

**New Hartford Public Schools
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, February 2, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Antolini School – Multi-Purpose Room
530 Main Street, New Hartford, Connecticut**

PRESENT: Josh Adams, Jen Benaitis, Stacie Cull, Cindy Duval, Sue Lundin, Penny Miller, Mary Misiorski, Pat Spaziani, Jen Zenuh.

ABSENT: None.

1. CHAIR TO OPEN MEETING:

Chairman Sue Lundin called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Lundin explained that she has invited Building Committee member Denton Butler to speak first as he was seeking to present information regarding the second phase of the window replacement/code updates currently underway at Antolini School.

MOTION: Ms. Pat Spaziani, Mr. Josh Adams second, **to adopt the following resolution: The Board of Education hereby approves the Ann Antolini School Window Replacement, ADA Upgrades, and HVAC State Project No. 092-0038 EC/CV plans, project manual, and cost estimate dated January 25, 2016; unanimously approved.**

Ms. Lundin reported, to the very full room, that rules for public comment will remain the same except that the duration will be extended to thirty minutes. She noted that if at the conclusion of thirty minutes, if there are people that remain without having the opportunity to comment, she would seek a motion from the Board to extend the time further. She also explained that the role of the board during Public Comment is to note the comments heard, but not to respond to questions.

Ms. Chris Barbaret of 19 Deer Run, and Administrative Assistant at Ann Antolini School, commented that up until last week she had assistance, for three hours per day, during the busiest times of student arrival and dismissal, in the main office under a Memo of Understanding with the paraprofessional's union. She noted that this help was through that of an Instructional Assistant from that unit. She noted that she has learned that this position will be eliminated in this year's budget. Ms. Barbaret opined that this decision will compromise school safety and the efficient running of the office.

Ms. Karen Schaller of 19 Shady Brook Road Extension read aloud a correspondence to the Board detailing a recent fall her 9 year old daughter incurred from the top of the slide at Antolini School. She relayed how events unfolded, the injuries sustained and the overnight stay at the hospital that resulted in her daughters T7 vertebrae fracture. She noted that she has received opinions that the initial staff response that occurred at Antolini was not the appropriate or medically recommended response for a fall over three feet, opining that her daughter is fortunate to not have incurred additional injuries as a result of that response. Finally, she urged the Board to initiate a review by a school medical advisor of all the procedures related to first aide medical care to ensure they follow the most current recommendations for response and care to pediatric medical situations and that the procedures provide the lowest liability risk to the school district.

Ms. Kerry Hurley of 63 Farnsworth Drive noted that she is a member of the Hurley family who owns the Hurley Mill building that in the past year has rented space to various businesses including a restaurant and Ovation Guitar. She noted that there is presently 23 tenants renting space

including furniture, media, photography, etc. Ms. Hurley also reported to the Board that plans were recently approved to build a 130 unit housing complex in the field adjacent to this mill building. Ms. Hurley commented that new and blossoming businesses, in combination with all these new homes, will bring more families who will have children attending these local schools. She continued with other details of why she is opposed to the closing of Bakerville School.

Ms. Erika Mumm of 522 Steele Road noted that as a registered nurse for eighteen years and a doctoral candidate (May, 2016), she supports the comments and suggestions made by Ms. Schaller. She noted her disappointment in the appropriate medical assessments done that day, especially in moving a child who has fallen from that height.

Ms. Nicole Helt of 14 Gray Road questioned the rush by the Board to vote on the closure of Bakerville School. Ms. Helt requested that the Board acknowledge that alternatives resulting in cost savings exist beyond the closing of this school.

Mr. Tom Buzzi of 651 Niles Road reported that the Board of Selectman voted at a January 28, 2016 meeting to put forth a question as an advisory vote by the town on or before March 15, 2016. Mr. Buzzi requested that the Board consider the results of this advisory vote.

Ms. Kate Rieger of 2 West Hill Road noted from her tenure within the district as an educator, urged the Board to provide the facts and figures that were utilized in the decision to close Bakerville School. She noted that people in education are familiar with data driven decisions and has yet to see the data used in making this decision. For example, she questioned why it was decided that Bakerville School be closed rather than New Hartford Elementary School. Additionally, she noted that five administrators will be serving the needs of 455 students next year, with a ratio of fewer than one hundred students per. She opined that no other district in Connecticut has this type of ratio.

Mr. Glenn Philips of 199 East Cotton Hill Road reflected on the proposed 2016-2017 budget items as related to the closing of Bakerville School, specifically the effects to the cost of bussing with the closure. He also questioned the projected savings through spared plowing expenses at the Bakerville School, opining that even if it is closed, it will need to be plowed.

Ms. Amy Damboise of 24 Barberry Drive noted that she will be providing reports, complete with graphs and charts, to the Board of Selectman regarding just how successful the education in New Hartford historically has been. She also noted with regret the elimination of the Special Education position held by Jeanine Cimmino, noting what a terrible loss it will be if that plan is followed.

Mr. Karl Hermonat of 450 Cedar Lane noted that the Pre-K program is a great plan, and is only lacking in terms of having only twenty spots available. He opined that because it is limited to only twenty, it is likely a huge revenue oversight. He also opined that a Pre-K program offering both a half-day as well as a full-day option should be considered. Additionally, Mr. Hermonat noted that he is inclined to think that teacher morale has suffered over the past few years because of a disruption in the work force. Finally, Mr. Hermonat expressed concerns with property values, as a resident of Cedar Lane, the road that Bakerville School is located on and expressed concerns with trusting projection figures.

Ms. Linda Goff of 265 Maple Hollow Road expressed support for the comments made by Mrs. Barbaret. She recalled a personal experience of her own, also as an administrative assistant in an elementary school office, when it was necessary to go into a lockdown state after a student's father had murdered the student's mother. She empathized with the points Mrs. Barbaret expressed, in terms of solely shouldering the responsibility of the security cameras/panic button should such a similar emergency arise.

Ms. Goff also recollected a time when her own adult children were young students attending Bakerville School, back when there was no room for an Art Room or a Music Room. She encouraged the board to allow the town to enjoy the extra space within the schools, opining that it someday won't likely be this way.

Ms. Marsha Jones noted that as a mom who has seen her own seven children and one grandchildren pass through Bakerville School, she now feels as if she is "in a war zone", further explaining that it is as if it is a battle between the Board of Education and members of the community who do not want Bakerville School closed. She spoke about the angst and anger that she feels everywhere she goes in New Hartford. She urged the Board to reconsider, noting that an advisory vote that she explained will likely cost approximately \$5K, can be avoided.

Ms. Bridget Seyer of 155 Town Hill Road requested that the Board reach out to the college age demographic with emails to ensure that all residents, especially that segment of the population who are so plugged in electronically, and provide the information regarding the decision to close Bakerville School.

3. CHAIR TO SELECT ORDER OF BUSINESS:

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Mary Misiorski second, **to add an item under Old Business of discussion of feedback received from the public regarding the Bakerville School; unanimously approved.**

MOTION: Ms. Jen Zenuh, Ms. Penny Miller second, **to put the consolidation of Bakerville School on indefinite hold until reviewed by the Board of Education on the outcome of the advisory vote that is to be held on or before March 15, 2016; Motion failed with Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller, Ms. Cindy Duval voted aye while Ms. Jen Benaitis, Ms. Misiorski, Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani, Ms. Lundin, Ms. Stacie Cull opposed.**

Discussion occurred between board members prior to the vote on the preceding motion regarding how the motion would affect the budget process. Ms. Zenuh lobbied to request that the Superintendent present two budgets, one in assuming the scenario of Bakerville School being closed as well as one assuming the scenario that Bakerville School remaining open. Ms. Lundin noted that the Board needs to be prepared to present their budget to the Board of Finance on March 12, 2016.

MOTION: Ms. Cull, Ms. Zenuh second, **to put on hold the consolidation of Bakerville Elementary School until after the advisory vote on or before March 15, 2016; Motion failed with Ms. Cull, Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller, Ms. Duval voted aye while Ms. Benaitis, Ms. Misiorski, Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani, Ms. Lundin opposed.**

4. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

A. Presentation of Budget for 2016-2017.

Superintendent Brian Murphy presented the 2016-2017 Budget. Copies of Mr. Murphy's budget were available for distribution on top of the piano in front of the Multi-Purpose Room as he reviewed the same document through a power point presentation. Mr. Murphy read the Board's Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives after which he again reviewed Assumptions and Priorities. He reviewed Historical Budget Data, detailing the district's budget percentage increases going back to 1997-1998. Capital History was reviewed, too.

Mr. Murphy then noted that a 5.9% (\$158,854.60) decrease in Regular Education due to elimination of teaching positions and a part-time teaching position. He also explained that the Curriculum Director's salary had also been in this line item but has been transferred to

Administrator's Salary. Mr. Murphy explained that the 2.4% (\$31,409) decrease in Special Education is due to the fact that the district had three outplacements last year and is budgeting for none in the 2016-2017 budget. Mr. Murphy explained that the 32.9% (\$39,807) decrease in the Health Education account is because of a reduction of a nurse through the Bakerville School consolidation. Mr. Murphy noted that the Improvement of Instruction account is planned to increase by 9.6% (\$6,300). The superintendent noted that the Library Media Centers account is being reduced by 10.3% (\$2,124.) due to purchasing less library books through the Bakerville School consolidation. He explained that the Technology account would shrink by 1.4% (\$1,795.) due to one of the licenses not being renewed. Mr. Murphy noted that the Board of Education account is increasing by 33.8% (\$8,025.) due to legal fees causing this account to be over budget through the last two years.

He explained that Central Office is increasing by 2.9% (\$8,494.) primarily because of negotiated increases at 2.5%. The School Offices account is increasing by 20.1% (\$70,801.) because this will now include the Curriculum Director, according to Mr. Murphy. The 13.9% (\$99,848.) decrease in Plant Operations is because less money will be needed with a building, Mr. Murphy had commented. He noted that the 0.5% (\$7,074) increase in Employee Benefits is because of health benefits. Mr. Murphy explained that Pupil Transportation will likely net in a 2.4% (\$16,699) increase although there are negotiations occurring next Tuesday, February 9, 2016 with the Transportation Subcommittee.

Ms. Zenuh questioned whether the Technology Integration Specialist Position is added back into the budget after last year's removal of it, and if not, why not. Mr. Murphy noted that the board did decide to remove this. Ms. Spaziani commented that she was pleased to see a Talented and Gifted Program and a S.T.E.M. program were being added. Mr. Adams questioned whether the figure used for Medical and Dental insurance indicating a reduction of 3.5% was based on what insurance employees had taken this year projected into next year. Mr. Murphy noted it was a projection. Ms. Miller questioned how many tuitions were being paid for this year. Mr. Murphy noted there were seventeen.

In response to a question from Ms. Benaitis, Mr. Murphy confirmed that the Superintendent salary figure utilized within the budget is only a placeholder for planning purposes. Mr. Adams questioned what the impact of the budget would be if Mr. Murphy had to put the \$110K back into Bakerville School and find those cuts somewhere else. Ms. Lundin sought the roles of the administrators in terms of the budget he has presented.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller second, **to remove the January 19, 2016 Minutes from the Consent Agenda; unanimously approved.**

A. Approval of Minutes – January 19, 2016.

The January 19, 2016 Minutes should be amended on page one, under Agenda item 3.B. Bus Contract 2016-2017, to include the following: "Mr. Adams raised a point of discussion that these bus contracts are sometimes extended in order to realize a savings inside of the original contract and that trying to line up a contract that ends five years from now is tricky."

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani second, **to approve the January 19, 2016 Minutes as amended; Motion passed with Ms. Lundin, Ms. Benaitis, Ms. Spaziani, Ms. Cull, Ms. Duval, Ms. Misiorski, Ms. Zenuh and Mr. Adams voting aye while Ms. Miller abstained.**

6. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Ms. Lundin read aloud a correspondence, dated November 12, 2015, from Mr. John Misko, Jr. a United States Marine Corps. Veteran to Antolini teachers and fourth grade students acknowledging his appreciation for a presentation he attended on Veterans' Day.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discussion of feedback received from the public regarding the Bakerville School.

Mr. Adams opined that the Board has not done a great job at communicating the history, motivation, facts, and information that went into their decision to close Bakerville School and commented that the Board would likely agree with this sentiment. He proposed that the Board puts together information, including all of the companies that had been spoken to, that played into the decision and communicate it to the town population.

9. REPORTS:

Ms. Lundin reminded the Board that while committee membership was assigned and a chairman designated, the chairmanship was merely a suggestion but shall serve as the point person who should see that a committee meeting gets scheduled.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani second, **to adjourn at 9:14PM; unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela Colombie
Recording Secretary**