

**New Hartford Public Schools
Special Board of Education Meeting
September 15, 2020
6:00 pm/Virtual Meeting
Access Meeting/Listen Only**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83282997034?pwd=VUhqUkViNS9VK1BEeVU0RkR5dUFSZz09>

Meeting ID: 832 8299 7034

Passcode: nhps2020

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

Others Present: Brian Murphy, Barbara McLean, Amanda Shaw, Kelly Carroll, and Heather Mathes

- A. Chair to Open Meeting** - Tim Goff opened the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

- B. Pledge of Allegiance** – The Board joined in saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

- C. Chair Select Order of Business** – No changes to the Order of Business.

- D. Superintendent's Report**
 - 1. School Opening Update** – Mr. Murphy started by saying that the students are engaged and building relationships with staff. Bus transportation has been a problem. Two members of Dattco's workforce tested positive for COVID. Finding additional drivers has been a big challenge across the state. Many drivers are nervous about going back to work.

Following are Board members concerns/questions and the response by the Superintendent: Some bus routes are longer than 60 minutes as more students have decided to come back from distance learning. School has started a little bit later due to the consolidated bus routes. Shortage of drivers has impacted seat assignments. Dattco is trying to mitigate this problem by trying to recruit new drivers, but there is fear and angst among those possible drivers. Everyone at the bus barn is being tested for COVID-19 with the rapid test. With no bus transportation and parents having to scramble to get their children to school today only a few students participated in Distance Learning, while most kids were able to get to school.

Students are supposed to receive mask breaks at least once an hour, but it's not happening. Mr. Murphy is aware of this and has discussed this with his Administrators who will review this requirement with teachers to ensure that the students are getting minimally required mask breaks. Initial guidelines stated that teachers did not have to wear a mask during

instruction, but the State changed that about one week ago and now teachers, even if they are 6-8 feet away, have to wear a mask the entire day except in isolated situations, such as Speech and Language. Brian will take a look at using Plexiglass barriers for teacher instruction.

There is a big concern that children participating in Distance Learning are having a hard time not seeing faces and they are struggling to hear instructions by teachers. It's very challenging, but there's not much we can do. Mr. Murphy stated that the curriculum is new grade level curriculum. Tents are being utilized and are very helpful. Physical education is being conducted outside and the goal is to get kids outside as much as possible. Brian will address the principals and teachers to utilize mask breaks and outside/tents as much as possible. Heading into fall and flu season there is talk about the flu conflating with the pandemic so we have to be ready to go to full distance learning. Currently the FVHD states that we are in very strong spot but anything can change, it's a very fluid situation and we have to be ready for that.

We have had to pivot to distance learning today and tomorrow due to bus issues, where are we with kids being home sick, snow days? Is there a plan in place for those students to access distance learning? Brian stated that we are not set up for individual distance learning. The major challenge in pivoting from in school instruction to distance learning is that if the decision is made after school hours children in grades k-3 rarely bring their Chromebooks home so they may not have access to electronic devices and would not be able to access lessons. Also teachers would not have access to materials after hours. However, if students and staff are in school and we made the decision to go remote, we can pivot to distance learning the next day.

Brian reiterated that in person instruction is best! Distance Learning cannot replicate in person learning with teachers. It is not a conducive environment to help test scores. It is very difficult for kids to have to sit especially for K-3. They need movement. It's important for the kids to be outside as much as possible, especially while the weather is on our side.

Board members thanked Brian, Administrators, and teachers for doing an amazing job.

- E. Public Comment/Communication to the Board of Education – Tim**
Goff stated that he had received a letter from Aulay Carlson. Tim stated that Mr. Carlson has a request in his letter and some comments regarding the budget. Tim will review it and respond accordingly in consult with Brian.

- F. Consent Agenda**
 - 1. Approval of Minutes-August 12, 2020/August 18, 2020** - Tim was asked to separate out the minutes from the consent agenda.

Minutes of August 12, 2020 - Motion by Penny Miller to approve the minutes of August 12, 2020, 2nd by Tim Klepps.

All in favor: Tom Buzzi, Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Tim Klepps, Penny Miller, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala
Mary Stempien abstained.

Motion passes.

Minutes of August 18, 2020 - Motion by Penny Miller to approve the minutes of August 18, 2020, 2nd by Tony Persechino. Mr. Murphy asked that one of the pieces of communication be removed from the minutes due to personal information. Tim asked for approval of the Minutes of August 18, 2020 with the retraction of that piece of communication/public comment. Penny Miller was fine with the revised motion, with the 2nd by Tony Persechino.

All in favor: Tom Buzzi, Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Mary Stempien, Penny Miller, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala
Tim Klepps abstained.

Motion passes.

2. Expenditure Report

3. Personnel

G. New Business

1. Board of Education Self-Evaluation (proposed for executive session)

Tim Goff asked for a motion to table this item.

Motion by Penny Miller to table the Board of Education Self Evaluation to the next Board of Education Meeting, 2nd by Tony Persechino.

All in favor: Tom Buzzi, Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Tim Klepps, Penny Miller, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala, May Stempien

Motion passes.

H. Adjournment – Motion by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 6:47 p.m., 2nd by Tim Goff

All in favor: Tom Buzzi, Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Tim Klepps, Penny Miller, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala, May Stempien

Motion passes.

Respectfully Submitted,

Janet Terenzi
Recording Secretary

Aulay Carlson
455 West Hill Rd.
New Hartford, CT 06057

15 September, 2020

To the Board of Education:

A note: Asking for public comment and then not reading the comments to the public is the same as not asking for public comment.

Although data does not appear to affect the functioning of this board, I will continue to bring the school data to your attention.

The school system has 1150 seats available. The school budget is this year, \$8,351,516.00. That makes the cost of each seat \$7,262.19 for this year. You have, let say, 410 students. With Mr. Murphy counting, it is very difficult to really know. He counts pre-kindergarteners as students. They aren't.

Given the above numbers, that would make the real cost of schooling for the 410 students is \$2,977,497.01, not \$8,351,516.00. That means you are spending \$5,374,018.99 on empty seats.

Now if the student results were good or better, then you could make an argument that the money was well spent. You can't make that argument because over the last ten years, the end of year's state tests shows that 40% of New Hartford students have failed English and 50% have failed math. In the tests for 2019, only 56.8% of the students were at grade level. That's with a teacher and teacher assistant/student ratio of around 8 to 1.

The following is a Freedom of Information request for the New Hartford Board of Education only. Your answer is to come from the BOE and not involve the superintendent or any of the school staff.

Please explain why the BOE is spending so much to educate so few so badly. Please send your answer to the address above. Your answers must be supported by data.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aulay Carlson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "A".

Aulay Carlson