

**New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Special Meeting
Antolini School
Multi-Purpose Room
March 16, 2023 @ 5:00 p.m.**

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCX-ZlomWmjG81dc_QM3rfg

PRESENT: Superintendent, Mr. Jeff Sousa; Chairman Mr. Karl Hermonat; Mr. Tim Klepps; Mr. Tom Buzzi; Ms. Penny Miller; Mr. Tony Persechino; Ms. Deirdre Tindall; Mr. Travis Bonhomme; Mrs. Kelly O'Dell Longhi; Mrs. Mary Stempien; and Mrs. Colleen Wipperman, Recording Secretary

A. Chair to Open Meeting: 5:02

B. Pledge of Allegiance

C. Chair Select Order of Business: None

D. Public Comment/Communication: None

E. New Business

Revisions to the 2023-2024 BOE Budget

1.) Increase staffing to meet the needs of increased enrollment in Kindergarten. (1.0 FTE and 1.0 Paraeducator).

Superintendent Jeff Sousa is asking for \$90,000 to add a 1.0 FTE kindergarten teacher with a Masters, starting at step 7 and a 1.0 FTE paraeducator. Includes family coverage for medical and dental for both positions.

MOTION by Tom Buzzi to increase budget to \$140,641 to accommodate the increased enrollment of kindergarten. Second by Tim Klepps.

DISCUSSION:

Superintendent Jeff Sousa stated that currently there are 49 Kindergarteners registered; however, there were 54 births in 2018, and typically we see an additional 8-10 registrations due to families moving into the area.. That would bring class sizes to 20 and that is too high regardless of the contracts that say teachers can teach 25 children. Superintendent Jeff Sousa does not recommend that.

**UNANIMOUS
MOTION PASSES**

2.) Increase staffing to support Special Education student needs. (1.0 FTE paraeducator)

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to add on to the budget 1.0 FTE paraeducator for special ed at \$50,600. Second by Travis Bonhomme

DISCUSSION

Penny Miller asked why we need another special ed paraeducator. Superintendent Jeff Sousa said: 1) for the students who continuously need support and help. 2) One cohort significantly impacted by covid. They could

be any grade level, but number one priority to support current 4th grade. Student needs are rising, from helping support students with IEP needs. Superintendent Jeff Sousa realizes this was not in his original budget but it should be considered due to the impacted cohort.

Aye: Travis Bonhomme, Tom Buzzi, Tony Persechino, Mary Stempien

Nay: Deirdre Tindall, Tim Klepps, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller

MOTION DENIED

3.) Increase School Staff to earmark 1.0 FTE armed security guard at \$75,000. (Survey results pending)

Superintendent Jeff Sousa presented a pie chart with the survey results. There were 395 individual emails that responded to the survey sent out.

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to add to the budget the cost for 1 armed security guard at \$75,000. Second by Penny Miller.

DISCUSSION

Penny Miller mentioned she is not comfortable spending tax dollars for an armed security guard with only 395 responses from approximately 2400 households.. Additionally, 79% of staff are not in support. She would like to recommend that the Board of Education take this to a town vote via referendum.

Aye: Tim Klepps, Deirdre Tindall, Tom Buzzi

Nay: Tony Persechino. Kelly O'Dell Longhi. Mary Stempien, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller

Abstained: Travis Bonhomme

MOTION DENIED

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to approve for submission to the Board of Finance the 2023-2024 school budget for \$9,508,338.61, with an increase of 5.19%.

Second by Mary Stempien

DISCUSSION

Penny Miller does not support this budget, the emergency repairs and legal fees are too high.. Travis Bonhomme asked if we would have to cut a lot for the percentage to go down.

Aye: Travis Bonhomme, Tom Buzzi, Deirdre Tindall, Tony Persechino, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Mary Stempien, Karl Hermonat

Nay: Tim Klepps, Penny Miller

MOTION PASSES

4.) Increase capital by \$50,000 for district wide security and safety infrastructure needs.

Needs include network, securing the buildings at a better level, upgrading the notification system. Two recent consultations have identified the same area of need.

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to add \$50,000 security safety infrastructure to the capital budget. Second by Tim Klepps.

DISCUSSION

Superintendent Jeff Sousa is comfortable with this amount to get us started for district-wide improvements. The \$50,000 is district wide. Superintendent Jeff Sousa will finalize the grant Monday to submit to the state, which we are hopeful to get. This would be in addition to the \$50,000.

UNANIMOUS MOTION PASSES

5.) **Increase capital by \$17,000** for district wide asbestos inspection, laboratory testing and begin planning for removal of all asbestos.

Phase 1 would be to test suspectful harmful asbestos items in all three schools. Phase 2 is to go out to bid to remove that asbestos and then apply at the state level so that we would not have to go through yearly inspections which cost us \$10,000 yearly. This would bring capital to \$171,000.

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to add \$17,000 to the capital budget for asbestos inspection. Second by Tom Buzzi.

DISCUSSION

Tim Klepps proposes postponing until next year due to all the increases. Karl Hermonat reiterated that we are already paying \$10,000 yearly. Deirdre Tindall wants to make sure it is not hurting our children and staff. Tim Klepps will provide Superintendent Jeff Sousa with the local NH resident that works with asbestos abatement.

Aye-Travis Bonhomme, Tom Buzzi, Deirdre Tindall, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller
Nay - Tim Klepps, Tony Persechino, Mary Stempien
Kelly not present for vote.

MOTION PASSES

F . Adjournment

MOTION by Karl Hermonat to adjourn at 6:24.

Second by Penny Miller

UNANIMOUS

Respectfully Submitted by:

Colleen Wipperman
Recording Secretary