

**New Hartford Board of Education  
Regular Meeting – November 16, 2021  
Ann Antolini School @ 7 pm**

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc\\_QM3rfg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg)

**Present:** Chairman Tim Goff, Vice Chairman Karl Hermonat, Secretary Penny Miller, Members: Tim Klepps, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala and via Zoom Tom Buzzi,

**Absent:** Mary Stempien

**Also present:** Superintendent of Schools Brian Murphy, Bakerville & New Hartford Elementary Schools Principal Kelly Carroll, Ann Antolini School Principal Amanda Shaw, School Psychologist Jen Harris, Curriculum Specialist Heather Mathes and Director of Student Services Barbara McLean, members of the public.

Chairman Goff opened the meeting at 7:01 pm and asked that everyone stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Goff asked that we observe a moment of silence in remembering Jennifer 'Jenn' Benaitis, a previous board member, who passed away on November 13, 2021. He asked that we recognize her service to the board (2014-2019) and to the town.

Chairman Goff said there were no changes to the agenda as presented.

**Superintendent's Report**

Supt. Murphy reviewed the procedure for snow days for this year – 2021/2022. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) will not allow remote/distance learning snow days this year. The CSDE is developing standards for the next school year. Mr. Hermonat asked if the state would be flexible if there were an overabundance of snow days. Supt. Murphy said this year the state is not allowing that flexibility.

Supt. Murphy introduced Ms. McLean, Director of Student Services. Ms. McLean presented the Special Education Department development plan for the school year 2021/2022. This plan is aligned with the district's Strategic Plan and each school's development plan. A copy is available for viewing at the New Hartford Town Clerk's Office and on the school website under Board of Education

<https://www.newhtfd.org/cms/lib/CT01000055/Centricity/Domain/5/AUDIENCE%20Packet%2011-16-21.pdf>.

New Hartford District Goals/Student Services Initiatives are: Learner-Focused, Programs & Community Partnerships, Organizational Effectiveness and Cultivate Talent. The goals of the Department of Student Services are: (1) all students will be able to read and comprehend complex literary texts and information texts Independently and proficiently; (2) mathematically proficient students will attend to precision; (3) gather accurate and reliable data about social emotional needs to ensure holistic support and (4) leverage technology to take an active role in choosing, achieving and demonstrating competency in student learning goals. At the completion of her report Ms. McLean said it takes a village to support the needs of our children in district. She thanked everyone for their support and partnership in this. Mr. Klepps asked how do you take the feedback from the parents & guardians of the children into this development. Ms. McLean said in previous years parents were surveyed in a special education survey. Part of those questions were embedded into this and feedback was given on how the special education

process was going. This past year the state put out a special education parent survey and those results haven't been received yet and are not included in this presentation. Mr. Buzzi (via Zoom) asked what was the biggest impact on special education learning because of Covid. Ms. McLean responded it is a number of things. One of the most impactful was the quarantines and the length of them. Some students were out more than others. There was disjointedness and continuity that happened within education. She said they are pleased now that the state has protocols in place and additional options available to the district. The students benefit most when they are in school and in-person learning.

### **Public Comment / Communication**

Chairman Goff said in a letter from the Region 7 Supt. of Schools, Dr. Judith Palmer, that Northwestern High School has been designated a 2021 National Blue Ribbon School for exemplary high performance. Dr. Palmer said it was important to recognize that the New Hartford Public Schools played an important role in their success. She also said that our NHPS students receive a strong educational foundation that they build upon when they enter Regional School District No. 7. She acknowledged the hard work of our school leaders, faculty and staff in preparing our students for 7<sup>th</sup> grade. A copy of her entire letter can be viewed at the New Hartford Town Clerk's Office.

Tim Russell, 77 Evergreen Crossing, a father of 3 children, a husband and a police officer. He spoke on the Freedom of Choice that we all have. The school system and the Supt. of Schools are going along with the legal mandates instead standing for what is right. Standing for parent choice and the unmasking of our children. He said as parents we know what is right for our children. He said the government shouldn't be mandating that the children need to wear masks in school.

### **Consent Agenda**

**MOTION:** by Mr. Persechino to accept the Consent Agenda which included (1) October 5, 2021 minutes; Expenditure Report and Personnel. Seconded by Ms. Tomala.

*Unanimous*

### **Reports**

Ms. O'Dell Longhi presented the following policies for their 1<sup>st</sup> time read.

Policy 0200 (Mission-Goals-Objectives). The changes were reviewed.

Policy 5144 (Students/Physical Exercise and Discipline of Students). This policy is a new one. When asked what we do now for disciplinary action, Supt. Murphy said we basically follow this policy now. We are just codifying it. We don't use physical exercise for punishment. We don't take away recess unless it is a unique situation.

Policy 3542.43 (Food Service). The changes were reviewed.

### **New Business**

#### **Region 7 Committee Meeting.**

In August, Region 7 BOE Chair Ms. Molly Sexton Read, sent emails to Chairman Goff & Supt. Murphy along with the Board of Finance chairs, Board of Education chairs & Superintendents of the other feeder towns to Region 7 for a meeting. The topic of discussion was to be our efficiencies, where the districts were struggling, ways to improve between the 4 towns and Region 7. The meeting was held the beginning of September. The conversation turned to consolidation of K-12 districts. It didn't gain a lot of traction. A 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting was held on November 4<sup>th</sup> which Mr. Goff & Supt. Murphy were unable to attend but Mr. Goff believes there wasn't any further discussion on the consolidation issue. Kerry Guilfoyle, New Hartford Board of Finance, is doing an enrollment study to get a better sense of what the

financial impact will be to each town by sending the children to Regional over the next several years. At this time no future meetings have been scheduled.

### **Executive Session**

**MOTION** by Ms. Miller that the New Hartford Board of Education enter executive session for the purpose of discussing the records and reports of negotiations with the New Hartford Administrators' Association and possible action concerning a tentative agreement reached for a successor collective bargaining agreement and to invite Superintendent Murphy to join us at 7:46 pm.

Supt. Murphy said as this is the last meeting for Heather Tomala and Tim Goff, and on behalf of the board, he wishes all the best them. He thanked them both for their support of the children in New Hartford. He said they have created additional learning opportunities for the children.

Seconded by Ms. O'Dell Longhi.

*Unanimous*

Executive session ended at 8:33 pm

Chairman Goff asked for the following motion....

**MOTION** by Mr. Persechino that the New Hartford Board of Education approves the tentative agreement for a successor collective bargaining agreement with the New Hartford Administrators' Association, and authorizes Karl Hermonat to sign such collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the New Hartford Board of Education. Seconded by Ms. Miller

Discussion followed. The contract will be approved with the changes, removal of Curriculum Director, as they are not part of this contract.

*Aye: Miller, Hermonat, Tomala, Persechino, O'Dell Longhi, Klepps; Abstained: Goff;  
Opposed: Buzzi*

*Motion passes*

**MOTION** by Ms. Miller to adjourn at 8:35. Seconded by Mr. Goff.

*Unanimous*

*Respectfully submitted, Penny Miller Secretary*