

**New Hartford Public Schools  
Board of Education Special Meeting (In-Person)  
January 16, 2024, Regular Meeting  
Rescheduled (Inclement Weather)  
Ann Antolini Elementary School – Library  
January 22, 2024 @ 6:00 PM**

**PRESENT:** Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chairman Timothy Klepps; Vice Chairman Thomas Buzzi; Meagan Albert; Eleanor “Penny” Miller; Tim Russell; Deirdre Tindall; Kristin Young and Recording Secretary Elizabeth Domas.

**ABSENT:** Kelly O’Dell Longhi

**A. Chair to Open Meeting:** @ 6:00 PM meeting called to order by Chairman Timothy Kelpps.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance**

**C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment:** None

**D. Board of Education Chair’s Report:** None

**E. Superintendent’s Report:**

- **Student Representatives:** Two sixth grade students were present as student representatives, a first ever, to share what’s going on in school, activities and events. Examples such as jump rope friends and band concert Tuesday of last week. The winter wonderland daughter dance is on February the 2, 2024, sponsored by PTO. The PTO is helping fund field trips, and these two students show their thanks. In addition, students are receiving “stars” for standing out, given out by staff members, when you receive a star, you may go down to the office and receive a raffle ticket, a star prize is picked at the end of the month, these are important because students earn stars for doing something to respect yourself, others and the school. When a student earns stars, they get to spend more quality time with a teacher. Other items mentioned were the library fund, making a gingerbread house to be displayed. Comments were written on a piece of paper and given to students which helps them grow and keep the students in school stay together.
- **Staff Update:** Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa requests permission from the Board to discuss a staff update. Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa welcomes Director of Student Services Michael Lynch. Michael informed the audience of a new recent hire through EdAdvance, a school based mental health professional Heather Black, who is a school counselor. Through a partnership with EdAdvance a grant was received for rural school districts, making her available two days a week in

Bakerville, this change allows for mental health professionals to be provided every day in every building. She does individual and group counseling, working with students in collaboration with teachers and is a resource in both assessing mental health needs and educational needs. She is provided free of charge and is part of our district for the next four and half years. This is a huge benefit of EdAdvance, RESC: (Regional Educational Service Centers).

- **MERA Contract Negotiations:** MERA (Municipal Employees Relations Act). Three contracts are being negotiated: custodians union, secretaries union and tutors and interventionists union. They have exchanged ground rules, Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa looks forward to updating the Board and public for the three bargaining units.
- **RFP Updates:** (Request for Proposals), New Hartford Public Schools contracted with EnviroMed Services, Inc to test for Asbestos over the winter break and on Saturdays when no children and staff are in the buildings.
- Next RFP for indoor air quality and HVAC inspections to Public Act 23-167, indoor air quality inspections are required to be conducted yearly and heating, cooling and indoor air quality (HVAC) are required to be conducted every five years. In order to pay for this requirement Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa puts forth a recommendation to reallocate the paving walkway funds in the amount of \$20,000. Mr. Sousa would need to look to the Board of Finance for reallocation to conduct indoor air quality testing instead of paving the walkway behind Ann Antolini Elementary School heading to the fields. The cost of indoor air quality testing is \$15,675, leaving an amount of \$4,325 left over. This Public Act went into effect about a year ago and is required.
- The RFP for security window requests have been published.

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to refer Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa to the Board of Finance to request reallocation of the Capital Expenditure of walkway paving (Antolini) to complete the State Public Act required indoor air quality testing. This would reallocate \$20,000 from Capital Expenditure for the cost of \$15,675, leaving \$4,325 left to be used. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

***UNANIMOUS  
Motion Passes***

- **Security Grants – Funding Course of Action:**

Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa noted there is \$75,000 allocated within Capital for security. A match is required to meet and satisfy grants, all three encompass tremendous security upgrades for the schools, grant match per year has an expiration date of three years needs to be \$154,000 per year. Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa recommends requesting from the Board of Finance to reallocate rotting trim (\$10,000) differential from indoor air quality (IAQ) testing (\$4,325) and technology (\$20,675), for a total of an additional \$35,000 to get closer to the three-year average needed for the local match, this will not cover the full amount.

- **Armed Security Officer:** Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa has consulted with other local Superintendents who have these armed security officers in their schools and has determined the need to have a committee of interviewers with the following: local law enforcement, Superintendent of Schools, school administration and a mental health professional. The hiring process involves creating and adopting a Board of Education policy for armed security. Some things the policy will include psychiatric evaluation, firearms certification and insurance rider for liability. Evaluations will be conducted as follows: 30-day review, 60-day review, 90-day review then quarterly, then twice a year at a minimum.

**F. School Security Discussion and Possible Vote On:**

- **Referral of Security Grants – Funding Course of Action to BOF**

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to have Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa request from the Board of Finance to the reallocation of funds from Capital Expenditures consisting of \$10,000 for rotting trim, \$4,325 left over in the previous motion (paving walkway \$20,000 - \$15,675 = \$4,325), Technology of \$20,675 which was allocated for chrome books, total \$35,000, these items would be deferred by at least one year. Second by Tim Russell.

***UNANIMOUS  
Motion Passes***

**The next scheduled Board of Finance meeting is February 13, 2024.**

- **Armed Security Officer Next Steps:** A policy needs to be created by the Policy Subcommittee in order to move forward with the next steps, similar to other hiring positions. There must be two reads and this policy should be put in place even if we do not move forward with armed security officers.

Jay Bailey requested to make public comment, Chairman Timothy Kelpps stated there is no public comment for the Board at this time.

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to send the armed security officer position to the Policy Subcommittee to adopt a policy outlining the criteria Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa mentioned previously, a policy for the armed security officer would be available for a first read at the next Board meeting in two weeks (February 6) and second read at the following meeting (February 20). Second by Thomas Buzzi.

***UNANIMOUS  
Motion Passes***

**G. Routine Business:**

- Approval of Minutes – December 5, 2023

**MOTION** by Thomas Buzzi to approve the minutes as presented. Second by Kristin Young.

**UNANIMOUS**  
**Motion Passes**

- **Expenditure Report:**

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to approve the expenditure report as presented. Second by Tim Russell.

**UNANIMOUS**  
**Motion Passes**

- **Line-Item Transfers:**

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to approve the line-item transfers. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

**MOTION-AMENDED** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller approving line-item transfers of \$10,000 from reading account putting it into salaries, para/substitutes and \$10,000 from language arts to salaries, para/substitutes for unanticipated FMLA and other medical leaves. Second Thomas Buzzi.

**UNANIMOUS**  
**Motion Passes**

**H. New Business:**

- New Hartford Public Schools 2024-2025 Calendar Adjusted Board of Education meetings to more align with Board of Finance.

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to approve the 2024-2025 New Hartford Public Schools calendar. Second by Kristin Young.

**UNANIMOUS**  
**Motion Passes**

**I. Old Business:**

- Second reading of the following:
  1. Policy and Regulation 5141.4 Students – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

**MOTION** by Deirdre Tindall to approve policy P 5141.4 Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect. Second Tim Russell.

**UNANIMOUS**

2. Policy and Regulation 1212 Community Relations – School Volunteers

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to approve policy P 1212 School Volunteers. Second by Tim Russell.

**UNANIMOUS**

3. Policy and Regulation 1250.1 Community Relations – Visits to the School

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to approve policy P 1250.1 Visits to the Schools. Second by Deirdre Tindall.

**UNANIMOUS**

**J. Adjournment**

**MOTION** by Eleanor “Penny” Miller to adjourn at 7:01 PM. Second by Tim Russell.

**UNANIMOUS**  
**Motion Passes**

Respectfully submitted by,  
Elizabeth Domas, Recording Secretary

**Recorded Regular and Special Board of Education Meetings will be posted to:**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc\\_QM3rfq](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfq)

*Attachments:*

*2024-2025 Calendar*

*Expenditure Report*

*Proposed Line-Item Transfers*

Policy and Regulation 5141.4 Students – Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

Policy and Regulation 1212 Community Relations – School Volunteers

Policy and Regulation 1250.1 Community Relations – Visits to the School