

**New Hartford Public Schools  
Special Board of Education Meeting  
Antolini School  
Multi-Purpose Room**

**August 24, 2021 @ 7:00 p.m.**

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

**Present:** Tim Goff Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Tom Buzzi, Tim Klepps, Heather Tomala, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Mary Stempien, Tony Persechino

**Other-** Brian Murphy

**A. Chair to Open Meeting-** Tim Goff called meeting to order at 7.00pm

**B. Pledge of Allegiance-** The board joined in the Pledge of Allegiance

**C. Chair Select Order of Business-**

Chairman Goff opened the meeting with a statement on behalf of the Board to request respect on both sides of the board and members of the public while addressing the reopening plan and some of the controversial topics it included.

Tim Goff also went on to request a change in the agenda to acknowledge the 52 forms of communication that were received by the board from the public. While these were not read aloud, they would be included in the special meeting minutes.

**C. Reopening Plan 2021-2022**

Mr. Murphy presented the New Hartford Public Schools reopening plan for the 2021-2022 school year. The plan details the mitigation strategies in place of the reopening of schools with includes the following:

- Requirement of face masks for staff and students both in schools and on buses.
- Social distancing from 6ft-3ft (change from last school year)
- Daily cleaning and sanitizing of classrooms
- Ventilated classrooms
- Vaccinated staff will no longer need to quarantine if asymptomatic.
- Parents will screen their children every day for covid symptoms
- School district will continue to partner with the FVHD to provide vaccines for qualifying staff and students.
- All children will be offered full, in person learning.
- Distance learning will not be offered as an option this year.

Following the presentation, the board moved to a full discussion regarding the details listed in the opening plan. Some key points in the discussion were as follows-

Mr. Murphy informed the board that 70% of New Hartford staff have been vaccinated. He also explained the current mandate in place by the state requires all school employees to have their first covid-19 shot by Sept 27th or pay for weekly testing at the employee's expense.

Tim Goff asked questions to Mr. Murphy regarding masks. He asked if masks would be required at bus stops to which Mr. Murphy responded no but if a student refuses to wear a mask on the bus then DATTCO will not allow the child onto the vehicle.

Tim Goff asked Mr. Murphy to explain to the board the consequences of not wearing a mask to school. Mr. Murphy said the student would be sent to the Principal's office and would be sent home and marked as absent for the day. There would be no suspension and the child would be given homework to make up for not being in the classroom. Tim Buzzi challenged this stating that it went against School Policy #151 and disagreed with the decision made to send a child home for refusing to wear a mask stating that he would not approve a reopening plan that "discriminated" against a child who refused to wear a mask.

Further discussion followed between board members regarding the plan and if the consequences of no masks should be included in the reopening plan. Tim Klepps and Tim Goff shared their personal opinions on the relevance to the voting off the plan since the requirement of masks and other mitigations in place as a result of the current pandemic where a result of the Government and State Department of Education therefore must be followed.

**Motion-** by Persechino to approve the New Hartford Public Schools District reopening plan for the 2021-2022 school year. Seconded by Hermonat.

Further discussion followed which included Tim Goff sharing the legal opinion of Shipman and Goodwin regarding the requirement of face coverings in schools.

**Motion-** by Persechino to approve the New Hartford public Schools Reopening Plan for the 2021-2022 school year.

**Aye-** Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Heather Tomala, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Mary Stempien, Tony Persechino **Nae-** Buzzi **Abstained:** Klepps.

**Motion Passes**

#### **D. Adjournment-**

**Motion** by Goff to adjourn at 7.45pm Seconded by Hermonat..

**Unanimous**