



HUDSON SCHOOL BOARD

Hills Memorial Library
18 Library Street Hudson, New Hampshire

Minutes April 18, 2022

In attendance:

Board Members

Gary Gasdia, Chairman
Gretchen Whiting, Vice-chair
Ethan Beals
Mike Campbell
Maureen Dionne

Kara Roy, Board of Selectmen Liaison

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 [0:00:12]

1. Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:30pm. Ms. Dionne led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input [0:00:30]

Diana LaMothe of St. Laurent Drive had questions regarding end-of-year fund balance (reporting vacant positions) and the recommendations of using the end-of-year fund balance and the capacity study to evaluate the needs at the Early Learning Center.

Kevin Walsh of Stoney Lane spoke about challenges facing the School Board in the next few years and the facility capacity study. Years ago, after the Capital Improvement Committee disbanded and gave their report, there was concern about overcrowding at the elementary level. As a result, Hills Garrison School was built and Memorial was left as a grade 6-8. Hudson was one of the last towns in NH to implement kindergarten. He was concerned about the back and forth between schools regarding the transitions from preschool, kindergarten, first grade and second grade. He

mentioned that in Hudson, housing was increasing while school enrollment was declining and multi-family housing was growing.

C. Recognition

Mr. Russell lauded Diana LaMothe for her dedication to the Board and the Hudson School District, notably her work with the Budget Committee and Capital Improvement Committee.

D. Presentations to the Board [0:10:10]

1. Pathways for Success (Information)

Alternative Education Instructional Coordinator Marybeth Hammond, teacher Kempton Pierce and Pathways students shared an update on the Pathways for Success program. The goal is to re-engage students at the high school with a flexible learning environment to gain competency. Students have made progress through hands-on/project-based learning and volunteering. Some students have already found employment in the community as a result of the program. There were student presentations: Lilianna Nunn spoke about the history behind the name of the program (not traditional schooling/different pathways to education); Troy Alves spoke about his growth at school while in the program; and Peyton Coggins distributed Pathways t-shirts. Mr. Russell read an email from Olivia Secovich, an Alvirne freshman, about her success while in the Pathways program and increased interest in learning.

2. Hudson Media Center (Information)

Hudson Memorial librarian Beth Sloat shared photos of the updated media center, including a walkthrough video by Tristan, a student at HMS. Updates included an electronic bulletin board, circular couches, charging stations, movable tables, and shorter non-fiction shelving and compatibility with how students looked for books. Improvements make the space more flexible for a variety of uses and have increased the use of the media center.

3. Alvirne High School SkillsUSA Travel Request (Decision)

CTE Director Eric Frauwirth presented a travel request to Atlanta for the National SkillsUSA conference from June 22 -25, 2022. Luke Bryan, a student also attending the DECA trip, spoke about SkillsUSA. He placed first in the state for the construction tool demonstration (circular saw). Only first place winners are eligible to attend nationals and Alvirne had first-place winners in three categories: Culinary Arts, Construction Trades and Welding. The request was for approval for chaperones to put the trip together; no funds were requested due to fundraising efforts and Perkins funding that was pre-allocated for the chaperones (welding and culinary instructors).

Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the National SkillsUSA conference trip from June 22-25, 2022 in Atlanta as presented. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

4. Technology Plan (Information)

IT Director Kevin Peterson reviewed the technology plan (3-5 years) to support the strategic goal of the district, incorporating hardware (standardization), software (consistency in district) and philosophy (making technology a service and more proactive). There was an inventory system for the IT-specific assets and there was approval through data compliance. A list of individual software programs was being compiled. A shift to using a cloud platform is projected. E-rate funding will be used for wireless access points. Once trained staff is in place, proactive work can begin.

E. New Business [1:01:05]

1. Alvirne High School Scheduling (Information)

Dean of Academics Sue Bureau and Jen LaFrance discussed the work of the Schedule Committee at Alvirne High School. The purpose of the committee was to study the impact of the current modified block schedule on teaching and learning and explore other models. The charge was to make recommendations on the master schedule based on student needs. Highlights included: Committee review (school data, observations, faculty collaboration activities, etc.); profile of an undergraduate; collaborative meeting feedback such as dysregulation/stress/gaps in education, interaction with kindness and understanding, and students anxious to make a connection; and goals of providing embedded time for social/emotional learning and for professional collaboration/development for teachers. Action research projects included: reducing teacher duty minutes by restructuring study hall and applying minutes to professional learning, collaboration and student interventions; and flex time pilot (embed 35-minute support/flex time into existing block days - to pilot in May 2022). Almost 78% of the full Alvirne staff voted to try piloting and implementing flex time. This was a way to address student needs. Grade data, intervention planning, etc. would be collected during the pilot period. Other schools such as Pinkerton Academy used this model. Committee members agreed that the current modified block schedule did not meet the needs of Alvirne High School students and faculty and should be adjusted to address the 2 goals.

Recommendations were to implement an A/B schedule with embedded flex time for FY23 and to form a Planning, Implementation and Review Committee to aid this process in June 2022. Takeaways included schools being able to function without traditional study halls (more production/less stress). There was concern about the mental capacity/anxiety of the students if the District went towards an A/B schedule next year with 80-minute classes every day. Rising Seniors had changed scheduling multiple times. Student and teacher feelings were considered. Ms. Whiting was concerned about the change in schedule next year and communication that had not yet been sent out. Ms. Bureau said that people felt that flex time was essential and that part of teaching students was about change and the ability to cope and plan. The recommendation was just given to Mr. Russell. Communication would go out to students for feedback in the spring. The following was clarified: after spring break, block scheduling would not occur and the school day start and end times would not be changing; and students would get the classes for which they signed up next year.

2. Proposed CTE Staff Changes (Decision)

CTE Director Eric Frauwirth reviewed proposed staffing changes for the Palmer Center, including a request to exchange adding three new Paraprofessionals to hiring two additional part time teachers (for extra sections of welding and diesel mechanics). Alternative sources would be used for applicants, such as retired military servicepeople. If necessary, extra coverage was possible in-house. It was noted that about 33% of applications were for area students (providing unanticipated income from tuition). There was no budgetary impact.

Gretchen Whiting made a motion to approve the change in request for three Paraprofessionals to two part-time teachers in CTE as presented. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

In the approved budget, additional part-time faculty would be added in Culinary, Health and Computer Sciences, bringing the total number of CTE teachers to 13 full-time and 8-10 part-time with one department chair. There was a request for a second department chair, dividing responsibilities between full and part time teachers and adding support for CTSOs and dual enrollment courses. There was comment about uniformity and preparation periods and concern about changing a position that was budgeted for (in a default budget).

Enrollment in Careers in Education had decreased in NH so it did not require a teacher's full teaching load. There was a request to transition the current teacher to a new co-department role while also teaching. This was within the current salary range. An idea was to modify this program into a Human Services one. There was a request to have a presentation on current and future enrollments and wait lists.

Gretchen Whiting made a motion to alter the Careers in Education role to be both educator and co-chair. There was no second. Motion failed.

3. Staff Renominations (Decision)

Gretchen Whiting made a motion to accept staff re-nominations as presented. seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion.

4. Financial Update & Year-End Spending (Discussion)

Jen Burk reviewed the financial reports.

The projection for the year-end fund balance is approximately \$3.5 million (6% of budget). The fund balance is primarily driven by the salaries and benefits of vacant positions. Two warrant articles that will be funded from the fund balance include \$75,000 for a playground at HO Smith and \$150,000 to go to the school renovation Capital Reserve Fund— have been accounted for in the fund balance calculation. Other major drivers are:

- The \$200,000 food service transfer is not anticipated to be needed this year due to the free meals program through the federal government. The program ends this year.
- A premium holiday from Primex from worker's compensation (savings due to returned premiums)

- Balance from charter schools based on services that students received there
- Savings on roof replacements cost

Vacant positions continue to be a serious issue. Staff are covering empty positions and its not sustainable. Current vacancies include teachers, paraprofessionals, monitors, custodians, food service, IT, maintenance personnel and others.

There was discussion on the increased fund balance being addressed earlier; positions (e.g. paras) were decreased in the budget to \$1 due to anticipation of some not being filled (there was a question if this helped the end-of-year fund balance). The budget is developed with all staff positions being filled from the start of the year, however in some years school may start without all positions being filled.

Mr. Gasdia had concerns about the district spending some of the fund balance before turning money back to taxpayers. Mr. Beals felt it was too early to decide on the percent of the balance to turn back (based on staffing and educational needs). There was a request to provide the fund balance with and without vacant positions being filled as well as the total number of teachers (head count). Mr. Beals requested a list of items that were funded and leftover from last year's requests.

Mr. Gasdia made a motion that 90% of the fund balance go back to the taxpayers first. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:1.

There was review of the list for year-end spending: projects for FY23 budget:

Principals/Administration Requests

- NWES Library refresh (similar to HMS project from FY21) – estimate \$50,000
- AHS Art Faculty Request – Digital Book Illustration technology (industry-standard iPads and Apple pencils that work with Procreate that is currently used in classes) to accommodate a new course in comic and children's illustration – estimate \$14,500

Facilities Requests

- HO Smith replacement of the lift – estimate \$30,000
- AHS Sound System – estimate \$15,530

Technology Requests

- New server to support expansion of cameras at HGS and NWES – estimate \$20,000
- LSS additional laptop cart (1 is in the budget for FY23, this would add another so they would have 4 in total) – estimate \$9,000
- HOS additional laptop cart (1 is in the budget for FY23, this would add another so they would have 4 in total) – estimate \$9,000

One additional request may be eligible for funding through a grant (looking into options through ARP): refreshing the HMS Life Skills space, which is estimated to cost around \$30,000.

Total Recommended = \$148,030 (excluding the grant-related item noted above)

Mr. Beals requested when the NWES library project was last refreshed. Mr. Campbell felt that the CIP facility use study was important; Mr. Beals was in support but felt that it was uncertain now that money would be available.

Mike Campbell made a motion to approve the Capital Improvement Committee's facility use study for a cost of \$85,000 using end-of-year fund balance. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 4:0:1 (abstention/ "not at this time" - E. Beals)

Results of the Federal Fiscal Monitoring conducted by the New Hampshire Department of Education included:

- Updates to policies/procedures (adequately covering federal regulations referenced in policies)
- Internal procedures needing to be updated with references, etc.
- Timecards used by staff (tracking work by Federal grants with correct dates, names, etc. - not using electronic signatures)
- Required statement on purchase orders specifically for Federal grants (all District P.O.s would now state having preference for domestic (US) products and support for minority and women-owned businesses)
- iReady program procurement process in accordance with the policy.

Some portions of the work on the above areas had been completed already. All updates will need to be completed by August.

5. General Assurances FY23 (Decision)

Mr. Russell reviewed the general assurances document from the NH Department of Education regarding compliance of grant funding.

6. Superintendent Staffing Authority (Decision)

Mr. Russell requested the authority to hire teachers between Board meetings due to the highly competitive job market (from tonight until the end of August 2022).

Ethan Beals made a motion to give Mr. Russell authority to hire teachers between Board meetings (until August 2022). Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

F. Recommended Action [3:16:54]

1. Minutes - March 21, 2022 and April 4, 2022

Mike Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of March 21, 2022 and April 4, 2022. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

2. Alvirne High School Budget Transfer

Ms. Burk noted that the manifests were all set, prior to reviewing the request from the High

School to transfer \$6,000 into the equipment account to purchase interactive technology for classrooms

Gretchen Whiting made a motion to approve the \$6,000 transfer for monitor equipment. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

G. Committee Reports [3:18:28]

Mr. Campbell mentioned that the Cable Committee met and went over bylaws regarding VHS tapes and the office at Town Hall.

Ms. Whiting noted that the Policy Committee met and reviewed policies and how to allow for a yearly review (divvying up policy sections and selecting some for review on a rolling 3-year period). The Budget Committee met. RSA 32 referenced members of School Board/Select Board as “ex-officio” members (to other Boards).

Gretchen Whiting made a motion to refer (e.g. in policies and minutes) to the individual associated with the Budget Committee as “ex-officio member” and not as a liaison. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.

Budget Committee members asked about end of year balance and job descriptions that correlated with positions. This will be worked on.

H. Board of Selectmen - Liaison Comments [3:22:06]

Ms. Roy was impressed with students who presented at meetings. She informed the board that this would be the last meeting she would attend as representing the Board of Selectmen unless she filled in for Selectmen Gagnon. She said that it was a pleasure working with the Board.

I. Board Member Comments [3:23:23]

Mr. Campbell noted that his son came home with an Alvirne Class of 2023 by the “ruler of the schools” (Mr. Russell).

Mr. Gasdia mentioned that the Board received an invitation from the Greater Hudson Chamber of Commerce for a banquet honoring the following: 2021 Citizen of the Year (Chrissy Peterson), and Joyce Hurd (2020); Large Business of the Year (Erickson Foundation Solutions and Granite Subaru); Small Business of the Year (Karascene and Cookies Cafe); Community Partner Hudson Memorial VFW Post 571 and Family Promise of Southern NH and Junior Citizens of the Year Molly Maclin (2021) and Evan Beals (2020) and Jack Gasdia (2019). All were congratulated.

J. Non-Public Session - Per RSA 91-A: 3 II c [3:25:35]

At 9:56pm, Mike Campbell made a motion to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II c. Gretchen Whiting seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.

The Board discussed a staff issue and a student issue.

K. Return to General Session and Adjourn

At 10:37 pm, Mr. Beals made a motion to return to general session and adjourn. Mr. Gasdia seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.

Respectfully submitted by
Susan DeFelice