

Hermon School Committee
Minutes– Regular Meeting
Monday, March 1, 2021– 6:30 p.m.
Hermon High School Room 167
Providing Leadership to Enhance the Aspirations of our Children

*** Due to Governor Mills' declaration of emergency, this meeting will be closed to public attendance. The public may join the meeting virtually by using the following link:*

meet.google.com/spn-jfer-dze

Attending

Ted Harris, Chair
Debora Farnham, Vice Chair
Scott Hatch
Deborah Langille
Kristen Shorey
Debbie CoWallis, RSU 87 Representative
Mackenzie Stepp, Student Representative

Absent

Madison Despault, Student Representative

Staff: Cindy Badger, Stephanie Biberstein, Brandi Butterfield, Jim Chasse, Melissa Davis, Kathryn Goodman, Micah Grant, Jesse Hargrove, Malick Kone, Jenny Perry, Jamie Rennebu, Rick Sinclair, Leslie Smith, Brian Walsh and Jody White

Guests: Over 95 staff and community members attended virtually

Item I: Call to Order

Mr. Harris, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

Item II: Agenda Adjustments: None

Item III: Approval of Minutes

Moved by Mrs. CoWallis, seconded by Mrs. Shorey, to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 1, 2021, as presented.

Unanimous (6): Mrs. CoWallis, Mrs. Farnham, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hatch, Ms. Langille, and Mrs. Shorey

Item IV: Proclamations and Presentation

A. Public Comments: None

B. Special Recognition of HHS employee

Brian Walsh introduced Malick Kone, JMG Specialist at Hermon High. Mr. Kone was hired as the assistant national coach for Guinea and traveled to the West African basketball tournament over February break. Mr. Kone spoke on his experience.

Item V: Personnel

A. In-house Transfer

Adam Baker from PADS Head Custodian to Maintenance/Sub Bus Driver
Richard McFarlin from HMS Custodian to PADS Head Custodian
Micayla Eason from HHS long term sub to CRF Tutor Interventionist

- B. Co / Extra-curricular positions *new to position
HMS Boys B Basketball **Mathew Allen** *

Item VI: Old Business

- A. Excused Absence of School Committee Member/s: None
- B. Reopening Committee

Mr. Chasse gave a PowerPoint overview presentation on the process and details of the reopening schools committee, federal COVID funds and the numerous challenges/variables for students/staff.

Mr. Walsh mentioned the biggest obstacle at HHS is the size of the school in following the DOE/CDC guidelines. The HHS proposal is that Mondays will be offered as intervention days: a 4-period, ½ day schedule where each period is one hour. That day will be open for any student attend. They will also utilize their interventionist. The hope is by offering transportation, breakfast and lunch on those days that they can get students in that need intervention and provide direct support. This would go into effect on March 22nd. The reason they are waiting until the 22nd because Monday, March 15th will an instructional day due to the In-service day on Friday, March 19th. The ½ day option also allows for teachers to offer opportunities to students who are high achievers some things outside of the regular curriculum. HHS will utilize Facebook, Instagram and a Thrillshare call and text to get the message out to faculty, parents, students and the community. They will also put out a YouTube video they will put on their website, as well as have the parent council get the word out. They will utilize Google Docs for teachers to tag those students, allow a conversation between student and teacher, then to make sure transportation is in place, which will give them a heads up on the number of students attending each Monday. This plan allows for targeted, focused intervention for students who have struggled the most with academic issues.

Mr. Grant stated that HMS also has severe space limitations. Currently students are divided in half, A-K attending in-person on Tuesdays/ Thursdays and L-Z attending in-person on Wednesdays /Fridays. The HMS goal was to pick up as much time as possible in order to cover more of the curriculum. They will have 4 days of instruction for students by offering virtual learning to students logging in for the 4 core classes with their 1:1 device on their “off day”. Teachers will have 7-9 students in-person and another 7-9 students attending online. They will test this with to the 6th grade on the week of March 15th and roll out school wide March 23rd. This plan gets 22 extra days for students vs. only 7 days if they rotated each group on Mondays. Mr. Grant has emailed his parent council asking for Monday, March 8th. Each grade level independently will set up a time with a meeting link for parents to log in to ask questions the week of March 8th as well. They will also put on social media and the website.

Mrs. Perry stated that the multistep plan for kindergarten through grade 3 has the Tuesday/Thursday cohort split in half and half would join the Wednesday/Friday cohort. on Wednesday and half would join the Wednesday/Friday cohort on Friday. The Wednesday/Friday cohort would be split in half and half would join the Tuesday/Thursday cohort on Tuesday, the other half on Thursday. That gives each of the kindergarten through third grade an additional day. The additional day for 3rd day students would include a couple of blocks of unified arts in-person at school. The

addition of a long-term sub PE teacher allows this to happen and can use the gym space. In the library/media space, the librarian and computer teacher will be able to house another grade level of 3rd day students. The music teacher will use the cafeteria space and the music room to meet regulations. The art teacher will use the art room. The COVID space must remain close to the nurse's area. The stage (curtains closed) will be sectioned off with a walkway sectioned off in the gym. One of the 3rd grade classrooms has to be moved to the multipurpose space. For 3rd grade only, they will have some lunch stations in the hallway for student, in order to meet the 6-foot distance requirement for masks off. There will be a lunch monitor with those students. It was unanimous for 4th grade that it was vital to get more instructional time, so they will be following the middle school model of 2 days/week in person and 2 days/week virtual. They will log in to 1st core content class for 45-60 minutes, have some independent work to do, then after lunch they will log in to their 2nd core content class for 45-60 minutes. This will start on the 23rd. They also need to get desks for the school for moving classrooms. This allows for 4 additional days per month for grades K-4 with a consistent schedule. They will be sending letters to let parents know which day is their additional day. It will be posted on social media, their website and in their newsletter. The Pre-K schedule is not changing at this time.

Mr. Hargrove, HEA president, addressed the question asked of him. He stated the teachers want kids back in school. They are appreciative of working well with administration at the building level. The plans presented are reflective of their recent meeting. It is a flexible model that allows for unique things at each building to occur. He is concerned about some of the posts on social media, directed mostly towards their elementary staff. He mentioned that teachers have certainly been flexible during this whole process, and they are not robots. They are trying to do what they can to support students given the current situation. They will continue to work with administration and the school committee to gain more days by the known science.

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mrs. Shorey, to agree to move forward with the high school, the middle school and the Patricia A. Duran school proposed plans for reopening to add additional time.

Unanimous (6): Mrs. CoWallis, Mrs. Farnham, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hatch, Ms. Langille, and Mrs. Shorey

C. Second Reading of 2021-22 School Calendar

Mrs. Farnham motioned, seconded by Ms. Langille, to approve the second reading of the 2021-22 School Calendar.

Unanimous (6): Mrs. CoWallis, Mrs. Farnham, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hatch, Ms. Langille, and Mrs. Shore

Item VII: New Business

A. First Reading of Policy Amendments

- a. BCB Conflict of Interest
- b. DJ Bidding/Purchasing Requirements
- c. DJH Purchasing and Contracting: Procurement Staff Code of Conduct
- d. DJ-R - Federal Procurement Manual - Admin. Procedure

Mrs. CoWallis motioned, seconded by Mrs. Shorey, to approve the first reading of the policy amendments.

Unanimous (6): Mrs. CoWallis, Mrs. Farnham, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hatch, Ms. Langille, and Mrs. Shorey

B. March 22, 2021 - School Committee Budget Workshop Date at 6:00 pm

C. Graduation date

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mrs. Shorey, to change the 2021 graduation date from Saturday, June 12, 2021 to Saturday, June 5, 2021.

Unanimous (6): Mrs. CoWallis, Mrs. Farnham, Mr. Harris, Mr. Hatch, Ms. Langille, and Mrs. Shorey

Items VIII: Reports

A. Students (as written)

B. Superintendent (as written) and Principals (as written)

Mr. Chasse thanked the Rec. Department for their before and after school as well as their weekend program. He also praised Mr. Sinclair for the amount of changes and adjustments athletics has endured.

Mr. Walsh added that was thrilled to bestow the honor of Principal's Award to Mackenzie Stepp. The HHS Show Choir will be competing and submitting a set to be judged at the State level. In addition, HHS One Act is also working to submit a One Act play to the State to be judged. Once they are recorded, they will be added to their YouTube channel.

Mr. Grant added that his staff has tried to make the experience as positive as possible through the restrictions. Cody Oliveira, grade 6 won the Geography Bee, held in spite of the State meet being cancelled. Their youngest winner ever.

Mrs. Perry stated that they are up to 38 pre-k registrations and 57 kindergarten registration, with 14 outstanding packets handed out, not yet received back.

C. SPRPCE (Ted H): Nothing new to add

D. Negotiations (Scott H)

Mr. Hatch stated that overall, they are taking their time and reviewing all of the negotiations. He feels they are near ready to submit some counter proposals and hopefully move forward. He feels it is going well so far.

E. Community Track Committee (Deb L, Deb F.)

Ms. Langille spoke with Steve Thomas regarding updates to concession shack: removing a wall to enlarge kitchen area, installing another window and exploring options. The Bangor Daily News covered the project. Mrs. Farnham added that the next step is that the committee is fine tuning the proposal to present to the Town Council on March 10th.

F. Finance Report (as written): Nothing further to add

G. Curriculum/Assessment Report (as written): Nothing further to add

H. Guidance Report (oral)

Leslie Smith, Director of Guidance, discussed the virtual support night for parents regarding COVID and parenting and stresses. The guidance plan created this past fall for Socio-emotional and mental health brain work in regards to our return to school has been updated and guidance continues to provide support. Kara Kitchin, Social Worker, has focused on drop-out prevention this month. She's also had an increase in home visits for students who are remote and need extra support. She also touched on guidance lessons, step-up and transition activities, registration, academic advising, and student pathways.

I. Athletics (oral)

Mr. Sinclair stated they were able to fit in 10 basketball games in a 6-week season for the HMS A team, and 9 for the B team. HMS cheering also had a season and one virtual competition in Brewer that they won. High school basketball is in post season play within their pods. There will be no regional tournaments. The Penobscot Valley Conference was the only conference in some form in the State for indoor track. Throwing events were hosted at Brewer, jumping events at the Old Town/Orono Y once, and distance events were held outside. Cheering has a virtual competition that they will be filming for. The MPA is hoping to have normal as possible spring season, including post season play. Baseball and softball would have to be reclassified to Level 5 to play cross county. Tennis can play cross county. Outdoor track will have something, but that will depend on whether the number of people allowed at an outdoor gathering goes up for what that will be. There will be no football for the 2020-21 school year.

J. Nurses Reports (as written)

K. Transportation and Facilities (as written)

L. Possible Future Agenda Items:

- The Board Workshop March 22nd
- Possible State of the Union address from the Admin team
- Negotiations continue
- Graduation

Item IX: Approval of Warrants

Mrs. Shorey motioned, seconded by Mrs. Farnham to approve warrants, as stated:

- Accounts Payable Warrant 1010 of January 29, 2021
- Payroll Warrants 1011 – 1015, and 16 of February 5, 2021
- Accounts Payable Warrant 1016 of February 15, 2021
- Payroll Warrants 1017 – 1020, and 17 of February 19, 2021

Voting for: (5) Farnham, Harris, Hatch, Langille, Shorey
Abstaining: (1) CoWallis

Ms. Langille thanked everyone for all of their hard work working in education during a pandemic. She extended congratulations to Cody Oliveira for the Geography Bee, Mackenzie Stepp for the Principals Award, and Malick Kone for coaching. Congratulations to all of the athletes and all of the teams. Mrs. Farnham agreed with everything Ms. Langille said.

Mrs. Shorey thanked all of the building admin and building level teams for being creative to come up ways to add additional time for the students. She asked how to get Malick Kone to be a Hermon coach, and she expressed being happy so many people joined the meeting.

Mrs. CoWallis chimed in with all of the other positives being stated. The example has been set for our students to think outside the box, as well as quick thinking and resilience.

Mr. Harris congratulated Mallory Cook's GSA group for receiving a grant. He asked if there was a training for parents on using the SeeSaw app. He is looking forward to things moving forward. Because of COVID dollars we now have storage and a Hawks Nest on the cement pad. There are some small positives.

Item XI: Adjournment

Mr. Harris motioned, seconded by Mrs. Shorey, to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m.

Unanimous (6)

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Chasse
Superintendent of Schools