



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 December 6, 2021

Present:

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

Absent: Gretchen Whiting, Member

A. Call to Order

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

Mr. Beals made a motion to enter a non-public session according to RSA 91-A: 3(c) at 6:00 pm, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Russell discussed an incident at HMS.

Mr. Campbell provided a status update on contract negotiations.

Mr. Beals made a motion to exit non-public at 6:28 pm, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Gasdia called the public session to order and apologized for the late start which was due to non-public session running over a bit. Mr. Campbell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input

James Weaver, 27 Rolling Woods Drive read an email that he sent to the board regarding a bus incident. His 12-year-old daughter was waiting for the bus on November 30 and a bus stopped around the usual time but with a different driver. The driver asked which school she went to and she replied, "Hudson Memorial." The driver said, "okay, let's go" and his daughter got on the bus, assuming it was a substitute driver. He asked a second girl who was waiting at the next stop where she was going and she

replied, “the middle school” and he said, “okay, let’s go.” Once on the bus, the second girl noticed it said Londonderry on the bus and asked the driver why a Londonderry but was in Hudson to which he replied, “are you sure this is Hudson?” to which she replied, “yes.” The students were asked to get off the bus, leaving Mr. Weaver’s daughter at the wrong stop.

Mr. Weaver asked the board to adopt a policy with surrounding towns to assure clear communication should a similar situation occur in the future.

Mr. Gasdia closed public input.

In the interest of time, Ms. LaMothe moved to move JROTC and the bus discussion to the beginning of the meeting, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passes 4-0.

C. JROTC Washington, DC Trip Request

Col. Cheetham explained that this biannual trip has not been able to happen the past two years due to COVID; it’s a vital trip, capstone to program, and all necessary safety protocols will be followed. He then introduced Nellie Brooks, Group Commander. Ms. Brooks presented a slide show with summary, itinerary, health and safety, rooms, and costs. Most of the trip is funded by the USAF which provides a stipend for academic purposes and they’ve also done some fundraising. Ms. Brooks then answered a few questions.

Ms. LaMothe moved to approved the JROTC overnight trip, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passes 4-0.

D. Bus Company Coordination Discussion

Mr. Russell shared that on the day of the bus incident he contacted the Londonderry superintendent and learned that the bus driver did try to contact dispatch but the dispatcher was driving one of the buses that day because they were so short-handed. Ms. Burk talked directly to the bus company as well. Litchfield, Londonderry, and perhaps Windham

Mr. Campbell talked about issues with notifications about bus issues within Hudson. Build a list for the entire route instead of by school.

Develop protocol and distribute to any substitute driver. Ms. LaMothe asked if it would be possible to notify parents of a sub driver in the same way parents are notified that a bus is running late. Our bus company is very accommodating

How to ensure the right kids are picked up, what if the wrong kid is picked up, and add situation to bus training for students.

Mr. Beals asked if we have any protocols for if one of our drivers picks up the wrong student. Create document and share with other districts. Mr. Russell stated that the hope is work with other districts to create such a document.

E. Good News Update

Ms. Organek shared info about the Pie Share and Hudson-Litchfield Ornaments.

F. Committee Reports

1. Capital Improvement Committee

Ms. LaMothe presented the 23-page report which can be viewed on the district website in the December 6 agenda. Ms. Burk provided information on traffic studies conducted at the schools.

Mr. Beals indicated that this is a living, breathing plan and commended Diana for the tremendous amount of work. Mr. Campbell echoed. Mr. Gasdia: It's great and not for us; it's for everyone in the town. This document will allow people to know ahead of time what the needs are. Ms. LaMothe thanked all that were involved. Ms. Roy suggested that a calendar be created and posted.

2. Superintendent Search Committee

Mr. Beals went over what the committee has accomplished so far and stated that the goal is to get the position posted before Christmas. The committee is creating "A Portrait of a Superintendent." Email was sent out to identify people who were interested in focus groups; over 30 have signed up. A survey will also go out. Next meeting is this Thursday. Ms. LaMothe asked about minutes from the committee meetings. Ethan shared that they are working on updating the search committee section of the website which will include minutes.

G. Old Business

1. ESSER Funds

Ms. Organek provided a summary on what the district has spent so far and on what with ESSER II & III funds. ESSER III was just recently approved. Ms. Organek answered questions from board members about different items on the list. Mr. Gasdia asked if there will be a way to identify which positions are ESSER-funded when the grant money runs out, so it doesn't appear that we are just cutting positions. Yes, they are being tracked and the employees know that they're being paid with grant money and the positions were created to address learning loss due to the pandemic.

Mr. Russell brought up the question about whether school board members have authority over how grant funds are used. This was discussed at a recent South Central superintendents' meeting. The board is a stakeholder group that needs to be aware of what's in the grant but has no authority of what does or does not go into a grant. Federal Funds are controlled by the district and do not fall under the board's purview. Input from all stakeholders is considered when deciding what to put into the grants. If the board would like to reach out to NHSBA for clarification, that would be welcomed. Mr. Gasdia encourage all stakeholders to share input when a grant is awarded and expressed his appreciation for all of the work that goes into it. Mr. Beals stated that he takes exception to the board being considered as just stakeholders in this case and he believes that any citizen would think that the board has say over how the over \$5 million dollars of grant funds are spent. Ms. LaMothe acknowledged what Mr. Beals was saying. The large figures for these grants are getting a lot of attention that we didn't see with smaller grants. She mentioned that Mr. Russell stated they're open to questions and she suggested reaching out to the NHSBA for their perspective. This is a unique situation with the pandemic and we have greater needs and also staffing challenges. Hopefully these grant-funded positions will help bring students back to where they should be and then they won't all be needed. These decisions are made by people on the frontline. Not in our purview but it's being handled well and very transparent. Mr. Gasdia stated that they should contact the NHSBA. Mr. Beals stated that he didn't mean for his comments to be so negative and that he has nothing to fight about and apologized if it appeared that way. No apology necessary. Mr. Gasdia stated that he does want to contact NHSBA to get their take on this so we know how to proceed going forward.

2. Policies (2nd readings)

Ms. Organek addressed the board. Only one change to a policy, replacing "school committee" with school board.

Ms. LaMothe moved to approved policies BEDH, IGE, KE, KEC, and KFA as amended, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passes 4-0.

H. New Business

1. Website Proposal

Moved to next meeting.

2. Extracurricular Nominations

Mr. Russell presented the nominations.

Mr. Beals moved to approve the nominations, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passes 4-0.

3. Marine Corps Educators' Workshop

Mr. Russell presented the request for Kate Marcotte to attend this workshop, 100% paid by Marines, and the Director of School Counseling will be able to cover her duties.

Mr. Beals moved to approve attendance at the workshop, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passes 4-0.

I. Recommended Action

1. Manifests are all set.

2. Minutes

10/04/2021 draft minutes. Ms. LaMothe pointed out that on page 3 there is no second noted for Mr. Beals' motion to approve TDD Earth Tech for one year, the wording, and that whoever voted no needs to be noted. Page 4

J. Reports to the Board

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Russell addressed the board. Job fair went well; hired 15 people. Still need more. Had 16 people out in one building last week, mostly unrelated to COVID. There's always a need for subs for many reasons even without COVID but if a staff member gets COVID, they're out for 10 days.

Thanked the Hudson Fire Department and Nashua Public Health for our vaccine clinic along with the staff that volunteered. Hudson Schools, PMA, and Litchfield took advantage. Next clinic on December 22nd. Both vaccines and boosters are offered at the clinics. Going through Thanksgiving uptick in cases. Some school case numbers have doubled in a week.

2. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Organek addressed the board. Continuing at HMS for CTE career exploration days for 7th graders. Next one is December 20 – Computer Science Month. Various vendors will attend. The kids have really enjoyed these career days and excited to learn about potential careers at such a young age.

Schoology parent pilot begins this week. Soft rollout for parent involvement with the student management system with full rollout to parents in January.

3. Director of Special Services Report

Ms. Borge address the board. Constant, ongoing, and quality collaboration that happens across our region. Was at South Central meeting. In process: uniform guidance across our districts, how school choice options affect potential IEP services. Coordinating with three districts in our region to do a workshop on EBD (Emotional Behavioral Disorders), six-part series. Everyone is short of staff and providers.

4. Business Administrator Report

Nothing this evening.

Mr. Russell shared that having an HFT representative attend board meetings is being reinstated. This will be beneficial when the board has questions where a teacher's perspective would be useful.

K. Correspondence

1. Financial Report

Mr. Burk summarized the financial report which includes year-to-date expenditures, a snapshot of where we are with finances. Anticipated fund balance of \$739,000 – obviously subject to change. Doing a mid-year PO cleanup, will work with administrative assistants. This will provide a better picture of where we are with our accounts. Ms. LaMothe mentioned that not last year (because of COVID) but two years ago January/February was a good time to discuss any urgent needs that may have come up since the creation of the budget. Ms. Burk relayed that nothing has come up yet but discussions will soon start with the administrative staff.

L. Board Member Comments

Ms. Roy: *inaudible*

Mr. Campbell: Thanked the JROTC for giving such a great presentation. Would like to get a review about the trip.

Mr. Beals: Commended the superintendent and SAU leadership. Lots of positive things in recent weeks, 15 is a solid number for the job fair, quick action taken over bus incident, setting up vaccine clinic, enjoys the superintendent's willingness to be a lunch monitor.

Ms. LaMothe: Didn't realize there was an HFT representative here this evening. Thank you for coming, glad to get feedback from teachers whenever we can. Voting is March 8th. It's so important, hoping for a big turnout, especially with two locations (we don't know yet). Budget Committee Public Hearing is scheduled for January 13th at 7:00 pm. Deliberative Session is February 5th for the school district.

Town's is February 12th. Candidates may file declaration of candidacy January 19-28. Happy to have a conversation with anyone who is interested in learning what being a school board member entails.

Mr. Gasdia: Watched concerts at Alvirne this past weekend; it's great that we are back and have the ability to have concerts. Performances were fantastic which is great but there were many students missing due to COVID. Others had to step up. Heard conversations that the kids were only missing because of the protocols and that they're not sick and should be in school. Don't want to violate privacy issues but some of those kids are very sick and not home because they had to take a test. Not saying all are sick but it is real. We have some students in our district very sick with COVID, some on the verge of going to the hospital. Want people to know this is real, stay vigilant, we've done a nice job making sure our schools stay open to December 6 and the holiday break is coming up. I hope everyone gets better really soon.

M. Non-public Session

Mr. Beals made a motion to enter a non-public session according to RSA 91-A: 3(c) at 8:30 pm, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passed 4-0.

The Board and Mr. Russell agreed that a mid-year evaluation/ half-year update would be in order.

The job posting for the superintendent position is targeted for December 22. The decision to include salary in the posting is to be made.

N. Adjourn

Mr. Beals made a motion to exit non-public and adjourn at 8:44 pm, second by Mr. Campbell. Motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail Porter (public)

Diana LaMothe (non-public)