

**New Hartford Public Schools
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, September 6, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Antolini School – Multi-Purpose Room
80 Antolini Road, New Hartford, Connecticut**

PRESENT: Josh Adams, Jen Benaitis, Staci Cull, Cindy Duval, Karl Hermonat, Mary Misiorski, Pat Spaziani, Jen Zenuh.

ABSENT: Penny Miller.

1. CHAIR TO OPEN MEETING:

Chairman Jen Benaitis called the meeting to order at 7:01PM.

2. CHAIR SELECT ORDER OF BUSINESS:

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Zenuh second, **to add an item to the Agenda, *NEW BUSINESS: Accept Nominations to Fill Position of Vice Chairman*; unanimously approved.**

3. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discuss and possible action regarding Personnel Matter (Board of Education member) (Executive Session).

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Ms. Misiorski second, **to enter into Executive Session to discuss and take possible action regarding a personnel matter regarding a Board of Education member; unanimously approved.**

Except for the Board and Superintendent Brian Murphy, all those present exited the Multi-Purpose Room at 7:07PM.

The Board exited Executive Session at 7:28PM, the public was permitted to return and the regular meeting resumed.

Ms. Benaitis reported that the Board will look into some training with Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) going forward as well as having specific discussions regarding training.

B. Action on Filling Vacancy on Board of Education.

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Spaziani second, **to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education with Karl Hermonat; paper ballots were cast and Board Secretary Mary Misiorski reviewed them aloud indicating that Mr. Hermonat was unanimously approved.**

Assistant Town Clerk Deb Ventre was present and swore in Mr. Hermonat at 7:30PM. He then joined the Board as a participating member with voting privileges.

4. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

A. Beginning of School Year.

Mr. Murphy reported that the school year got off to a fantastic start, with staff and students focused and working hard.

Mr. Murphy noted that the format of the district website has been changed, allowing easier navigation. He acknowledged the efforts of Data Coordinator Linda Fitzgerald in modifying the website.

B. District Website.

Ms. Fitzgerald then reviewed some of the aforementioned changes made to the district website including the following: reducing the amount of the color red that is present, adding all new pictures to the website including the building improvements at Antolini School, at least one classroom picture per school, and the inclusion of additional shortcuts or quicklinks.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Minutes – August 16, 2016 and August 25, 2016.

B. Expenditure Report.

C. Personnel Report.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Cull second, **to approve the Consent Agenda, except for the August 16, 2016 Minutes; unanimously approved.**

The draft of the August 16, 2016 Minutes was then discussed. Ms. Benaitis suggested the following change: Page 3, second paragraph, third sentence, the portion of text that reads, “...*Nominations for the Vice Chairman will be held at the next meeting...*” should be omitted.

Ms. Benaitis also reported that she had conferred with Town Clerk Donna LaPlante regarding the outcome of the vote for the Motion reflected under **New Business** on Page 5, sixth paragraph, seventh line. The text read, “...*Motion by Josh Adams, 2nd by Jen Zenuh, to support the Superintendent in efforts to balance class size including, but not exclusive to, putting three classes at Bakerville, reaching out (to) the NHE parents to transfer to BAK and reaching out to BAK parents to transfer to NHE. Those in favor: Josh Adams, Mary Misiorski, Jen Zenuh. Abstentions: Cindy Duval, Pat Spaziani, Jen Benaitis. Motion passes...*”

Ms. Benaitis reported that Ms. LaPlante had conveyed that this Motion should be indicated as having failed and had noted in her explanation that the abstentions should have counted as opposing votes. Ms. Misiorski questioned this, noting that the Bylaws should be reviewed in this regard. Ms. Benaitis indicated that she would forward to the Board an informational packet she received from Ms. LaPlante regarding “Crossing Voting Thresholds”. Ms. Zenuh questioned the practice of a Board member who is unable to attend a meeting, but would like to participate and vote via a speakerphone. Ms. Benaitis reported that she had indeed received a request for this practice for this meeting, but had conferred with Ms. LaPlante who indicated that a member has to be physically present at a meeting in order to vote. Ms. Misiorski questioned whether the information provided by Ms. LaPlante is sourced from the State Department of Education. Ms. Benaitis indicated that Ms. LaPlante refers to the Board's Bylaws and also contacts the State. It was then suggested that these items could be referred to the Policy Subcommittee and/or discussed with Nate, a representative from CABE.

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Mr. Adams second, **to table the approval of the August 16, 2016 Minutes pending the results of the information regarding Item H; unanimously approved.**

6. COMMUNICATION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Except for the letter to be discussed as part of the *Curriculum Update: Constitution Day*, Mr. Murphy reported that no other communications to the Board have been received.

7. CURRICULUM UPDATE:

A. Statewide Sexual Assault/Abuse Prevention and Awareness Program.

Mr. Murphy reported that in 2015, the Connecticut State Legislature passed a law mandating school districts to implement a Sexual Assault/Sexual Abuse Prevention and Awareness Program by October 1, 2016. However, Mr. Murphy noted the State Department of Education only recently dispensed the curriculum materials and information to each Connecticut school district a few weeks ago, without any extension of the 10/01/2016 implementation date.

Additionally, Mr. Murphy reported that the program does allow for an “opt-out”, wherein the district would have to provide an alternative educational environment for this purpose.

Curriculum Director Ericka Sacharko then addressed the Board regarding the development of curriculum for this mandate. She explained that the program being reviewed has modules that go from kindergarten through fifth grade and noted that her team would modify up for sixth grade. In response to Ms. Zenuh’s inquiry regarding making the materials available to parents, Ms. Sacharko indicated that it would be available prior to any teaching of materials and will plan to be available once the curriculum has been established. In response to an inquiry from Ms. Cull regarding whether the Susan B. Anthony Project has been contacted regarding their program, Ms. Zenuh confirmed that School Psychologist Alex Uscilla has had an initial contact with them but noted that the legislation is clear in that the program is to be an ongoing program, something that is beyond what that entity has provided in the past. Ms. Misorski questioned whether there are means to quantify the impact to districts for this unfunded mandate that will involve training for staff and materials for teachers. Mr. Murphy reported that the training, including addressing the standards provided, will occur on the Professional Development Day scheduled for October 7, 2016 as well as utilizing staff meetings between now and October 1, 2016. Ms. Sacharko noted that this was also discussed at the teachers’ convocation.

Ms. Sacharko then reviewed the state standards for this program, noting that the links to these may be found on the district’s website under “Connecticut Statewide Sexual Awareness Requirements & Standards” under the Curriculum tab. She also briefly reviewed the performance indicators to be used with these standards.

B. 2016/2017 Professional Development Plan for Mathematics.

Ms. Sacharko reported that Dr. Christine Moynihan will be meeting with each grade level team for a half-day of professional development for Mathematics.

C. Constitution Day.

Ms. Sacharko reminded the Board that they had received a copy of the correspondence from resident Tom Beaudin regarding Constitution Day. She reported that Constitution Day will be celebrated in the district on September 16, 2016, noting that classroom teachers have received a reminder email in this regard containing useful links to plan activities and lessons. Ms. Sacharko also reported that the Library Media teacher will be addressing it throughout the week of September 12-16.

8. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Maria Moore of 104 Town Hill Road praised the work of Ms. Fitzgerald in the district’s website updates.

Mr. Tom Buzzi of 651 Niles Road questioned what penalties would be levied for failing to comply with the October 1 date imposed by State of Connecticut regarding the Sexual

Assault/Abuse Prevention and Awareness Program. Mr. Buzzi also questioned what the added cost per student is likely to be for this new mandate. Additionally, he questioned the amount of instructional time this program will consume. Finally, he opined that these are matters that ought to be taught at home.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Accept Nominations to Fill Position of Vice Chairman.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani second, **to nominate Josh Adams as Vice Chairman;**

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Mr. Hermonat second, **to nominate Karl Hermonat as Vice Chairman;**

Paper ballots were cast and passed to Board Secretary Mary Misiorski who declared Josh Adams as Vice Chairman. (Mr. Adams, Ms. Benaitis, Ms. Cull, Ms. Duval, Ms. Misiorski and Ms. Spaziani cast their ballot for Mr. Adams while Mr. Hermonat and Ms. Zenuh cast their ballots for Mr. Hermonat.)

Prior to the vote on the preceding motion, Mr. Hermonat questioned his status as member of the Ad Hoc Enrollment Projection Subcommittee. Ms. Benaitis indicated that she had been waiting for the results of the Vote and would be discussing this with Mr. Hermonat.

10. REPORTS:

No business discussed.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Duval second, **to adjourn at 8:21PM; unanimously approved.**

**Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Colombie
Recording Secretary**