

S.C. MINUTES

Hoosac Valley Regional School Committee

School Committee Meeting

August 24, 2026 - 6:30 p.m.

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

PRESENT: Fred Lora, Tracey Tierney, Erin Milne, Robert Tetlow, John Duval, Daniel Barnes, Kyle Malloy,

ABSENT:

OTHERS: Aaron Dean, Kristen Palatt

104487 – Call to Order

Fred Lora called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

104488 – Public Comment or Questions

There were no public comments or questions.

104489 – Approval of Minutes

June 15, 2026

The June 15, 2026 minutes were approved.

MOTION: On motion of Erin Milne and second by Tracey Tierney

VOTED: To approve the minutes of June 15, 2026. The vote was unanimous.

104490 – Report of Treasurer/Business Manager

A. SC Order – FY26 Budget Reclassification

The FY26 budget reclassification was reviewed. The reclassification is a standard year-end process used to align budget accounts with actual expenditures and ensure that accounts do not show negative balances.

The Department of Revenue certified the FY26 R&D amount at \$862,969, which represents approximately 3.6% of the FY27 budget.

MOTION: On Motion by John Duval and Second by Daniel Barnes

VOTED: To approve the FY26 budget reclassification and transfer plan. The vote was unanimous.

104491 – Report of Sub Committees

NOTE: Communications moved ahead of the Subcommittee reports to allow the scheduled presenters to speak first and in the interest of time. The Committee approved the change. The Subcommittee reports followed Communications.

A. Policy – Updated Policies and Handbook

The Policy Subcommittee reviewed several handbook and policy updates, including physical restraint, time-out and seclusion, the Reset Program, health and medical requirements, attendance procedures, and alcohol, tobacco, and drug policies.

The attendance policy was updated to better address chronic absenteeism, with attendance concerns to be reviewed throughout the school year rather than waiting until the end of the year.

MOTION: On Motion by John Duval, seconded by Fred Lora.

VOTED: To approve the updated policies and handbook changes. The vote was unanimous.

B. Maintenance – Summer Maintenance and Facilities Updates

The Maintenance Subcommittee reviewed summer work throughout the district, including classroom cleaning and floor work, grounds maintenance, athletic fields, repairs, drainage, gutters, and other building improvements.

The middle school basketball hoops were also discussed, including possible portable hoops as a short-term solution.

The Committee also discussed proposed lighting upgrades for both the middle/high school and elementary school. The projects would replace older lighting with LED fixtures, improve efficiency, and address lighting equipment for which replacement parts are becoming difficult to find. The projects would be supported through a grant and existing solar credits, with the cost spread over 36 months at no interest. Work is expected to take place this fall during the second shift.

MOTION 1 : On Motion by Fred Lora Second by Robert Tetlow

VOTED: To approve the updated lighting for Middle/High School. The vote was unanimous.

MOTION 2 : On Motion by Fred Lora Second by Robert Tetlow

VOTED: To approve the updated lighting for Elementary School. The vote was unanimous.

C. Technology and Curriculum – Updates for 2026-2027

The Committee received updates on technology, including Chromebook replacements, network equipment, security, and E-Rate-supported equipment. The take-home Chromebook process for students was also discussed.

Curriculum topics included grading, MCAS, AP results, literacy, attendance, and student achievement. The district is continuing to focus on literacy across grades and on using student data to identify students who may benefit from additional support and tutoring.

D. Public Relations – Goals for 2026-2027

The Public Relations Subcommittee discussed employee recognition, including possible programs recognizing longevity, retirements, and employee contributions to the district. Further details will be developed.

104492 – Communications

A. Fall Athletics Update – Jeff Puleri, Athletic Director

Jeff Puleri provided an update on fall athletics and reported strong participation across several sports.

Football has 42 players and continues as a co-op with Drury and Mount Greylock. Girls soccer, volleyball, cheer, boys soccer, golf, cross country, and Unified Basketball were also discussed.

Volleyball had particularly strong participation, with 52 students attending the first practice. The Committee discussed the possibility of developing a separate Hoosac Valley volleyball program in the future.

The Committee also discussed MIAA tournament changes, travel costs, middle school basketball hoops, and possible improvements to the athletic scoreboard.

B. HVMS Principal Introduction – Dwayne Chamble

Superintendent Aaron Dean introduced Dwayne Chamble as the new Hoosac Valley Middle School Principal. Mr. Chamble spoke about getting to know the school community, building relationships with staff and families, listening, and maintaining an open-door approach.

C. Northern Berkshire Educational Sustainability Study (NBESS) Update

Representatives from Berk 12 provided an update on Phase One of the Northern Berkshire Educational Sustainability Study. Phase One is focused on collecting and organizing information on enrollment, finances, staffing, educational programs, operations, and governance. The study does not have a predetermined outcome.

The study includes community surveys, focus groups, interviews, school committee and municipal meetings, public forums, and historical research. A community survey is expected to be released in September, with community forums planned for November and December.

The group emphasized the importance of broad community participation, including families, students, staff, residents, civic organizations, and municipal boards.

D. Lifetime Achievement Award – MASC – Adam Emerson

Adam Emerson was recognized for receiving the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Lifetime Achievement Award. The award dinner will be held November 6, and Committee members and staff were invited to attend.

104493 – Report of Superintendent

A. Personnel Report

The Superintendent reported approximately 30 new hires for the upcoming school year. Overall staffing is in a strong position, and the district is beginning the year with most positions filled.

The new Compass Program Coordinator position, which is grant-funded was discussed. The Program is designed to provide an alternative option for students who are at risk of dropping out or becoming disengaged from school, with the goal of helping students re-engage and remain on track.

The high school has also expanded its alternative program to address additional student needs. The Committee discussed the grant funding supporting these programs and the potential for future expansion if the programs are successful.

B. CPPI Grant Update

The Superintendent provided an update on the CPPI grant and related funding adjustments. He reported that CPPI funding was reduced from approximately \$1 million to \$700,000, requiring staffing and partner budget adjustments. The district may use reserve funds to maintain personnel, preschool classrooms, and services. Funding will continue to be monitored, with further adjustments possible next year.

104494 – Chairman's Report

The Chairman thanked the Committee and subcommittees for their work and continued efforts to review district operations, data, and priorities for the upcoming school year.

104495 – Unfinished Business

There was no additional unfinished business.

104496 – New Business

A. Procedures for Addressing Concerns That Come to Committee Members

The Committee discussed how concerns brought directly to School Committee members should be handled. Operational concerns should generally begin with the building administrator or Superintendent so they can be addressed through the appropriate administrative process. District-wide or policy concerns may be brought before the Committee when appropriate.

a. BHC – School Committee-Staff Communications

The Committee discussed appropriate communication between School Committee members and staff and the importance of following the proper channels when addressing concerns.

104497 – Action Items

None.

104498 – For the Good of the Order

The Committee welcomed the new middle school principal and expressed appreciation to staff for their work preparing for the new school year. A bottle and can collection supporting the band was also mentioned.

104499 – Executive Session

MOTION: To enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Adams Cheshire Teachers Association, as an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the School Committee, pursuant to M.G.L. c. 30A, §21(a)(3), and to approve the June 15, 2026 Executive Session minutes. 9:04 pm

VOTED: Roll-call vote was unanimous.

The Committee entered the Executive Session and will only return to end the meeting.

MOTION: On motion of Fred Lora and second by Erin Milne.

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the Executive Session. Roll call vote John Abstained. The vote was 6-0-1

MOTION: On motion of Erin Milne and second by Fred Lora.

VOTED: To Not declassify the minutes from the Executive Session. The Roll call vote was unanimous.

MOTION: On motion to exit Executive Session.

VOTED: To exit Executive Session at 9:11 pm. Roll call vote was unanimous.

MOTION: On motion of Fred and second by Robert.

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 9:29 pm. The vote was unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Aaron Dean, Superintendent

Mary Lisa Irizarry, Recording Secretary