

HOLLISTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Holliston, MA 01746

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Meeting Minutes

Time: 7:30 p.m.
Date: June 29, 2026

Location: Remote Meeting

Members Present

- Frank Ogura, Chair
- Hilary Bresnahan
- Sarah Fitzgerald
- Tracy Floeckher
- Dawn Neborsky

- Jess Ommen (absent)

Administration Present

- Dr. James "Kimo" Carter, Superintendent
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Call to Order

Chair Frank Ogura called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM and read the remote participation statement in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. A roll call confirmed all members were present.

Consent Agenda

The Committee reviewed the Executive Session meeting minutes from August 28, 2025.

Motion: Approve the consent agenda, including the Executive Session meeting minutes dated August 28, 2025.

Moved by: Frank Ogura
Seconded by: Sarah Fitzgerald

Roll Call Vote

- Hilary Bresnahan – Yes
- Sarah Fitzgerald – Yes
- Tracy Floeckher – Yes
- Dawn Neborsky – Yes
- Frank Ogura – Yes

- Jess Ommen (absent)

Motion passed unanimously (5–0-1).

Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations Recommendation

Superintendent Dr. James Carter recommended Howard ("Howie") Barber for appointment as Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations, subject to successful contract negotiations.

Dr. Carter highlighted Mr. Barber's qualifications, including:

- Certified Public Accountant (CPA) and Licensed School Business Official.
- More than 18 years of leadership experience in school finance and operations.
- Current Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations for the Old Rochester Regional School District.
- Previous leadership roles in Hampden-Wilbraham, Greenfield, Auburn, and Springfield Public Schools.
- Experience overseeing finance, operations, human resources, procurement, facilities, and strategic planning.
- Leadership positions with MASBO and ASBO International.
- Adjunct professor and published presenter on school finance and operations.

Dr. Carter noted that Mr. Barber demonstrated exceptional knowledge during both the screening and public interview processes and would be an excellent addition to the district leadership team.

Committee Discussion

Committee members expressed unanimous support for the recommendation.

Discussion included:

- Recognition of the strong pool of applicants.
- Appreciation for Mr. Barber's ability to communicate complex financial information in an accessible manner.
- Praise for his experience developing and presenting district budgets.
- Appreciation to Hilary Bresnahan and Dawn Neborsky for serving on the screening committee.
- Recognition that filling the position with a highly qualified candidate on the district's desired timeline was a significant accomplishment.

Motion

Motion: Approve Superintendent Carter's recommendation to appoint Howard ("Howie") Barber as Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations, subject to successful contract negotiations.

Moved by: Tracy Floeckher
Seconded by: Dawn Neborsky

Roll Call Vote

- Hilary Bresnahan – Yes
- Sarah Fitzgerald – Yes
- Tracy Floeckher – Yes
- Dawn Neborsky – Yes
- Frank Ogura – Yes

- Jess Ommen (absent)

Motion passed unanimously (5–0-1).

The Committee congratulated Mr. Barber, who was participating remotely, pending completion of contract negotiations.

Public Announcement of Appointment

The Committee discussed plans for announcing Mr. Barber's appointment.

Discussion included:

- Preparing a joint communication from the Superintendent and School Committee following completion of contract negotiations.
- Coordinating the announcement through the Communications Subcommittee.
- If timing became challenging because of holiday schedules, the Superintendent could issue an initial announcement, followed later by a School Committee communication.
- Scheduling a brief School Committee meeting to review and approve any joint communication if necessary.

No formal action was taken.

Policy Advisory Committee Appointment

The Committee discussed appointing Jess Ommen as the School Committee representative to the Holliston Policy Advisory Committee following her election to the School Committee.

Ms. Ommen had previously served as the Select Board representative and would transition to serving as the School Committee's appointed representative. The Select Board will appoint a new representative to fill its vacancy.

Motion

Motion: Appoint Jess Ommen as the School Committee representative to the Holliston Policy Advisory Committee.

**Moved by: Tracy Floeckher
Seconded by: Sarah Fitzgerald**

Roll Call Vote

- Hilary Bresnahan – Yes
- Sarah Fitzgerald – Yes
- Tracy Floeckher – Yes
- Dawn Neborsky – Yes
- Frank Ogura – Yes

- Jess Ommen (absent)

Motion passed unanimously (5–0-1).

End-of-Year School Committee Newsletter

The Committee reviewed a draft of the end-of-year School Committee newsletter.

Members agreed additional revisions would improve the publication before release.

Discussion included:

- Delaying publication until recent leadership appointments could be officially announced.
- Expanding the update on the MSBA High School Building Committee by providing additional context about committee membership and next steps.
- Highlighting district leadership transitions, including welcoming Dr. Carter, Dr. Rondon-Bourne, and the incoming Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations.
- Avoiding repetition of information already shared in school newsletters.
- Waiting until after the July 4 holiday and the Committee's upcoming reorganization meeting before publishing.

The Communications Subcommittee will revise the newsletter for future Committee review.

No vote was taken.

Future Meeting

The Chair announced that the Committee expects to meet the following week to:

- Complete the annual School Committee reorganization.

- Review the communication announcing the Assistant Superintendent appointment, if needed.
 - Finalize the end-of-year newsletter.
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Executive Session

The Committee voted to enter Executive Session and not return to Open Session for the purpose of:

Conducting strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations and contract negotiations with a non-union employee regarding the Assistant Superintendent of Finance & Operations position.

Roll Call Vote

- Hilary Bresnahan – Yes
- Sarah Fitzgerald – Yes
- Tracy Floeckher – Yes
- Dawn Neborsky – Yes
- Frank Ogura – Yes

- Jess Ommen (absent)

Motion passed unanimously (5–0-1).

Adjournment

The Open Session adjourned at 7:57 PM, after which the Committee entered Executive Session. Before adjournment, Chair Ogura wished the Committee and community a safe and happy Fourth of July holiday.