

**New Hartford Board of Education Meeting  
Board Special Education Meeting  
May 19, 2020  
6:00 PM /Virtual Meeting  
Access  
Meeting ID: 820 6406 3173  
Password: nhps2020**

**Board Members Present:**

Tim Goff, Chairman  
Karl Hermonat, Vice Chairman  
Tom Buzzi  
Timothy Klepps  
Penny Miller  
Kelly O'Dell Longhi  
Tony Persechino  
Mary Stempien  
Heather Tomala

**Also Present:**

Brian Murphy- Superintendent of Schools  
Amanda Shaw-Antolini School Principal  
Kelly Carroll - New Hartford Elementary and Bakerville School Principal  
Barbara McLean- Director of Student Services  
Linda Fitzgerald- Data Management Coordinator  
Diane Barrett-Recording Secretary  
Open to the public per Zoom invitation

**A. Chair to Open Meeting**

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Tim Goff at 6:01 pm. Tim explains this is a Virtual Meeting. The public is allowed to listen and send in public comment to the Chairman's email. If there are questions or comments for the Board, please email Tim Goff @ [gofft@newhtfd.org](mailto:gofft@newhtfd.org).

**B. The Pledge of Allegiance**

The Pledge of Allegiance was cited.

**C. Chair Select Order of Business**

Mr. Goff stated he had no changes at this time. He gave the public a few minutes to email him for public comment.

**D. Public Comment**

Chairman Goff began by reading two emails that were requested to be read to the public.

1. *Email #1:* Resident Julie Quinto, 414 Bruning Road, New Hartford dated May 22, 2020. (email on file) This email stated that the taxpayers should not place the financial burden of this town on

the teachers who do so much for the children. Julie states she is against the freeze in the teachers' salaries and the town should explore others options to recoup money.

2. *Email #2:* Brooke Harris, 380 West Hill Rd, New Hartford dated May 18, 2020 (email on file). Mrs. Harris states that being a mother of 3 and an 18 year veteran elementary teacher, she is in support of the original proposed education budget and opposed in making additional cuts which would not be in the best interest of the staff and students.

#### **E. Consent Agenda**

**6:29 pm MOTION** by Miller to approve the Board of Education minutes from May 5, 2020 as presented, seconded by Tomala. *Unanimous*

#### **F. Communication to the Board**

1. *Email #1-* resident Krissy Worley was questioning if Dattco bus is still being paid by the BOE? She states, upon moving to the town, her first connection was with the school bus drivers. The concern was that she heard the drivers are collecting unemployment and not being paid by the town, which would be in violation of the Executive Order by the Governor. Superintendent Murphy reached out to the Worley family and addressed their concerns.
2. *Email #2 -* Kerry Guilfoyle, member of the Board of Finance. She had specific questions in regards to the \$100,000 savings proposed by the BOE. Superintendent Murphy and Chairman Goff addressed these concerns in a detailed email outlining the line item savings. (Email on file- Board Of Education, Town Hall and Board of Finance)
3. *Email #3-* resident Joe Toro was questioning average class sizes and the breakdown between NHES and Bakerville. Chairman Goff responded by emailing him a copy of the current enrollment numbers for 2019-2020 school year.
4. *Email #4-*Michelle Traub, Stubb Hollow Rd, New Hartford, asks the BOE to vote in favor of the proposed budget. She states the children deserve the best education possible because they are our future.
5. *Email #5-* Dylan and Ashley Holmes stated their concerns that this is not the time to reduce resources to our schools due to the future accommodation of social distancing, an increase in cleaning, increase in social emotional services, and the need to address the gap in learning from the school closure.
6. *Email #6-*Christine Nelson stated her concerns with the proposed budget reductions. She states she is in support of small class sizes and appropriate staffing levels.
7. *Email #7-*Shennan Flannery- She urges the BOE not to cut any more services to our children. She writes a zero budget is detrimental and damaging to the community, irresponsible and unjust to the most vulnerable and growing population.
8. *Email #8-* Mary Svetz- Juliano, 305 South Rd, New Hartford. She writes she is in support of the original proposed budget. She is not in favor of any additional cuts and these cuts would be insulting to the teachers and students. Teachers are going above and beyond in distance learning and this is an area where teachers have not been extensively trained.
9. *Email #9 -* Seth Newton and Emily McAdam- 20 Knollwood Dr. New Hartford. He asks that the BOE supports the proposed budget. He states that reducing funding further will make it difficult to be flexible when approaching problems and uncertainties next year due to Covid 19. He also states reducing salaries, which were bargained in good faith, should not be considered until the town can give concrete evidence of its fiscal need.

10. *Email # 10-* Michelle Tardif, 9 Turkey Hollow Rd, New Hartford- She states she is in support of the original proposed budget because additional cuts will be damaging to students, teachers and staff. Dealing with so much uncertainty, cuts will make it difficult to support students in the upcoming 2020-2021 school year.
11. *Email #11-* Megan Kennedy - She states she is against the freeze of the teachers' salaries due to the tremendous work and commitment of the teachers in embracing the distance learning and engagement of multiple platforms.
12. *Email #12-* (received for public comment) forwarded email from Rebecca Welsh. She references a statement made by **Fran Rabinowitz** – Executive Director of the Connecticut Association of **Public School Superintendents** about the future of public schools. She states children need in person organized school activities, sports, and normalcy.

**REVISED MOTION** by Miller to approve the Board of Education minutes from May 5, 2020 as presented and the expenditure report under the Consent Agenda, seconded by Tomala. *Unanimous*

13. *Emails that Chairman Goff was CC'd on that were sent to the town* - Email #1 Christopher Tomala, Email # 2 Melissa Preece. No discussion of emails. These emails will be in communication to the Board of Selectman and the Board of Finance through the budget process.

## **G. Old Business**

### **1. Budget Updates 2019-2020**

Chairman Goff states the \$100,000 of savings from the budget cannot be applied to the Dattco bus contract as proposed as per additional communications after the BOE meeting on May 5.

There are two options:

- (a) Give the \$100,000 back to the town which would go into the General Fund. The Board of Finance can distribute these funds from there.
- (b) State Statute # 01428A- this is a non lapsing account that the BOE can deposit 2% of your overall budget into from year to year- similar to a Rainy Day Fund. Currently, our town does not have this fund. Chairman Goff has been in communications with Regina Wexler from the Board of Finance. It was discussed at the Board of Finance and is being researched for more information. If this statute is approved or adopted, this will approve a Rainy Day Fund for the BOE. Then, these funds can be used for what the BOE agrees to, for example, prepayment of the bus contract. Chairman Goff has been in contact with CABE about this non lapsing account, and about half the schools presently use this account.

### **2. Fiscal Year 2020-2021**

BOE has cut \$75,000 from the Capital Fund, which was an effort of good faith with the town and the Board of Finance. Chairman Goff presented this reduction to the Board of Finance, who was grateful for this gesture. Chairman Goff states that the Board of Finance unfortunately made a motion to reduce the proposed BOE's budget to zero. This is still in discussion.

## **H. Staff Contracts**

Chairman Goff referenced the letter from First Selectman Dan Jerram requesting to remove any and all allowances for increases in pay for the Fiscal 2020-2021 budget or defer the wage increases to support all of those families who have lost their jobs during this COVID 19 crisis.

**MOTION** by Goff to have New Hartford Board of Education instruct Superintendent Murphy to approach our union partners to negotiate a wage concession for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year due to the effects of Covid 19, Miller seconded to have discussion.

Buzzi commented: The board has spent \$37,000 in legal fees to negotiate all the union contracts at this point. To negotiate a freeze would be at least \$18,000, alienating our teachers. He also points out, at his understanding, we are the only district looking into a wage freeze. We will also be set up for a miserable budget season next year. He states he is in zero favor of anyone to do this.

Persechino states: This is a bad use of lawyers and there are contracts that cannot be broken. He agrees with Buzzi.

Chairman Goff shares that New Hartford Board of Education's attorney, Peter Maher, from Shipman and Goodwin handles 120 of the 155 school districts in the State of CT. Attorney Maher states there has been no school districts that have approached any union partners for a wage freeze or deferment. Chairman Goff also had a meeting with CABE on May 5, 2020 with Nick Caruso and CABE's attorney, Rebecca Adams. At this time, no boards are asking unions for a wage freeze. Chairman Goff also received the same communication from other board chairs in the State of Connecticut.

Klepps comments: He thinks it is a foolish use of money to renegotiate contracts. He is in agreement with Buzzi's comments. He expresses his worries about what this decision can do in the future for New Hartford Education. There are too many unknowns about the education of the students next year, none of them look good. Deferring or freezing raises are not a proper way to appreciate the hard work of the teachers.

Hermonat comments: He states that being a member of the negotiating committee with the teachers, the last round of negotiations were fair. Both groups gave significant concessions, whether it was on the insurance side or salary side and he feels it would be a "slap in the face."

Longhi comments: She is in agreement with Buzzi, Klepps and Hermonat.

Tomala comments: She voiced her opinion at the last BOE meeting about the wage freeze and she is completely against this process.

Chairman Goff explains the financial aspect of a wage freeze. Reviewing the board communication email from Superintendent Murphy that had a detailed description of the wage increases for the 2020-2021 in the amount of \$ 103,683.00, he explains if the BOE has a 0% wage increase this year, the BOE will automatically transfer \$103,683.00 to next year's budget. That coupled with the salary increases next year- approximately \$110,000.00, places the BOE in deficit of \$220,000.00. He points out that adding in the \$75,000.00 cut in Capital Funds from this year ( projects need to be completed), puts the Board into a \$300,000 deficit. Then, if we receive any unanticipated costs (outplacement of a Special Ed student), this will increase the deficit further. Chairman Goff states that it is fiscally irresponsible to ask this request, and it will be setting the BOE up for a distasteful budget season for next year. He points out that as a taxpayer, he would rather have the salary increases spread out over the next three years, than have a 0% this year, and then get walloped next year.

Miller comments: She voiced she would like to leave the proposed budget as is, and not go back to the unions for wage freezes.

**6:57 pm MOTION** by Goff to have New Hartford Board of Education instruct Superintendent Murphy to approach our union partners to negotiate a wage concession for the 2020-2021 Fiscal Year due to the effects of Covid 19, Miller seconded.

*All in favor: None*

*All opposed: Goff, Hermonat, Buzzi, Klepps, Miller, Longhi, Persechino, Stempien, Tomala*

*Abstain: None*

*Motion Fails*

## **I. Reports**

Kelly O'Dell Longhi presented the reports from the Policy Subcommittee:

### **1. Review Policy 5118.1 (Homeless Students)**

Longhi reviewed changes that are highlighted on each policy. Homeless Students Policy added public preschool programs.

**MOTION** by Miller to approve Policy 5118.1 Homeless Students, seconded by Longhi.

*All in favor: Goff, Hermonat, Buzzi, Klepps, Miller, Longhi, Stempien, Tomala*

*All opposed: None*

*Abstain: Persechino*

*Motion Passes*

### **2. Review Policy P5112(a) (Admission Placement)**

Longhi reviewed the addition of **disability** to the discrimination paragraph #1, corrected some errors and reworded some sentences.

**MOTION** by Klepps to approve Policy 5112(a) Admission Placement, seconded by Longhi.

*All in favor: Goff, Hermonat, Buzzi, Klepps, Miller, Longhi, Stempien, Tomala*

*All opposed: None*

*Abstain: Persechino*

*Motion Passes*

### **3. Review Policy 6159 (Individual Education Program)**

Longhi reviewed the addition that the school paraprofessional can be added to the IEP TEAM for the child. Longhi further explained the addition that any member of the PPT employed by the BOE that discusses or makes recommendations during a PPT meeting shall not be disciplined for such recommendation.

**MOTION** by Miller to approve Policy 6159 Individual Education Program, seconded by Longhi.

*All in favor: Goff, Hermonat, Buzzi, Klepps, Miller, Longhi, Stempien, Tomala*

*All opposed: None*

*Abstain: Persechino*

*Motion Passes*

Chairman Goff acknowledged that during this meeting, he received 5 more emails that stated that they are opposed to any wage freeze or deferment of salary increases by the teachers.

**7:16 pm MOTION** by Miller to adjourn meeting , seconded by Longhi.

*Unanimous*

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Diane Barrett*

*Recording Secretary*

New Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education Meeting  
May 19, 2020-6:00 pm Virtual Meeting

Meeting/<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82064063173?pwd=SOx6N01GRmdiU1dlcWRIRUVCNkv3QT09>

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