

**New Hartford Public Schools Special
Board of Education Meeting
March 31, 2021**

**6:00 pm/Virtual Meeting
Join Zoom Meeting**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89744095557?pwd=emR3L1BHZ0Y2T3BmMUFFLzB1TWczZz09>

Meeting ID: 897 4409 5557

Passcode: P5h7Yp

Present- Tim Goff, Karl Hermonat, Penny Miller, Tom Buzzi, Tim Klepps, Tony Persechino, Heather Tomala, Kelly O'Dell Longhi, Mary Stempien

Other- Brian Murphy, Kelly Carroll, Amanda Shaw, Barbara Mclean.

A. Chair to Open Meeting - Tim Goff opened fully virtual meeting at 6.02pm.

B. Pledge of Allegiance - The board joined in the pledge of Allegiance.

C. Communication to the Board

Chairman Goff explained that the reason for tonight's special meeting, was in response to the sixteen letters and emails received by the Board of Education, regarding parent's thoughts on the proposed 2021-2022 district budget and specifically staffing levels for the next school year. Goff explained the importance of the public's input and that the Board of Education should acknowledge and work together with the public to ensure the best outcome for the New Hartford Public Schools.

Although Goff did not read all sixteen letters aloud, he did summarize by stating the author, date received and main purpose of each one. A copy of each letter was also shared with Board members and School Administration prior to the meeting and have been included in the meeting minutes.

D. Old Business

1. Budget-2021-2022

Goff gave an overview of the status of the budget and how the Board plans to move forward. On March 13th at 8pm chairman Goff and Superintendent Murphy presented the budget to the New Hartford Board of Finance. On March 23th, there was a special Board of

Finance meeting where both Goff and Murphy answered questions regarding the 2021/2022 budget. One of the main questions asked at that meeting was regarding the letters received by the public about the budget. Many of these letters were also received by the Board of Finance. Goff responded that as a result of the public input, the Board of Education would reassess the budget and make a decision on how to move forward. The three possible outcomes identified by Goff were as follows:

- 1- To add back in the fourth grade teaching section bringing the new proposed percentage increase to 4.4%
- 2- Add back in the fourth grade teaching section and find other line items to reduce, in an attempt to keep the increase at the original 3.89%
- 3- Make no change and leave budget as first presented.

Chairman Goff opened discussion to the board members. Buzzi asked Superintendent Murphy if he had any suggestions on how to add the teaching section back into the budget based on the outcry of support from the public and what other line items could be reduced to offset the increase of \$47,000. Mr. Murphy stated that any reduction to the budget would be impactful however after further assessment, he recommended reducing one reading interventionist at the cost of \$24,198, decreasing the health insurance line by 20,074 based on a reduction in percentage from 8% to 7% and finally reducing the maintenance supplies line item by \$3000. These reductions total \$47,272 which would result in bringing back the fourth grade teaching section. The rest of the board members participated in the open discussion expressing their opinions of the budget proposal and presented questions to Mr. Murphy regarding other areas that savings could be made. Notables in the discussion were that although there could be additional funding available to schools next year based on the new covid relief package that was passed, the money is not in hand therefore cannot be included in the budget number.

Persechino and O'Dell Longi voiced their opinion of keeping the 4th grade teacher and the reading interventionist and presenting the budget to the Board of Finance at a higher rate. Buzzi, Klepps and Hermonatt all agreed however recommended working within the current guidelines and moving forward with Mr. Murphy's recommendations. Miller disagreed and said that the reading interventionist and maintenance line items should remain and other areas of savings should be looked at.

Motion- by Buzzi, to follow Mr. Murphy's recommendation to add back in the 4th grade teaching section (\$47,272) and reduce one reading interventionist, (\$24,198) reducing the health insurance line item (\$20,074) and the maintenance supplies line item (\$3000) keeping the budget at 3.89%. Seconded by Hermonat.

AYE: Goff, Hermonat, Buzzi, Klepps, Persechino, Tomala, O'Dell Longhi, Stempien, **NAY:** Miller
ABSTAIN: none

Unanimous

The next board of Finance meeting will be held on April 6th which is a public hearing of the budget. A special Board of Finance meeting will then follow on April 13th which will discuss any potential changes as a result of the public hearing. All members of the public are encouraged to attend.

E. Adjournment

Motion: by Buzzi to adjourn meeting at 6.46pm. Seconded by Klepps.

Unanimous

Respectfully Submitted

Laura Fritch
Board Secretary.