

**New Hartford Public Schools  
Regular Meeting Board of Education  
August 15, 2017  
7:00 p.m./Library Media Center  
Ann Antolini School**

Present: Josh Adams, Jenn Benaitis, Stacie Cull, Cindy Duval, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Mary Misiorski, Pat Spaziani, Brian Murphy, Amanda Shaw and Barbara McLean

Absent: Jen Zenuh

**A. Chair to Open Meeting**

Jenn Benaitis called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

**B. Chair to Select Order of Business**

No changes to the Order of Business. Jenn Benaitis asked Josh Adams to run the meeting.

**C. Superintendent's Report**

**1. Update Principal Search** – Dr. Pangallo resigned from New Hartford Public Schools after an illustrious 22-year career. There were 26 applicants for the Principal of BAK/NHE position. The interview committee is comprised of one parent and teacher from each school, Amanda Shaw, Barbara McLean, and the Superintendent. Four candidates will be interviewed on Wednesday and four on Thursday. Four candidates will move to the semi-final round and will complete a performance task. The Central Office will interview those four candidates and two individuals will then be sent to the Board of Education for selection.

**2. District Personnel Update** - Amy Bardino has been hired as the Special Education teacher for Ann Antolini School. Todd Marfyak has been hired as the part time custodian, and Betsey Conner retired but will be coming back part time for four days a week at Antolini School. Director of Curriculum interviews will be conducted the week of 8/22 and 8/24.

**3. Antolini School Building Project** – The majority of work has been completed. and final work will be completed by August 22, 2017. Ms. Spaziani updated the Board about the walk-through that was conducted. There was a proposal to change all the lenses of the lights. The new LED project has completed; however, Denton Butler, Kaestle Boos representatives, and Scope Construction propose to change all the lenses in every classroom. There are 18 lenses in each classroom. The cost is \$800 per classroom and there are 20 rooms to be done. This is more cosmetic than necessary because it might change how much light you are getting from this LED system. Kaestle Boos will be doing a mockup in one classroom using a light meter, which will then determine if these lenses improve the lighting. Landscaping will be done in the fall.

**4. Primary School Class Sections** – Current enrollment stands at 450 students, which is a three-student increase from June. There will be two Kindergarten sections at each primary school. There will be two first grade sections and three second grade sections at Bakerville School. There will be one full day Pre-K section, and one first and second grade sections at New Hartford Elementary. Ms. Benaitis asked that the Superintendent start looking at class sizes to be fair to the BAK teachers. She noted that the swing line has not changed in four years. There needs to be more balance if there are three schools open. Ms. Spaziani also noted that the BOE does not decide where the swing line is. That is a decision for the Superintendent and Administrators.

**5. Opening of School** – Mr. Murphy stated that the first day of school is August 20, 2017. Professional Development for staff will be held on August 28 and 29. A welcome back letter was sent to both staff and parents.

**D. Public Comment**

*Mr. Aulay Carlson of 455 West Hill Road* read a letter to the Board discussing class size, the state scores, consolidation and implored the BOE to make the needed budget reductions in the current school budget. At the current spending levels, the town of New Hartford will see almost a 13% increase. This will cause some people to lose their homes.

*Kelly O'Dell Longhi – 9 O'Keefe Lane* discussed the "swing line". She is all for balancing class sizes, but noted that people that are moving into this Town aren't aware of which school their child will attend, or that it could change from year to year. There was no information about the swing line until she purchased her house. The BOE should do a better job of getting that message out. The outcry comes because people feel blindsided when there is a change in their child's school.

*Tom Buzzi – 651 Niles Road* noted that the BOF stated that Mr. Murphy endorsed the cuts; however, he has been in attendance at the last several meetings and Mr. Murphy did not endorse these cuts. He thinks the BOE should make it clear whether they are for or against these cuts. He would also like the BOE to provide more information about Dr. Pangallo's departure. Did she retire or retire from New Hartford? He is disturbed that someone so entrenched in this town for years, the BOE should find out why she left and what were there problems. What led to the mass exodus of such qualified Administrators?

*Donna LaPlante – 77 Stedman Road* stated that she bought her house in New Hartford before she had any children. If you buy a house in New Hartford she would anticipate that people checked out the education system. She doesn't believe that anyone has any data that children will get a better education depending on which side of the swing line you are on. What difference does it make? The only difference it makes is to the parents. One school is not better than the other. She doesn't understand why parents have that mentality. We don't sort teachers out by saying this is Pine Meadow teacher and this is a Bakerville teacher. Additionally, her children were also in classes of 22 students and it was not detrimental to them. She feels that it would better to put all classes together; i.e.: PK and K in one school; 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in another. Then you can have classes balanced in size and with team teaching.

**E. Consent Agenda**

**1. Approval of Minutes – June 6, 2017; June 20, 2017; July 18, 2017** – Mr. Hermonat asked to pull the minutes of June 20, 2017. Motion by Pat Spaziani, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Karl Hermonat to accept the minutes of June 6, 2017 and July 18, 2017. Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

Mr. Hermonat was concerned about the wording in the June 20, 2017 minutes. The intent of the letter was to reiterate to the Board of Finance that the cuts to our budget are excessive and not in the best interest of students. Motion by Penny Miller, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Pat Spaziani to amend the minutes of June 20, 2017. Unanimous. **Motion passes.** Minutes changed to reflect the following: Under **F. Old Business** change the following from: Karl recommended the BOE send a letter stating that the they have approved a recommended budget that they feel is in the best interest of the school and the town financially; to: Karl recommended that the Board of Education send a letter stating that they have approved a recommended budget that they feel is in the best interest of the schools and the town financially. Pat Spaziani made a motion to accept the minutes of June 20, 2017 as amended, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Penny Miller. Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

**F. Communications to the Board of Education**

Jenn Bentaitis read a letter from Sue Lundin stating that the Board of Education needs to make the recommended cuts to their budget as directed by the Board of Finance.

**G. Old Business**

**1. Review, Discuss and Possible Action on the 2017-2018 Budget** - Jenn Benaitis stated that the BOF would like to know why we haven't done our job to make the recommended cuts to the budget. We were asked to cut a certain amount of money by the Board of Finance and that is our job as board members. Perception is, that even with those cuts, the tax increase to the townspeople will 12.93% and the mill rate will go up 3.82%, which means the mill rate will go from 29.517 to 33.3%. Ms. Benaitis read the state statute penalty for not complying: ***Sec. 7-349. Penalty. Any officer who, in violation of any provision of this chapter, expends or causes to be expended any money of such town, except for the purpose of paying judgments rendered against such town, shall be liable in a civil action in the name of such town, and the amount so drawn from the treasury of such town shall be liquidated damages in such action against any such officer.***

Josh Adams felt the BOF is misrepresenting the value of the additional cuts. He stated that \$155,000 is such a very small percentage of what the increase to the budget would be.

Karl Hermonant stated that it is very unfortunate that we can't have a discussion with the BOF, and to have them make a draconian statement about a number based on formula, and not compromising to find some common ground, is disturbing.

Pat Spaziani feels that these cuts do not impact education and would bring us to the \$295,497 that the BOF is looking for.

Stacie Cull suggested putting the Director of Curriculum position on hold.

Penny Miller suggested cutting the Superintendent's position to part time; cutting the Curriculum Director part time or freezing that position. Karl Hermonat also inquired about hiring a part time Curriculum Director and saving some other items.

There was a lengthy discussion about how to make the \$155,497 worth of cuts to the Board of Education budget.

Josh Adams then stated that he did not endorse these deeper cuts; however, made a motion to reluctantly direct the Superintendent to reduce the 2017-2018 proposed budget by \$155,497 as identified in the line item handout. Penny Miller reluctantly 2<sup>nd</sup> that motion. All in favor: Josh Adams, Jenn Benaitis, Stacie Cull, Cindy Duval, Penny Miller, Mary Misiorski, and Pat Spaziani. Opposed: Karl Hermonat. **Motion passes.**

After further discussion Pat Spaziani made a motion to temporarily freeze the hiring of a Curriculum Director, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Penny Miller. All in favor: Stacie Cull, Cindy Duval, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Mary Misiorski, and Pat Spaziani. Oppposed: Josh Adams and Jenn Benaitis. **Motion passes.**

Jenn Benaitis stepped out of the room at 8:56. Back in at 8:58

**2. Long Range Planning Committee Update** – Josh Adams stated that the LRP committee has not met to discuss the Five Year Plan.

**H. New Business**

**1. Secretary for the Board of Education** – Josh informed the Board that Mary Misiorski is no longer able to get to the Central Office to sign checks due to her new job. Josh Adams thanked Mary Misiorski for a job well done. He then asked for nominations for Board Secretary. Karl Hermonat nominated Penny Miller for Board Secretary, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cindy Duval. Cindy Duval then nominated Pat Spaziani, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Mary Misiorski. Penny then withdrew her name from the candidacy. Members then voted by paper ballot. Mary Misiorski read the votes: **Unanimous.**

**I. Adjournment**

Penny Miller made a motion at 9:08 p.m. to adjourn the meeting, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Cindy Duval. Unanimous. **Motion passes.**

Respectfully submitted by Janet A. Terenzi, Recording Secretary

