

**New Hartford Public Schools
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
JOINT BOARD OF EDUCATION AND SPECIAL BOARD OF FINANCE MEETING
MINUTES**

**Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Antolini School – Multi-Purpose Room
80 Antolini Road, New Hartford, Connecticut**

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jen Benaitis, Josh Adams, Staci Cull, Cindy Duval, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Mary Misiorski, Pat Spaziani, and Jen Zenuh; Superintendent of Schools Brian Murphy.

BOARD OF FINANCE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Jim Fitzgerald, Dan Charest, Reggie Smith, and Steve Tuxbury; Alternate Maria Moore.

ABSENT: Board of Education: None.

Board of Finance: Bart Baxter, Ben Witte and Alternate Bob Nilsson.

1. BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIR TO OPEN MEETING:

Chairman Jen Benaitis called the meeting to order at 7:04PM.

A. Board of Finance Chair to open and call meeting to order.

i. Board of Finance Seating of Alternates.

Chairman Jim Fitzgerald seated Maria Moore for Ben Witte.

B. Board of Finance Purpose of Joint Meet with Board of Education: In Accordance with Section 10-153d of Connecticut General Statutes, discuss and provide input for Consideration to the Superintendent and Board of Education Regarding Upcoming Teacher Negotiations.

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Mr. Adams second, to go into Executive Session for purposes of discussion regarding upcoming teacher negotiations and to invite the Board of Finance and Superintendent of Schools Brian Murphy to join; unanimously approved.

All but for the Board of Education and Board of Finance members and Superintendent Brian Murphy cleared the Multi-Purpose Room at 7:06PM.

Executive Session concluded at 7:56PM.

C. Board of Finance Adjournment.

MOTION: Mr. Charest, Ms. Moore second, to adjourn the Board of Finance portion of the Special Meeting at 7:57PM; Motion passed with Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. Charest, Mr. Smith, Mr. Tuxbury, and Ms. Moore voting aye.

2. CHAIR SELECT ORDER OF BUSINESS:

No change was made to the order of business.

3. OLD BUSINESS:

Ms. Benaitis followed up on a question that arose at the last meeting on September 6, 2016 regarding a Motion from the August 16, 2016 meeting to support the Superintendent in his efforts to balance class size including his decision regarding the distribution of students between Bakerville School and New Hartford Elementary School. During the approval of those August minutes at last month's meeting, discussion had ensued regarding how to interpret whether a motion passes or fails when three votes were affirmative along with three abstentions. At the September meeting, Ms. Benaitis had indicated that Town Clerk Donna LaPlante had advised that the motion would have failed as the three abstentions should have been construed as "no" votes. After consultation with the Board's legal counsel, Ms. Benaitis reported that the Motion did in fact pass with the vote of 3-0-3.

Ms. Benaitis reported that the last meeting of the Board had been attended by "Nick", a representative of CABA (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education). She reported that Nick had made several observations and provided three suggestions including the following: to stay on the agenda, to remind Board members to refrain from comments about personal issues, and to minimize the dialogue with the public in the course of the meeting.

4. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

A. Special Education.

Mr. Murphy reported that a legal settlement has occurred between New Hartford Public Schools and the parent of a Special Education student. Mr. Murphy noted that the Board is in a position to cover this sum in this year's budget through a combination of transferring \$40K from OTT Tuition line item and \$10K from the Special Education Transportation line item to the Tuition – Special Education line item. He explained that this will be formally requested in January, 2017.

In response to queries from the Board regarding whether a letter should be sent to the Board of Finance, Mr. Murphy reiterated that he was confident that these unanticipated costs could be absorbed but was amenable to providing formal notice. It was agreed that the letter would be sent in an effort to maintain open communications, just in case something else unforeseen was to occur.

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller second, to provide a letter to the Board of Finance now, serving as advance notice of these unanticipated costs, including the notation that this Board is likely able to absorb the costs but that a possibility exists that a request for more funds could be made; unanimously approved.

B. Smarter Balanced Assessment Results Presentation (Grade 3-6) (Grade 5 Science) District Website.

Mr. Murphy reminded the Board that the Smarter Balanced Assessment Results were received, noting that while several highlights were evident through the results, the need for improvement in areas was also clear. He explained that students in grades 3-6 completed digital assessments in English Language Arts and Math every spring. Mr. Murphy reported that New Hartford students fared better in English Language Arts and Math than the state average in every grade level. However, Mr. Murphy noted that the district did however see a decline in these areas. Participation rate was slightly higher, at 96%, according to Mr. Murphy.

Curriculum Director Ericka Sacharko reviewed the assessment results. She explained that the District has experienced a change in its DRG (District Reference Group), noting that New Hartford has gone from DRG C to DRG D. She explained that DRGs are used generally for comparison purposes, lumping schools with other schools similar in terms of income.

Ms. Sacharko and Antolini School Principal Amanda Shaw reviewed how scores are delivered in four levels: not meeting achievement level, approaching achievement level, meeting achievement level, and exceeding achievement level. Ms. Shaw noted that the writing piece was removed from the 2016 assessment.

Ms. Shaw also noted that in addition to reviewing individual scores, cohorts are also reviewed. Comparisons of New Hartford against other schools in the DRG were also noted. A decline in scores in English Language Arts from Grade 5 to Grade 6 was noted. Ms. Shaw explained that this only represents six students. Discussion followed as to why this could have occurred. Ms. Shaw explained that New Hartford has always done very well in the Writing component of the assessments and that this writing component has been removed this year.

In response to dips seen in the Math assessment, Ms. Sacharko reminded the Board that a new Mathematics program was implemented last year and reported that research indicates that slight temporary dips are not uncommon for the first and possibly second year before a rebound occurs.

C. School Improvement Plan Presentation.

Mr. Murphy reminded the Board that the framework for the School Improvement Plan had been provided last year. He explained that a more complete document has been prepared as one focus in creating this has been to establish specific measured targeted goals to improve student achievement and school climate.

Ms. Shaw along with Bakerville School and New Hartford Elementary School Principal Roxanne Pangallo presented information on the School Improvement Plan. Dr. Pangallo noted that there are district goals as well as school specific goals and strategies included.

Ms. Shaw noted that each component of the Plan has an academic goal as well as a climate goal. The family surveys used as part of this Plan was briefly discussed.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Minutes – August 16, 2016 and September 6, 2016.

B. Expenditure Report.

C. Personnel Report.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani second, to approve the Consent Agenda with the September 6, 2016 Minutes pulled; Motion passed with Ms. Benaitis, Mr. Adams, Ms. Cull, Ms. Duval, Mr. Hermonat, Ms. Misiorski, Ms. Spaziani, and Ms. Zenuh voting aye while Ms. Miller abstained.

The September 6, 2016 Minutes should be amended as follows:

Third Page, Third Paragraph, Fourth Line, the portion of text that reads, "...Ms. Zenuh confirmed that School Psychologist Alex Uscilla has had an initial contact..." should instead read "...Ms. Sacharko confirmed that School Psychologist Alex Uscilla has had an initial contact..."

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Mr. Adams second, to approve the September 6, 2016 Minutes as amended; Motion passed with Ms. Benaitis, Mr. Adams, Ms. Cull, Ms. Duval, Mr. Hermonat, Ms. Misiorski, Ms. Spaziani, and Ms. Zenuh voting aye while Ms. Miller abstained.

6. COMMUNICATION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

Jennifer Harris and Bridget Seyer

Ms. Benaitis confirmed that each member had the opportunity to read the correspondence from New Hartford Education Association Co-Presidents Jennifer Harris and Bridget Seyer requesting that a teacher be included in the Ad Hoc Enrollment Projection Subcommittee. Ms. Benaitis reported that she had contacted former Board Chairman Sue Lundin who indicated that the subcommittee has teacher representation through BAK/NHE Principal Roxanne Pangallo, a former teacher herself.

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Mr. Hermonat second, to add to the Agenda under *New Business*: *Discussion about the Ad Hoc Committee Membership*; unanimously approved.

7. CURRICULUM UPDATE:

A. 2016-2017 Professional Development Plan for Mathematics.

Ms. Sacharko reported that there will be four days of professional development for alignment of the Mathematics Assessments, noting the ones that have already taken place with Dr. Christine Moynihan. She noted that the November 8, 2016 professional development day will include the entire region coming together at Antolini with presenters from CERC to discuss the Next Generation Science and Social Studies Standards.

B. Sexual Assault Prevention Plan Updated.

Ms. Sacharko reported that the Professional Development Day scheduled for Friday, October 7, 2016 will include hosting representatives from the Susan B. Anthony Project of Torrington to hold a session for staff on the signs of sexual abuse. She noted that this free training is part of the initial steps in this curriculum. Ms. Sacharko reported that lessons will be pulled from the Health Curriculum that they deem are appropriate to meet the State's standards for this curriculum. She noted that a community forum will be held once that work is completed to allow parents an opportunity to know the content of the lessons.

Ms. Sacharko reported the necessary sequence to occur in terms of curriculum development: parental input regarding that curriculum, an opportunity to opt out of the curriculum, a review of the number of students that have been opted out by their respective families and then a final determination regarding the how and when of implementation. She noted that she will keep the Board apprised of developments along the way.

8. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

None.

9. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Benaitis distributed a list of the Board's Subcommittees and the membership for each.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Zenuh second, to approve the recommendation for subcommittee membership made by the Chairman; unanimously approved.

A. Discussion about the Ad Hoc Committee Membership.

Ms. Benaitis read aloud the September 29, 2016 correspondence from Jennifer Harris and Bridget Seyer regarding the Ad Hoc Enrollment Projection Subcommittee recommending the addition of teacher Christine Sullivan.

Mr. Adams reminded the Board the purpose of this Ad Hoc Committee: to look at current and future school population issues and come up with a recommendation on how to proceed. Discussion ensued regarding whether or not to add a teacher to the Subcommittee. With perception as one cited area of concern, Ms. Spaziani asked Enrollment Projection Subcommittee Chairman Karl Hermonat if any subcommittee members had requested that an additional person be added. Mr. Hermonat reported that with regards to perception, he had heard suggestions that a teacher should have been included as well as a resident from the Pine Meadow/New Hartford Center area. It was noted that the next Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for 6:30PM on November 15, 2016.

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Mr. Adams second, to add a person to the Ad Hoc Subcommittee; Motion failed with Ms. Cull, Mr. Hermonat, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Zenuh voting aye while Ms. Benaitis, Mr. Adams, Ms. Duval, Ms. Misiorski and Ms. Spaziani were opposed.

10. REPORTS:

A. Ad Hoc Committee Update.

Mr. Hermonat reported that the study will not be received before the November Subcommittee meeting. He noted that Ms. Misiorski will be providing some data elements.

11. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Ms. Misiorski, Mr. Adams second, **to adjourn at 9:47PM; unanimously approved.**

Respectfully submitted,

**Pamela Colombie
Recording Secretary**