

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Special Meeting
5:00PM on Thursday, January 15, 2026
Ann Antolini School

Present: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chair Timothy Klepps; Vice Chair Kristin Young

Board Members: Thomas Buzzi; Penny Miller (Secretary); Erik Perotti; Jon Puz; Frank Rodenberg; Timothy Russell

Absent: Kirby Morante

Also present: Kelly Carroll, Michael Lynch, Heather Mathes, Sara Voghel, Jeffrey Linton, Carmen Neale, Charlie Neale and Karen Griswold-Nelson

Timothy Klepps, Chair of the NHPS Board of Education, called the special meeting to order at 5:02PM.

- A. Pledge of Allegiance**
- B. Order of Business**
- C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment**

Correspondence from Jay Bailey

D. Superintendent's Report

a. Advocacy Letters

The New Hartford Public Schools leadership group has been busy writing advocacy letters expressing the needs of the school district. Letters have been sent to Jeffrey Beckham regarding the DRIP program, also to the Bond Commission, Mark Anderson and Paul Honig. These letters were written based on the concern of what wouldn't be funded by the Bond Commission. DRIP grant funds are approximately \$47,000 and will be received by the end of the year, which was unanticipated. DRIP is for small projects in the school district. Other letters were advocating for the mental health grant to be sustained, which was cut by the federal government. EdAdvance had received a grant for 8 million dollars for the course 5 years, which supported mental health in the school district among many other districts. This grant has been discontinued, which the letters advocate for this grant to be restored. There are proposed cuts by the House of Appropriations Committee. There are advocacy letters to Senator Chris Murphy and others stating any cuts to Title 1, Title 2 or Title 3 funding is unacceptable as it has a direct impact on students. The SEED grant was unanticipated and is approximately \$50,000 to help support Special Education and new hires. Letter to Superintendent Steven Lepage—Mr. Sousa is very thankful to Superintendent Mr. LePage at Region 7, they allowed New Hartford to retain the funds which were supposed to be shared overall to offset the cost of Special Education. The State failed to think about Regional School Districts and how the funding would be spread out.

b. School Facility Utilization Study Updates (*Silver Petrucelli & Associates* or SPA)

There have been two meetings to date. The first meeting was a meet and greet to discuss deliverables, the tentative timeline and data collection. SPA has collected architectural designs, mechanical reports and more. They have established dates for the School Facility Utilization Task Force. The second meeting with SPA was specifically regarding enrollment projections and collecting all the necessary reports. The timeline for enrollment projections is within two months. SPA contracted with another company to provide the enrollment projections. There is a student privacy agreement with the company to protect the student's privacy. Enrollment projections are a part of this study as well as used in grants, construction and recuperating funds.

There is a designated email for the task force: nhtaskforce@newhtfd.org

The first meeting for the School Facility Utilization Task Force is Thursday January 22, 2026 (7:00PM) at Ann Antolini School. The meeting is a meet and greet, discussing the goals of the task force. The School Facility Utilization Task Force meetings are from January to June 2026, skipping July and August, then scheduled to meet again from September to December 2026. Superintendent Sousa reviewed the tentative task force timeline. Chairman Klepps and Mr. Sousa, clarified the School Facility Utilization Task Force

does not have the authority to make decisions, rather they will make recommendations to the Boards. The Board of Education has also established a tab on the New Hartford Public School website, which will contain all task force information:

<https://www.newhrtfd.org/board-of-education/school-facility-utilization-task-force>

Frank Rodenberg inquired if there is a different/better way of getting feedback from the community sooner in the budget process. The Community Outreach Subcommittee has discussed this at their meetings.

- c. **Budget Overview**
Superintendent Sousa reviewed the budget timeline. The current requested budget increase based on a very broad overview is a 5.25%. Budget assumptions that create this increase are: inflation/cost of living, employee healthcare, transportation, decrease in Excess Cost Grant, and contingencies. The Regular Board of Education meeting on February 3, 2026 will be the Superintendent's Budget Proposal.
- d. [Tools for School Checklist](#) Tools for School is required by legislation, to ensure the schools are safe and have everything required by the Federal EPA, which are completed every year. Tools for School reports are available online. Indoor Air Quality & HVAC are also completed and posted.
- e. [Proposed BOE Regular Meeting Schedule Aug 2026 - Jun 2028](#) The Board Retreat has been scheduled later to be after the holidays. There are additional meetings scheduled, January 5 & 19, 2027 & January 4 & 18, 2028 to have budget season begin earlier to have more time for community input.

MOTION by Penny Miller to accept the Board of Education Meeting Schedule from August 2026 through June 2028. Second by Jon Puz.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

- f. [Proposed 2026-2027 School Calendar](#)

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the 2026-2027 School Calendar. Second by Timothy Russell.

Erik Perotti, questioned having Professional Development on November 3 (*Election Day*), rather than the day before, to align with Region 7. Erik Perotti suggests the Professional Development Day be on Election Day. Jon Puz questioned if the first day of school will definitely be Wednesday August 26, 2026, Mr. Sousa said he would not suggest using the day definitively until the calendar is approved by the Board.

Penny Miller retracts her MOTION.

MOTION by Penny Miller to table the Proposed 2026-2027 School Calendar until the February 3, 2026 Board of Education meeting. Second by Timothy Russell.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

The Pre-K program continues to grow with several new students. The New Hartford Public Schools is entering a free of cost with CONN-OSHA as a preventive and proactive measure to look for safety concerns. The reason the CONN-OSHA came to light was because OSHA made a surprise visit to Region 7. CONN-OSHA will determine if there are any problems and allow time to fix those before issuing fines. Superintendent LePage shared the OSHA visit with other Superintendents. OSHA's five-year plan is to have a surprised visit at to two schools per year. The DRIP grant could be used to fix any safety concerns CONN-OSHA finds within the schools.

E. Board of Education Chair's Report

- a. **Cancellation of April 7, 2026 Regular Meeting**
There is a conflict with the Board of Finance meeting during budget season.

MOTION by Penny Miller to cancel the April 7, 2026 Regular Board of Education meeting. Second by Jon Puz.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

b. Task Force Representatives

The New Hartford Board of Education must appoint three members from the Board of Education and two members from the community to the School Facility Utilization Task Force. The Board of Finance members appointed are: Kerry Guilfoyle and Ben Witte. The Board of Selectman members appointed are: Mary Beth Greenwood and Alesia Kennerson. The School Facility Utilization task force meetings are public for anyone to attend.

The Board of Education previously decided to appoint two community members who consist of: (1) individual with children in the school district (Samantha Wald is the only individual interested with children in NHPS) and (1) individual without children in the school district (Carmen Neale and Jeffrey Linton have expressed interest).

See Motion & Votes

F. Routine Business

- a. **Approval of Minutes** - *November 11, November 25, December 15 and December 17, 2025*

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve meeting minutes from November 11, November 25, December 15 and December 17, 2025. Second by Penny Miller.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes**

- b. **Expenditure Report**

MOTION by Timothy Russell to approve the Expenditure Report. Second by Erik Perotti.

In accordance with Section 36 of Public Act 25-93 requiring the Superintendent to report on the non-lapsing fund, the non-lapsing fund currently stands at \$217,452, the \$28,500 contracted amount for SPA will be taken from this amount.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes**

G. Old Business

- a. REVISION - Policy 5151 - Students - Child Identification Gifted and Talented (*2nd Read*)

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve Policy 5151 - Students - Child Identification Gifted and Talented. Second by Jon Puz.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes**

- b. NEW - Policy 6172.1 - Instruction - Gifted and Talented Students Program (*2nd Read*)

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve Policy 6172.1 - Instruction - Gifted and Talented Students Program. Second by Jon Puz.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes**

- c. NEW - Policy 5131.111 - Students - Video Surveillance Cameras in Schools (*2nd Read*)

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve Policy 5131.111 - Students - Video Surveillance Cameras in Schools. Second by Penny Miller.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes**

- d. REVISION - Policy 6161.3 - Instruction - Comparability of Services (*2nd Read*)

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve Policy 6161.3 - Instruction - Comparability of Services. Second by Penny Miller.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

- e. REVISION - Policy 3323 - Business/Non-Instructional Operations - Soliciting Prices/Bidding Requirements (*2nd Read*)

MOTION by Thomas Buzzi to approve Policy 3323 - Business/Non-Instructional Operations - Soliciting Prices/Bidding Requirements. Second by Penny Miller.

UNANIMOUS
Motion Passes

H. Public Comment - (For Agenda Items Only)

I. Reports

- a. EdAdvance

Deirdre Tindall (prior Board Member) was the New Hartford Board of Education member acting as the representative to EdAdvance, Board of Directors. The Board of Education needs to appoint a replacement. Board Members Penny Miller and Kristin Young have expressed interest.

See Motion & Votes

J. Adjournment

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 6:06PM. 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:

Jay Bailey Correspondence

NHPS – School Facility Utilization Tentative Timeline

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1768574064/newhtfdorg/xbi3ei7hm44p6eeltqfe/NewHartfordUtilizationTentativeTimeline01132026.pdf>

New Hartford Utilization Timeline – Status Tracking

<https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1768574195/newhtfdorg/qt5raberwnsxj2cd70v/NewHartfordUtilizationTimelineTracking.pdf>

School Facility Utilization Task Force Meeting Dates

Budget Timeline & Assumptions

BOE Regular Meeting Schedule Aug 2026 – Jun 2028

Invitation to Board of Finance from NH BOE – Budget Workshops

Linton, Neale and Wald Correspondence