

**New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Regular Meeting (In-Person)
Ann Antolini Elementary School – Library
February 6, 2024 @ 7:00PM**

PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Sousa; Chairman Timothy Klepps; Vice Chairman Thomas Buzzi; Members: Meagan Albert; Penny Miller; Timothy Russell; Deirdre Tindall; Kristin Young, Frank Rodenberg and Recording Secretary Elizabeth Domas.

ABSENT: Kelly O'Dell Longhi

A. Chair to Open Meeting: @ 7:00 PM the meeting was called to order by Chairman Timothy Klepps.

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Communications to the Board of Education/Public Comment: Chairman Timothy Klepps noted communication to the Board contains an email from Mr. Jay Bailey. Mr. Jay Bailey (575 Main Street) spoke to the Board and stated he felt if the Board of Education were to go ahead with an armed security officer there needs to be an armed security officer for each school. He made the suggestion to consolidate into two schools, then there would only be a need for two armed security officers, he is not supportive of 1 armed security officer for the three schools. Mr. Bailey stated that school buses have technology (cameras) that could be useful. Mr. Bailey feels that the armed security officer(s) should be subcontracted and expressed his support to alleviate the Board of Education of the responsibility of buying or holding liability for firearms. A request was made by Mr. Bailey to have to have opportunity for public comment at the end of the Board meetings.

D. Board of Education Chair's Report: Chairman Timothy Kelpps highly encouraged all Board members to note the meeting dates for of the Board of Education going forward, as the budget process will soon begin. Mr. Kelpps requested members to arrange their schedules to be available to attend the upcoming meetings, as participation from the Board is very important. Chairman Timothy Klepps thanks Mr. Jay Bailey for his input and for joining the Policy Subcommittee as a spectator.

E. Superintendents Report:

- 1. Student Representatives:** To give you an update on what students are doing in the classroom, in Social Studies they wrapped up learning about the industrial revolution, the students are now learning about immigration and the individuals who traveled to Ellis Island. In Science, students learned about the principles of heat transfer, convection, radiation and conduction. The students did a project to learn about the process of slowing down the melting of an ice cube. In Math, students are learning to multiply with decimals. In recess, students enjoy spending time (30 minutes) outside. If snow gear is brought students may play in the snow. Many are playing games such as kickball, basketball and football, or enjoying the playground and many of the girls like to jump rope. The cafeteria lines are fast, even on pizza day, allowing more time to eat. Some favorite meals

are Thanksgiving dinner and popcorn chicken. To give an update on the second graders in Bakerville, in art they are learning about Ted Harrison, a British painter, by creating a sunset using oil pastels. A thank you to Art Teacher Ms. Rachel Savage was expressed. In math, students are learning the base ten system, using numbers to add and subtract. In Science, students are learning about fossils, how the earth changed over time, animal biodiversity and paleontology. A field trip was taken to Dinosaur State Park. An exciting expedition that will happen this Spring, second graders from Bakerville will field trip to their new school (Ann Antolini Elementary School) to help the transition from 2nd to 3rd grade. The 5th graders will gain responsibility by assisting the 2nd graders in a tour of the school. Recently, PTO sponsored the Winter Wonderland father daughter dance this past weekend, which was a great success.

Superintendent Mr. Sousa would like to publicly announce the art show Thursday February 8, 2024, at 4:30PM at Town Hall. Tomorrow February 7, 2024, is read aloud day to celebrate the importance of literacy.

2. **2024-2025 Budget Drivers:** Mr. Sousa noted some considerations as the Board moves forward with the budget process. Mr. Sousa met with brokers (Brown & Brown) for healthcare insurance, he noted the Board of Education is expected to see a 11.6% increase to healthcare line. Federal (pandemic relief) is fully expended, about \$100,000, this money was used to hire staff and help support students. Governor Lamont has proposed cuts to the educational budget. The Board should be aware of contractual employee increases, negotiations with MERA UNIONS are currently in the works, increased student enrollment, contractual transportation increases occur every year (contract with region 7 and New Hartford together). Some offsets include grant money (Title 1, Title 4, REAP (Rural Energy for America Program), and IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) 619 and 611. The next regular Board of Education meeting is Tuesday February 20, 2024, to kickoff more details of the budgetary process, review the overall proposal, the Board will motion to receive the Superintendents proposed budget. Mr. Sousa gave a special thanks to the Policy Subcommittee for working diligently to complete items on the agenda, in preparation for first reads at tonight's meeting. Mr. Kelpps noted there are no motions regarding this discussion. He also expressed interest in looking at what alternatives there are to the budget drivers previously noted, what other options does the Board of Education have?

F. Routine Business:

1. Approval of Minutes: January 22, 2024 (Special Meeting)

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the minutes from the Special Meeting on January 22, 2024, as presented. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

**UNANIMOUS
Motion passes**

2. **Expenditure Report:**

MOTION by Penny Miller to approve the expenditure report as presented. Second by Thomas Buzzi.

UNANIMOUS

G. New Business: FIRST READINGS

1. Policy and Regulation 5142.2 Armed Security Officer – 1ST READING

The Policy Subcommittee created a policy for review at tonight's meeting. The position is an "armed security officer" or ASO. Clarification was made regarding the term "*other weapons*", this term refers to items such as a shirt, belt, hat. Other weapons does not reference items like a taser or pepper spray.

Tim Russell suggested wording be added to this policy to state an incident must be reported immediately to 911 and State/Local Police first then the Superintendent.

Thomas Buzzi suggested regular practice range time should be written into this policy to be reported and should also be added to the duties of the ASO, because practice time is still considered a discharge of a firearm.

Firearm handling and storage was a discussion at the meeting. The newly created policy allows for the Board, contracted hiring agency or Connecticut State Police, to purchase the firearm. If the Board were to purchase the firearm, liability insurance would also need to be purchased with CIRMA an insurance agent. The ASO Policy drafted by the Policy Subcommittee allows for three different avenues for the Board to take.

Consensus was the Board members as a whole were not in favor of "the Board" being responsible for the purchase, storage, handling and inspection of the firearm, the Board would like this language to be left in the policy but would be the last preferred choice and all members agreed they would rather a subcontracted agency or CSP to be an option first before the Board. There was a suggestion to inquire with region 7 on the topic of purchasing a firearm. Mr. Klepps noted, when referencing "the Board", what does that mean? Who is the gun registered to? More information was requested.

2. Policy 4117.6 Personnel – Exit Survey/Interviews – 1ST READING

Some changes to this policy are on the first page, previously the surveys were sent to other individuals, the change the Policy Subcommittee has made states the survey will now be sent right to the Superintendent directly. On the second page, changes to delete the "old" exit survey have been suggested, these changes are based on Policy Subcommittee feedback. The new survey includes years of service, which was suggested by Board member Frank Rodenberg. The purpose of the exit survey is to help the Board of Education understand why an individual has left their position, while making sure policies are up to date.

3. Bylaw 9323 – Construction of the Agenda – 1ST READING

CABE Policy Services, the changes in this policy are the term "*City*" was removed, the Town of New Hartford only has a Town Clerk. Additionally, the language in red was added to include the posting of meeting agendas 24 hours prior to the meeting and associated documents will be made available for members of the Board to review on the Board's website. This requirement and addition to the bylaw has always been done, the Board of Education is always compliant with this requirement. The purpose of adding this language into the bylaw is a formality to meet the criteria of Public Act 23-169.

4. Bylaw 9324 – Advanced Delivery of Meeting Materials – 1ST READING

CABE Policy Services, the same language that is purposed to be inserted into Bylaw 9323 was also added in Bylaw 9324.

H. Adjournment:

MOTION by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 7:49 PM. Second by Tim 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_QM3rfq

Attachments:

Email from Jay Bailey (575 Main Street)