New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Special Meeting (Virtual Only)
5:30PM on Monday, May 19, 2025

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

Board Members: Penny Miller; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell; Deirdre Tindall and Kristin Young

Absent: Meagan Albert and Erik Perotti

Chairman Timothy Klepps called the virtual only special meeting to order at 5:33PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Discuss and take action on the 2025-2026 Budget

The Board of Finance met on Tuesday May 13, 2025, to discuss the result of the failed Budget Referendum that took place on Tuesday May 6, 2025. Chairman Timothy Klepps summarized key points of discussion and actions taken at this meeting. There was an immediate motion to restore $66,000 to the Board of Education and $34,000 to the Town Government, for a total of $100,000, which was voted down. There was lengthy discussion on the Board of Education non-lapsing account and general fund surplus. The Board of Finance discussed the Board of Education using an additional $66,000 from their non-lapsing account, which would leave the account at a net of approximately $100,000. Superintendent Sousa and Chairman Timothy Klepps did not support this suggestion by the Board of Finance and advised them the other Board of Education members would not be in favor. Mr. Sousa informed the Board of Finance that the Board of Education does not need the Board of Finance approval to use funding from either non-lapsing account. In discussion, another idea was to split the $66,000, $33,000 from Board of Education non-lapsing account and $33,000 from general fund surplus. Eventually, there was a motion to take $66,000 from the general fund surplus and apply this amount back into the Board of Education budget. The budget approved at this Board of Finance meeting will be the same budget sent to the next referendum, except for $66,000 being restored to the Board of Education, which will restore two positions, the *Instructional Assistant (1) and the Clerical Aide (1)* and a 0.02% increase in the overall tax increase for a clerical error in the reflection of Board of Education grant numbers being off by $6,000 in the town spreadsheet. The previous increase was 3.55% and to correct the clerical error, the overall tax increase at the next Budget Referendum is 3.57%. The Board of Finance did not restore the Town Government the $34,000. Further discussion was held on how to get more residents to vote. The budget referendum had a turnout of 474 voters, which is higher than usual around 300-350 voters.

For a breakdown of changes to the 2025-2026 Board of Education budget from the beginning (3/04/2025) to the last Board of Finance meeting (5/13/2025), please see the summary attached provided by Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa.

- The 2025-2026 proposed Board of Education budget started on March 4, 2025, at $10,705,676 at an 8.86% increase in the amount of $871,145. This was Superintendent Sousa's initial proposed budget for the Board of Education.

- The Board of Education then made reductions to the Superintendent's proposed budget on March 11, 2025, reducing the proposed budget to $10,325,026 at a 4.99% increase in the amount of $490,495. This budget was adopted by the Board of Education on March 18, 2025, which included several eliminations.

- The Board of Education motioned on Thursday April 3, 2025, to use $66,000 from the non-lapsing account and apply towards tuition which restored two staff positions, the *Instructional Assistant (1) and the Clerical Aide (1)*. There were savings from the bus contract and retirements which restored *White Memorial, Talented & Gifted Math Olympiads, 5th & 6th Grade Band and the School Counselor* in addition to the two staff positions. The budget was reduced to $10,324,676 at a 4.98% increase in the amount of $490,146.

- The Board of Finance met on Tuesday April 8, 2025, and motioned to cut $66,000 from the Board of Education budget, which the Board of Education then eliminated two staff positions, the

Instructional Assistant (1) and the Clerical Aide (1). These two positions were previously kept by the Board of Education using $66,000 from their non-lapsing account. $66,000 was still being used from the non-lapsing towards tuition as well as a $66,000 cut by the Board of Finance. The budget was then reduced to $10,258,676 at a 4.31% increase in the amount of $424,145.

- From there the adopted budget of $10,258,676 at a 4.31% increase in the amount of $424,145, went to the Town Referendum on Tuesday May 6, 2025, and ultimately failed by 14 votes.

- The Board of Finance then had a meeting on Tuesday May 13, 2025, in which they motioned to restore $66,000 to the Board of Education budget, for an approved budget of $10,324,676 at a 4.98% increase in the amount of $490,146. This change meant the Board of Education restored two staff positions, the *Instructional Assistant (1) and the Clerical Aide (1)*. The $66,000 being restored will not increase the overall tax increase and will be funded from the general fund surplus. This is the budget which will be voted on at the next Town Referendum pending the Board of Education's approval tonight.

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to rescind the 2025-2026 Board of Education previously adopted budget on April 8, 2025, at a budget of $10,258,676 at a 4.31% increase in the amount of $424,145 from Town Referendum. Second by Timothy Russell.

UNANIMOUS

MOTION by Timothy Russell to adopt a revised 2025-2026 Board of Education budget of $10,324,676 at a 4.98% increase in the amount of $490,146. Second by Kristin Young.

Aye: Thomas Buzzi, Timothy Klepps, Frank Rodenberg, Timothy Russell and Kristin Young
Naye: Penny Miller and Deirdre Tindall
Abstain:

(5-2-0)

Motion Passes

C. Adjournment

MOTION by Kristin Young to adjourn the special meeting at 6:11PM. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

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)*

Updated Reductions Summary 05.19.25
*(**https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1747746171/newhtfdorg/fqwgeo0equk8nta6encv/UpdatedReductionsSummary519251_1.pdf**)*

2025-2026 New Hartford BOE Adopted Budget - May 19, 2025
*(**https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1747743354/newhtfdorg/lq8ix3pl7d9oy0pft1zu/25-26NHPSAdoptedBudget5192025xlsx-GoogleSheets.pdf**)*