

S.C. MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee

School Committee Meeting

Monday, January 12, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.

Hoosac Valley High School, Resource Center, 125 Savoy Road, Cheshire, MA

PRESENT: Erin Milne, John Duval, Robert Tetlow, Fred Lora, Tracey Tierney, Jen Solak, Adam Emerson

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Aaron Dean

104410 **Call to Order**
Vice Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:31

104411 **Public Comment or Questions**
None

104412 **Approval of Minutes - December 08, 2025**

MOTION: On Motion of Fred Lora and second by John Duval
VOTED: To approve December 8, 2025 meeting minutes The vote was unanimous.

104413 **Report of Business Manager**
 A. Accept donations - ACE and Barrett Foundation grant awards

- The Committee reviewed ACE Foundation grants supporting classroom-based instructional projects (up to \$2,000 per award).
- Grant criteria include educational value, enhancement of student learning, and appropriateness for grant funding.
- Nearly all applicants in recent years have received funding.
- Awards were finalized in late fall, with checks distributed in December.
- The Committee also reviewed a Barrett Foundation award to support the purchase and replenishment of middle school band instruments for students with financial need.
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MOTION: On Motion of Tracey Tierney and second by Jen Solak
VOTED: To accept donations The vote was unanimous.

104414 **Report of Sub Committees**
 A. Negotiations - Brief overview of the teacher negotiations process

- The subcommittee reported on preliminary discussions to initiate negotiations with the teachers' association.
- Proposed ground rules and the general negotiation process were reviewed.
- A tentative first meeting date of January 26 was discussed.
- The goal is to complete negotiations by early June to allow for a contract effective July 1.
- Both parties indicated readiness to begin.

 B. Regionalization Study Group Update - Timeline and RFP process for study

- An update was provided on the issuance of Requests for Proposals for a regionalization and shared-services study.
- Phase one will focus on data collection related to enrollment, demographics, programming, funding, and resources.
- Consultants will develop three to four potential models outlining governance, operational, and financial implications.
- Community and stakeholder engagement will be included.
- The preliminary RFP working group has completed its work; a steering committee will guide the next phase.

 C. Wellness Updates

- The Committee received an update on revisions to the district wellness plan, last updated in 2013.
- Revisions are required to align with state and federal guidelines.

- Areas under review include nutrition standards, food service, physical education, classroom celebrations, and student food allergy considerations.
- The Wellness Committee includes staff, parents, and students.
- A revised draft will be brought forward for School Committee review and approval.

D. Maintenance Updates

Roof Project

- Administration reported the state funding application will not open until January next year.
- The project is now anticipated as a potential 2028 capital item.
- This update will be shared with local select boards.

Parking

- Parking and safety concerns during athletic events were discussed.
 - Increased police enforcement has improved compliance.
- Additional communication has been sent to families.

Facilities Update – Middle School Gym/Basketball

- Ongoing concerns with the middle school gym basketball hoop system were reviewed.
 - Options included reinforcing existing beams or installing standalone hoops; estimated costs (~\$120,000) were deemed prohibitive given budget constraints.
- Administration will meet with relevant staff and coaches to determine next steps.
- A decision is needed for the remainder of this season or planning for next season.
 - External fundraising was discussed but not included in budget assumptions.

104415

Communications

- Administration outlined district onboarding and training procedures in response to community questions.
- All employees and volunteers complete CORI checks and fingerprinting prior to working in district buildings.
- The option of Department of Children and Families (DCF) Central Registry checks was discussed and may be referred to the Policy Subcommittee.
- All staff complete mandatory annual compliance training, including FERPA, Title IX, workplace safety, and professional conduct.
- Training completion is tracked and monitored.
- Substitutes: safety and procedural guidance; additional mentoring identified as an area for improvement.
- Paraprofessionals: shadowing and specialized training as required.
- Teachers: statutory new teacher induction and mentoring.
- Secretaries, custodians, food service staff, and administrators: role-specific training and required certifications.

104416

Report of Superintendent

- Administration shared an early update on FY budget development.
- Special education remains a major cost driver (274 IEPs, 8 out-of-district placements with more anticipated, ~50 students with ASD).
- Planning focuses on program structure, in-district capacity, and tuition costs; Tier II intervention support is a concern.
- Budget assumptions depend on Chapter 70 aid, charter reimbursement, school choice revenue, and projected health insurance increases (15–20%).
- House 1 figures expected January 26, with further discussion in early February.
- Advocacy priorities include full funding of the Special Education Circuit Breaker and Rural Aid.

104417

Chairman's Report - none

104418

Unfinished Business

- **Superintendent's contract**
 - The Chair reviewed proposed changes to the Superintendent's contract.
 - Proposed terms include:
 - a. Salary increases of 2% for the current year and 3% for each of the following two years
 - b. Retroactive implementation to July 1
 - c. Increase in annual vacation leave from 25 to 30 days
 - d. Transition to a \$100 monthly local travel allowance with mileage reimbursement for non-local travel
 - e. Replacement of a district-issued phone with a mobile device allowance
 - Public records implications of using a personal device were discussed and acknowledged.
 - Legal counsel reviewed the proposed changes with no objections noted.

MOTION:

On motion of John Duval second by Tracey Tierney

VOTED: To approve the proposed superintendent contract changes as presented. The vote was unanimous.

PR Subcommittee – Graduation & Employee Recognition

- Current PR Subcommittee members: Jen, Erin, Tracey
- Incorporating recognition of retirees at graduation or Class Night. Opportunities for School Committee members to participate in scholarship presentations (e.g., Jim Bigelow Scholarship).
To be added to the next PR Subcommittee agenda for development of recommendations in time for graduation.

104419

New Business

- **Appointment of members to the Regionalization Study Steering Committee**
 - Two applicants: Cassandra Rochelo (Adams) and Jessica Chittenden (Cheshire).

MOTION:

On Motion of Erin Milne and second by Fred Lora

VOTED: To appoint the two applicants. The vote was unanimous.

- **Appointment of Final Committee Member.**
 - Authorize Erin and Aaron to fill final seat, prioritizing municipal representation
 - Full committee representation before the first meeting in early February.

MOTION:

On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by John Duval

VOTED: To designate authority to Aaron and Erin to appoint final committee member. The vote was unanimous.

- **Regional District Agreement Revisions**
 - Vote to adopt recommended revisions to Regional Agreement Amendment
 - Above-minimum town assessments move from single-year enrollment → five-year rolling average to reduce funding volatility.
 - Legal/statutory clarifications and definition of annual maintenance & operating budget (excludes grants/revolving funds).
 - Agreement approved by Committee; to be presented to towns for approval, then submitted to Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education.

MOTION:

On Motion of John Duval and second by Jen Solak

VOTED: To adopt recommended revisions to Regional agreement amendment. The vote was unanimous.

104420

Action Items - none

104421

For the Good of the Order

- Heroes of the Month were the Hoosac Valley Girls Basketball Team, recognized for mentoring young players, demonstrating leadership, and contributing to community youth programs by Fred Lora.
Rob attended the Middle School Christmas performance; praised student musicians and stage helpers.
Erin Milne attended the December career fair. It had strong student preparation, engagement, and exposure to various career pathways.
Adam visited the art show and appreciated student artwork and collaborative presentation in a professional setting.
Positive feedback on student involvement, real-life connections of school programs, and community engagement.

MOTION:

On Motion of Adam Emerson and second by Tracey Tierney

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8: 05 p.m. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Mary Lisa Irizarry, Recording Secretary