New Hartford Public Schools

Board of Education Regular Meeting

7:00PM on Tuesday, September 16, 2025

(Virtual Only)

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

Board Members: Penny Miller (Board Secretary); Erik Perotti; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell; Deirdre Tindall and Kristin Young

Board Members Absent: Meagan Albert

Additional Present: Sara Voghel (Executive Assistant to the Superintendent) and other members of the public

Chairman Timothy Klepps called the regular meeting (virtual only) to order at 7:00PM.

A. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Order of Business

C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment

Two individuals (*Jeffrey Linton and Carmen Neale*) from the community have expressed interest in participating in the "Joint Task Force".

D. Superintendent's Report

For the current school year 2025-2026 there are (437) students in total, (21) of those are new enrollment. (5) students are in grades 1-2 and (16) students in grades 3-6. The security camera project is in progress with completion estimated by the end of October.

a. Investment in School Infrastructure *(see attached presentation)*

The cafeteria floor, which is also used for the gymnasium at Ann Antolini School, has been replaced. The floor was pulled up, scrapped down, blasted, sanded, then epoxy was applied for moisture mitigation and then the floor was replaced or "rolled out" and there is a warranty in place. This was funded by COVID funds in a cafeteria account.

The district utility van used by school custodians has been upgraded.

b. Update RFP Task Force

Yesterday (Monday September 15, 2025) was the deadline for companies/firms to submit proposals, Mr. Sousa stated he received three. The next step will be to schedule a time within the next week for interviews with the firms who submitted proposals. These interviews will be with Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa, Chairman Timothy Klepps (*BOE*), Chairwoman Kerry Guilfoyle (*BOF*) and First Selectman Daniel Jerram (*BOS*). Once they have reviewed the three submitted proposals they will proceed to selecting the firm/professional.

Board Member Thomas Buzzi joined the virtual meeting at 7:12PM.

E. Board of Education Chair's Report

a. Community Interest - "Joint Task Force"

Chairman Timothy Klepps stated again there are four individuals from the community who are interested in participating in the joint task force. Those are: **Jon Puz, Samantha Wald (*NH PTO President*), Jeffrey Linton and Carmen Neale**. The community selection is unknown currently. The Board of Education has spoken about having two individuals: (1) with school-age children in the system and (1) without school-age children in the district. The selection process will begin once a professional firm is selected.

F. Routine Business

a. Approval of Minutes - August 19, 2025 (*Regular*)

MOTION by Kristin Young to approve the minutes from August 19, 2025. Second by Erik Perotti.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

b. Expenditure Report EOY 2024-2025 - Pending completion of audit

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the expenditure report EOY 2024-2025. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

c. Expenditure Report Current 2025-2026

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the expenditure report for the current year 2025-2026. Second by Timothy Russell.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

G. New Business

The first four new policies are mandatory with changes to the current law and allow for more transparency. Board Member Penny Miller brought the Board through each policy individually; any changes will be discussed at the next policy subcommittee meeting. The purpose of these policies pertains to materials that come in and out, parental rights and the involvement of parent's community. If anyone is concerned with materials/displays, there is a process to review or eliminate material. Thomas Buzzi questioned Superintendent Sousa on his reason for adding the words "mandated policy". Mr. Sousa responded his intent is to provide more transparency for the Board and the public. Erik Perotti questioned the form which would be filled out by a parent/guardian, as to why questions were deleted. Certain questions were removed because the policy subcommittee felt the questions were redundant, the questions were not going to give the information they needed. Penny Miller emphasizes there is an option to appeal. Kristin Young clarified, someone may appeal that the process was not followed but cannot appeal the merit of the decision. Erik Perotti questioned changes to number 3. Board members Kristin Young, Frank Rodenberg and Erik Perotti concluded there should be an adjustment to question three which will be revised for the second read.

The following three library policies provide the standard in which library material complaints or concerns are evaluated, reviewed, curated and removed.

a. **NEW - Policy 1312.3 Community Relations - Library Material Review and Reconsideration Policy (*1st Read*)**

The Library Media Specialist (*certified*) will review. Superintendent Sousa oversees the committee.

b. **NEW - Policy 1312.4 Community Relations - Library Collection Development and Maintenance Policy (*1st Read*)**

This policy streamlines the process of disposing material.

c. **NEW - Policy 1312.5 Community Relations - Library Display and Program Policy (*1st Read*)**

This policy covers what is on display. Do displays meet the policies of the Board of Education?

d. N**EW - Policy 5118.2 Students - Educational Opportunities for Military Children (*1st Read*)**

This policy supports military children who are enrolled and attending New Hartford Public Schools and have a family member deployed. If a student had a family member deployed, the student would be allowed to finish out the school year. The intent of the policy is to prevent disruption during the school year for the child.

e. **REVISED - Policy and Regulation 5125 - Students - Confidentiality and Access to Student Records (*1st Read*)**

The current policy is too restricted and not aligned with current practice. The revision allows for more flexibly – allows for up to 45 days largely because only certain individuals can make those copies. Board cannot comply with current regulations, having a 3-day turnaround, especially in the summer – not feasible.

H. Old Business

a. Task Force Selection: Input from Board of Education Members

Chairman Timothy Klepps asked if there was any Board of Education input on the selection process of the three individuals who will be part of the Joint Task Force from the Board of Education. Penny Miller informed board members that the Board of Finance will conduct a random draw, for example: all members' names in a hat. Kristin Young advised once a professional is chosen the Board of Education should clarify if there needs to be consideration for minorities and to have the chosen consultant assist with this process. The thought now is to have the joint task force consist of (9) members: (3) from the Board of Education, (2) from the Board of Finance, (2) from the Board of Selectman, and (2) from the community consisting of (1) individual with a student in the district and (1) without a student in the district, pending input from the selected professional who will guide the Board of Education. Frank Rodenberg felt there should be more weight in the selection process for those individuals who have been engaged and go to Board of Education meetings. Thomas Buzzi had several questions regarding the funding for the Joint Task Force. Chairman Timothy Klepps responded that the cost would need to go before the Board of Finance for approval. The Board of Finance will determine where the funding will come from and if there is a set amount. Mr. Klepps stated at this time numbers are confidential.

I. Reports

a. EdAdvance *(see attachment)*

Board member Deirdre Tindall summarized EdAdvance updates. EdAdvance is still trying to figure out cuts by the federal government for mental health. If they don't receive funding after December 31, 2025, 17 mental health counselors in the Northwest corner will be affected. EdAdvance closed WorkspaceCT because they sold the property and therefore had to move special education from one building to another because of the property sale. There is a delay in the 2025-2026 budget which has been pushed to the November meeting. Deirdre Tindall noted the general assembly discovered shortly after the session in June 2025, 190 million

dollars in new revenue, where that money will go? Deirdre brought this to the board's attention to investigate further to see if this will affect the current budget.

J. Public Comment - (For Agenda Items Only)

K. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 7:53PM. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

Recorded Reg. & Special BOE meetings will be posted to:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-_ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg

Attachments:
Investment in School Infrastructure_Floor and Van
Jeffrey Linton – Email 8-21-2025
Carmen Neale – Email 9-9-2025
EdAdvance – The Advance: News from EdAdvance!