

New Hartford Public Schools
Board of Education Meeting
October 3, 2017
7:00 p.m./Multipurpose Room
Antolini School

Present: Josh Adams, Penny Miller, Cindy Duval, Pat Spaziani, Karl Hermonat, Jenn Benatis, Mary Misiorski, Superintendent Brian Murphy

Absent: Stacie Cull and Jen Zenuh

A. Chair to Open Meeting- Chairman Jenn Benatis to call meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. Chair to Select Order of Business- No changes to the order of business.

C. Superintendent's Report

- a. School Climate Committee Results-** Amanda Shaw presented the district results of the Spring 2017 Climate Survey, including the strengths and weaknesses from both the parent and student surveys. She also presented strategies to improve parent relationships and to improve the school environment for students. These include programs to promote peer relationships and positive behavior as well as enrichment/extension activities.
- b. District School Safety Plan Update-** Brian Murphy informed the Board that the committee met with last week to discuss recommendations for the safety plan and updated the safety plan with those recommendations.
- c. October 6 Professional Development Update-** October 6th will be the regional PD this year. Tutors will be able to attend the PD this Friday, October 6th.
- d. Primary Schools Transition Plan-** Brian Murphy discussed the smooth transition of Principal Kelly Carroll to Bakerville and New Hartford Elementary.

D. Public Comment

- a.** Marcia Jones (298 Ramstein Rd)- Voiced her opinion on the Board cutting the position of an Instructional Assistant and the burden that has placed on the teachers. She asked the board to rethink their decision on cutting this position.

E. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Minutes August 15,2017/ August 23,2017- Motion by Josh Adam, second by Penny Miller.** Both minutes were pulled and corrections will be made to August 15 to remove Amanda Shaw and Barbara McLean and add Superintendent Brian Murphy to who was present and under section 5 of the SI report the date will be changed from August 20 to August 30. The spelling of Karl Hermonat's name will also be corrected. August 23 minutes will be changed to include Cindy Duval as absent and add Superintendent in front of Brian Murphy.. **Motion** by Penny Miller, second by Mary Misiorski to approve the

minutes from August 15, 2017 and August 23, 2017 as corrected. All in favor, none opposed. **Motion passes.**

- b. **Personnel Report-** Brian Murphy informed the board that Diecy Palifka has resigned as New Hartford Elementary's cafeteria worker and Marcia Jones has been hired for this 3 hour position.

F. Communications to the Board

- a. Letter from The Wilhems- (see attached) Jenn Benaitis read a letter sent to the Board that expressed the family's disappointment in the boards decision to cut a teacher from the 2017-2018 sixth grade section.

G. Old Business

- a. **School Building Committee Update-** Pat Spaziani is a representative on the School Building Committee as a taxpayer and resident of New Hartford but not a Board of Education representative.

H. New Business

- a. **Authorized Signature Change Form/School Nutrition Program-** Brian Murphy asked for a motion to change authorized signature form due to the change in Director of Student Services. **Motion** by Jenn Benaitis, second by Penny Miller, to change the Authorized Signature Change Form for the School Nutrition Program from Paula Moradito to Barbara McLean. All in favor, none opposed. **Motion passes.**
 - b. **New Hartford/Bakerville Schools LED Lighting Project Proposal-** Brian recommended that the LED Lighting Project for New Hartford Elementary and Bakerville School be carried out and clarified that Power Point Energy will pay for the new lenses to be replaced at these schools. **Motion** by Penny Miller, second by Karl Hermonat, to allow Power Point Energy to upgrade indoor and outdoor fixtures at New Hartford Elementary and Bakerville School as presented in their plan. Those in favor: Penny Miller, Karl Hermonat, Josh Adams, and Mary Misiorski. Opposed: Cindy Duval, Jenn Benaitis, and Pat Spaziani. **Motion passes.**
 - c. **Closing of Phase One/ Antolini School Project-** Brian Murphy informed the Board that he has been informed that Phase One of the Antolini School Building Project has been completed and asked for a motion to be read. **Motion** by Jenn Benaitis, second by Pat Spaziani that the New Hartford Board of Education accepts the closing of Phase I(Project Number-0920037RR) of the Antolini School Building Project. The motion was withdrawn and it will be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Brian will reach out to the First Selectman and the SBC Chair.
- I. **Adjournment-** Motion by Josh Adams, second by Penny Miller to adjourn the meeting at 8:12. All in favor, none opposed. **Motion passes.**

(Letter read during communication to the Board)

Dear Board of Education Members,

As fellow educators and parents of an incoming sixth grader in New Hartford, we are extremely disappointed in your decision to eliminate a teacher for a class that has clearly been identified as extremely needy on so many levels. Several of you are parents yourselves and know the composition of this particular class. We are most disappointed in you because if your child were affected by the sheer virtue of his birth year, you would want him or her to have every opportunity for the best learning experience possible. Cutting a section in this grade is hugely problematic. This past spring, we explored many options for a better educational placement for our bright, capable child, so he would have an optimal learning environment, but had ultimately decided to stay in New Hartford for his final elementary year and reconsider placement again for middle school or high school. We knew if we chose a charter school that would take funds out of town and considered how it would affect others in our decision. To notify parents at this late a date that you have decided to cut a section rather than reduce administration where there would be less direct effect on the students is a both disheartening and disrespectful of our students' needs and our faith in a Board of Education.

Other towns are not responding to the state budget with such draconian measures. While there have been reductions in administration and staff in other districts, it was completed in a timely manner and not at the last minute. Now parents whose children will be affected have almost no time to make changes in educational plans, and many of the options that would have been available in the spring, may no longer be available. You could have moved staff from curriculum positions back to regular instruction or you could have reduced the superintendent's position to part time. Is there any other district in the state with a full time superintendent and two principals for three elementary schools?

You have done a grave disservice to the children in the struggling sixth grade class and, in our opinion, should have at least made known on your agenda that teacher cuts were a consideration - the agenda merely says "budget" and is misleading to say the least. I will be posting this letter on the Facebook New Hartford Moms page, so others are aware that they can speak up in behalf of this class too. We are in hopes that many more parents of sixth graders will speak out against your choice and that you will reconsider where the dollars could be saved - if curriculum were static for a year, that would have far less impact on the children who should be your first priority.

Sincerely,

The Wilhelms