

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, June 5, 2023 - 6:30 p.m.
Cheshire Elementary School
191 Church Street, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Mike Mucci, John Duval, Adam Emerson, Mike Henault, Andrew Przystanski

ABSENT: Bethany DeMarco, Erin Milne

OTHERS: Superintendent Aaron Dean

104065 Call to Order

Vice Chairman Mike Mucci called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104066 Public Comment or Question - None

104067 Approval of Minutes May 8, 2023

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: to approve the May 8, 2023 School Committee minutes. The vote was unanimous.

104068 Report of Treasurer/Business Manager - Mike Mucci: reading the meeting minutes from the last meeting, we discussed how the Town of Cheshire voted against our school budget, but when we went to their meeting, they stated that it wasn't a vote, and they voted at that meeting and voted in favor of the budget. Would like to get on the minutes, who went to that meeting and noting for the record that the Town of Cheshire was in favor of the budget as proposed. Erika stated that she was present at the Town meeting as was most of the board, gave another summary of the budget and what it represented from an education standpoint, after hearing this, a member of Cheshire selectmen stated that they had not in fact made an official vote, but would like to move that our budget be recommend at the town meeting. Erika and Bethany also attended their meeting last Tuesday when they gave a brief budget overview and it did state the school budget was recommended by the Board. That is now part of what they will present at their meeting next Monday. Aaron: there is a narrative out there that we have 30 administrative positions, and that is not the case, we've added the AP's and that is key for our teaching practices and staff having the proper support. It was important that we laid out what these positions were and what they were doing. We need these positions to effectively function as a district. Mike Henault: collectively we did a good job of expressing our frustrations, they asked some valid questions, it would have been better to ask months before, when we were talking about the line items. Adam: given this wasn't the first year that we had this conversation with the town leadership where the school committee approved the budget, the board then asks questions about it, going to them early on and asking, how do you want it presented this year, timeline? Being proactive, in January and February, how do you want it? Mike Mucci: thanked everyone for attending that meeting.

104069 Report of Sub Committee -

A. Maintenance - Aaron: a number of projects that we are tracking progress on in both buildings. The HVAC systems, finding energy savings with them, we have controllers that haven't been working properly. Working with a contractor to find those savings and get our automated systems to work how they should. Elementary: good shape, but things we can do for improvements that we will look at. We looked at a report from Garland - had an assessment on the 2 gyms roofs that continually leak. Had some work, still patching. Garland did a thorough assessment, we received quotes for replacing those 2 roofs and perhaps can use ESSER funding, in a way that we won't have to go to the Towns and borrow. We will have significant work at the elementary school, which would be eligible for MSBA. Doing a lot of work to make sure the elementary school building is safe and in good shape. Repoint the brick for the portico, working on a joint venture with the Town of Adams getting the stucco for the windows in the auditorium,

gutters, stop the deterioration on the outside of building Inside: fire panel, updates done on that, retiling the 3rd floor classrooms, last of the classrooms that haven't been retiled, getting air conditioners in every classrooms - interior in good shape. The bathroom stalls, looking to replace them at the elementary school. Working on things to improve our facilities, lucky to have resources. Mike Mucci: the use of ESSER funds, while still available, for capital repairs, is a smart move, talking about the 2 gym roofs, the maintenance committee has a good handle on what needs to be done.

104070 Communications -

A. Rebecca Hoell - Spain Trip - Summer 2024 - Rebecca introduced herself, one of the 2 Spanish teachers at the high school. Would like to take students next summer to Spain using EF. Rebecca handed out the proposal, see attached. The trip would be 12 days, flying into Barcelona. Going to Europe is not cheap, the trip is \$4,000/student, want to plan ahead, many families do not have the resources, her plan is to do an extensive amount of fundraising. What included: hotel, meals, - do not intend to take parents, but will take teacher chaperones, for each 5 students, you receive 1 free teacher chaperone. Open to any student who has completed Spanish 1, was originally thinking of limiting it to upperclassmen, but classes are small, would like to extend it to underclassmen, so probably about 30 students who could apply, open to freshman, sophomore, junior and seniors. Adam: Seniors will go even though it's past graduation. Rebecca: yes. This year Spanish is about 60 kids, plus kids who took Spanish 1 last year - there is no minimum number of students required for the trip. She thought maybe taking 30 kids. Mike Henault: minimum number before price increases? Rebecca: 12 students. Mike Mucci: have we taken the last 2 years off for international travel? Colleen: yes. Mike Henault: how do we ensure that all students are able to go and that cost is not prohibitive? Have we explored grants? Have we looked at any grant opportunities, if not is that something we can do over the summer, and what mechanism do we have in place to identify the families that need support, and how to do it in a discrete way? Want to make sure we are not excluding anyone based on finances. Rebecca: very vested in as well. Kristen Palatt stated that she and Jackie could look at grants to see what's out there. Mike Henault: fundraising opportunities scheduled from now until next spring? Rebecca: yes, monthly/bimonthly meetings, would like to fundraise for the whole trip. Adam: would the fundraiser be shared amongst all the students going, or to those who contributed? Rebecca: will be working out the details on that. The deposit is \$95.00. You have 14 days to cancel and get it back. Adam: We are coming at the end of the school year, is this going to be communicated in the next few weeks, or wait until the fall? Rebecca: the hope is to have them signed up in the next few weeks. Mike Mucci asked about the actual days of travel - the brochure states 11? To include travel time? Rebecca, yes it is 11 days, to include travel days. Would be from July 11 - July 21, 2024. Aaron: hope to find ways over the funding hurdle. Our students deserve the opportunity Mike Mucci: is this fully supported by the administration? Colleen stated that it was. Rebecca, students have to pass classes and abide by all of the rules of the schools. Mike Mucci: Hoosac should be doing international travel, the school should have good policies put in place - if the administration is in favor of this trip, then he would be. Making sure that the upperclassmen have the first right if the numbers are high.

MOTION: On Motion of Andy Przystanski and second by John Duval:

VOTED: To approve the Spain 2024 Trip. The vote was unanimous.

104071 Report of Superintendent -

A. Approval of Fy23-24 School Committee Calendar - See Attached

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by Adam Emerson:

VOTED: to approve the FY23-24 School Committee Calendar. The vote was unanimous.

B. Innovation Pathways Designation - High School - Colleen Byrd & Regina Diesz: How we want to move forward with the pathways, did a lot of work, looking at other schools, started pathways in 2018, took what we were offering and put it in 3 broad pathways. Started talking about what other schools in Northern Berkshire County are offering: Drury is an early college school, MCCann is career and technical and BART is Arts and College - Hoosac: Innovations Pathways and hands on College and Career Exploration School. We received 2 innovation pathways stamps of approval. We will be receiving resources from the state to plan and support creative scheduling, course development, and internship opportunities for our students. Moving forward we want to end up with multiple IP designations from the state.

Courses per pathways: Education, Biomedical & Healthcare, Sports Medicine, Health & Wellness, Arts & Entertainment, Business and Entrepreneurship, Engineering and Technology - we came up with these pathways based on the program of studies that we currently have at the school.

Regina Diesz: there is a core group of teachers working on continuing this work. There is a lot of work that needs to be done to meet the needs of the pathways. Partnered with PBL Works - PBL is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem or challenge. We currently have 12 staff signed up.

Reimagining our Professional Learning for 23-24 - For the 2023-2024 school year, we are reimagining how we provide PD at HVHS. Throughout the course of the year, staff will be participating in PLCS we call "Strands" Each strand focuses on a key component of the 23-24 HVHS school improvement plan, designed to foster a student-centered, innovative learning experience for all. All staff will select a strand to commit to for the year. 1-2 faculty meetings per month and most PD days will be dedicated to our Strand PLC's. Strands will be lead by teacher leaders who will become the representatives on the 23-24 HVHS ILT.

Strands for consideration: PBL; Crew; DEi, Portrait of a Graduate Pathway Development; Special Education

Make your thinking visible: If you were to pick a strand right now what would you choose? A lot of staff had great ideas that they shared.

Become an ILT leader - the role of the ILT members is to engage as an active participant on the school instructional leadership team, provide support for the school improvement efforts in teaching and learning and to lead teams in regular collaborative planning, data analysis, and instructional improvement.

Mike Mucci: is this freshman through seniors? Colleen: starting with the freshman, pick a pathway and hopefully see it through. School Counselors have met with every 7th graders and met with every 8th graders - 8th graders will get a taste of the pathways.

John Duval: what's the plan to get this out in the community? Colleen: started with our signature experience, then will be planning out our next steps, really excited to get this out in the community. We want families and students in, having tours, continue with the signature experience. Aaron spoke with the press to get a piece out on this work.

Crew: Crew is a vision that will become reality based on the staff at Hoosac. Everyone, students and teachers, need a reason to be here. Crew is a culture that is planned for, developed and sustained through practices that bring the HVHS community together, promote shared understandings and encourage all members to become Hurricane crew - not passengers. Crew allows students to build positive connections with their peers and Crew leaders. The culture of Crew means all members of the school community work together as a team to promote whole school success - individual success is not enough.

C. Preschool Expansion Grant - Jackie Daniels and Shelley Fachini presented - CPPI grant - last year we met for the CPPI planning grant. Wrote up a strategic plan for preschool - had community partners at the table, Childcare of the Berkshires and the Youth Center. We moved forward with the actual grant. Found out at the end of April that we received the grant. Working very hard behind the scenes to get this up and running. Shelley: this grant is about reaching out to families, we had to select 2 community partners, magic seasons and head start. This is about preparing students to be ready. Working with community partners to align our practices. About the state deciding to support our early childhood programs and students. \$610,000 was received with this grant. Looking forward to system alignment with the community partners, talk about their good practices, what good practices are. Wrap around services, about equitable access.

Family engagement: great to have parents involved, the grant affords us a family engagement partner. We give families similar materials that we are using in the classroom so there is carry over in the home.

The money funds 3 classrooms, an additional full day preschool at the elementary, magic seasons is the adams component, youth center is the cheshire program. Will be adding for speech and OT, - they would be working with the classroom in setting up universally designed centers. This is just the initial part of something bigger, if we see the data showing this is benefiting our students, maybe we can add on. The grant is there to add to and build on.

Mike Henault: With this grant we opened up 1 preschool classroom at the elementary and then on top of that supporting wrap-around services with magic seasons and head start and paying the teachers and also supplementing the tuition for preschoolers of need? Shelley: yes, equitable access.

Committee thanked Jackie and Shelley for their presentation.

D. Recommendations for Policy Updates for next year - We don't have anything to put into place for next year, but based on how things have gone and issues we had with the cellphones, we are looking to ban them from the school day. Looking at the Yondr pouches. MCcann is doing this and the results have been resounding. We have problems with texts and bathroom meetings, etc. the problems far outweigh any benefits at this point in time. Adam: what we implemented didn't work? Colleen: No Aaron: It is impossible to police. It's time we do something about it. We will roll it out the right way with Q & A's and make sure people understand what we are trying to do. DESE is putting out grants for this. Looking to get another grant to support this. Mike Henault: Looking at other schools that have the Yondr pouches already, and getting over the initial shock, students are reporting that they like school better, they feel safer, it's the right thing to do. Aaron: Just wanted to put this on the committee's radar.

Andy: what are the pouches? Aaron: if a student brings their phone to school, they are given a pouch, they put their phone in it and it locks, at the end of the day it gets swiped and unlocks it and they are on their way.

Mike Henault: not opposed to having an emergency meeting, prior to school, to get the policy approved and give Colleen more time to let parents know so it's not a shock to them. The first few weeks of enforcing that policy could be an administrative nightmare.

Jon Duval: do we have Williams College interns helping with policies this year? Aaron: not this year.

104072 Chairman's - None

104073 Unfinished Business - Superintendent's Evaluation - Mike Henault - doing evaluation in August, have the same format set to go as was done in the past, by July, if Aaron could give his evidence and will go from there.

104074 New Business - Shared Services Agreement with NAPS - Aaron: as previously discussed, looking at 2 shared positions with North Adams - technology and custodial. The technology data specialist knows the ins and outs of powerschool, state reporting and has additional reporting tools that would be beneficial to our reporting. Sharing the position 50/50. They share the same systems as our District. The other position is facilities director. This person brings a wealth of experience. Has a lot of experience with examining custodial department work. We can build some efficiencies with our custodial staff. Also knows buildings and vendors well. The money that can be saved, will end up saving us a lot. Ballpark salary would be around \$20,000 - \$25,000. Looking for authority to expand the agreement we have in place with the A.D. by adding these 2 positions.

Mike Mucci: this is a great avenue for shared services, our district can't afford a full time director and having a janitorial leadership is very beneficial and cost effective. Great use of shared services.

MOTION: On Motion of Mike Henault and second by John Duval.

VOTED: to enter into the shared services agreement with North Adams.

104075 Action Items - None

104076 For the Good of the Order

Andy Przystanski: second Mike Henault's comments earlier about the Cheshire Selectboard meeting, only second public meeting in this capacity, was impressed with the level of dialogue on both sides of the table.

John Duval: all the best to the class of 2023

Adam Emerson: commencement was another great ceremony. Good luck to the teams still going in the MIAA playoffs

Mike Mucci: thanked the committee for another good year of due diligence and doing great work. Everyone enjoy their summer

MOTION:

On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Mike Henault:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Lisa Bresett, Recording Secretary