



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

6:00 pm Non-public Session
6:30 pm Regular Meeting
Non-public Session

Hudson School Board Minutes of November 15, 2021

Present:

Gary Gasdia, Chair
Diana LaMothe, Vice-chair
Ethan Beals, Member
Mike Campbell, Member
Gretchen Whiting, Member
Kara Roy, Board of Selectmen Liaison
Larry Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent
Rachel Borge, Director of Special Services
Jennifer Burk, Business Administrator

A. Call to Order

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Mr. Beals made a motion to enter non-public session according to RSA 91-A:3 (b) at 6:01 pm, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passed 5-0.

Others present:

James Petrillo, Vice-President Teamsters Local Union No. 633 of NH
Mark Clifford, Field Representative Teamsters Local Union No. 633 of NH
Ryan Leary, local union representative

Mr. Petrillo presented an overview of the grievance filed by a staff member for non-compliance of vacation time earned as stated in Article 7, Section A of the Contract between the Teamsters Local No. 633 of NH for the Hudson School District Custodians, Electricians, and HVAC Technicians and the School Board of the Hudson NH School District. The schedule that shows how full-time employees earn vacation was discussed. Mr. Petrillo presented their interpretation that year 0-2 represents a period of 2 years. It appeared that some clarity in the contract regarding year 0 was warranted.

Mr. Petrillo, Mr. Clifford, and Mr. Leary left the meeting at 6:22 pm.

Mr. Beals made a motion to exit non-public at 6:23 pm, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passed 5-0.

The board then began public session and Mr. Gasdia told those present that the board has been in non-public session.

B. Public Input

Mr. Gasdia explained that there will be two public input sessions this evening, the first being for any non-COVID-related agenda topics and the second for any input related to the superintendent's update on COVID protocols. Following that, the board will ask the superintendent any questions they may have. Ms. LaMothe read the policy on public input.

No public input at this time.

C. Good News Update

Ms. Organek shared that the schools observed Veterans Day last week. HMS students made holiday cards for the troops, a very moving activity.

D. Presentations to the Board

Ms. Organek shared a presentation on Summer Scholars and iReady assessment data on participants. Looked at diagnostics from spring and the first one in fall. Seventy-five percent of HMS students that did participate increased their scores. Seventy-one percent increased their scores in reading. Fifty-nine percent of NWES students increased their reading scores this fall. Seventy-three percent increased their math score. Seventy percent of HGS students increased their reading score. Eighty-two percent increased their math scores. Students that did not participate in Summer Scholars decreased their scores significantly. The program really helped lessen the gap for struggling students. There was then a question-and-answer period.

E. Requests of the Board

1. Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRiP) Conference

Ms. Burk presented a request for her to attend the Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRiP) Conference with no cost to the district.

Mr. Beals moved to approve the trip request, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Human Capital Leadership Summit Attendance Request

Joyce Coll, HR Director, presented a request for her to attend this conference.

Mr. Beals moved to approve the request, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passes 5-0.

Ms. LaMothe requested that Ms. Coll come back to the board with a summary after the trip.

F. Old Business

1. Policies (2nd readings)

Ms. Organek presented the policies to the board for their second reading. Clarification was requested on what amount the superintendent could accept without board approval when there is more than two weeks between board meetings. Ms. Organek offered to add a sentence stating that it is up to \$5,000.

Ms. Whiting moved to approved policy KCD Public Gifts/Donations with the addition of that sentence, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passes 5-0

Ms. LaMothe moved to approve policies KEB and KED, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Superintendent Search

Mr. Gasdia shared that the board has begun the search process and has selected the NHSBA in partnership with the Bryan Group to conduct the search. Mr. Beals and Mr. Campbell will lead the

search. Mr. Beals shared that there's a survey on the website for those interested in serving on the search committee. Ten people will be selected. Requested the board meet again this Thursday at 6:30 to discuss the survey results and select committee members. Mr. Beals also gave an approximate timeline for steps of this process (i.e., posting, applicant review, interviews, and final selection). Board consensus is to meet this Thursday at 6:30 pm.

3. COVID Protocols

Mr. Russell addressed the board. There have ups and downs with COVID, conversations with different groups, and the goal remains to keep kids in school. Two of three clusters were related to sports but most cases come from students associating outside of school. Indoor volleyball was not affected. There was one cluster at an elementary. Mr. Russell listed case numbers for the year by school. We are doing very well as compared to some other area districts. Cases in town and the state have increased. Based on case increases, Mr. Russell recommends allowing the rec department to use our buildings for sports while following the same procedures that have kept our schools safe. While participating in indoor sports at the high school and middle school, active participants will not have to wear a mask but inactive participants and spectators will. This is common throughout the state. He is recommending that student mask requirements in the school remain the same as they are. Mr. Russell continued, sharing news of an upcoming district-hosted vaccine clinic. Conditions and numbers will be reviewed in mid-January and recommendations will be made at that time.

G. Public Input Related to COVID Protocols

Patrick Quinlan, 10 Hurley Street

Stated that Craig Powers is unable to attend tonight so he will read something on his behalf. Mr. Powers' letter and Mr. Quinlan's prepared statement asked many questions about how the decisions were made regarding mask protocols and expressed disapproval of the mandate.

Suzanne Dozois, 25 St. Anthony Drive

Not everyone was at the roundtable, but she was able to attend and thanked Mr. Russell for holding one. She then continued to express her opinions on COVID and masks, stating that COVID isn't going to go away; we all have to live with it.

There were no additional speakers. Mr. Gasdia closed public input and asked if the board had any questions. Mr. Campbell asked if the middle school that Mr. Russell mentioned is of comparable size to Hudson Memorial. It is the same or slightly larger. Mr. Beals asked why the craft fair and rec basketball are different than other facility use requests such as the Haunted Hayride. Mr. Russell replied that it's because indoor facility use was off limits under previous guidelines and the hayride is outside. Mr. Beals started to talk about when the requests come to the board for rec basketball and the craft fair. Mr. Gasdia clarified that the only facility use requests that come to the board are those for the Hills House property use; the rest are not under the board's purview. Mr. Beals asked why and Ms. Whiting replied that it's policy and offered to pull it up for him.

Mr. Gasdia asked Mr. Russell what his thoughts are on what it would take to make one policy (for all grades). Mr. Russell replied that after the December 1 and 22 vaccine dates and then the January booster vaccine, that he wouldn't mind considering both populations the same as they all would have had equal access to the vaccination. Mr. Gasdia then asked what Mr. Russell's thoughts were in early November when things looked promising. Mr. Russell replied that it was the trending decrease in cases locally and statewide. Then the numbers began to rise. Mr. Gasdia then asked what would cause a school to close and what are we doing? Mr. Russell replied that not being able to staff the schools and severe outbreaks are two reasons. Mr. Campbell asked if we're prepared to go remote if necessary. Mr. Russell replied that we are.

H. New Business

1. Farm Equipment

Ms. Burk presented a request for farm equipment from Eric Frauwirth, CTE Director. The equipment will be paid for by the Trustees.

Mr. Beals moved to approve the request, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passes 5-0.

2. Policies

Ms. Organek presented the five policies for a first reading. Mr. Gasdia suggested adding “state full name and address” to BEDH Public Comment and Participation at Board Meetings so we know the speaker is a Hudson resident. He also pointed out that on policy KE Public Complaints it mentioned board of education where it should be school board.

3. Extracurricular Nominations (hand-carried)

Ms. Whiting moved to approve the nominations for boys’ JV basketball and varsity wrestling coaches, second by Mr. Beals. Motion passes 5-0.

4. Potential Calendar Adjustment

Mr. Russell relayed that the town needs two voting locations and the March voting day falls when school is in session and started a conversation about various ways how to address that.

I. Recommended Action

1. Manifests are all set.

J. Reports to the Board

1. Superintendent’s Report

Tomorrow we’re hosting a job fair at the Barnyard Café. For more information, go to www.jobs.sau81.org.

Sign-up link for December 1 vaccine clinic will be sent out tomorrow. Second clinic will be held on December 22. We have invited PMA and the Litchfield School District.

Discipline Data: September and October hand-carried. Ms. LaMothe requested a breakdown of the number of students.

2. Assistant Superintendent’s Report

Ms. Organek addressed the board. January 14 is an early-release day for PD. Preparing for that. Working on a pilot for parents to use Schoology for after Thanksgiving. Parents should be set up by February.

3. Director Special Services

Ms. Borge addressed the board. She’s been dealing with some student-specific needs. Offered a “shout-out” to a number of her staff members for going above and beyond.

4. Business Administrator’s Report

Ms. Burk also mentioned tomorrow’s job fair. Had first meeting with the budget committee on the 10th and we meet again this week and a wrap-up on the 22nd. No CBA information yet. The budget committee does have a copy of the draft warrant articles.

K. Committee Reports

1. Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. LaMothe stated that the Capital Improvement Plan Committee met on the 5th. Updates will go into the report to be brought to the board in December.

2. Board of Selectmen

Ms. LaMothe relayed that the Board of Selectmen voted to deny the request from the Budget Committee to direct the selectmen, ex-officio member of the Budget Committee, to abstain from voting.

3. Budget Committee

Ms. LaMothe noted that the presentations were great and a good representation of the talent we have in the school district. One change was made; \$1500 for equipment replacement was removed. Some discussion on classroom management software but no motion.

L. Correspondence

1. Enrollment History & Projections for FY23

Ms. Burk shared a summary that had been shared with the Budget Committee.

2. Hills Garrison Library Dedication

As a courtesy, Mr. Russell shared a letter dedicating the library to former principal, the late Lois Connors.

Mr. Beals stated he believes we need a policy related to naming and that there was a similar request that the board denied. Mr. Russell replied that if that is the case, it was not done based on policy because we do not have a policy on this. Ms. LaMothe agreed that this would be something to discuss in Policy Committee. Mr. Beals said that although he supports this, he thinks we should press pause, create a policy, and follow it. Ms. Whiting explained that it will take more than three or four board meetings to get a policy written and approved. She does not think the board should interfere with this one. Ms. LaMothe would like to go with past practice. Mr. Beals stated he distinctly remembers the board voting no at another time. Gary offered two options: make a motion and vote and if it passes, it's done and if it doesn't, he thinks it needs to be revisited or option two, allow this one to go through and then make a motion that no more naming rights will be allow until we do have a policy.

Mr. Beals moved that no other naming rights shall be entertained by the district after this one until we have adopted a policy, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passes -5-0.

Mr. Gasdia requested that the policy committee move this to the front burner.

M. Board Member Comments

Kara Roy offered thanks to all the people who have donated to the food pantry and encouraged other to do so.

Mr. Campbell
Nothing.

Ms. Whiting: reminded people that the pickup of students still happens before the sun rises. Watch out for that as sometimes they stand close to the road. Wants everyone to be safe.

Mr. Beals: If you'd like to be involved in the superintendent search, the survey on the website that has also gone out in email closes this Thursday at noon.

Ms. LaMothe: Attended the in-person superintendent chat on the 8th. Interesting comment was that children are happy to be in school, initially not wanting to wear masks, but they got used to it and that our teachers are doing a wonderful job. The input was appreciated.

Mr. Gasdia: Great job by all of the schools that did food drives and the scouts. If you can donate food or cash, that's great. If you want to make a donation that you're not sure would be accepted, give them a call.

Been able to get into the schools lately and there are a lot of events happening now. Great to see, kids will remember these events.

N. Non-public Session

Mr. Beals moved to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (b, c), second by Ms. Whiting. Rollcall vote: Mr. Campbell, aye; Ms. Whiting, aye; Ms. LaMothe, aye; Mr. Beals, aye; Mr. Gasdia, aye.

Ms. Organek and Ms. Borge left the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Ms. Burk indicated why she denied the grievance. The way payroll tracks vacation earned according to the contract has worked well for years. Year 0-2, as stated in the contract, represents a period of 3 years. The district is following the contract. It was understood that there were different interpretations of the vacation schedule stated in the contract due to the meaning of year 0. Mr. Russell indicated that an MOU was offered but Mr. Petrillo declined.

Ms. Whiting made a motion to deny the grievance, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passed 3-2. Mr. Beals and Mr. Campbell voted nay.

Mr. Gasdia will prepare a response letter. Legal counsel may review the letter. The question was asked if an MOU will still be sought.

Mr. Beals made a motion for Superintendent Russell to reach out to Mr. Petrillo, after the letter from the School Board is delivered, to re-offer MOU discussions, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passed 5-0.

O. Adjourn

A motion to exit non-public and adjourn at 9:35 pm was made by Ms. Whiting, second by Mr. Beals. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Porter (public)
Diana LaMothe (non-public)