

**New Hartford Public Schools
TOWN OF NEW HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 7:00 PM
Antolini School – Multi-Purpose Room
80 Antolini Road, 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 7:02PM.

2. OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:

Ms. Karin Jones of 15 Spencer Brook Road and a 4th grade teacher at Antolini School read aloud a letter submitted on behalf of the six member fourth grade team. The letter put forth the recommendation that this current grade move to fifth grade with the same number of sections thus allowing smaller class sizes. Ms. Jones noted that there are significant behavioral and learning issues within this cohort of students, noting that the staff fears a drop down again in the number of sections for this level would diminish gains made this year through smaller class sizes. She noted in this correspondence a recommendation to keep Bakerville School open.

Mr. Karl Hermonat of 450 Cedar Lane urged the Board of Education to repeal the decision to close the Bakerville School and to submit a 0% increase to the Board of Finance.

Mr. Dan Jerram of 30 Willow Lane reviewed the results of the March 15, 2016 town-wide advisory vote noting that 1275 of 1768 total votes cast that date voted against closing the Bakerville School. He noted that voter turnout represented 40% of those registered to vote.

Ms. Rebecca Carter of 785 Litchfield Turnpike read aloud a letter from her ten-year old daughter pleading to keep the Bakerville School open.

Ms. Alesia Kennerson of 198 Gillette Road read aloud a letter, opining that the amount of saving is not significant enough to warrant the closing of Bakerville School given the wide town support for keeping the school open. Ms. Kennerson put forth questions she urged the board to consider in their review of their decision.

Ms. Laura Garay of 10 Barberry Drive thanked all the boards that have worked together and requested that the Board of Education consider the will of the people as they move forward with the rest of the evening's agenda.

Ms. Donna LaPlante of 77 Stedman Road noted the silver lining coming out of these meetings is an effort at better communication and made a suggestion that meetings get recorded.

A copy of Ms. Jones' correspondence, Mr. Hermonat's correspondence, and Ms. Kennerson's correspondence are available for review in the Central Office in Town Hall in accordance with the State of Connecticut schedule for records retention.

3. CHAIR TO SELECT ORDER OF BUSINESS:

No changes.

4. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Discussion and possible action concerning the consolidation/closing of school/possible relinquishment of school to town.

MOTION: Ms. Jen Zenuh, Ms. Penny Miller second, **to rescind the motion to close Bakerville School; Motion failed with Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Staci Cull voting aye while Mr. Josh Adams, Ms. Jen Benaitis, Ms. Cindy Duval, Ms. Sue Lundin Ms. Mary Misiorski, and Ms. Pat Spaziani were opposed.**

Prior to the preceding vote, Mr. Adams had suggested a procedural change to the action, and suggested that the vote to keep Bakerville School open be made through a budget action. His suggestion included waiting to vote on rescinding the closing, and instead to appropriate funds for keeping that school open, allowing that action to go to referendum for approval.

B. Budget 2016-2017.

It was agreed that Superintendent of Schools Brian Murphy would provide to Board members updated version of the changed pages within the budget, identical to that which was presented to the Board of Finance.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Zenuh second, **to adjust the budget to keep Bakerville School open, at a cost of approximately \$210K, to add an additional first grade section, to add an additional fifth grade section, and to add a .7FTE Technology Integrated Specialist, at a cost of approximately \$139K; Motion failed with Mr. Adams, Ms. Cull, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Zenuh voting aye while Ms. Benaitis, Ms. Duval, Ms. Lundin, Ms. Misiorski, and Ms. Spaziani were opposed.**

Prior the preceding vote, discussion ensued regarding the motion. Ms. Cull sought to verify that the extra section would serve this year's fourth grade class as they become fifth graders. Ms. Miller voiced her support of this move, noting her own personal experience with this grade as a volunteer within the school's library. Ms. Zenuh supported the motion, noting the size of the current kindergarten sections this year. Mr. Adams noted that new data has emerged through the March 15th referendum, opining that the latter three components of his motion will have a stronger return on investment than keeping Bakerville School open. Ms. Benaitis noted that she understood the need for an IT position was already addressed through other staff. Ms. Zenuh noted that it was a procedural reason having to do with Robert's Rules of Order that resulted in the .7FTE position not being filled this year and noted that the principals had both provided reports that students were losing library media time due to the loss of the position. Mr. Adams confirmed with Mr. Murphy that the .7FTE Technology Integrated Specialist was not part of the proposed budget due to budgetary constraints. Mr. Murphy confirmed. Ms. Benaitis recalled that the Superintendent had reported that the position was not needed, and that the Library Media person was filling this role. Ms. Miller opined that the status of the Bakerville School remaining open or being closed does not equate to taxes going down because the building will still need to be heated and maintained. Ms. Spaziani explained that her consideration of the issue is not all about the financial implications with closing Bakerville School and instead centers around what she deems is best for the children. Ms. Benaitis explained that her opinion regarding the action involves what the teachers can do with having an entire section in one school. Ms. Zenuh noted that the teachers came forward in support of Bakerville School remaining open. Ms. Benaitis noted that not all the teachers came forward. Ms. Cull noted that her decision has been based in large part due to the lack of known plans for

what will occur with Special Education students, etc. She opined that while it may be inevitable that Bakerville School would someday close, there are too many questions presently in need of answers. Ms. Misiorski clarified that the motion was not to rescind the closing but instead to put to referendum the question of including money to keep it open through the budget.

Ms. Cull questioned whether there was health education for fifth and sixth grade students. Mr. Murphy explained that it is imbedded in a very minor way in the science curriculum. Ms. Cull also reiterated her request from the last meeting, that a review be made of budgeting for one psychologist and one social worker and the cost difference from this structure rather than what is in place now.

MOTION: Ms. Duval, Mr. Adams second, **to adjust the budget to add a first grade teacher and to add a fifth grade teacher; unanimously approved.**

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller second, **to adjust the budget to add \$210K for Bakerville School staying open; Motion failed with Mr. Adams, Ms. Cull, Ms. Miller, and Ms. Zenuh voting aye while Ms. Benaitis, Ms. Duval, Ms. Lundin, Ms. Misiorski, and Ms. Spaziani were opposed.**

5. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT:

A. Six Month Asbestos Report.

Mr. Murphy reported that EnviroMed did find small levels of asbestos in Antolini School, New Hartford Elementary School, and Bakerville School. He noted that the small amount of asbestos found in the windows at Antolini will be remediated as part of the building project this summer. Mr. Murphy noted that there was a small amount of asbestos found at Bakerville School found in the boiler room ceiling and the custodian's office. He reported that asbestos was found in the custodial closets, workroom, electrical closets, gym storage, and gym teacher's office area. Mr. Murphy reported that a remediation company will be providing an estimate but that these are minor levels that will be remediated either over April vacation or summer vacation.

B. Accountability Index Report.

Mr. Murphy explained that this is the first year that the State Department of Education is reporting using a different matrix. He reported that New Hartford scored an 89.2 as a district compared to a state average of 76. He noted that there are several metrics that go into this score, including the standardized test scores on SBAC (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium) in grades three through six, fifth grade CMT (Connecticut Mastery Test), absenteeism for students, and physical fitness scores. Mr. Murphy noted that participation with the SBAC is another component with the state's goal being 95% in Math and Language Arts.

Curriculum Director Erika Sacharko and Antolini Principal Amanda Shaw briefly reviewed the Accountability Index Report and the metrics involved in calculating the score.

C. SBAC Report/Schedule.

Ms. Sacharko and Ms. Shaw also briefly reviewed the SBAC report, noting the four achievement levels. Ms. Shaw noted that as was always the case with the CMTs, the District is exceeding the Connecticut goals. She also reported that the district outperformed most other districts in New Hartford's ERG (educational reference group).

Ms. Sacharko noted that there will be continued staff development and that they will continue to utilize the services of Dr. Christine Monynihan.

6. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Minutes – March 1, 2016.

B. Personnel Report.

MOTION: Ms. Zenuh, Ms. Miller second, **to remove Personnel Report from the Consent Agenda; unanimously approved.**

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Mr. Adams second, **to approve the March 1, 2016 Minutes; unanimously approved.**

Ms. Zenuh inquired about the staffing of a nurse at New Hartford Elementary School. Mr. Murphy reported that the posting for the position ends March 24, 2016 and that they have identified a likely candidate.

MOTION: Mr. Adams, Ms. Spaziani second, **to approve the Personnel report; unanimously approved.**

7. COMMUNICATIONS TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

None beyond the correspondence of Ms. Jones, Mr. Hermonat, and Ms. Kennerson, as previously noted.

8. NEW BUSINESS:

None.

9. REPORTS:

A. Policy Subcommittee Review Report.

i. Policy 5141 (Administration of First Aid).

Ms. Benaitis reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on February 25, 2016. She noted that advice on policy regarding Administration of First Aid was sought from CABA (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education). She noted that the subcommittee accepted CABA's recommended policy in its entirety. Ms. Zenuh confirmed that the board's physician, Dr. Curry, and school nurses reviewed the proposed policy. Mr. Murphy confirmed. Mr. Adams questioned whether the regulations governing procedures that are referenced within the policy have also been created.

ii. Policy 5144 (Physical Restraint/Seclusion).

Ms. Cull noted that Dr. Pangallo also served on the subcommittee. Mr. Murphy noted that Special Education Director Dr. Paula Gladu-Morabito has trained tutors regarding physical force and noted that all staff will need to be trained by 2019.

10. ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Ms. Spaziani, Ms. Benaitis second, **to adjourn at 8:53PM; unanimously approved.**

**Respectfully submitted,
Pamela Colombie
Recording Secretary**