

Hudson School District Hudson School Board Meeting Approved Minutes

Present:

Dr. Darcy Orellana, Board Chairman
Mr. Gary Gasdia, Board Vice-Chair
Ms. Diane LaMothe
Mr. Ethan Beals
Ms. Fabiana Fickett
Ms. Kara Roy, Vice-Chairman, Board of Selectman
Mr. Larry Russell, Superintendent
Ms. Kim Organek, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Rachel Borge, Director of Special Services
Ms. Karen Burnell, Interim Business Administrator
Ms. Hannah LoVerdi, Student Representative

A. Call to Order: Board Chairman Dr. Orellana called the meeting to order. Ms. LaMothe led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Russell introduced Hannah LoVerdi, student representative from Alvirne High School who will be joining our meetings. He also re-introduced Karen Burnell who is helping the district as we are now in budget season and have the Business Administrator position vacant. Ms. Burnell is helping out until the position is filled. The Board welcomed both.

B. Public Input:

Leo Bernard; 3 Bungalow Ave. Mr. Bernard said he spoke to the Board in Zoom back in May. He said he has emailed several times but has not received an answer so that is why he is here tonight. He is wondering what the plan is and if they are going to open the adult day care center now that Alvirne is open. Mr. Russell said right now they are building it to have it there and mentions it's a very nice location at the CTE center. He mentioned that the entrance is not completed yet and not ready for occupancy yet but as soon as it is ready, then that program will be back in the swing of things. Mr. Bernard asked what happened to the section that they were using. Mr. Russell said the section they were using previously was renovated into a different use. Mr. Russell said the program will definitely be happening. Mr. Russell told Mr. Bernard that if you email him, he will gladly be able to give you an estimated date of when this will be happening.

Judy Brouillette; 183 Highland street; Ms. Brouillette said she sent an email over the weekend in regard to the possibility of the district being able to get free meals for all of the students, not just ones that apply for the free lunches. This program is through the USDA and they have extended free meals for the kids. Ms. Brouillette said she works in a different district and she found this information in a roundabout way. She said as long as the district has applied for it, you can get free meals for everyone through December 31st as long as the funding continues. Ms. Brouillette said from what she was told by the food person in her district, it might also extend longer. Ms. Brouillette said when she called the Hudson School District, she felt like she got a little bit of a runaround with it and wanted to come tonight for transparency purposes and also to let the community know about this. She said there might be more to this than she knows of but wanted to bring this to the Board's attention because families are struggling during these times. She also mentions that if there is anything she can do to help, she is willing to do whatever it takes.

Dr. Orellana thinks this is an important matter and thanks her for bringing it up and said we will definitely be looking more into this. Mr. Russell mentions that he thinks there is more to this than just applying for it but that there is something that always happens on the other end of things. Mr. Russell said he will look more into this tomorrow but they are staged and ready to go. The Board thanked Ms. Brouillette.

C. Old Business:

1. Policies (2nd readings): These are all new policies.

a) JICFA Hazing	New, NHSBA Verbatim
b) JICG Prohibitions Regarding use and Possession of Tobacco Products, E-Cigarettes and E-liquids in and on School Facilities and Grounds	New, NHSBA w/ Tracked change
c) JICH Drug and Alcohol use by Students	New, NHSBA w/ tracked change

Ms. LaMothe commented on JICFA Hazing. She said the last sentence was brought up before and how the Board said we should maybe not say that items are being printed in the student handbook and requested it would say incorporated or included since they are now using electronic versions.

Mr. Beals said assuming this gets approved tonight, we need to make sure we follow up and go school by school and check that we have the appropriate signage that is required by the policy letter (b). He mentions he knows we have them, but we should double check all schools are appropriately signed.

Ms. LaMothe commented on policy letter (b) where they added “or nicotine” under the student section. She, for consistency, asked if we should add “or nicotine” throughout the whole policy because it will say tobacco products in different places, especially on the last sentence where its talking about the signs. Mr. Beals shared his personal opinion that by just saying “any tobacco product” left some glaring gaps for students mainly because you have the nicotine gums and patches but at the same time, they felt that if a teacher is making an effort to quit smoking and comes to school with a patch on their arm then he doesn’t think this is in his best interest to prohibit that. Ms. LaMothe said she would agree with that but perhaps they should include or nicotine on the signs so that the students are aware. Mr. Beals said he thinks the signs are tough because he thinks that it’s a standard sign that the State puts out and it’s very rigid in the language that is used.

Mr. Beals made a motion to approved policy letters (a, b, c) as amended, second by Mr. Gasdia. Dr. Orellana, aye, Mr. Gasdia, aye, Ms. Fickett, aye, Ms. LaMothe, aye, Mr. Beals, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

D. New Business:

1. Staff Resignations: Mr. Russell said this issue was brought up in a prior meeting on how the Board would like to do these, if they would like to do these in public or in nonpublic meetings. Mr. Beals said thinking about the days prior to being on the Board, he always liked being able to go through the resignations and see it formalized by the Board and it gives them a connection on when or why they are moving out of the district. Mr. Gasdia said his thought on this is that having the name is perfectly fine but when they start getting into resignation letters, it starts to get personal. Mr. Gasdia said if we want to have a list of resignations that’s fine and shows transparency as to turnover and allows the public to get the name of the teacher who may have made an impact on them but it doesn’t open it up for a lengthy resignation letter. Ms. LaMothe and Ms. Fickett agrees with Mr. Gasdia. Dr. Orellana asked the Board if they are suggesting the name of the person and the title of the position and when it goes into effect. Mr. Russell said he will make this happen.

Ms. LaMothe asked what if it is a unique circumstance where the person resigning would rather not have it be public. Mr. Russell said that they would honor this.

2. 2020-2021 Tuition: Ms. Burnell said it's time to set the tuition for the current year. Ms. Burnell said you can see the cost-per-pupil, she said the highest was \$16,323 and she is recommending that the 2020-2021 tuition rate be set at \$16,350.

Mr. Beals asked is a jump like this something that we have seen before or is this atypical for the times we are living in. Ms. Burnell said what this means is that the cost per pupil went up but it is a significant jump. Ms. Burnell said this isn't due to the district; this amount comes from a formula that they are given by the State.

Ms. LaMothe made a motion to set the tuition rate for the 2020-2021 school year at \$16,350, second by Ms. Fickett. Dr. Orellana, aye, Mr. Gasdia, aye, Ms. Fickett, aye, Ms. LaMothe, aye, Mr. Beals, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

3. Public School Infrastructure Fund Project Completion & Request for Payment: Ms. Burnell said as we remember, last year we were approved to receive well over \$1 million from the state infrastructure fund. This is the last amount we will receive and we had to wait until the project was complete to request the funds. This was for the sprinkler system at Alvirne. Ms. Burnell said Mr. Beals had applied for the cost of the project which was over \$1 million and the maximum allotment allowed was \$300,000 which was received. Mr. Burnell said she is requesting Board approval as it is required to receive reimbursement.

Mr. Beals made a motion to approve the \$300,000 reimbursement, second by Mr. Gasdia. Dr. Orellana, aye, Mr. Gasdia, aye, Ms. Fickett, aye, Ms. LaMothe, aye, Mr. Beals, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

E. Recommended Action:

1. Manifest- Recommended Action: These were done online

2. Reports to the Board:

1. Superintendent Report: Mr. Russell wanted to update the Board on what's been going on with the district opening up. Mr. Russell said for the most part, it was a smooth beginning and admits that it could have been a lot worse. Mr. Russell said overall it was a very expensive endeavor to take on. Some of the things we needed to spend money on were unexpected and were not budgeted for. Some expenses Mr. Russell listed were attorney fees for impact bargaining, technology, PPE, storage for excess furniture, tents for the outdoors, HVAC System (ultraviolet). Also, Mr. Russell said the lack of flexibility requires them to bring more people on board. We are hiring additional staff with more students who are coming back. One additional step they took was to have a night cleaning crew come in and sanitize everything in the evening. He said this does not include the time spent that could be spent on other things.

Mr. Russell went on to talk about the dashboard that is located on the SAU website. Mr. Russell said the status of the dashboard for October 5th is either green (good situation), yellow (in need of something) or red (a change needs to be made). He said they went into red right before school started at the middle school when they were in full in they had a couple of areas that went into red so they ended up going into a hybrid model. He said right now at Library Street they have two areas that are in yellow. Mr. Russell said it is the facility for the cafeteria and also PPE for wipes they are using along with staffing at Library Street that is getting pretty tight which has a lot to do with lunch monitors and substitutes. H.O. Smith staffing is also a concern which is in yellow and along with the number of students allowed in the cafeteria as well. Hills Garrison right now is yellow in staffing and in facilities, lunch is at capacity, available support staff is limited. Mr. Russell said Nottingham West is all green. Hudson Memorial staffing is yellow. Alvirne High School space in the

cafeteria on bad weather days is yellow. The CTE Center is all green. Mr. Russell admits there are areas that are raising a concern as you can see but they are trying to monitor them so they can make appropriate decisions.

Mr. Russell said another thing he would like to talk about is the tremendous amount of work that the nurses are doing for the schools. He said there is a lot of pressure on them with communicating with parents and family members about what's going on and said they are handling a lot and couldn't thank them enough for all their hard work.

Mr. Russell handed out a sheet with an update on video conferencing. He said he heard there was a conversation that came about at the last meeting but he was not there to talk about Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Mr. Russell said Microsoft Teams was the plan to connect with remote learning students and also for internal meetings. Mr. Russell said the district right now does have a limited amount of Zoom licenses for larger groups. Mr. Russell said Zoom was adopted in the spring when it waived a 40-minute time limit for teachers. He also said in the Spring Microsoft Teams had limited features compared to Zoom but since that time Microsoft Teams had many advancements which is now equal to Zoom. Mr. Russell mentioned that they have a taskforce if they have to go into remote full-time or if we have blizzard bag days. He mentions that remote teachers have been working with the tech integrators on technical issues and they have come to find that Teams is a better choice when training is done. Mr. Russell said one of their tech integrators is Teams-certified and he is offering support to teachers. He mentions that Teams has not gone out to everyone yet because we need to make sure the remote teachers are getting trained first. Mr. Russell would like to have the tech integrator attend the next meeting to go over the remote learning in more depth and bring in some questions the public or anyone else might have. Ms. Organek mentioned some features Teams has over Zoom as well and there will be training that will be happening for not only staff and students but parents so everyone is adjusted to this properly.

Mr. Gasdia said while we are transitioning, he gets the idea of we don't know when Zoom will start charging us. He asked if teachers have the option on which one they can use or is everyone on Teams as of now. Ms. Organek said at the start of school they let everyone know that they wanted to transition into Teams by October 1st. Mr. Gasdia said the lack of computer hardware is a big issue and that is because when Teams has a new update they download more which is similar to a windows update. He wanted to know if we are seeing this happen to a lot of students where they are struggling on getting these updates in order to move forward. Ms. Organek said she has not heard of any instances of that kind arise but Mr. Russell said they can certainly ask around and see if this is a problem. Mr. Gasdia said he would love to hear from some of the teachers and parents that are having some problems, whether it be through Zoom or Teams especially if remote learning is something that we are going to have around for a long time.

Ms. LaMothe said there was a Forbes article that said Microsoft is adding new features and updates to surpass Zoom and mentioned that it was comforting to read. She asked how the remote helpline was working for remote students. Ms. Organek assured that was working well along with the tech integrators.

Mr. Beals asked Ms. Organek if the group collaboration chats are different than the chat they were talking about last week that was raised as a concern. Ms. Organek said that naturally, it depends on the class whether they are able to the chat appropriately or not. Ms. Organek said this is a whole new learning curve and that they are supporting the teachers as much as possible to create a whole new classroom management plan to be able to deal with these types of issues that arise. Mr. Beals asked if in Ms. Organek's experience, do more teachers have the chat turned off or do more teachers leave it on. Ms. Organek said at first there are more teachers who have the chat off so they can get into the swing of things but this could change over time. Mr. Beals is also interested in the pricing and what each remote learning entails.

Dr. Orellana asked Ms. LoVerdi what her take on Zoom vs Teams is. Ms. LoVerdi said personally this year she has not used Teams much at school because she is in person but last year she used Zoom. She mentions last year she did not

have any issues with the chat features but this may also be due to the classes she is in. Ms. LoVerdi said this is going to be different with different grades, classes, but she also said that teachers can see what we put into the chats no matter if it is sent privately. Ms. LoVerdi said all of her teachers have set up Teams and have sent over links to get onto Teams as well. Ms. LoVerdi said when you are using Teams you should make sure you have a good signal set up.

Mr. Russell said the last thing he would like to talk about are the protocols that are put out by the State with the holiday season. He admits that the protocols can be very difficult for people that want to travel. Mr. Russell said right now the order is that if you go out of New England you have to isolate for 14 days and that this is the guidance coming from the governor's office. He mentions that New England is one of the safest places to be right now. He also mentions that we are in a fragile place; tough decisions have to be made and if we don't do this then that it will be very difficult to stay in the models we are in. Mr. Gasdia questioned Mr. Russell and asked if you travel outside of New England and you get a test and it comes back negative, that doesn't mean you can come back. Mr. Russell said correct; that is part of the governor's order. Mr. Russell is working with the taskforce right now to work out the kinks on tough situations that might arise.

Ms. LaMothe asked if when coming back to school after a holiday period where people may be likely to travel, is there a way to have an online form to submit answers to questions that are supposed to be answered daily, such as have you traveled outside of New England, etc. Mr. Russell said it would be difficult to monitor this. He would take this into consideration.

2. Assistant Superintendent Report: Ms. Organek said last week they submitted their Title II and Title IV grants to the State. Title II focuses on professional development and Title IV focuses on safe and healthy schools, well-rounded education, and effective use of technology. Ms. Organek said last year due to the pandemic they waived the requirements of spending 20% or more on safe and healthy schools, 20% on well-rounded education, and the rest can be spent on technology but these limitation are all back in play this year. Ms. Organek said they are hoping to hear back on Title II very soon.

Ms. Organek also mentioned that she was at Hills and saw some 5th graders who were working hard at their math and long division and thanked them for chatting with her. She also gave a shout out to all teachers as it is World Teachers' Day.

3. Interim Business Administrator Report: Ms. Burnell said they are moving along with filling the Business Administrator position. She also isn't sure if they have the budget meetings planned yet and is wondering when this should be planned. November 18th is when the Board needs to have everything to the budget committee, so the board would have until November 9th or 10th to have this complete. Mr. Russell said if they cannot finish up on November 2nd then they can pick another day. The Board has decided to have budget meetings on October 19th, October 26th, November 2nd, and November 12th will be a wrap up if necessary.

4. Director of Special Services: Ms. Borge answered Mr. Gasdia and said if people travel and do not tell us, the most tragic consequence would be if they came to school without knowing they contracted the virus as the first four days you are asymptomatic and people need to be concerned about everyone's safety. Mr. Borge also reminded everyone that this Wednesday is the virtual meeting and if you have not registered for this you can find this on the website or email sepac03051@gmail.com directly. She also asked families to make this a success and come ready with questions and let them know what have gone right but as well to address any issues that are arising.

F. Legislative Updates: No updates.

G. Correspondence:

1. Financial Report: Ms. Burnell said they have their financial statement in their packet and you notice that the anticipated fund balance is \$196,000 which is an example of how much additional funding has been spent this year for cleaning and supplies. She mentioned not only do we have over-expended accounts, we also have a shortfall in revenue as things are not happening as they normally do. Ms. Burnell said it is going to be her recommendation to the Superintendent that we freeze the budget and go with minimal spending on only things that are necessary. Ms. Burnell said we do need to take a look at what and how we are spending. Mr. Russell asked Ms. Burnell if she could briefly go over what it does and does not affect. Ms. Burnell said salaries and benefits it does not affect, it basically affects things like projects in the facilities, and equipment purchases. She said everything besides contract obligations we should be talking about whether we should spend the money or not.

Ms. LaMothe asked if the budget has ever been frozen before. Ms. Burnell said it has been frozen before, but this is probably the worst she has ever seen it this early in the year. Mr. Russell said without doing what we did, the schools would not have been able to open up at all. Ms. LaMothe asked if there are any other sources of revenue that may be possible. Ms. Burnell mentioned that she does not see any revenue coming in at the moment.

H. Board Member Comments:

Mr. Gary Gasdia: Mr. Gasdia welcomed Hannah and Karen. He said it was great to see they had public input tonight and how it's always nice to hear from the public.

Mr. Gasdia also mentioned that Mary Glaude who was the Math Department Head at Alvirne unfortunately passed away recently. He mentioned she had a positive impact on many people in the district and offered condolences to her family and thanked her for everything she had done over the years.

Ms. Diana LaMothe: Welcomed Karen back and Hannah to the Board. She asked if the Board members were going to attend the Zoom webinar on Saturday afternoon that the commissioner is giving on issues with reopening. Ms. LaMothe said she cannot attend but said it would be a good webinar to watch. Dr. Orellana said they will be attending this meeting.

Mr. Ethan Beals: Welcomed Hannah and Karen. He said he was curious as to what the advantages are with using Canvas and is interested what the webinar is going to talk about.

Ms. Fabiana Fickett: Welcomed Karen and Hannah. She mentioned that there were a few fundraisers happening at Nottingham West has the Cherrydale Fundraiser going on until October 9th and the Fun Pasta fundraiser at the Early Learning Center is also going on until October 10th.

Ms. Hannah LoVerdi: She thanked everyone who welcomed her. She also mentioned that all sports are playing Nashua South this week. She said SATs for senior are being held on Wednesday. Ms. LoVerdi said they are having a sock fundraiser at school which occurs every year in October, they would also like to beat their goal from last year which was around 350 socks.

Ms. Kara Roy: Welcomed back Karen and Hannah to the board. Ms. Roy said voting for the presidential election will happen at the Hudson Memorial School at 1 Memorial Drive.

Dr. Darcy Orellana: Welcomed both Karen and Hannah. Dr. Orellana went on to talk about when she thinks about travel and 14 days of quarantine, she thinks about public health and said it is a community act. She mentioned that we don't

want to be that district to make other people sick and to think deeply about your future actions. She also gives everyone credit for everything they have done.

J. Upcoming Meetings

Meeting	Date	Time	Location	Purpose
School Board	10/19/2020	6:30 pm	Hills Memorial Library	Budget Meeting
School Board	10/26/2020	6:30 pm	Hills Memorial Library	Budget Meeting

J. Non-Public Session:

Mr. Gasdia made a motion to enter non-public session according to RSA 91-A: 3(b, c) at 8:00pm , second by Ms. LaMothe . Roll call vote, Mr. Beals, aye, Ms. LaMothe, aye, Mr. Gasdia, aye, Dr. Orellana, aye, Ms. Fickett, aye. Motion passes 5-0.

Ms. LaMothe moved to approve the nomination of Elyse Seward to the position of Special Education Teacher at a salary of \$43,000, second by Ms. Fickett. Motion passes 5-0.

District Leadership (Larry Russell, Kim Organek, Karen Burnell and Rachel Borge) dismissed at 8:30 pm.
Attendance – Darcy Orellana (Chair); Gary Gasdia (Vice-Chair); Ethan Beals, Diana LaMothe, Fabiana Fickett.

Discussed personnel issue.

K. Adjourn:

Motion by Mr. Beals to exit non-public and adjourn, second by Ms. Fickett. Motion passed 5-0.

Meeting adjourned 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Gage (public)
Kim Organek (1st non-public)
Gary Gasdia (2nd non-public)