



HUDSON SCHOOL DISTRICT ♦ Hudson, New Hampshire
Hills Memorial Library, 18 Library Street

6:30 pm

Regular Meeting
Non-Public Session

Hudson School Board Meeting Minutes

November 1, 2021

In attendance:

Board Members

Gary Gasdia, Chairman
Diana LaMothe, Vice-chair
Ethan Beals
Mike Campbell
Gretchen Whiting

SAU Staff

Larry Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Rachel Borge, Director Special Services
Jen Burk, Business Administrator
Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

A. Call to Order [0:00:09]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

B. Public Input [0:00:43]

Ms. LaMothe read the policy for public input. It was suggested that Craig Powers be able to speak longer than the three-minute limit due to a glitch in correspondence.

Ms. Whiting made a motion to allow Craig Powers to exceed the three-minute time limit as set in policy. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Craig Powers of 31 Cedar Street requested that the Board:

1. Deliberate and vote to expunge from the official record the (“unlawful”) vote that the Board took on October 4, 2021 dismissing the petition regarding children’s face coverings in schools
2. Commit to communicating to Hudson voters by the close of business on Friday, November 5, 2021 the date, time, and location of the special meeting for which voters had legally petitioned

since September 17, 2021, at which voters would be allowed to democratically vote (a binding vote) on the merits of removing the authority of the School Board to define face covering requirements on the School Board. NH RSA 197:2 was the legal backing of the petition (two conditions for which a special meeting shall be held: by a vote of the School Board or when 50+ voters made written application to the School Board with the action desired).

Issues he had with the Board vote were: 1. the opinion of the Board to vote down a petition that they did not like and 2. actions to dismiss the petition. RSA 189:1 and 15 dealt with face covering mandate issuance. RSA 197:2 provided the people a democratic remedy. There were other low-cost ways to get public input or the Board could return to parental choice for face masks (as parents made clear they preferred).

Patrick Quinlan of 10 Hurley Street favored optional mask-wearing/parental choice. Covid numbers were not up to date online and 50 cases equated to 0.2% of the population. He felt this did not justify a mask requirement and suggested using a certain percentage of the Town. He was concerned that the Board voted not to allow a petition for which there were sufficient signatures and also that mask-wearing would not end. He asked for a vote for masks to be optional and to have public comment.

Suzanne Dozois of 25 St. Anthony Dr. thanked the Board for adding bullet points in the agenda to help address issues for public input. She sent emails to the Board with documents/sources stating that masks had no effect of stopping covid - they were doing more harm than good to children (learning disabilities, mental health).

Melissa Mattera of 19 Teloian Dr. spoke about children struggling with fear, mental health issues and anxiety that were distracting learning. She felt both sides of the issue should be taken into consideration.

C. Good News Update (Information) [20:01]

1. Fall Festival at Nottingham West 10/23/21
2. Hudson Memorial Jack O'Lantern and scarecrow stroll
3. Middle School Career Day grade 7 theme was manufacturing
4. Alvirne Vet Science Team won 6th place at Nationals in FFA Convention in Indianapolis and Megan Houdon from Hollis/Brookline won 5th place in the individual competition
5. Chicken coop built by Building Trades Class for Natural Resources class to showcase their chickens - people could purchase a coop to support the team
6. Halloween Parades, hayrides, etc.

D. Old Business [0:22:40]

1. Covid Protocols

The Covid plan would be reviewed quarterly and there would be more about strategies at the next meeting.

Positive changes since last year were: shields removed from classes; vaccinated people not needing to quarantine; lessening missed school; vaccinations slowing the spread of Covid; availability of booster shots; and FDA approved vaccines for students aged 5-11 (waiting for CDC approval). The District was looking at having a clinic for students aged 5-12. Mr. Russell

had no intention to have a mandate for vaccines and efforts were made to open school up again for parent teacher conferences, co-curriculars, sports, etc. The topic of Recreational Basketball would be revisited at the next meeting; issues were past damage and availability of custodians. The District was mask-required as of today. The State dashboard was down for a week but was back up today. Today, there were 85 Covid cases in Hudson. A survey was sent regarding asymptomatic testing which would be reviewed at the next meeting. Next steps included: Superintendent chats; allowing outside groups into schools; changing mask metric; and going to mask-optional at all levels after vaccines were truly available for NH students.

E. New Business [0:31:14]

1. FY23 Budget Discussion/Decision

Mary Ellen Labrie, principal of H.O. Smith, reviewed the elementary budget from the four Principals. Highlights were:

- The overall elementary budget decreased by 1.61%.
- Salaries and benefits decreased by 1.44%.
- There was an increase in the furniture replacement line due to re-establishing the replacement cycle that was paused last year.
- There was an increase in office expenses due to Principals' cell phone allowances
- decrease in equipment due to change in copy machines
- math program: consumables purchased through ESSER II grant funds and not in budget
- ELA purchase included Fountas and Pinnell Assessment Kits
- Warrant Article proposal for playground for H.O. Smith and Library Smith: would allow all students at both schools to have access to age-appropriate playground equipment daily
- Items with impact of \$5,000 more or less included:
 - staffing down by \$153,908 due to decrease in Title I Staff
 - Rental/leasing equipment down by \$11,839 due to copier agreement
 - Math supplies down by \$27,634: math textbooks in ESSER II needed to be added
 - Software decreased by \$17,618 (ESSER II)
 - Furniture replacement increase of \$18,495 (reestablish replacement cycle - \$7,904 for shelving at Nottingham Library).
 - Testing materials - decrease of \$14,472 (using iReady instead of Renaissance Star)
 - Note: the material cost of items funded with ESSER grant (used for impact due to Covid) would need to go back into the budget after.

Enrollment: there were 220 students in grade one as of today (it was 167 last year). Kindergarten enrollment increased also. Maximum class size in grade one was 18 and in kindergarten was 16.

A possible cut would be to revisit furniture replacement items and first grade field day at the Y (\$3,400). Helpful additions included IT needs (classroom devices for iReady use). Some paraeducator positions would be moved from the kindergarten line to the Special Education line.
Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce ELC Paraeducator vacancies (\$95,784 and \$7,332).
Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Nancy Maguire, Principal of Library Street, suggested a possible cut could be in furniture and hospitality (\$2,000). Additions could include a cart of laptops/IT (space was an issue).

Bill McCarthy of Hills Garrison mentioned that a possible cut could be in furniture replacement and additions could be in the IT area (more access to mobile labs).

Scott Baker of Nottingham West mentioned that a possible cut could be in the furniture/equipment line (library shelving units) and additions could be in extra technology for iReady. More carts for ELC were being ordered through the ESSER grant. He hoped to have field trips at the end of the year.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to remove \$11,700 for Math in Focus from the elementary budget. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce the Emergency Management Line in the elementary budget by \$2,915 to be moved to the District-wide budget. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Warrant Article 9 was to raise/appropriate \$75,000 to create the playground at H.O. Smith (\$0.02 impact on the tax rate). This article was under legal review.

District-wide expenditures showed an increase of \$1,948,502 (23.66%):

- increase driven by grants offset on revenue side
- salaries increased by \$1,059,535 due to contractual obligations and ESSER/Title II Funded positions
- benefits increased by \$448,622 due to NHRS rate increase, insurance benefits, vacancy and new position benefit assumptions
- \$1,356,000 increase in salary and benefits due to federal and other funded items
- Increase in general fund = \$262,297 (3.2% over FY22); \$152,000 affecting the tax rate
- increase in transportation cost (second year of 5-year contract with First Student)
- decrease in interest payment on CTE bond
- \$100,000 decrease in current budget for Covid-related expenses
- other funds - increase of \$1,656,205

Budget changes of \$5,000:

- AESOP increase
- Federal Grant activities
- library services
- Professional development
- software
- supplies (community and staff engagement)
- leases - change in copiers/printers
- supplies - cleaning (FY22 \$100,000)
- transportation
- Bond - interest payment
- IRS late fee 403b
- summer scholars food service staff stipend - part of ESSER II grant
- No Child Left Behind line item would be offset by federal funds

TOTAL FY23 proposed budget total = \$10,182,399 (increase of 23.7%)
Ms. Burk would double-check any possible duplicates.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce the District-wide budget partially by \$5,520 for the Destiny library software and \$1,250 for 403b late fees. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

\$9,600 was in the budget for electors and District meeting (two locations were now necessary, meaning more staff).

Possible cuts included the \$10,000 line under Superintendent Services for community outreach.

Mr. Beals noted that ESSER funds were based on existing general fund numbers and would need to be paid for in the general fund once funding ran out. He suggested paying attention to these items in perpetuity to continue programming.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce District-wide budget for object codes 531 and 532 totaling \$4,043. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to reduce the District-wide budget by \$1,800 (mileage reimbursement line). Mr. Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

There was an overview of Project Aware, of which the District was in year 3 of 5. The purpose was to help with student behavior and to support mental health and social/emotional learning and counseling. SEL interventionists went to schools to work with students.

Food Service [1:46:55]

- New Director in July (Abigail Kaplan) is devising a Preventative Maintenance Contract
- Shortages on food and paper products
- Majority of staff in PSRP contract currently in negotiations
- Increases in repair maintenance accounts and cost of supplies and a la carte foods
- Overall, budget increased by 6.5% with offsetting anticipated revenue increase

There was concern about hiring a plumbing contractor when the District had a plumber. It was noted that this was limited as much as possible. Mr. Beals wondered if there was an alternative solution to six food service people driving to the bank 5 days/week.

Revenue

- The numbers were subject to change based on what the State anticipated as a decrease in the education grant (Adequacy Aid) that was impacted by enrollment/participation in the Free/Reduced Lunch program.
- Level budgeting was done for other services and Medicaid and local revenue (except for educational tuition anticipated to be lowered)
- Anticipating decrease in Title I, Title III, and Title IV funding
- Anticipating increase in Title IIA funding

- Anticipating slight increase in Project Aware
- Not anticipating Federal funds for Adult Education/apprenticeship
- IDEA - TBD

There was discussion about the \$1.7 million in ESSER III funds that were just approved; \$2.4million remained to be spent (equaling \$4.1 million total). Mr. Beals felt the Board should be involved in where the funding was spent, and see what programs were successful to see if cost should be absorbed. Ms. LaMothe noted there was a checks and balance process in place outside of the Board's review.

The Town's evaluation with utilities was \$3,218,932,520. For \$32,189 of the cost, there was \$0.01 on tax rate. It was noted that, while the total budget was over \$60 million, the portion attributed to non-fund sources was more like \$57 million because almost \$5 million was in various revenue sources.

Default budget [2:11:13] = \$61,698,471 with tonight's edits. It was noted that the addition of the Student Family Interventionist and HMS security cameras should be able to be absorbed in the FY22 budget.

Ms. Borge reviewed the Student Family Interventionist and Certified Mental Health Counselor positions. She recommended increasing the Mental Health Counselor (\$120,051) since the person could service regardless of IEP.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to add a Licensed Mental Health Counselor in the amount of \$120,051. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Mr. Beals had contacts the CTE Director:

1. Additional culinary position for after dark program
2. Additional proposed staff position for the new Health Science position. Mr. Beals did not feel there was a need but suggested a compromise of a part-time position that could fill in and keep the culinary lab open year-round. He felt the position should be funded by the Perkins grant. Ms. LaMothe noted there was a 60-student waitlist for culinary arts and the program helped students with no athletic or other interests. This would be open to other Districts for a fee.

Mr. Beals made a motion to reduce the full-time culinary position to a part-time position. Mr. Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 3:2. (Ms. LaMothe and Ms. Whiting voted nay.)

Mr. Beals made a motion to reduce the Health Science Instructor with the recommendation of funding through the Perkins Grant based on priority. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion failed 1:4. (Mr. Gasdia, Ms. LaMothe, Ms. Whiting and Mr. Campbell voted nay.)

It was noted that if this was funded through Perkins, a Career Center job would be lost.

Mr. Campbell suggested discussing the addition of another Full-time Mental Health Counselor in the future. Mr. Beals added the suggestion of future discussion about how to leverage positions through community partners to help student needs.

Warrant Article Review - Draft [2:44:14]

- Dates of annual meeting
- 2 open School Board positions
- Warrant Article 1 Operating budget
- Warrant Articles 2-4 CBAs
- Warrant Article 5 Partial roof replacement at Nottingham West (\$550,000)
- Warrant Article 6 Capital Reserve Renovation Fund (\$250,000 placeholder from fund balance - no tax impact)
- Warrant Article 7 Transfer of property for Hudson Lions Club (no tax impact)
- Warrant Article 8 Update to Fund Balance Retention (a District can retain up to 5%; if voted down, this will stay at 2.5%)
- Warrant Article 9 H.O. Smith playground (\$75,000)

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to remove Warrant Article 8. Mr. Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Tax rate Impact [2:54:38]

Total proposed FY23 budget \$62,230,444

General fund increase \$776,097 (1.39% general fund increase)

Tax rate impact was \$0.51 originally; with tonight's changes, the rate was \$0.34 (excluding Federal funds/grants)

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to approve Warrant Article 9. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to approve Warrant Article 5 - Nottingham West roof replacement. Mr. Beals seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to approve Warrant Article 7. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0:1 (abstention from Mr. Gasdia, member of the Lions Club)

Online Form Review [3:00:16]

Online forms were used for public input during Zoom meetings due to the pandemic but there was a delay in the Board members receiving them. Use of these forms has decreased so they will be discontinued. Mr. Campbell suggested having a link online to the School Board pages.

2. Policies [3:04:26]

- a) KCD Public Gifts/Donations revision, NHSBA sample w/tracked changes (2nd reading)

Ms. Lamothe made a motion to accept Policy KCD Public Gifts/Donations as amended (adding wording about donation made within 2 weeks of notification). Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

b) KEB Public Complaints About School Personnel, Employees, Students, or Administration (1st reading) new, NHSBA sample w/tracked change: language about complaints being made about the Board to the Chair, not Clerk.

c) KED Facilities or Services – Grievance Procedure (1st reading) new, NHSBA sample w/tracked changes

3. Superintendent Search (Discussion) [3:09:49]

Mr. Russell would be leaving the area at the end of the year; his last day would be June 30, 2022. Mr. Gasdia thanked him for his service. Three search firms would be at the public meeting on November 4, 2021. Questions to review included: the scope of the search, cost structure, District wants, and transparency.

4. Extracurricular Nominations (Decision) [3:13:00]

Mr. Campbell made a motion to accept the Winter and Spring Extra-curricular nominations for Hudson Memorial School set by CBA. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Ms. Whiting made a motion to accept the Winter Extra-curricular nominations for Alvirne High School based on CBA. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

F. Recommended Action [3:14:25]

1. Manifests

2. Minutes - July 21, 2021

On page 2, the highlighted “attached proposal” would be removed.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to accept the minutes of July 21, 2021 as amended. Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

G. Committee Reports [3:16:48]

Information that was emailed to the Budget Committee would be uploaded to the Website under Budget Committee information.

H. Reports to the Board (Information) [3:17:27]

1. Superintendent Report

There was a temporary solution to meeting minutes as a Secretary was sought. Minutes were planned to be caught up by November 15, 2021. There was difficulty hiring across all levels, especially substitutes and Food Service personnel. The Job Fair was on November 16, 2021 Barnyard Cafe 3-6pm. Three upcoming chats included: Strategic Plan, Covid Protocols and L/T Capital Improvements

2. Assistant Superintendent Report

Ms. Organek noted that all furniture was due to arrive at HMS by January 14, 2022. Performances of *Clue* would be on November 19 and 20 at Alvirne. There would be no school on November 11th. Professional Development included a book study on *Dare to Lead* starting tomorrow.

3. Director of Special Services Report

Ms. Borge mentioned that they would not use an agency for Paraprofessionals, as other Districts had difficulty with reference and criminal background checks. She recognized people who had gone above and beyond to help students: Laura Gebing, Mia Weaver, Susan Piper, Karen Teig, Janice Linstead, Therese Brown, and Laura Ilk.

4. Business Administrator Report

I. Correspondence (Information) [3:24:26]

1. Principal Priorities

Priorities in buildings provided support to staff and students.

2. Financial Reports - Update

The anticipated fund balance was \$1.25 million

J. Board Member Comments [3:09:54]

Ms. Roy said that on November 2nd, the Board of Selectmen would talk about the American Rescue Plan and present a list of priorities.

Mr. Campbell noted that the ELC PTO held the Book Fair fundraiser. Calendars were available for \$10. He mentioned that Jerry Remy passed away.

Ms. Whiting reported that the Haunted Hayride was a success and it was nice to have it return. She commended sports teams, noting the Girls Soccer team made it to finals.

Mr. Beals thanked everyone for their work in the budget process.

Ms. LaMothe noted that the CTE Center Science Team placed 6th in the nation. It was nice to see things getting back to normal and she hoped people planned to attend the November 8th Superintendent chat to get public input. She noted the Strategic Plan was under the "About" menu online.

Mr. Gasdia reminded people to be careful when driving, noting that a student was hit near Alvirne but was alright. He thanked everyone for their work in the budget process.

K. Non-Public Session [3:31:04]

Per RSA 91-A:3 II (c)

At 10:02pm, Ms. LaMothe made a motion to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II (c). Ms. Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.

Appeal for grievance going to step 3 (School Board). Written decision is due within 15 days or November 15. Board will meet with grievant on November 15 before the board meeting.

SAU staff does not have to be present at November 4 meeting.

L. Adjournment

At 10:37 pm, Mr. Beals made a motion to exit non-public and adjourn the meeting, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passed 5:0.

Respectfully submitted by
Susan DeFelice (public)
Kim Organek (non-public)