

MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee
School Committee Meeting
Monday, August 25, 2025 - 6:30 p.m.
Hoosac Valley High School - Resource Room
125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Adam Emerson, Erin Milne, John Duval, Andy Przystanski, Robert Tetlow, Fred Lora,

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Aaron Dean, Tracey Tierney

104350 Call to Order

Chairman Erin Milne called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104351 Public Comment or Question - None

104352 Approval of Minutes - June 16, 2025

Before a motion was made Bob Tetlow asked for follow up from a concerned parent who spoke under public comment at this meeting. Erin Milne asked that this be tabled for later in the meeting under unfinished business.

MOTION: On Motion of Andy Przystanski and second by Fred Lora

VOTED: to approve the June 16, 2025 School Committee minutes. The vote was Unanimous

104353 Report of Business Manager -

A, FY2025 Budget Transfer

Business manager reviewed the process for budget transfers and noted there are 2 major transfers each year - one in the beginning to align budget with projections and one at the close of the year to align budget with actual expenditures.

MOTION: On Motion of Bob Tetlow and second by Andy Przystanski

VOTED: to approve the FY2025 budget transfer. The vote was 4 in favor, Adam Emerson abstained.

104354 Report of Sub-Committee -

A. Policy - Adam Emerson spoke to the policy changes being made - first policy - Title IX Language - as a result of the Mahoud case. See Handout. Changes are vetted by legal counsel and are consistent with MA regulations. Additional changes include inclusion of AI in academic integrity policy for the High School and the cell phone policy at the Middle School. Expectations outlined in the policy are standard and are commonly followed throughout the Commonwealth. This will improve the ability of the staff to hold students accountable for use of cell phones during school hours.

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Milne and second by John Duval

VOTED: to approve the policy changes as outlined in the Handbook Update document. The vote was unanimous.

A. Open School Committee Seat - Cheshire - Tracey Tierney

Erin introduced Tracey to the board. Tracy gave some background to her connections to the school and residency in the town of Cheshire and also her background in education as a teacher and most recently as the principal at Savoy School. Erin Milne asked what experience she has with school committees and the responsibilities of a member. Tracey has attended all the Savoy School committee meetings and is familiar with the process and responsibilities of the board. In regards to our district, she is looking forward to conversations around regionalizations and also knows the importance of schools within towns and the budget process. Adam asked how Tracey might respond to the common criticisms of our budget in the towns. She spoke of a recent experience where she had overheard a conversation about the school budget. She feels communication is key and that getting the word out in the proper channels will make a big difference. Bob asked how often she had attended town meetings and what exposure she has had with our budget being discussed over the years at town meetings and the perception of the budget to town residents. She compared her experience in Savoy to what she sees as being important in our town - presence at selectboard meetings being one of them.

MOTION:

On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval

VOTED: to approve the appointment of Tracey to the vacant seat in Cheshire. The vote was Unanimous

B. Athletic Director - Fall Sports

Jeff Puleri - spoke to each fall sport and their current numbers and upcoming schedule - see handout.. Also spoke about current co-ops and how those changes have proved to be beneficial. He also outlined projected numbers for some winter and spring sports all of which look to have decent numbers. Co-ops are successful this year but are one year agreements only and will be dependent on numbers each year to confirm continuity. League realignments were discussed. Power rankings and geography and competitiveness all drove the changes. Some sports will have more of a Berkshire County League of the past and will not have to travel as much as in years past. An athletic budget was presented for some of the more costly sports for the board to view. A goal has been for the district to purchase uniforms and not pass that cost to booster clubs and this has been happening on rotation so that all sports receive new uniforms every so many years using District funds. Gate receipts are expected to be increased with the league realignment. A new athletics website will be going live and will be a one stop shop for all things athletics. Students will be participating in the start up and upkeep of the site. Online ticketing will also be an option with the use of this site. All games on the football field and in the gym will be broadcast LIVE on the NFHS network this year. Field utilization will be a topic to discuss down the road as there are several spaces such as softball / baseball fields that are not being used. There was a discussion around officials and their availability in the coming seasons. Fred Lora spoke to the issue brought forward at a previous meeting around the access to food during sports season and asked how we are able to address the extended periods of time without access to food. Jeff is willing to discuss options but many of these issues vary by sport and also involve booster club contribution. There was discussion around the cafeteria providing something for the longer road trips and the criteria for providing that. Erin mentioned the health and wellness advisory committee which is being formed this year and that this committee could address this. It was also noted that our food service director may like to be involved. Conversation around lunch schedules and the bigger issue around children needing food within our school community took place and will be directed to the health advisory committee for further action. Additional conversation about bathrooms at the softball field we had and what options could be for the future.

Report of Superintendent -**A. School Opening Updates - Superintendent Dean**

23 new employees starting Tuesday for new teacher induction. This is a mix of new positions, retirements, non renewals and resignations. All staff reporting on the 27th for a breakfast and opening convocation in the auditorium. Superintendent Dean spoke about challenges but also accomplishments to be celebrated. Students will return to school on Sept. 2nd. All schools will report to school and remain on the same start and end schedule. The district is in solid shape in regards to vacancies and enrollment. We will have numbers to report once October 1 reporting is complete. The superintendent has created a welcome back document on the website as a one stop for all back to school information and has met with local and state authorities to plan school year drills both announced and unannounced. All maintenance related tasks completed over the summer were noted and applauded by the Superintendent. He is looking forward to this year and feels we have achieved our goal of improving and being better than the year before.

B. Summer Professional Development - Kristen Palatt

Presented about professional development opportunities that took place over the summer - more than 60 staff logged over 600 hours of professional learning. All administration participated in Leading for Change - a joint course with the Harvard Business School. Training in implementation of Curriculum as well as a range of PD opportunities around other relevant topics were taken advantage of by several members of the District. She noted that we are lucky to have several staff trained as trainers who will be able to conduct PD in house in the future. Bob asked if he could be acquainted with the Reveal math curriculum in order to see how math is now being taught.

104357 Chairman's Report - None

104358 Unfinished business -

A. Superintendent's Contract

Aaron looking for a 3 year contract - Erin, Aaron and counsel will draft something that will come before the committee for a vote at a future meeting

B. Finalize Strategic Planning Retreat (September 13th or September 20th)

Erin asked for committee input and availability for the retreat date. Consensus for meeting the 20th - will utilize the glen meeting space if available. Time TBD. This will be a working meeting where the public can observe. Meeting will need to be posted.

C. Resolution to Appoint Representatives to Exploratory Working Group on Regionalization

Erin gave background on the need for this vote - what the responsibilities would be of these individuals. All 3 participating districts would be putting forth this same resolution to be consistent. Work of this group should be complete by October and then a full committee will be formed to complete tasks outlined by the exploratory working group.

MOTION: On Motion of Erin Mine and second by John Duval

VOTED: to authorize the chair to appoint 2 members of the school committee to the exploratory working group. The vote was unanimous.

104359 New Business -

A. Authorization change and title to Assistant Superintendent and approval of contract

The superintendent spoke about the history of Kristen Palatt's role and the work she has done in the past and role she has taken on in recent years. This title is more inline with the actual work she is doing. A change in title also allows for her to participate in organizations such as MASS and benefit from all that those groups offer. A director does not have access to these groups the way an administrator does. Going into year 5, the scope of work and responsibility in combination with the grant funding the position has supported over that time has increased. Ability to supervise is also a key change in the role. Structurally and in regards to responsibility, there will be minimal changes. This change is being made to honor the work that is being done and that this work falls in the bucket of an administrator and not that of a Director. Bob expressed the need for chain in command and wanted to be sure there was not going to be an additional load of work being placed on this role that would cause overload. Adam agreed that this is a deserved change in title and the staff has expressed their support in the position and the work she does, Bob asked for clarification on an article 13 of the contract and questioned the salary increase language around increases.

MOTION: On Motion of Andy Przystanski and second by Fred Lora:

VOTED: to approve the change in title and contract for the Assistant Superintendent. The vote was Unanimous

- B. Fred requested that SRO be put on a future agenda for discussion. Another item for a future meeting from Fred would be discussion about graduation and class night ceremony improvements - it was noted that this is more operational than policy but the committee can have a conversation as to how we recognize staff in a public setting. Fred also would like the Fire Marshall visit to be put on the agenda for a future meeting

104360 Action Items - None

104361 For the Good of the Order

Members welcomed Tracey to the committee and wished the students and staff well in the new school year. They all congratulated Kristen in her role and are supportive of her change in title.

MOTION: On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Andy Przystanski:

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Erika Snyder, Recording Secretary