

**HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD
DECEMBER 21, 2016
MEETING MINUTES**

A regular meeting of the Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board was held on Wednesday, December 21, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at the Hollis/Brookline Middle School Library.

Chairman Elizabeth Brown presided:

Members of the Board Present: Tom Solon, Vice Chairman
Holly Deurloo Babcock, Secretary
Christopher Adams
Eric Pauer
Cindy VanCoughnett
Krista Whalen

Members of the Board Absent:

Also in Attendance: Andrew Corey, Superintendent (arrived at 6:04 p.m.)
Gina Bergskaug, Assistant Superintendent
Linda Sherwood, Assistant Business Administrator
Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School
Bob Thompson, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School
Khushali Patel, Student Representative, Hollis Brookline High School
Erin Moynahan, Sophomore Class Representative, Hollis Brookline High School

APPOINTMENT OF PROCESS OBSERVER

Chairman Brown appointed Cindy VanCoughnett to serve as Process Observer.

AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS - None

APPROVAL OF SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board November 16, 2016

The following amendments were offered:

- Page 7, Line 11; insert “.” after “GMR”
- Page 7, Line 54; replace “appears” with “appear”
- Page 9, Line 12; replace “includes” with “to include”
- Page 10, Line 23; replace “delay” with “delayed”

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board – **Non-Public** November 16, 2016

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE AS PRESENTED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN
MOTION CARRIED
7-0-0**

Hollis Brookline Cooperative School Board October 19, 2016

The following amendments were offered:

Page 6, Line 9; replace "is" with "if" and begin the second sentence with "Ms."

Page 9, Line 23; replace "one" with "on"

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE AS AMENDED

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

MOTION CARRIED

6-0-1

Member Pauer Abstained

NOMINATIONS / RESIGNATIONS / CORRESPONDENCE

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug informed the Board of the Administration's receipt of a letter requesting Maternity Leave. The request comes from Laura DeRosa, and notes that her due date is currently March 8, 2017, and she is uncertain, at this time, if she would take additional time beyond the 6-8 weeks of leave.

PUBLIC INPUT - None

PRINCIPALS' REPORTS

Bob Thompson, Principal, Hollis Brookline Middle School (HBMS), noted receipt of a check in the amount of \$8,800 from the Hollis Brookline Rotary to allow the school to move forward with its greenhouse project.

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE THE ACCEPTANCE AND EXPENDITURE OF A DONATION IN THE AMOUNT OF EIGHT THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$8,800) FROM THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE ROTARY FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A GREENHOUSE AT THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon requested a letter of gratitude be sent to the Rotary. Chairman Brown commented on the generosity of the donation and the excitement around the project.

Mr. Pauer questioned the total set aside for the project, and was informed there is approx. \$14,000. The available funds are sufficient to cover the cost of purchasing the greenhouse and having it installed. Principal Thompson stated, once the ground thaws, they are ready to begin constructing the greenhouse. They will be able to hire a company to perform the installation. The expectation is that installation time is 2-3 days. It was noted additional donations are anticipated in the form of materials.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Rick Barnes, Principal, Hollis Brookline High School (HBHS), commented the only action item discussed within his report related to approval of the Program of Studies. He and Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug sat down, reviewed the input provided at the last meeting, and have made the appropriate amendments. The major items included moving the credits back and a discussion of the math experience for the four years, bolstering of the Algebra II Running Start description, workload sheets were made more noticeable in the back and referenced in the opening paragraph, and small adjustments to the math pathway chart that include the Running Start courses.

MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO APPROVE THE PROGRAM OF STUDIES AS AMENDED AND PROVIDED IN THIS MONTH'S BOARD PACKET

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN

ON THE QUESTION

Vice Chairman Solon commented he had not expected the Program of Studies to be voted upon at this time, and had not yet had the opportunity to review the document line-by-line. He requested clarification on the questions posed regarding the definition of the math studies. He also requested additional information on the previous discussion regarding

programs being broken up in such a way that it almost forced very small classes, and questioned if any changes are proposed that would impact that situation.

Principal Barnes responded the confusion around the four years of math courses was created by the identification of 4 math credits. Required are 3 math credits and a 4th year math experience. The math experience can be a number of things. He and Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug will work over the summer to create the rubric that outlines where a student could acquire that 4th year math experience. The answer to the second question was simply no.

Mr. Pauer questioned the math experience, and Principal Barnes informed Mr. Pauer that there has to be exposure to the 4th year of math. It is believed most of the students will qualify for that; it will be a matter of capturing the group of students that does not, and identifying what will be done to expose them to the 4th year of a math. He has heard of people doing projects, getting credit through the Voc. Tech pathway, etc. It is a pretty broad umbrella. He commented he does not see it as difficult to implement, it will be more around how to track it.

Mr. Pauer questioned if the Guidance Counselors will look at each of their students to ensure that they fulfill the requirement. Principal Barnes responded yes, when they are doing their course selection they will have to see who could potentially miss that, and then have a plan in advance to ensure that is captured somewhere.

Mr. Pauer commented page 15 includes language regarding there being no class rank. However, there is class rank for some students and there is a class rank that is calculated. If a student is in the top 10 at the end of his/her junior year, he/she receives a class rank that can be used for college applications. The District also allows students applying to service academies to use a class rank. Principal Barnes stated his belief the language, if not identical, is similar to what is used in the policy that states it is the policy of the COOP School Board to not rank its students. Mr. Pauer reiterated it is a false statement because we do calculate a rank for everybody and it is available for some students. He stated his belief inclusion of the statement adds confusion. He noted a typo in "Alvirne" on page 6.

Vice Chairman Solon questioned if it would be appropriate to state the District does not provide or publish a class rank. He questioned, and was informed students who are ranked in the top 10, at the end of the junior year, are provided with a letter indicating their rank. Chairman Brown stated the policy language reads in part: "It is the policy of the board to name the Valedictorian, Salutatorian and those students who rank numbers three through ten alphabetically at the end of their senior year and those students who rank one through ten at the end of their junior year."

Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug remarked she was present the day this year's seniors were handed the letter at the end of their junior year, and it provided information to parents and the student who could opt to provide that information, at their own will, with their applications, but the District would not be providing the information.

Mr. Pauer commented page 17 talks about college selectivity and rank is referenced several times. He suggested that to be sending a mixed message. Principal Barnes agreed the policy reads differently than he had believed. Chairman Brown suggested the language in the first sentence of the policy could be utilized within the Program of Studies and/or a simple reference to Policy IKC - Class Rank.

MOTION BY MEMBER PAUER TO FURTHER AMEND THE PROGRAM OF STUDIES, ON PAGE 15, BY REPLACING THE WORDS "HOLLIS BROOKLINE HIGH SCHOOL DOES NOT RANK ITS STUDENTS." WITH "IT IS THE POLICY OF THE BOARD TO NAME THE VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN AND THOSE STUDENTS WHO RANK NUMBERS THREE THROUGH TEN ALPHABETICALLY AT THE END OF THEIR SENIOR YEAR AND THOSE STUDENTS WHO RANK ONE THROUGH TEN AT THE END OF THEIR JUNIOR YEAR. SEE POLICY IKC FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS"

MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER ADAMS

ON THE QUESTION

Mr. Adams questioned why the District provides class rank for those achieving the rank of 3rd through 10th in the class. Vice Chairman Solon stated the argument against providing class rank is that it could hurt kids. The feeling was if you are in the top 10 it would not hurt you. Chairman Brown remarked there are students who are in the middle of the class with very solid GPAs, but because of the concentration of very high GPAs, those kids end up getting hurt when those ranks are released to schools. When the policy was amended in 2014-2015, the Board conducted lengthy discussions on the

subject. The consensus reached was that it was in the best interest of all of the students not to have the rank disclosed other than the stated exceptions.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

Mr. Adams commented on the previous discussion of class size and where a cut-off line would be established. He stated his belief there is no current policy on this subject. Chairman Brown stated there is a pretty detailed policy in place (Policy IIB). Mr. Adams questioned if there are classes that do not follow the restrictions associated with the policy. Principal Barnes stated he would say no because, as the designee of the Superintendent, he has discretion to deal with those on a case-by-case basis. As they come up he discusses them with the Superintendent. Some of that usually falls around whether or not a certain program can be run. Not wanting to lose something it may be run. He stated his opinion they do a decent job of holding things to a certain class size. In some cases, they are above where he would like to be in class size.

Mr. Adams remarked there are classes that are below the established threshold. Principal Barnes stated agreement. He was asked to provide information on the number of classes that fall below the threshold for the Board's next meeting. Ms. VanCoughnett requested the Board be provided with a report on all class sizes.

Mr. Pauer noted page 97 includes the worksheet for apportioning the efforts, and questioned if the Student Representatives could be asked to comment on the language that states an AP class has 1 hour of homework a night, an Honors class 0.75 hours/night, and college prep 0.5 hours/night.

Erin Moynahan, Sophomore Class Representative, HBHS, stated she is currently taking an AP class, and it is a bit more than an hour/night. It can vary from night to night. Miss Moynahan and Khushali Patel, Student Representative, Hollis Brookline High School commented the other times stated appear accurate. Principal Barnes noted the times listed are intended to be averages.

Vote on the Main Motion to approve the Program of Studies as amended.

MOTION CARRIED

7-0-0

DELIBERATION

- To see what action the Board will take regarding setting the date for the Annual District Meeting

Chairman Brown noted the dates proposed by the Administration to be Monday, March 13, 2017 with a snow date of Thursday, March 16, 2017.

When asked, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated the Hollis School District has a meeting date of March 7, 2017 and a snow date of March 9, 2017 and the Brookline School District has SB2 voting on March 14, 2017.

When asked about the possibility of a different snow date, Superintendent Corey spoke of efforts made to ensure all requirements are met for each of the districts, and stated he could revisit the calendar with the Business Administrator.

Mr. Pauer spoke to the number of meetings that would occur in a single week, and the need for members of the Administration to be in attendance. Superintendent Corey stated his recollection March 15, 2017 is the date of the Town Meeting in Brookline. When asked if there is availability in the following week, Assistant Superintendent Bergskaug stated her belief there are limitations on available dates based on when the meeting has to be conducted, the distance between when the reports have to be out, etc.

Chairman Brown noted March 15, 2017 is in fact the date of the Brookline Town meeting. Their snow date is Monday, March 20, 2017.

**MOTION BY MEMBER SOLON TO SET THE DATE OF THE ANNUAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING AS MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2017 AND THE SNOW DATE AS THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2017
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER WHALEN**

MOTION CARRIED

6-1-0

Member Pauer voted in opposition

JOINT MEETING WITH THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE COOP BUDGET COMMITTEE

Chairman Mann called the meeting of the COOP School District Budget Committee to order at 6:45 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Darlene Mann, Chairman
 Raul Blanche, Vice Chairman
 Brian Rater, Secretary
 David Blinn
 Tom Enright (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
 Krista Whalen

Members of the Committee Absent: Jim Solinas
 Lorin Rydstrom

Chairman Mann thanked the School Board for the opportunity to participate in a joint review of the proposed FY18 budget.

Superintendent Corey noted updated budget information was provided with the [agenda](#). He commented on having informed the Budget Committee back in November that the first objective would be to get to a level-funded budget. The sheet provided titled "FY18 COOP Budget Reduction Worksheet" explains how a level-funded budget is achieved:

Balance of November Budget Committee Meeting	\$22,624,376	
Corrections	\$ (14,908)	Non-Union Merit Increases
	\$ 8,234	Snow Removal
	\$ (45,605)	Health Ins.; plan changes from last open enrollment
	<u>\$ (2,368)</u>	Teacher Retirement
11/30/16 Balance	\$22,569,729	
Add'l Cuts	\$ (32,000)	From Athletic Trust-Trainer Cost
	\$ (30,000)	Transportation Reduction-Van Purchase
	\$ (47,246)	Add School Psych./Reduce Cont. Svcs/RIF Case Mgr.
	\$ (6,500)	Lighting Relays
	\$ (2,000)	HBMS Front Entrance Landscaping
	\$ (1,200)	HBMS Door Repairs
	\$ (2,500)	Projector Reduction
	\$ (4,500)	ARRA Student Laptop Replacements
	\$ (775)	HBHS Art Printer
	\$ (3,370)	Graduation Expense Reduction; level funded
	\$ (3,427)	HBHS Library Book Reduction; level funded
	<u>\$ (2,525)</u>	Minor line item reductions
	\$22,433,686	
Budget Committee Goal	\$22,303,686	
Differential	\$ 130,000	

Superintendent Corey explained at the November meeting the total proposed budget was \$22,624,376. He and the Business Administrator conducted a review of each line item. A few corrections were noted, which resulted in an overall reduction of \$54,647.

Superintendent Corey spoke to the proposed additional reductions totaling \$136,043. The District is adding an Athletic Trainer position to the budget. As a result \$32,000 is reduced from the Athletic Trust Fund. He is working with Rhon Rupp, Athletic Director, and Brian Bumpus, Assistant Athletic Director, to identify areas within the budget that can be funded through the Athletic Trust Fund, e.g., uniforms, etc. If this premise is acceptable, the Board/Committee will be provided with an itemized list.

The cost of special education transportation is increasing. A good deal of the increase has to do with in-district programming and the requirements for those students to do internships. What is being proposed is use of the projected surplus in special education to purchase a van to reduce the in-district transportation cost. Initially there would be an expense of \$30,000 funded out of the surplus, which would allow the FY18 budget to be reduced by \$30,000, and would result in a reduction in future budgets.

A Case Manager position will be subject of a Reduction in Force (RIF). There is a great need for that position to swap into a School Psychologist position at the HBMS. As a result of the swap, expenses associated with contracted services will be able to be reduced by \$47,246.

The end result is a total proposed operating budget of \$22,433,686, which represents a \$130,000 difference between the total proposed budget and the Budget Committee goal of \$22,303,686.

Mr. Adams questioned who would be driving the in-district van, and was informed a 12-passenger van will not require a commercial license. The Paraprofessional employed by the District is currently being sent with the students. That individual will be responsible for driving the van.

Superintendent Corey remarked the Administration does not take any of the cuts lightly. They actually provide some new avenues such as the van, which will enhance what we do. Some are pieces like front entrance landscaping that they would really like to do. If a surplus is identified somewhere within the budget, items such as that could move forward. He noted the ending total of \$22,433,686 is \$14,141.88 below the FY17 budget, which represents a .06% reduction.

When asked, Superintendent Corey stated the Business Administrator has budgeted approx. \$67,000 for athletic fees for the past few years and the same amount in FY18. The online payment system has streamlined the payment process.

Mr. Pauer spoke of the \$14,141.88 reduction from the FY17 budget. He stated he has heard from citizens and shares the opinion that with a declining population and a NESDEC projection of a 2% reduction in enrollment and the retirement of a bond of over \$900,000, a savings should be seen.

Superintendent Corey noted the teachers' contract approved by the voters last year (\$307,000), two significant cost increases; healthcare (15.9% Guaranteed Maximum Rate (GMR)) (approx. \$150,000 - \$180,000) and a 2% increase in the New Hampshire Retirement System (NHRS). Over \$700,000 was eaten up before the budget process began. He stated he does not disagree that the voters would like to see more of a savings. He believes what is being proposed is the expectation of meeting guidance, which is the recommendation of the Budget Committee, which does provide for some reduction.

Vice Chairman Solon commented had the contract not been sanbornized the cost would be put forth as a Warrant Article. Superintendent Corey noted the second year of the Paraprofessionals contract is also a cost (approx. \$85,000). The voters may or may not approve that contract, but it goes towards identifying the costs that offset what was perhaps anticipated as a savings.

Superintendent Corey stated he and the Business Administrator, having reviewed the proposed budget line item by line item, make the following additional recommendations:

Support for Alternative Funding

There is the need to increase the category of the Guidance Secretary at the HBHS. Originally proposed was \$11,360 to take the position from a Category II to a Category IV. Since the last presentation to the Board, the Senior Secretary at the HBMS retired. As a result of that retirement and the hiring for that position, there is a differential in salary that will cover the increased cost for the Guidance Secretary. That results in a reduction to the proposed FY18 budget of \$11,360.

Essential Purchases for FY17

A copy machine at the HBHS has broken beyond repair. An order has been placed for a new copier. The cost will come from the savings experienced from the Science Lab. Furniture was delayed, and as a result tables were borrowed from the HBMS. The HBMS tables are backfilled and scheduled to be delivered during the winter break. The remaining \$4,000 will be used to offset the cost of the copy machine and move the expense out of FY18.

When the Business Administrator presented the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) she noted two minor roof repairs that were actually scheduled for FY18. As we start to experience the fall and get into the winter, they met, and determined both of those projects need to be accelerated, and addressed this spring. Superintendent Corey stated he would identify the necessary funds within the existing operating budget. As a result those expenses would be removed from the FY18 proposed budget.

The purchases of door locks (\$17,500), window ballasts (\$4,000), floor scrubber (\$8,700), and Chromebooks at the HBHS Library (\$12,003) are being delayed. It was noted a significant upgrade of computers, etc. recently occurred. When looking at priorities, the HBMS Library Commons was identified as the priority. He, the Assistant Superintendent, and the Principals will go through the budget again, and identify approx. \$18,000 of cuts. There is a Foreign Language cut of \$5,000, which was in the form of textbooks. A change was made a few years back to the Level I and Level II textbooks. As a result of the new textbooks, the two textbooks are now being used for Levels I, II, and III. We're also using the second half of the French II workbook for French III. The budget was reviewed again. Some textbooks will be purchased and are budgeted for the Foreign Language program. However, a cost of \$5,000 has been eliminated.

Superintendent Corey spoke of having had a discussion with Rich Raymond, Network Administrator, who has recommending a reduction of \$1,750 that was identified for live streaming. He was able to patch a few things and purchase a new camera. Things are working well, and he is pleased with the system.

The above items result in an additional total reduction of \$82,313.

Superintendent Corey stated his belief the District is currently running at a surplus. The majority of the surplus is due to savings in special education. His recommendation is to accelerate the following items to be paid through the surplus and removed from the proposed FY18 budget:

- Security alarm update (\$3,000)
- Fire alarm upgrade (\$2,000)
- Pumps (\$3,000)
- Clean Well Tank (\$3,000)
- Replacement Security Cameras HBHS (\$6,000) - Technology has changed drastically. New cameras will enhance security.
- Replacement Security Cameras HBMS (\$2,900)
- Locker Repairs HBMS (delayed) (\$1,600)

Those items total \$21,500

During the budget discussions, beginning last June, the District prioritized the areas of focus. As much as the technology pieces are desired, already within the proposed budget are the Tech-rich Physics Initiative, computers for the writing program, accelerated Bio course textbooks, Learning Commons for the HBMS, and the Athletic Trainer. Also, for the first time on this list, there are no proposed cuts to textbooks. The Administration has determined there is the need to acquire the books, which have been delayed a number of times.

Also being proposed for acceleration are the thirteen projectors (\$5,525) and Chromebooks at the HBMS. Although the number of Chromebooks being proposed has been reduced, purchases continue to be planned for the Library as well as 22 for English and History (total of 40-45 new devices).

Room 142 is a lab that is coming up for computer replacement. The Network Administrator has indicated that can be delayed. Some of the computers can be replaced with the repair line items. Two printers are proposed for the HBHS (\$1,362).

Total under the heading of technology is \$26,187.

Superintendent Corey stated the total of the items being proposed for acceleration is \$47,687. He added, as an alternative, the Board could decide to fund the security alarm update, fire alarm upgrade, pumps, and the clean well tank items out of the Maintenance Trust Fund. He is not recommended that action as it is his desire to see the Maintenance Trust Fund built up to address major roof repairs that are in the foreseeable future. Were it the decision of the Board to utilize the Maintenance Trust Fund for those items, the overall request for acceleration/utilization of FY17 dollars would be reduced to \$36,687.

Superintendent Corey noted in the FY17 budget there are a few items the District is already looking to fund, although whether or not they will be funded continues to be considered; crosswalk (\$5,000), an expense that would allow the District to begin

the work of looking for a well (\$9,000), and the potential to make changes to the weight room area (\$27,000 being the most expensive proposal received). Those three items can presently be funded from the surplus resulting from heating oil. The per-gallon cost came in less than what was budgeted for. The anticipated surplus is approx. \$45,000.

Looking at the area of special education, as a result of a student moving out of district, there is \$180,000 that was budgeted for Student Services that, unless another student requiring services moves into the district between now and the end of the year, will be a surplus. Those are the funds he would recommend utilizing to fund \$50,000 worth of purchases from FY17, to pay for the van, and to establish a special education trust fund. The District is currently running well on the regular education side of the budget as well. However, until the snow season comes to an end, any real savings cannot safely be predicted. Superintendent Corey stated his opinion the recommended changes could be made, the District could still contribute the required revenue to offset the budget as has been done in the past, and the Warrant Articles would be structured so that the special education trust fund would be last and would include "up to language" so that if for some reason surplus was not sufficient to cover all items, the special education trust fund could at least be started.

The additional recommended cuts allow the proposed FY18 budget to reach guidance.

Chairman Mann remarked from the \$180,000 anticipated surplus from special education, \$50,000 was identified for FY17 purchases, and questioned if they are special education purchases. Superintendent Corey stated they would be potentially non-special education purchases. He noted, when reaching a certain point in the year, those funds become part of the unrestricted fund balance. From a community point of view, in the past, unrestricted funds were utilized to cover the cost of the track, for the irrigation of the HBMS fields, etc. He stated his belief there will likely be \$50,000 of unassigned fund balance on the regular education side; he simply cannot guarantee that. He stated updates could be provided, and commented he would have no problem prioritizing the list and buying as we go in case the needed level of funding were not reached.

Mr. Pauer stated NESDEC projections going out 6 years, show the population decreasing over 7% in the COOP School District and teachers are getting more expensive. He questioned at point consideration is given to a smaller staff when you have a smaller student population. Superintendent Corey responded the Administration is always looking at the staffing level. He believes that mentality is seen in the proposed budget with the decision to RIF a Case Manager, but swap it for a School Psychologist, which is an identified need. That resulted in an approx. \$48,000 reduction to contracted services. He added the contracted services figure represented 2 days/week. There are times when people question if outsourcing is an alternative. However, it is very expensive in many of the specific fields such as Occupational Therapy, etc.

Superintendent Corey spoke to the NESDEC projections noting the HBMS enrollment is up slightly this year and the HBHS is up in the area of 20 students. What seems to be happening is that NESDEC works off straight line projections, and what is being seen in our communities is the turnover of homes from a couple who has raised their children and moved out of the community selling their 3-4 bedroom homes to families having school-age children. The group coming out of the 6th grade this year to the COOP School District is going to be close to 200-210 students. Through swaps and creativity in Brookline, two teachers are being added to address the enrollment spike they have seen. Their primary school has increased by about 30 students since the close of school last year. The Hollis School Board had to add a teacher at the 4th grade over the summer because of a large influx. He stated the Administration will always look at enrollment based on class sizes. Looking at the future report of students in classes, he is aware there are some classes below specifications, but a lot of times that happens because they started a class with a number that was acceptable and situations occur such as seniors figuring out a way of getting the first or last period of the day freed up, and as a result that class size is reduced.

If the recommendations included on the second handout provided are adopted, the overall budget would be reduced by approx. \$145,000 from last year's number. If all recommended cuts are approved the proposed budget would be \$22,307,000. Chairman Brown noted the proposed \$100,000 special education trust fund is not included in any of the calculations. That would then push the view back up to \$22,403,000. She commented based on a prior report the Business Administrator provided earlier in the cycle, there is \$120,000 - \$125,000 in surplus funds due to attrition. Between attrition, surplus, heating oil, and the special education surplus, she is of the feeling the \$22,300,000 could still be reached if including the \$100,000 proposed for the special education trust fund. Superintendent Corey stated he would not disagree with that, and then you could almost commit to \$100,000 worth of revenue. If he is asked to fund the proposals other than the van, through the regular education side of the existing budget and potentially the trust, he is uncertain if there will be sufficient surplus to fund the entire trust, but he is of the belief one could be started.

Superintendent Corey questioned if the Board would be looking for the \$100,000 to move over and enhance the revenue side. Chairman Brown stated the revenue estimate in place for being returned to the taxpayer totaled \$300,000. However, that was

\$100,000 being returned from special education, and now that is being discussed as a lower amount. They also had the special education trust fund at \$50,000. That \$50,000 is basically coming from the amount returned to the taxpayer up to the line item for special education. Revenue would be reduced to \$250,000. She stated her opinion there is the need for the Board to be provided with a good view of what the run rates look like for the remainder of the year to be able to have a clear understanding of what can be covered through year-end surplus.

Superintendent Corey remarked if the Board can approve the pre-buying of items and the van, he is of the belief a special education trust fund can be started although it may not be at the level being proposed. The increased revenue could be reached. One of the goals has been to try to keep the taxes the same for the two communities. Chairman Brown stated the goal to be for a reduction in the tax rate.

Mr. Pauer stated he is not supportive of a special education trust fund. Transportation cost for special education is increasing about \$187,000. Out-of-district services are increasing \$48,000. He questioned why the increase in out-of-district services, and if the van would bring the transportation cost down. Superintendent Corey responded he has not reduced the special education transportation in the budget as of yet as he does not yet have approval to purchase a van. The reason the out-of-district number is increasing is the State of Massachusetts, where a majority of the out-of-district placements are, had significant rate increases, which we have no control over. They are hearing that out-of-district placements in New Hampshire might go up 5%. The van would not be doing out-of-district runs, it would be focused on the requirements of the IEPs of the in-district programs, but would reduce the transportation overall by \$30,000 for special education.

It was noted the language associated with a special education trust fund would identify a specific dollar amount that the fund could not exceed.

Vice Chairman Blanche stated in essence we are retiring \$900,000 of burden, while at the same time there are mandatory increases that add up to roughly \$700,000. He stated the desire to understand, without any expenses associated with the van, where the differential stands, and perhaps take the difference between that number and what is being recommended and prioritize items. He likes the idea of taking some risks for a year and showing the taxpayers that we saved them \$100,000 to \$200,000 even if only for one year. He suggested it may be that for this year alone, there won't be the need to fund the contingency.

Superintendent Corey responded he believes that can be done if that is the will of the Board. He reiterated the budget number is being reduced by about \$145,000. If the van purchase were approved, but the Board/Committee were not comfortable with the accelerated pieces, there would be the potential of a special education surplus of \$150,000 that could be returned to the taxpayers. He stated his belief he will have the ability to purchase some of the items being discussed from the regular education side of the budget. In doing that, the District would have provided what is believed to be essential for the students, will have met guidance, and because of this unusual circumstance of a reduction in special education costs, would be able to increase the revenue side. Approx. \$145,000 would be returned from the expense side and, to be conservative, \$100,000 on the revenue side.

Superintendent Corey commented although he has recommended delaying certain purchases, those purchases will come back in the next year or so. One of the items they are sort of rolling the dice on is the phone system. He learned there is the potential that the Federal e-rate funds will once again be allowed to supplement a phone purchase. He is of the belief the phone system will survive, and if it did not he would look to the contingency fund as that is what it is designed for.

Superintendent Corey requested the authority to purchase the maintenance and technology items, which total \$47,687 out of the FY17 surplus. He stated he would have no issue updating both boards should the surplus appear to be sufficient to allow the Administration to move forward with those items.

Mr. Adams questioned the number of replacement laptops identified for the computer lab, and was informed there are 24, which are the ones used with the school newspaper (higher-end). A significant number of those would continue to be able to be redeployed, and would likely be sent to the Library to offset the recommendation not to purchase the Chromebooks. Mr. Adams spoke of the number of computers being redeployed. He suggested, given we are likely in the 4th year of the 5 year plan the District should be fairly well staffed with fairly new machines. Superintendent Corey responded the District is in pretty good shape, but technology changes quickly.

Mr. Enright stated he is comfortable with \$130,000 in cuts. He does not wish to load those onto the budget. However, he feels the District should be very aggressive in year-end surplus spending. When getting to year-end he would expect the

Superintendent to come in with a lot of these items. He stated his support of the items, just that he does not support them in this budget. The \$180,000; he is not in favor of the \$50,000, is supportive of the \$30,000 van purchase, and thinks perhaps half of the \$180,000 surplus should be returned to the tax base.

Mr. Blinn stated his opinion the special education trust fund and a van purchase is a hot topic. He is supportive of a special education trust fund, and questioned what the cap would be set at. If \$50,000 is taken out of what was designated for special education he is of the belief there will be a good deal of issues raised. He reiterated he is supportive of the creation of the special education trust fund noting it is fortunate that there is a surplus this year, but next year there could be an unexpected cost of \$300,000. He felt the purchase of the van is an easy decision given the expectation the savings achieved in the first year alone would likely cover the cost.

Mr. Blinn stated he is supportive of the budget. A good deal has been eliminated and the budget has been brought down, but in trying to come up with that \$47,687, he thinks another direction has to be sought.

Superintendent Corey responded he does not disagree that the funds will probably be available on the regular education side. He clarified as we get to the end of the budget year all of the money, whether special education or regular education, becomes surplus. He is simply trying to provide as much information as possible so that when Board members are approached by a citizen asking what it is, they can respond. This is basically \$180,000 that was allocated to a student, that student's family moved, and as a result those services are not required. The Administration immediately encumbered those funds so they would not get spent, and now input is being sought on the best way to utilize those in the future.

Vice Chairman Solon stated a desire to see the funding for the facilities study and the crosswalk taken out. He stated the Board has not seen a willingness to fund the facilities investment yet. We've also talked a lot about mechanisms for potential alternate funding for items such as that. Until we have identified a way to pay for the outcome, he is reluctant to invest in a plan at that level of expense. He believes that would be a multi-year effort, and he would rather have a plan in place and community support for investing in it. With regard to the crosswalk, it is not the \$5,000, it is the implication of the COOP School District spending on that. He feels very strongly that is a municipal expense. He is in favor of advocating for it, but as soon as we start paying money for it we own it, and he is 100% opposed to the school owning something on a public roadway.

Superintendent Corey noted all of the items would have to come before the Board for a vote. He didn't want to leave them off as he is aware people have them in the back of their minds. If we choose not to conduct a facilities study and instead take that \$27,000 and buy that technology, he would not be opposed to that.

Ms. Whalen stated a desire to fund the special education trust with some amount, and the minimum to her would be \$50,000. She would not want the District to find itself in the same situation it was in last year where monies had to be taken out of regular education. This \$180,000 is part of the general fund, it was just placed in the line item it was in to cover the costs associated with a particular student. That specific student is no longer in the District so that \$180,000 is coming back in. It is not in any special trust fund, it just had been delegated toward special education. She stated her support of both a \$50,000 and a \$100,000 contribution to the special education fund. She understands the desire to return the funds to the taxpayers, but has to support the regular education students as well, and ensure if and when the situation came up again, we wouldn't be digging into regular education funds.

With regard to utilizing \$50,000 of the surplus to support the \$47,687 in accelerated purchases, she would like to be able to make those purchases. She commented she does worry about technology and supporting that. It has been said we are buying so much; that is the direction we are going in and the areas we need to start focusing on, and she feels as if we continue kicking that can down the road. She reiterated she supports an allocation of at least \$50,000 into a special education trust fund, supports the purchase of the van, and would like to see the \$50,000 in surplus expended on the accelerated purchases.

Ms. VanCoughnett stated she is supportive of the purchase of the van. She agrees the special education trust fund could be started with an allocation of \$50,000. She is in agreement with the remarks made by Vice Chairman Solon regarding funds for the sidewalk. Although she is 100% supportive of the crosswalk, she believes it to be a Town issue.

Speaking in regard to the initial reductions recommended she commended the Administration for identifying the \$47,246 that can be saved through the RIF and swapping of a Case Manager position for a School Psychologist position. With regard to the athletic trust covering the cost of the trainer position, she would need a great deal more information on that. She commented the desire was to correct how the funds were being utilized because we had been paying a trainer when it was a

State mandated job that should have been in the general budget. She commented those funds are earmarked for the athletes. The coaches, transportation, uniforms, etc. should be in the general budget and have not been for years.

Chairman Mann stated there remains \$64,500 in the operating budget to cover the cost of the trainer. It becomes a budget element. We used to fund a trainer for \$32,000 out of the trust, which we will no longer be doing. In effect, we are adding \$64,500 in athletic expense and saying now we are not using the \$32,000 from the trust so we can move a different \$32,000 out of our athletic piece of the budget for uniforms, dues, etc., and pay that from the trust. Ms. VanCoughnett stated the comment was made that the Superintendent would look to the Athletic Department for identification of expenses in the amount of \$32,000 out of the trust.

Chairman Brown stated the point being made is those monies should not be moved out. Those are not expenditures for the athletic trust. Those who believe the athletic trust should be protected for the athletes would like to see those funds expended on those one-time big purchases like what was spent last year for the poll vaults. The trainer, coaches, uniforms, fees, and the expenses for the students to participate should be in the budget.

Chairman Mann stated there would be the need to go back through old meeting minutes, etc. to identify why the trust was developed, which was specifically, at the time, to fund those elements of the budget that were specifically sports related. At times it included equipment, but it also includes NHIAA dues, uniforms in some cases, etc. It was never intended to cover the extras. It was always intended to offset a part of the budget and to make sure that when those funds were collected on those pay to play fees they were specifically going to athletic purchases.

Chairman Brown stated if you review the creation of that fund it is not clear at all because it talks specifically about those funds not being turned over to the general fund. She remarked the question at that point is, what are the proper things to be budgeting for and what are the things the fund should be used for? Chairman Mann remarked that does require attention because last year they looked at a surplus that grew over time because we weren't really looking at it. From her perspective she was assuming, aside from those extra items that we had put off for a long time like the wrestling mats at the HBMS, that it was always expected to be a one for one and not a balance building fund. If we got away from that and we weren't having public hearings that were releasing funds to relieve the budget then shame on us for not looking at that and ensuring it was being managed that way. We don't have a list of things that we're saving for, and maybe we need a list.

Vice Chairman Solon stated the fund was established to keep a clear firewall between the money that was collected through the pay to play fees and the other areas. It was not set up to be a contingency fund. There was discussion that big ticket items, which carry over multiple years were an appropriate expenditure from the fund. The fees for paying referees and uniforms were explicitly highlighted when it was created as an appropriate expenditure from that so that there wasn't a question of why am I paying my money to play and every year arguing about not having the money to buy uniforms.

Superintendent Corey remarked he believes progress is being made. The way the fund was utilized last year, to him, was the way he interpreted the intent. He requested the opportunity to go back and work with the Athletic Department to define what that \$32,000 would be utilized for. A list of items could be provided at the January meeting.

Mr. Pauer commented this year we have a new item for FY17; hockey ice time at \$7,500 which is identified as \$5,000 for FY18, and questioned where the funding would come from. Superintendent Corey stated that cost has historically been lumped in with other line items, and the Business Administrator identified it on its own line item for clarity. The cost has been reduced as a result of switching rinks and obtaining a more favorable price.

Mr. Adams requested a copy of the balances of the various funds. Chairman Mann stated there to be a contingency fund, which is \$100,000, a retained fund balance, which is about \$141,000, a facilities maintenance trust, which stands at \$60,000, and will be put forward for another \$20,000, and the athletic trust, which is in the \$67,000 range.

Mr. Adams questioned the Library buildout. Principal Thompson stated his belief what is budgeted is around \$14,000 for the Learning Commons. He explained there is a technology component to that. They would look to bring some Chromebooks really to have more portable devices in the Library, an interactive whiteboard, additional online content, etc. Mr. Adams requested additional detail be provided. Superintendent Corey stated sections 1-4 of the budget rounds identified on the handout identifies the items to be purchased related to the Learning Commons.

Superintendent Corey provided the example of the HBHS noting the Library has become the hub of the building. We've gone from the traditional library to a much more research-based, collaborative environment. The closest example would be SNHU,

which built a new building all designed around the Learning Commons approach. It is really the way all of the colleges are heading. As a school that primarily is college prep., it really prepares our students well for what they are going to be getting when they walk onto a college campus. Mr. Adams responded although that sounds like a nice to have, he is not sure it is necessary at the HBMS.

Mr. Adams questioned the discussion the Budget Committee had regarding medical insurance with regard to the GMR. Chairman Mann commented the District has done well with GMR since moving to the new plans about 4-5 years ago. There was a year where the District was flat, a year where the increase was negative, and a year where it was a single-digit increase. This is really the first year in 4-5 years that we are up at the 15.9%. Mr. Adams remarked projected increases have not come even close to actual increases. He questioned why the budget would anticipate the 15.9%. Chairman Mann stated the actual line item for medical benefits is not a 16% increase. It is based on the mix of plan use and things like that. The Business Administrator has the direct calculation of that.

Vice Chairman Solon noted the line item, 10.2900.211.00.000001- Health Insurance, shows an 8.9% increase being budgeted. Superintendent Corey stated the budgeted amount is higher than in past years, but the item is seen as very volatile this year. It is very unusual for the GMR to come in across all of your plans at the same rate. He commented on having spoken with his colleagues who have also received similar GMRs across the board some at a higher rate, and are uncertain what the outcome will be. The Business Administrator has been working with the agency that represents the SAU in negotiating with insurance companies, and we are shopping around to see if a different vendor is an option.

Mr. Adams questioned taking an educated risk that we will not hit the budgeted amount. He questioned the will of the Board with regard to dropping \$19,000 from the budgeted amount. Chairman Mann commented having reviewed the trend of where actuals have come in compared to budgeted amounts, the amount proposed for FY18 is in line. She stated she would not take that calculated risk on that line item. Vice Chairman Solon remarked the District has had dramatic changes to how that is calculated in the past three years. We have changed our health plans so that we don't have as many plans, we have an external group working with us to help manage that on the cost side and the planning side, etc. If you go back 7-10 years to review the differences between budgeted and actual none of the new measures were in place and that is when we were seeing large fluctuations between what was budgeted and what was spent. We had 7 plans and were budgeting everything based on the most expensive plans.

Mr. Adams stated since the management plan has changed, the District has not seen any large increases. He does not believe the GMR will be reached. Vice Chairman Solon reiterated the budgeted amount is 8.9%. He stated his belief the end-of-year surplus, if not spent on end-of-year lists of wants, could absorb any increases were the budget to be lowered in that area. Chairman Mann stated the benefits to be the absolute wrong place to take a risk. Mr. Enright stated agreement.

Superintendent Corey stated his impression the Board/Committee is supportive of the \$130,000 cuts to meet guidance, there is support for the van purchase, there is support of the establishment of a special education trust fund, but at a lesser dollar amount, the Board/Committee is uncomfortable making the purchases in FY17 (accelerated) with the special education surplus, but would consider regular education surplus, and using the two pools, reduction of the special education trust and the purchases, giving that back to the taxpayers in the form of revenue. He heard talk around the facilities study, etc. which he is comfortable with bringing back to the Board/Committee. It may be that the decision is reached to fund technology as opposed to the facility study. There was a request to clearly define the Athletic Trust and identify the recommended purchases. He stated his belief the Administration will be able to finalize a budget in January knowing they will come in with the guidance number, and give the Board more specifics around how the dollar amounts would be allocated.

Chairman Mann stated the desire to be provided with mid-year run rates at the January meeting. She would also like to understand the trade-off with the transportation changes.

Mr. Adams spoke of the \$900,000 bond that has been paid off and stated his understanding of where \$700,000 of those savings has been allocated, but he would still like to see the budget go down to twice what the guidance is. He would like to see the final budget come in at a 1.2% reduction from last year's budget.

Vice Chairman Solon stated he is in agreement with what the Superintendent summarized. He stated a desire to be provided with short-term enrollment projections based on current population carrying through so that the Board has an idea, without changes, what we are facing.

Vice Chairman Blanche stated although his preference would be to delay the setting of the trust fund, he does support starting it out at \$50,000.

Ms. Deurloo Babcock stated she is supportive of the establishment of a special education trust fund and starting with an allocation of \$50,000. She commented on the amount of time spent discussing a \$180,000 surplus that is the result of a single family that moved out of district, and noted 1 family could move into the district. That is where the trust fund is really important. The regular education students lose when budgets have to be frozen.

Chairman Brown stated her desire to see the special education trust funded at more than \$100,000 because of the point just made that all it takes is a single student. If funding it at \$50,000 you are just doing it to make yourself feel good, and it will do very little to protect the programs and the budget we adopt if we have that 1 student come in with an out-of-district placement. If wanting it to be effective it will have to be funded at \$100,000+ where it would at least allow for covering that 1 student swing.

Mr. Enright questioned if that trust fund could be added to utilizing end-of-year surplus. Vice Chairman Solon stated that could be done at Town Meeting. Superintendent Corey stated this year it would be a warrant article to approve the establishment of the fund and allocate funding. Mr. Enright clarified and to add X amount with surplus up to a certain cap. He stated that to be a good way to establish that fund.

Approval of Minutes:

Hollis Brookline COOP Budget Committee November 28, 2016

The following amendment was offered:

Page 1; identify Jim Solinas as absent.

**MOTION BY MEMBER BLINN TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 28, 2016 MEETING AS AMENDED
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER RATER
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0**

Mr. Pauer departed at 8:35 p.m.

REPORT OUT BY PROCESS OBSERVER

Ms. VanCoughnett commented the Board got behind schedule during the discussion of the Program of Studies having gotten sidetracked with the discussion of class rank. Other than that the meeting was really productive.

Vice Chairman Blanche commented the Committee typically allocates 2 hours for the meeting. At this time the meeting is wrapping up 5 minutes ahead.

Ms. Whalen stated two forum dates have been identified for the Start-Time Committee presentations; January 23, 2017 and January 30, 2017. One will be in Hollis and the other in Brookline. The exact times and locations have not yet been identified.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY MEMBER ADAMS TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER SOLON
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0**

**MOTION BY MEMBER BLANCHE TO ADJOURN THE MEETING OF THE HOLLIS BROOKLINE SCHOOL BOARD
MOTION SECONDED BY MEMBER BLINN
MOTION CARRIED
6-0-0**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

Date _____ Signed _____