New Hartford Board of Education Meeting
January 17, 2023
Ann Antolini School/Multi-Purpose Room

Board Members Present: Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Sousa; Chairman, Mr. Karl Hermonat; Mr. Tim Klepps; Ms. Penny Miller; Mr. Tony Persechino; Mr. Travis Bonhomme; Ms. Deirdre Tindall and Ms. Dana Finello, Recording Secretary

School Staff/Guests: Dr. Kelly Carroll; Mrs. Amy Kennedy; Mrs. Heather Mathes and other members of the audience.

Not Present: Mr. Tom Buzzi, Mrs. Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Mrs. Mary Stempien

A. Chairman to Open Meeting
B. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Hermonat opened the meeting at 7:03pm. Members were asked to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Chair's Order of Business

1. Chairman Hermonat stated that the future BOE meeting format will be slightly changed to run more efficiently. He stated that members will indicate they want to discuss the topic and use the microphones, light and mute features so that the audio will be better for the YouTube video for listeners as well as better cohesion among members who wish to speak.

2. The Chairman also stated that a new curriculum subcommittee will be formed to assist with curriculum changes made up of one BOE member, Curriculum Director, teachers, administrators and parents to explore and discuss the school's future vision and would like to add that under *New Business* on the agenda.

   A motion was made by Ms. Miller and seconded by Mr. Persechino to place this item under *New Business*.

   Miller/Persechino – The Motion Passed Unanimously

D. Communications to the BOE/Public Comment

There were no communications or public comments.

E. Board of Education Chair's Report

The Chair wished everyone a Happy New Year 2023 and stated that the BOE is looking forward to Superintendent Sousa's new leadership for the district.

F. Superintendent's Report

Narrative:

Mr. Sousa started off by thanking those in attendance for supporting the BOE and his new leadership. Next was appreciation for the wonderful 6th grade student concert orchestrated by Allison Melillo; Congratulations to Dr. Kelly Carroll who successfully defended her thesis, *"Primary Teachers Perceptions of Self-Efficacy During the COVID-19 Pandemic"*; Former alumni Maddie Topa nominated and won the Gametime Athlete of the Week for her 25-pt 9 rebound performance; thanked PTO for Riverside Reptiles; thanked Andrea Bennett for sharing her 4th grade class field study to the CT State Capitol and had an amazing trip and showed some brief slides of their trip, and learning experiences about our government, laws and getting involved; thanked all those involved with the fire drills; kindergarten registration has started so please register your little ones; shared an accolade from parents stating how well they are treated when they enter the schools, the great interaction with teachers and students as well as how much the students love and respect their teachers.

1. Line-item transfer – Mr. Sousa stated that he is working to clean up some of the budget items. It came in from November and it was debited as a tuition check going back to legal services. It was also noted the Mr. Sousa will notify the BOE whenever a line-item transfer is more than $5,000.

2. 2023-24 budget overview – Mr. Sousa stated that drivers that will have an impact on the 2023-24 budget are: renegotiated teachers' contracts, Special Ed costs, best placement for Special Ed students transportation/new 3-yr contract with DATTCO, new fuel contract in August checking to see what the market does for the best rate to

lock-in. Some incoming grants such as a behavioral special education grant will help offset costs for some salaries for specific teachers, training for CT SEDS (CT Special Education Data System). Capital budget for items five years out. Examples were renovations, replacing oil tanks underground, some asbestos removal in one school.

A motion was made by Mr. Klepps and seconded by Ms. Miller to approve the line-item transfer.

Klepps/Miller – The Motion Passed Unanimously

G. Routine Business

1. Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2022 – The Chair requested to table the minutes for discussion for an amendment.

A motion was made by the Chair and seconded by Ms. Miller to amend the minutes and delete on Page 2 a quote from Gina Maroney at public comment *"When her daughter left, she read on a 3rd grade level and her son read at a possible 4th or 5th grade level."*

It was noted that for taking minutes for public comments, the BOE thought it would be best to only document an individual's name, address and their general issue. If a person chooses to watch the full comment, they can watch the YouTube video.

A motion was made by Ms. Miller and seconded by Ms. Tindall to approve the amended minutes on Page 2.

Miller/Tindall – The Motion Passed Unanimously

A motion was made by Ms. Miller and seconded by Mr. Persechino to approve the entire December 5, 2022 minutes

Miller/Persechino – The Motion Passed
Abstained – Mr. Klepps

2. Personnel – Dr. Kelly Carroll successfully defended her thesis as mentioned above. Hiring search for an administrative assistant for the

Director of Pupil Services. Round one interviews should be completed by end of this week and Round 2 should be wrapped up by end of next week.

3. Expenditure Report

A motion was made by Mr. Klepps and seconded by Ms. Miller to approve the Expenditure Report.

Klepps/Miller – The Motion Passed Unanimously

H. New Business

1. COVID-related safety measures survey results – Mr. Sousa stated that one of the grants for the school involving stakeholders is to continuously maintain all the safety measures to help keep students and staff safe. 232 parental responses to the survey which was a very positive number.

One Board member noted that it would be helpful that Mr. Sousa notify the Board each time a survey goes out so they can be aware of any questions or comments that may come their way. Mr. Sousa agreed that he will add the Board to the distribution list. Some Board members asked questions about the historical data about the grant funding name and survey requirements and Mr. Sousa will research and get more information and update the Board.

2. Proposal of 2023-24 school year calendar – The Chair explained the new process for implementing the BOE meeting and school calendars. The BOE meetings should be in alignment with the school calendar and be as one whole calendar for dates of vacations, buses, and professional development days all in one place. Region #7's calendar is also in alignment.

A motion was made by Mr. Klepps and seconded by Ms. Tindall to approve the proposed model for a new combined school calendar with all the BOE meeting dates.

Klepps/Tindall – The Motion Passed Unanimously

I. Old Business

Curriculum Subcommittee – Mr. Sousa updated the Board. His recommendation is to have the subcommittee comprised of the

Superintendent, Curriculum Specialist, one or two parents, administrators and one BOE member. A board member raised the question to Mr. Sousa of just how involved does a BOE get involved with curriculum from past experiences? Mr. Sousa emphasized the importance of this subcommittee and how the committee members will become educated as well and be able to speak informatively of the great work taking place in our schools.

A motion was made by Ms. Tindall and seconded by Ms. Miller to approve the Curriculum Subcommittee.

Tindall/Miller – The Motion Passed Unanimously

J. Reports

1. School Safety Subcommittee – Mr. Klepps gave a brief update on proposals and considerations to increase security within the NH school system. Three action items were:

a. School security consultant. An architectural firm such as The Slam Collaborative will visit and provide their assessment and suggestions about the three schools and what can be done.

b. A community survey and how the town community feels about the current school security and potential of hiring armed guards.

c. The cost associated re:armed guards and best use of funds or grants.

Mr. Sousa pointed out the fact that the FOIA meeting with Mr. Tom Hennick, provided the rationale for agenda minutes and postings not being posted because it's under the exemption clause for the safety of our students. He is also getting pricing for armed guards and other information for consideration before proceeding. Also noted was the State of CT is expected to release a grant to provide additional funding to offset costs for school security and Mr. Sousa is waiting for the update on that.

K. Executive Session – To discuss employee position and implications.

A motion was made by the Chair and seconded by Ms. Miller to enter into Executive Session. The session will also include Superintendent Sousa and Amy Norton.

Hermonat/Miller – The Motion Passed Unanimously

The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:47pm.

A motion was made by Mr. Persechino and seconded by Ms. Tindall to hire Michael Lynch as the new Director of Student Services for the New Hartford Public Schools.

Persechino/Tindall – The Motion Passed Unanimously

L. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mr. Klepps and seconded by Mr. Bonhomme to adjourn the meeting at 8:48pm.

Klepps/Bonhomme – The Motion Passed Unanimously

Respectfully submitted by,
Dana A. Finello, Recording Secretary