New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Special Meeting (VIRTUAL ONLY)
6:00PM on Thursday April 10, 2025
AMENDED MINUTES

PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chairman Timothy Klepps; Vice Chairman Thomas Buzzi

Board Members: Megan Albert, Penny Miller (Board Secretary); Erik Perotti; Frank Rodenberg; Deirdre Tindall and Kristin Young

Board Members Absent: Timothy Russell

Chairman Timothy Klepps called the special (VIRTUAL) meeting to order at 6:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Board of Education Chair Report
Chairman Klepps gave the Board Members an update on the last Board of Finance meeting that he and Superintendent Sousa attended. The Board of Finance motioned to reduce $66,000 from the Board of Education 2025-2026 budget. The Board of Finance also motioned to take $200,000 from the surplus and apply to the 2025-2026 budget and reduce the Town Government budget by $34,000 to make an even cut of $100,000. The Board of Finance could not send a budget to referendum at 5.37% increase to the Town of New Hartford taxpayers. The budget for the Board of Education needs to be brought down to a 4.31% increase.

C. Discuss and Take Action on 2025-2026 BOE Budget

Superintendent Sousa is very saddened by this news from the Board of Finance and thanks everyone in the community who spoke up. Mr. Sousa will review with his team and determine where the $66,000 will be cut from. The Board of Finance received (46) correspondence between Tuesday April 1 and Tuesday April 8, 2025. Many individuals were not in favor of increasing their taxes.

Chairman Klepps noted the Board needs to motion to adopt the budget at the lesser amount of $66,000. By removing the $66,000 this decreases the Board of Education budget from 4.98% to a 4.31% increase. Thomas Buzzi reminded the other Board Members to leave it up to Superintendent Sousa to decide where the cuts are going to be made. The original adopted budget was $10,324,676 then minus $66,000, the revised budget amount to adopt is $10,258,676 for a 4.31% increase.

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to adopt the 2025-2026 budget for $10,258,676 at 4.31% increase. Second by Deirdre Tindall.

Frank Rodenberg questioned is there was a choice for the Board of Education in this matter. Mr. Klepps informed Frank that the Board of Education has an obligation to cut what the Board of Finance determines.

Penny Miller mentioned, based on the changes made by the Board of Finance, the total tax increase is 3.55% for the entire town.

Mr. Sousa respectfully reminded the Board of Education that he is an advocate for the children 100% of the time. Jeff states the decision by the Board of Finance has made his job extremely difficult to give the children the quality of education they deserve.

If correspondence would like to be sent to the Board of Finance the correct place to be sent is:

town@newhartfordct.gov

Frank Rodenberg asked if there was any feedback from the Board of Finance if they were dissatisfied with the 4.99% increase previously adopted, prior to the Public Hearing Meeting. Frank Rodenberg would have liked this feedback a month ago. The Board of Finance did recognize this concern and there was a member of the Board of Finance who mentioned there should have been an indication some time ago before making these revisions.

Deirdre Tindall stated for the record, it is not a desire to cut positions, no member wants to cut jobs or take away from the children, but there is a responsibility of the Board to do more with less. The way the budget is currently going is not a sustainable solution and something has to change. Kristin Young expressed her desire to have studies conducted on consolidation to help cut costs in the future. Mr. Klepps reminded the Board that the only job for tonight's meeting is to adopt a budget that is in line with the requirements stated by the Board of Finance. Superintendent Sousa will go back to the budget and report the cuts at the next meeting.

Aye: Megan Albert, Thomas Buzzi, Penny Miller, Frank Rodenberg, Deirdre Tindall and Kristin Young
Naye: Timothy Klepps and Erik Perotti
Abstain:

(6-2-0)
Motion Passes

D. Adjournment

MOTION by Deirdre Tindall to adjourn the meeting at 6:32PM. Second by Erik Perotti.

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: *(Filed with the Town Clerk and available upon request, or see links included if available)*