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 1
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0

Article 2

To see if the school district will vote to approve the cost items for the first year of a three-year collective bargaining agreement reached between the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board and the Hollis Education Association for the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years, which calls for the following increases in professional staff salaries and benefits at the current staffing levels:

Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase	Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase	Fiscal Year	Estimated Increase
2021-22	\$228,316	2022-23	\$294,057	2023-24	\$330,369

and further to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$228,316** for the first fiscal year (2021-22 school year), such sum representing the additional costs attributable to the increase in professional staff salaries and benefits required by the new agreement over those that would be paid at current staffing levels.

Budget Committee recommends: 6-1-0

MOTION BY MEMBER WHALEN TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 2
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON

ON THE QUESTION

Member Brown questioned if the language of the Article is typical, e.g., that we are approving the first year. We won't vote on this again. Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated all three years are stated, but we are raising and appropriating only the first year for this budget year.

Vice Chairman Solon noted this year the amount is not in the budget. In future years, by approving the budget, we will be approving the appropriation.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 3

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate a sum of **\$24,160,377** for the support of schools, for the payment of salaries for the school district officials and agents and for the payment of statutory obligations of the district. This appropriation does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles.

Budget Committee recommends: 6-1-0

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 3

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted what was pointed out by a Budget Committee member on February 2nd was that, in general, this is a flat budget if you take out the increases associated with the New Hampshire Retirement System and healthcare costs. She commended the work of the Budget Committee and the Administration in putting together a \$24 million budget that will meet the needs of our students, support our staff, and continue to support the community members that take advantage of our schools and also those members of the community who may not have students in the district but who are helping to provide for their citizens.

Vice Chairman Solon noted because we have a Budget Committee, this is the Budget Committee's budget based on input from the Administration and the School Board. What we essentially are doing is being asked to approve the work of the Budget Committee. The Budget Committee is the group empowered to look after the fiscal interests of our community.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 4

Shall the District vote to raise and appropriate the sum of **\$997,899** as the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's portion of the SAU budget of **\$1,953,257** for the forthcoming fiscal year? This year's adjusted budget of **\$1,918,864** with **\$980,328** 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.

Budget Committee recommends: 6-1-0

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 4

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if the Superintendent had the opportunity to Benchmark our district against any other SAUs. Superintendent Corey stated he has preliminary numbers. He reached out to Bow because

they are similar to us, Pelham and Milford because they are neighbors, and Chester because there was a conversation about Brookline having its own SAU and that would be a similar size. He should be able to do more of that by March.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the hope that between now and when citizens will be asked to vote on this, we will be able to give them some landmarks to judge. He believes it will show the SAU is operating much more efficiently than some claim, if you look at the work they are required to do. In addition, there is some misinformation that has been presented recently at a number of meetings about growth and additions of staff. He finds interesting some of the comments about how many districts have multiple Assistant Superintendents; when he went on the DOE website he found that we don't; we only have 1. He is unsure where the data is being collected. It is tough to get some good data on that.

The benefit; we didn't create new positions, we transformed positions of the Curriculum Coordinator and the Director of Student Services to recognize the credentials that our staff has and to exploit those credentials and allow us to operate in more places at any given times. As Assistant Superintendent's the district's contribution to the NHRS, based on their salaries, is at a lower percentage than if they had the less credentialed titles. There are operational and fiscal advantages to having multiple Assistant Superintendents in our district.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock thanked the SAU Budget Committee and SAU staff for the work done on this budget.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Chairman Deurloo Babcock noted she had heard from the District Moderator that Petition Warrant Articles can be amended. SB2 cannot be amended, the tax cap can have the percentage amended, the cost items of the CBA cannot be amended and the Petition Article that has language relating to curriculum can be amended.

Article 5 - Discontinue Athletic Expendable Trust

Shall the school district vote to discontinue the Athletic Expendable Trust fund? Said funds and accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, are to be transferred to the school district's general fund. (Majority vote required).

Budget Committee recommends: 6-1-0

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 5

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon questioned what would happen if Article 5 is approved and Article 6 is not.

Superintendent Corey stated the Board would have the same public hearing as we are a year in arrears from when we collect to when we spend. This spring you would make the motion to add it into the upcoming budget and then you would have to figure out the solution for next year.

Member Brown stated her belief the money would end up in the general fund. Vice Chairman Solon remarked we would be back in the situation we were in before we created this fund where there is concern about mixing the money.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 6 - Establish Athletics Revolving Fund

Shall the school district establish a non-lapsing Athletics Revolving Fund in accordance with RSA 194:3-c, to be funded by receipts from athletic participation fees and charges? Further, to raise and appropriate up to **\$50,000** to put into that fund for the purpose of supporting athletic programs in the district, with said amount to come from unassigned general fund balance (resulting from the previously discontinued Athletic Expendable Trust and participation fees collected in 2020-21). The money received from athletic fees and charges shall be allowed to accumulate from year to year in this revolving fund, and shall not be considered part of the general fund unassigned fund balance. Expenditures may be made from this revolving fund only for the purposes stated herein at monthly intervals or as needed without further approval of the legislative body. (Majority vote required).

Budget Committee recommends: 7-0-0

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 6

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 7

To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate up to the sum of **\$115,000** to be added to the previously established School Building and Facilities Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund. The sum to come from the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District's June 30, 2021 unassigned fund balance, available on July 1, 2021.

Budget Committee recommends: 6-1-0

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 7

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon remarked he has in the past been in favor of this trust fund; however, lately it seems to have become a tool for making the budget look artificially low by putting money in that we know we will spend in the upcoming year. It was his impression that the goal was to collect things for long-term future uses. A good portion of the amount proposed to be allocated will go in and come right back out. It is his feeling that this is not the intended purpose of this fund.

MOTION CARRIED

6-1-0

Member Solon voted in opposition

Article 8

To see if the school district will vote to establish a contingency fund for the current year for unanticipated expenses that may arise and further to raise and appropriate up to **\$100,000** to go into the fund. This sum to come from the unassigned fund balance available on July 1, 2021, and no amount to be raised from taxation. Any appropriation left at the end of the year will lapse to the general fund.

Budget Committee recommends: 3-4-0

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 8

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER STOLL

MOTION CARRIED

5-2-0

Members Solon and Williams voted in opposition

Article 9

Shall the school district accept the provisions of RSA 198:20-b providing that any school district at an annual meeting may adopt an article authorizing indefinitely, until specific rescission of such authority, the school board to apply for, accept and expend, without further action by the school district, unanticipated money from a state, federal or other governmental unit or a private source which becomes available during the fiscal year?

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 9

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 10 (Contingent Article)

If Article 9 passes, this article is unnecessary: to see if the school district will authorize the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board to access future year state and federal special education aid funds in the event that special education costs exceed budget limitations.

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 10

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon questioned how the article would be addressed in the event Article 9 passes, and was told it would be skipped.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Article 11 – Petition Warrant Article

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5 V-b, requiring that the annual budget and all special warrant articles having a tax impact, as determined by the school board, shall contain a notation stating the estimated tax impact of the article? The determination of the estimated tax impact shall be subject to approval by the governing body.

Budget Committee recommends: 0-7-0

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 11
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon stated he is supportive of communicating tax impact, but respects the fact that it is very difficult to have an accurate number at the time the warrant articles are proposed. The Budget Committee expressed concern over there being two numbers brought before the legislative body, which could result in confusion and bring about a certain level of distrust. That is his reasoning for opposing the Article. He is supportive of the work being done, but not of being required to post it on the Warrant Article.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated agreement with the comments made.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

Members Deurloo Babcock, Solon, Stoll, Brown, VanCoughnett, Whalen, and Williams voted in opposition

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if the language of the article would indicate the Board does “not” recommend. Superintendent Corey indicated the majority position would be articulated.

Article 12 – Petition Warrant Article

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 32:5-b, and implement a tax cap whereby the governing body (or budget committee) shall not submit a recommended budget that increases the amount to be raised by local taxes, based on the prior fiscal year’s actual amount of local taxes raised, by more than 4%.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 12
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon commented one of the greatest downfalls of this was illustrated in Brookline this year; last year’s budget was impacted by what he referred to as a windfall that created an anomaly. As a result, the cap in Brookline, which was thought to be a relatively exorbitant amount, ended up throttling their ability to put forth a budget that allowed them to support the schools as they thought was necessary. In fact, resulted in a budget that is essentially the same as the default budget. Due to the weirdness of this year and the regulations, they were allowed to amend that. Under normal circumstances they would not be permitted to.

If it goes through, as is purported, the Legislative Body can make a change and even the School Board can make a change, but what it basically says is you are taking the voice away from the Budget Committee. It does not allow them to make their honest recommendation of what a budget should be. That is just wrong. If you don’t like what the Budget Committee is doing, get rid of the Budget Committee, but don’t tell them to do their work and then ask them not to give you their best advice.

Member Williams stated her agreement. She agrees that some of this has been unsustainable growth, and respects that concern. However, she does not support putting a cap in place not only for the reasons already stated, but she has seen too many times where the unintended happens. Her first year on another school board the State cut \$4 billion out of education and cuts had to be made, e.g., cut art teachers and librarians. She does not ever want to be forced into a position, given the circumstances of a year, to be unable to be flexible and have the best recommendations from a Budget Committee on how we manage.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

Article 13 – Petition Warrant Article

Shall we adopt the provisions of RSA 40:13 (known as SB 2) to allow official ballot voting on all issues before the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District on the second Tuesday of March?

**MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 13
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON**

ON THE QUESTION

Member Whalen spoke of having grown up in Illinois where she did not have the opportunity, like you do in a small town in New England, to have true democracy, and this to her is true democracy. She appreciates everyone having the ability to vote, but what is also interesting is having the ability to vote and having all the information and facts put in front of you. That is what we have at our Town meeting.

With SB2 there is the deliberative session, and she understands that, but we have seen over and over that attendance is low, and the information that is put on warrants is not necessarily the information that was initially put forward for reasons that the School Board or Budget Committee spent an entire year working on.

It is true that a small group of people can take that and change it; can lower or increase a budget. We are constantly hearing how long the meetings are. She has been part of the Board for a very long time and prior to that attended the meetings. They weren't really long. They have been for the last few years, and a big reason for that is the small minority of people who are constantly making it so that we have to conduct secret ballots as opposed to card votes, which extends the meeting. It is being done deliberately to make the meetings long to try to encourage us to move to SB2.

She does believe in voting and in giving everyone the ability to vote. She encourages everyone to attend the meeting; it is once a year. We spend an entire year working on all of this and a lot of time and energy goes into everything that is put forth on these warrant articles. She appreciates that people don't necessarily have the time to tune into our meetings every month, read our minutes, or look into all of the committees that we work on, but all of that information is available.

She believes it worthwhile, when you live in a very small town in New England, to be able to have the opportunity for a full democracy. She does not support SB2.

Member Williams stated this to be a tough one for her and one she struggles with. She will not support it as a Board member, but wishes to note this process and the time involved is hard. In the almost five years that she has been here there has not been a time where all voting people in her household could vote. It is hard on families with young kids, it's hard on a lot of people. She has a hard time with being provided information and needing to decide on the spot. She likes to be able to digest information. As much as she sees a lot of great benefits, and has lived in other areas of the country and sees a lot of the benefits to SB2, she does not believe it is the answer to some of those problems.

We just have to be mindful of how to make these meetings more accessible. She doesn't have all the answers, but does know the way we have this now works great for a lot of people, but it doesn't work for everybody.

Member Brown stated her belief the meeting system we have that runs multiple nights and into midnight is really unsustainable. She understands the pitfalls and the arguments, but just does not think this is a sustainable system. What ends up happening; there is a fragment of people in both towns who are into this and know how

to play the games at the Town Meeting. It does not work as true democracy like it should. It does if you can figure out how to play town meeting, but she would really rather have governance done by something other than a crafty game of chess, and that is how she feels town meeting is. She feels that way at the COOP level and at the Town of Hollis.

We need to be able to make this where normal folks with normal jobs who have to get up the next morning, can have an opportunity to vote and that we don't give the power to the 25 people on that petition list. We kept hearing that tonight, the same 25 people, but it really is probably 50 people in this town that show up at the meetings, manipulate the meetings, manipulate the petition warrant articles, and control what happens. At this point, SB2 is a way to include more of the public. Yes we are going to have to show up at the deliberative sessions, but that isn't any different than the need to show up at district meeting. The deliberative sessions may be several hours, but 2-3, and that is a very different ask than multiple nights until midnight and 2:00 a.m.

MOTION FAILED

1-6-0

Members Deurloo Babcock, Solon, Stoll, VanCoughnett, Whalen, and Williams voted in opposition

Article 14 - Petition Warrant Article

To see if the Hollis Brookline Cooperative District will vote to amend the Articles of Agreement of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District by deleting Article 3 as currently written and substituting a new Article 3 as follows:

Article 3: The Hollis Brookline Cooperative School District shall be responsible for grades nine (9) through twelve (12).

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 14, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon opposes this article because he opposes dissolution of the middle school COOP, which is what this is proposing.

He has heard this presented in a couple of different formats at different meetings, but basically there are two arguments being made for doing this: 1) that it is financially advantageous to everybody, particularly to Brookline and 2) that it will make for better education for our students. On the second count, he can't imagine how that is true knowing the benefits we have with scale of offerings, the co-mingling of students, and the difficulty there is with hiring skilled teachers. He does not see how that would be better for our students. He has not heard anyone make a compelling argument other than to just say it is true.

It truly baffles him where one would think that building another building to house a given population is going to be lower cost. The fact is if numbers do increase and another building is needed he would love to see another building be built in Brookline, but he would like to see it still be part of the COOP. He thinks the advantages of having more facilities would be great. If it is justified and if Brookline voters are willing to pay the cost of putting up a \$20 million structure on the CSDA campus that would be great. It would even be better to have that cost shared and utilized by both communities. If people are really concerned about cost and that is the driver for this, the real way to decrease the cost would be to have a K-12 COOP, not to break them apart.

Member Williams stated agreement. It has bothered her for a long time; we are going in the wrong direction if we're taking kids out of the middle school. She would much rather see this turning the other way.

Member Whalen stated agreement.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked to her this would be fiscally imprudent. It doesn't make any sense academically because our students get so much more from economies of scale and being able to have expanded offerings when they get to the 7th and 8th grade. Socially and emotionally this is a time in life when adolescents are really needing to move into a place where they can meet some new people and learn more about peer relationships. This is a prime time, and this school does a great job of that; has really figured that out. For all of those reasons it brings our communities together and it has trickled down to be Hollis/Brookline sports in K-6. It has made us all one community. She cannot understand why anyone would suggest making a separation of this very successful building and very successful program. Not to say that the elementary districts aren't successful in their own right; they are, they are great at K-6 and 7th & 8th up here has done very well and fiscally responsibly.

Member Stoll commented most of her points have been stated. Simply put, our towns are better together; the resources, the offerings, the advantages are far more robust as a group, and to dissolve the middle school COOP would not be in the best interest of any of our children or the communities.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

Members Deurloo Babcock, Solon, Stoll, Brown, VanCoughnett, Whalen, and Williams voted in opposition

Article 15 – Petition Warrant Article

Shall SAU 41 and the Hollis Brookline Cooperative Schools hereby affirm our general support for each student's growth and enrichment, in support thereof, We, the Legislative Body, hereby state the following as a matter of general policy:

- (a) The family unit is ideally at the core of each individual's social, educational, intellectual, and emotional well being,
- (b) Our schools are a critical element that shall foster an environment where our goal is that all students are enabled to thrive and positively achieve their potential and develop the content of their character accordingly,
- (c) It shall be the primary goal of all teachers and administrators to support these efforts,
- (d) Any divisive policy that fosters prejudicial discrimination, segregation, stereotyping, intimidation, censorship, harassment or retribution based on race or sex is, by its nature, a threat to our social fabric, morally wrong and generally unlawful,
- (e) Further, educational techniques that hinder or prevent: fairness, impartiality, equality of opportunity OR, conversely, support outcomes of "equity redesign", "equity based outcomes", "redistribution", "retribution", "unlearning" or "Critical Race Theory" are, by their nature, detrimentally counterproductive to healthy education and the unifying ideals of our greater American Society,
- (f) Any parties so wronged may seek court relief under applicable federal and state laws, through and with RSA 354-A (Anti-Discrimination), RSA 91-A, (The Right to Know), et al., noting the enforcement and penalty provisions provided therein.

Therefore,

WE, the Legislative Body of SAU 41 and the Hollis Brookline Cooperative Schools, with our vote, hereby affirm that this Article be published and made an integral policy of our School Administrative Unit and Cooperative School District."

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO RECOMMEND ARTICLE 15, AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS**

ON THE QUESTION

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated first and foremost our attorney has advised that this would be advisory only. That is because the School Board is the only legislative body that has the responsibility to review curriculum and ensure it meets State standards and guidelines. We have brought into this district incredibly professional educators who are experts on this. They are experts; not us. The Board is elected and has knowledge of issues, but the Administration understands curriculum. They understand children, the development of adolescents, what needs to be taught and what needs to not be taught. We also have a group of professionals who work in this community; our teachers who are also taught to be teachers. They understand curriculum, the needs of their students, and how to present information.

She does not believe there is any reason to have a petition warrant article out there that directs them in any way. It is the role of the School Board to make sure they are meeting those standards, and their role to ensure our systems are in place and that we are doing what we need to do.

The district has taken some time in the last 6 months to do some exploration on these topics, and is learning more and more every day.

Member Whalen stated agreement with the remarks of the Chairman. She added we are a public school and under legal obligations in many forms to not discriminate. She believes our system does not teach any extreme curriculum, and if that were ever the case, it would be brought forward to a teacher and an administrator and would be acknowledged and taken care of. It would be difficult for her to support an article that would, in a sense, force us to teach in a certain way. She does not believe we are discriminatory and does believe we are held to a lot of legal standards. She believes it important to teach our children all sides of history as well as all subjects to the best of our ability.

Member Williams stated agreement with the prior speakers. Something that was said tonight was touched on at the last meeting, and she wished to comment. She heard the gentleman who presented this describe equity. She struggles with equity because there are so many different perspectives on it. If she understood correctly, he described equity as about us all crossing the finish line at the same time. That is not how she sees it. We are not all equal. We have different abilities and that is something that we in this community really do celebrate well. It is not about crossing the finish line at the same time. Equity is about having the opportunity to show up, it is about finding the tools that you need to be the most successful as an individual to find your personal best.

Member Brown stated the desire to bring this back to legal counsel and determine whether or not we must put this on the warrant simply because it received 25 signatures. She has a number of concerns; specifically starting with the fact that it includes the SAU41 as the Legislative Body and we do not vote as SAU41's legislative body, when we vote we vote as the COOP. There are so many terms in this that are undefined, unclear, debatable, etc. She does not even know what generally unlawful means and she spends her time practicing law. She is very concerned that putting this in front of the public in this form is toxic.

She encouraged the Board, if possible, to not put this in front of the voters, to decline to do so.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated there to have been multiple conversations with legal counsel, and the Moderator just said that we have to include it. It can be taken back to legal counsel. However, she suggested the Board vote on whether or not to recommend it. If we find out from counsel that we can legally exclude it, there will be time to do that.

She did put it in front of legal counsel, and his feeling was the safest way to proceed is to put it out to the voters and to explain the concerns we have. He said it wasn't illegal enough to put off.

Superintendent Corey stated he would take it back to legal counsel to get an update.

Member Brown commented it could be this is the safest course. She is willing to be a little unsafe at this point. She does not believe that anyone on the Board, the Administration or school believes that we are intentionally racist, that we are intentionally trying to indoctrinate our students in any direction. Some of the language in this implies that we think we are and that we need to change something. That very much concerns her. She does not want to ever go back to a situation where we are allowing the legislative body at district meeting to basically be giving directives to the School Board regarding curriculum and instruction, which is what happened a few years ago when there was a similar petition article dealing with Common Core.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he opposes the article from a similar standpoint that we have talked about the resolution for DEI, not specifically because of its content, but because of the type of document it is, and what it is claiming to do versus what it really will do. It is misleading to have this voted upon by a public who really has no say in the matter and may not really understand what they are being asked to vote on. The other part that concerns him, particularly in sub-section E, are these terms. The fact that they were put in quotes by the author means that they are not clearly defined elements. That is what you do when you are saying there is ambiguity about a term. To ask the public to decide on, even if it is only advisory, suggesting something using trigger words that mean different things to different people is just the opposite of the type of legislative action that he would hope our community could give us.

The sad part is if looking at the intent of the people who are passionate about this and the intent of the people who are passionate about the DEI resolution, he thinks there is a lot more in common than there are differences, but the choice of words and the context and emotions attached to them are divisive.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock stated agreement.

MOTION FAILED

0-7-0

Members Deurloo Babcock, Solon, Stoll, Brown, VanCoughnett, Whalen, and Williams voted in opposition

Article 16

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

- To see what action the Board will take regarding the date for the annual meeting – consideration is being given to Saturday, April 10th or Saturday April 17th

Superintendent Corey recommended both dates; April 10th as the first date and if weather inhibits that, there would be the option of April 17th. He recommended a 10:00 a.m. start time.

MOTION BY MEMBER STOLL TO MOVE THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL MEETING TO SATURDAY, APRIL 10, 2021 WITH A BACKUP DATE OF SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021 WITH A START TIME OF 10:00 A.M.

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon questioned when a decision has to be made regarding the potential need to postpone it further. Superintendent Corey suggested early April. The Moderator would have the ability to postpone the meeting to a date certain. You could actually open up the meeting to adjourn it to the next Saturday. Vice Chairman Solon questioned the latest date at which the Moderator could postpone to a date certain without opening the meeting. Superintendent Corey stated his belief the Moderator has great flexibility.

Vice Chairman Solon commented he is quite confident we could conduct the meeting in May, but choosing April could just as easily be impossible. Superintendent Corey stated his school worry to be that we won't have a teacher's contract. It will be a very difficult market to attract teachers, and we have some very talented teachers who would be able to seek employment elsewhere if they were concerned about a contract.

Vice Chairman Solon stated his belief it was the notice to not continue that has a timeline associated with it. Superintendent Corey stated the problem that will be faced is we will have open positions potentially by people naturally leaving, and if we don't have a budget there is the potential that offers made to individuals could be rejected if they are receiving offers from districts that do have the ability to offer a contract. This is going to be a very difficult hire in math and science. We're already down in the area of Chemistry. The longer we get behind the 8 ball the more likely it is that we are going to struggle to obtain somebody that we would truly like to have.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if a contract could be issued contingent upon passage of a budget. Superintendent Corey questioned what if he said to you that you can have a contract tomorrow and the voters take out half a million dollar. If I've already told you that you could have a contract how do I fund that if I have lost half a million dollars?

Vice Chairman Solon stated the Superintendent has a hard decision regardless of what the teachers do. As an employee I have to decide do I think it is likely that they are going to close the school. Superintendent Corey commented there is not a reserve fund that could be looked to in covering those dollars.

Vice Chairman Solon remarked he is not opposed to the date. His question is if we approach it and it is not a workable date, how close up to it can the Moderator postpone.

Chairman Deurloo Babcock remarked the Moderator has indicated he has the power to postpone 2 hours before the meeting.

Asked if he has any indication of the number of districts that are conducting virtual meetings or if any are trying to do in-person meetings, Superintendent Corey responded a lot of them are doing in-person. Londonderry has a live meeting this Friday night in the gymnasium. Noted was that it is an SB2 community holding a deliberative session.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

HB HIGHLIGHTS

Member Williams spoke of winter sports occurring that can be watched even if unable to attend in person. She spoke of thoroughly enjoying lunch duty at the high school and recommends people consider participating in that way and as substitutes.

The biggest feedback from students was regarding the real snow day last week. They were really appreciative.

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Member Williams stated the meeting has gone way over the time identified. An hour was scheduled for the public hearing, which took 2 hours and 45 minutes. Even the deliberations at the end required a little more time.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY MEMBER VANCOUGHNETT TO ADJOURN

SECONDED BY MEMBER WILLIAMS

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

The February 10, 2021 meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was adjourned at 10:44 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____