

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting (In-Person)
Ann Antolini Elementary School – Library
Tuesday August 20, 2024 @ 7:00PM

PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chairman Timothy Klepps; Vice Chairman Thomas Buzzi; **Board Members:** Penny Miller; Erik Perotti; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell and Kristin Young. Board Member Deirdre Tindall via Google Meet.

Also Present: Kelly Carroll; Amy Kennedy; Michael Lynch and Heather Mathes.

ABSENT: Board Member Meagan Albert

Chairman Timothy Klepps called the meeting to order 7:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Order of Business – Chairman Timothy Klepps would like to make a change for item G (old business) to follow item K (new business) in executive session. The Board agreed to the change.

C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa noted he received two information requests from Mr. Aulay Carlson.

D. Superintendent's Report:

Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa announced currently 431 students are enrolled this year. The extended school year (summer school) program was a success. Mr. Sousa received approval for the Leader and Educator Evaluation and Support Plan. Mr. Sousa noted an effort towards stronger workings with the Board of Finance to provide transparency, Mr. Sousa is scheduled to meet with Board of Finance quarterly to discuss grants, as a reminder, grant funding is not taxpayer dollars.

Kelly Carroll, Amy Kennedy, Michael Lynch and Heather Mathes gave a presentation to the Board of Education on the New Hartford Public School Climate Survey Results (Family, Staff & Student). 152 families (estimated about a 1/3) participated in the Family Climate Survey Results. The survey had great results, very favorable responses from families. In the survey results all questions received above a 90% except *"I believe the school will effectively address reports of bullying and/or mean spirited behavior"* and *"I know how my child is doing in school before I get my child's report card"*. In general, compared to last year the survey is a little bit up since previous years. Answers choices were ***"Strongly Disagree, Disagree, I Don't Know, Agree and Strongly Agree"***. With the Staff Climate Survey about 70 staff members completed the survey and there are a little over 90 staff members in total. Michael Lynch noted the great results from staff. There were many responses that received a 100%. There were a couple questions that received under 90%, one was *"the district provides supports professional development that supports my professional growth"* which was at 81.8%. The PDAC committee is a part of review this process as well. Newly, paraeducators have been involved in professional development days. The results showed an area of improvement which is, *"I believe the school effectively addresses behavior issues"* that resulted at a 66.7%, in last year's survey the result was about 60%. Michael Lynch noted more professional development days will highlight this topic. Board Member Penny Miller asked questions about leaders contacting an outside agency for ideas or suggestions. Mr. Sousa noted if behavioral issues arise beyond their scope a Board-Certified Behavioral Analyst is contacted for a behavioral assessment to work with,

which in turn is “trial and error”. The Student Climate Survey was issued to grade 3-6 students. 95% percent of students strongly agree or agree that they enjoy coming to school. The top three student requests were interested in: more field trips, special clubs and activities, extra recess equipment. Mr. Klepps inquired on what plans are in place going forward to improve. Mr. Sousa noted the theory of action where there are areas have certain items increase know we can do better, intervention process, and more professional development. Kelly Carroll announces that through EdAdvance, the staff will be working with Judy Palmer to increase the climate results. The first day of school is Wednesday August 28, 2024.

E. Board of Education Chair’s Report:

Social Media Policy/Etiquette

Chairman Timothy Kelpps would like all members to understand the importance of the social media policy/etiquette on the agenda, this topic is very important. Mr. Klepps expressed his thoughts on social media. Part of the policy explains that items which are discussed at Board of Education meetings are public information, but there may be other information that may not be public information. Such as, when the Board enters executive session, this information is not to be shared with public or on social media. Mr. Kelpps noted the importance of confidentiality and asked all members of the Board to please be cognizant of their duty on the Board of Education. Kristin Young brought up to everyone that these rules don’t just apply to social media but apply to other areas as well, could be a simple face to face conversation with someone, but emphasized the same rules apply. Vice Chairman Thomas Buzzi noted that regardless of votes or the opinions of each member, it is important to remember to treat all members of the Board with respect. Additionally, the discussion mentioned that not one singular member can speak on the behalf of the entire Board.

F. Routine Business:

Approval of Minutes: June 4, 2024 (Regular Meeting)

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve meeting minutes from June 4, 2024, as presented. Second by Timothy Russell.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

Expenditure Report (New Format):

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the Expenditure Report as presented. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

The new Expenditure Report format has begun to code by location, this will more accurately help reporting to the State of Connecticut (B=Bakerville, A=Ann Antolini). The intent of this year long project is to improve reporting by location. Additionally, the Board of Finance has requested, expenditure grants be listed on the expenditure report, to be transparent and available for questions. Now the report can be based on location and not student enrollment in each building, to more accurately report. Thomas

Buzzi questioned how examples such as curriculum supplies could be based on location, Mr. Sousa noted the custodians would communicate with Mr. Sousa, the total number doesn't change, but rather the way the information is broken down is what's changed. The total of all the locations will still add up. Mr. Sousa met with Board of Finance and brought forth all the grants received, that could not be projected in the budget process, or surprise money (for example: paraeducators). When the budget is finalized in the audit process, money spent over the budgeted amount are grants. There are times that Mr. Sousa may apply for grants but doesn't always receive the grant, or the amount the grant was applied for. There are times where grants require the Board of Education to consult the Board of Finance, then go to the town meeting, this gives opportunity for the taxpayers to understand. Grant money is unpredictable, a great thing at no cost. If the Board of Education didn't apply for grants, the budget would be higher. Kim Ahrens, the town Bookkeeper communicates with Amy Norton, the Admin Assistant/Fiscal Services for the Board of Education, to improve the communication on grant funding. Janet Terenzi, the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, keeps a very detailed report of every grant received. Any expenditure that exceeds the budgeted amount by \$20,000 requires the grant to go to town meeting, more transparent about the grants and costs of those grants.

G. New Business: moved to executive session (after public comment)

H. Old Business:

1. Chlorination System

Thomas Buzzi reminded the Board of a meeting two months ago; it was determined that there is no need at this time to include the chlorination system into current system.

2. PFAS

The Department of Public Health will require testing for PFAS. The removal of PFAS system is extremely expensive. Ron Black noted its very unlikely the wells will contain PFAS. The recommendation was made to continue testing at \$1,400 per well, this means \$1,400 per well (4) each time they are tested. There are two wells at Ann Antolini School and two wells at Bakerville School.

3. Asbestos

Thomas Buzzi stated the removal of asbestos would be cost prohibitive, especially to talked about this to avoid the testing. Remediation at Bakerville would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Recommendation is to continue with State mandated annual testing at all locations. This has been monitored there is currently no safety concerns. EnviroMed Services tests every couple of months. There is asbestos at all three school locations, Bakerville has the largest amount. Removing the asbestos at the two schools with less asbestos, would not alleviate New Hartford from the mandated testing.

I. Reports:

EdAdvance - consensus of the Board was to table this discussion for the next meeting.

J. Public Comment – (For Agenda Items Only): None

K. New Business:

1. Action Regarding Tentative Agreement Reached with Local 1303-336 New Hartford Custodial Employees (Executive Session)

MOTION by Penny Miller to go into executive session to discuss the ongoing mediation, school security report and active regarding a tentative agreement reached with Local 1303-336 New Hartford Custodial Employees and invited Superintendent Sousa to join at 8:01PM. Second by Kristin Young.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

*Everyone in attendance left the meeting.
The Board of Education and Superintendent Sousa remained for Executive Session.*

Motions following Executive Session were provided by Board Secretary Penny Miller to the Recording Secretary.

Executive Session ended at 8:43PM.

Chairman Timothy Klepps stated the next agenda item is to ratify the tentative agreement with Local 1303-336 New Hartford Custodial Employees.

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the contract between the New Hartford Board of Education and Custodial Employees Local 1303-336 of Council #4 AFSCME, AFL-CIO for the period of July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. Second by Timothy Russell.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

- 2. Policy & Regulations 4112.5/4212.5 Personnel - (First Read)**
- 3. Policy & Regulations 5144.12 Students (First Read)**

Based on feedback from the Board of Education, the Policy Sub-Committee will review Policy & Regulations 4112.5/4212.5 Personnel.

L. Adjournment:

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 9:02PM. Second by Timothy 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_QM3rfg

Attachments:
Family/Staff/Student Climate Survey