



**HUDSON SCHOOL BOARD**  
Hills Memorial Library  
18 Library Street, Hudson, New Hampshire

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**Minutes**  
**June 7, 2022**

**In attendance:**

**Board Members**

Gary Gasdia, Chairman  
Gretchen Whiting, Vice-chair  
Ethan Beals  
Mike Campbell  
Maureen Dionne  
Emily Dozois, Student Representative

**SAU Staff**

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

Brett Gagnon, Board of Selectmen Liaison (absent tonight)

**A. Call to Order [0:00:17]**

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mr. Gasdia called the meeting to order at 6:40 pm. Ms. Dionne led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**B. Public Input [0:00:38]**

Michaela Mann of 5 Wagner Way and Holly Buchanon of 15 Partridge Circle spoke against block scheduling at Alvirne High School. They read an account from a student who attended Alvirne from another district whose grades and attention improved at Alvirne due to the scheduling. Students responded to a survey and 150 out of 218 did not favor block scheduling, mostly due to not having attention spans for the 90-minute blocks vs. 45 minutes and not being able to see teachers for extended periods of time. There were concerns about students who had IEPs where students would not be able to regularly see case managers.

Haley Basset of 23 Glenn Drive is a junior at Alvirne and has a full schedule of classes and finally has a study hall this year. She spoke about using lunch time to get help/do homework and concerns about student discipline (skipping classes), the inability to focus during 90-minute classes and concerns about more schedule changes since Covid.

**C. Recognition of Retirees [00:10:44]**

The School Board and Superintendent Russell recognized and thanked retirees for their years of service. Retirees in attendance were Sara Conrad, Vincent Denufrio, Tom Jackson, Lise Linehan, MaryAnn Melizza-Goya, David Roustio and John Wilcox.

**D. Presentation to the Board [0:24:29]****Added – Trip Request**

Karen Bonney, Alvirne Athletic Director, commended all student athletes, especially state champions Noah LeClair, Alvin Thumi and Molly O'Donnell.

The Meet of Champions was held on Saturday and Ms. Bonney requested permission for an overnight trip for the eight qualifying students (Noah LeClair, Alvin Thumi, Molly O'Donnell, Jack Ashworth, Paige Boudreau, Anna Simpson, Ava Martin, Jenna Hebert, Adrienne Mckoy-Sophos) to attend the New Englands this Saturday in CT. The cost would come out of the student activity account.

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the athletic overnight trip request for eight qualifying students to attend the New Englands in CT on June 11, 2022. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

**1. Washington DC Update (Information)**

Hudson Memorial School students Caleb Cloutier and Avery Welch and teacher Kim Bourassa shared highlights of the eighth grade Washington DC trip, including the National Archives and Colonial Williamsburg. Both students felt it was a fantastic experience.

**E. Old Business [0:34:51]****1. Alvirne Schedule Update (Information)**

Alvirne High School Dean of Academics Sue Bureau provided an update on the flex pilot and proposed A/B block schedule for fall. Mr. Russell provided historical context of the proposed scheduling. Last year, part of the CBA stated that a committee would be formed to look at different high school schedules and the committee would make a recommendation to the superintendent, who would make the final decision.

Much of the discussion was about flex scheduling. The committee voted 4-2 to move in the direction of A/B scheduling. The next step was impact bargaining, where the primary focus was flex scheduling. He recognized some students/people had reservations of the A/B scheduling.

Ms. Bureau spoke about the pilot program that started in May. They looked at how the scheduling served the goals of community building and time for academic intervention. A/B scheduling supports these goals. The pilot was supported by teachers. The "home base" aspect went well. Teachers, in general, saw value in the scheduling. Data was being collected regarding students and flex time. The goal would be to have a flex time committee meet during the summer via Zoom meetings. Students would also serve on the committee. Impact bargaining was offered to HFT and they accepted it.

Flex time and A/B scheduling were discussed among Board members. Ms. Whiting had concerns about the changes and suggested implementing the A/B schedule later. She was concerned about communication to teachers, families and students. Ms. Whiting had concern about the changes in scheduling that some students, especially seniors, have had over the years. Mr. Beals commented that block scheduling was long overdue and a better educational model. Mr. Russell noted that the longer blocks would be broken up appropriately to keep student engagement (not all lecture). Ms. Bureau noted that there would be more time for professional learning with block scheduling. The capstone project was set up similar to block scheduling. Ms. Dozois noted that students with whom she spoke were concerned a block was too long for a class, flex could be too much support in high school and there have been many schedule changes over the past few years. Holding forums and creating a frequently asked questions document was discussed. Ms. Dionne asked the families of rising freshmen also receive the update. Ms. Bureau will distribute data regarding flex time when it is ready. Mr. Russell said that the main focus was on how flex time would be scheduled in - this could be inserted lightly. The intention is to communicate the scheduling plan by the end of this school year.

**2. Alvirne Renovation (Discussion/Decision)**

Jay Doherty of Lavallee/Brensigner Architects shared an updated version of the proposed Alvirne renovation plan including the proposed budget and the process for state building aid. The application is due July 1, 2022. The renovation includes a safe and secure entry, safe bus and parent drop-off loop, an auditorium with a new staircase and elevator for safety, renovated gym mechanical system, cafeteria and locker spaces. The proposed plan is based on the Homeland Security review. It was noted that much of the renovation plan is contingent on the auditorium portion being built.

The previous project cost totaled \$17.5 million with Harvey Construction. The 2023 total is \$29.5 million due to increases in the cost of materials, labor and transportation.

New auditorium	\$5.4 million
New main entry/office	\$3.6 million
Renovation of school	\$7.0 million
General conditions/design fees	\$5.4 million
Sitework Improvements	\$2.3 million
Furnishings, equipment and contingency	\$2.8 million

There is potential to receive state building aid. There are 18 pieces to the application, due on July 1, 2022m that were reviewed (condition evaluation form, assurance statement, 20-year maintenance plan, etc.) The School Board and taxpayers need to approve the project in order to receive funding. Hudson is potentially eligible to receive 30% in aid, resulting in approximately \$10 million. State building aid is set every two years. There was concern about the high cost but also that the project was important. The warrant article would reflect the full scope of the project at \$29.5 million. The State Board publishes the ranked list of projects by mid-January.

***Ethan Beals made a motion, based on today's presentation by Jay Doherty of Lavallee/Brensinger Architects of the project and budget values in the board packet, that this (Alvirne Renovation) project be considered to be brought in front of voters come voting season. Mike Campbell seconded the motion.***

Board members believe in the project but had concern about the cost in this fiscal environment. Mr. Gasdia had concern about the cost of the project and the amount of work for the SAU. He felt it could be seen as tone deaf. Ms. Whiting would like more information on what would go on the ballot. The board asked if the district would be *required* to move forward with the proposal if building aid is approved. The board would not be required to do so. Ms. Dionne agrees the price is sticker shock but it is a need not a want. The feasibility study being done will provide information regarding how all the buildings would are being used – there might be a higher need than the Alvirne renovation.

***Motion passed 4:1 with Mr. Gasdia dissenting.***

### **3. Compensation (Information)**

Ms. Burk reviewed compensation options related to staff retention and recruitment. Highlights included retention bonus, which would essentially be a one-time “thank you” to staff. Full-time staff would receive a \$1,500 retention bonus, part-time staff \$1,000 and \$500 for all monitors, to be paid in two installments. The total would be about \$1 million.

A sign-on bonus is another option - \$1,000 for all full-time hires, \$500 for part-time hires and \$250 for monitors, paid in two installments. The cost would be about \$100,000.

A referral bonus is another option- \$1,000 for all full-time hires, \$500 for part-time hires and \$250 for monitors. The cost would be about \$50,000. A referral encourages staff to share that HSD is a good environment in which to work. There would be no limit on referrals and hiring managers would not be eligible.

Funding for any of these options would come out of ESSER funds. There is a concern that a one-time thank you payment would not be effective since the district could not make up the difference in salaries with other districts. Mr. Russell felt it would make more sense to focus on adjusting pay scales in the teachers’ contract. This would make the district attractive to teachers. There was discussion about putting ESSER funds to good use and timing of payments. The board asked about the impact of using ESSER funds and what would not be done if it is used for any of these options.

Mr. Beals agreed the longer-term fix (teacher’s contract) needs to happen. The retention bonus might persuade someone who is on the fence and thanks people that worked hard.

### **4. Year-End Spending (Decision)**

The Board discussed year-end spending requests. There was a remaining item, the Hills Garrison music room A/C unit. The cost is \$10,594. This was cut from the default budget. There was discussion that the crane is being rented for work at Hills Garrison anyway and that

construction costs are increasing.

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the Hills Garrison music room A/C unit for \$10,594. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed, 5:0.***

## **F. New Business [2:19:39]**

### **1. Bids (Decision)**

Bread bid for the Food Service Department - There were multiple bids but the recommendation was Fantini Bakery (\$18,360) that was the lower bid.

***Ethan Beals made a motion to award the bread bid to Fantini Bakery in the amount of \$18,360. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

Office and School Supplies Bid - Quill and WB Mason were the usual supply companies used by the district; the recommendation was to award half the bid to each company (\$35,000 each).

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the Office and School Supplies bid to Quill and WB Mason at \$35,000 each. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

Art Supplies Bid - The recommendation was to split the cost between the usual vendors of Quill and National Art and School Supplies (\$17,000 each).

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the Art Supplies bid to Quill and National Art and School Supplies at \$17,000 each. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

Playground Bid - The voters approved using \$75,00 from the fund balance for this project. Some money was donated by the PTA for the cost of surfacing. The focus was on equipment and installation. Early Learning Center Principal Mary-Ellen Labrie spoke about the project and working with people on the design, including ADA compliance (e.g. slight incline entrance; see-saw seats; tic tac toe board accessibility). There was concern about the difficulty of wheelchairs rolling over surfacing. There was discussion about the composite bark mulch surfacing and potential alternatives. The proposed plan included professional installation. Mr. Beals suggested using volunteers to install the equipment, as was done at Hills Garrison several years ago. There was a concern about the timeliness of installation and liability if volunteers were used. The equipment provider has a project-manager onsite that oversees the installation process.

Ms. Burk will bring back updated information at the meeting on June 20.

### **2. Extracurricular Nomination (Decision)**

Mr. Russell requested approval for nominations for the *Summer Shakespeare* program at Alvirne.

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the Summer Shakespeare Advisor (Jen LaFrance and***

***Lauren Denis stipends as presented (\$2,500 each). Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

### **3. Transfer Request (Decision)**

Ms. Burk reviewed a request for a transfer for Special Education Equipment.

***Ethan Beals made a motion to approve the transfer request of \$9,231.30 as presented. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

It was noted that the free meal program will be ending June 15 and information will be available by August for families to sign up for free/reduced lunch. Creative ways of communicating this out would be discussed this summer.

### **G. Recommended Action [2:43:52]**

#### **1. Manifests: Make necessary corrections/sign**

#### **2. Minutes (May 23, 2022)**

***Mike Campbell made a motion to approve the minutes of May 23, 2022 as presented. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0.***

### **H. Reports to the Board (Information) [2:44:19]**

#### **1. Superintendent Report**

Mr. Russel noted that Scholarship Night was last night and many students were represented. Prom would be held tonight. The 8th grade held the first dance in 3 years. Hudson history trips were taken by the third graders. The new website launched May 27, 2022 and the search feature would be live soon. The Career Fair was on May 25th and went well.

#### **2. Assistant Superintendent Report**

Ms. Organek thanked the third graders for touring Hudson including the SAU. The Summer Scholar program is full, with 145 students attending. The district will also host a new STEM program in August. Rich Paiva submitted a proposal to the ACTE Career Tech Vision Conference of 2022 in Las Vegas in November entitled "CTE Ambassadors and Career Development Peer Education for Middle Schoolers" and they were accepted to be presenters.

#### **3. Director of Special Services Report**

Ms. Borge shared feedback on the transition pilot from parents, staff and students. People liked the fact that students had opportunity to attend different work experiences in the community and how to engage in different people. People felt that more time and days would benefit. There was current legislation would extend the age of eligibility for special services by one more year - it is expected to pass. Discussions were ongoing regarding more structure towards the gradual release to community-based activities to students.

#### 4. Business Administrator Report

Ms. Burk noted there were 81 job vacancies. There has been progress with some roles at the SAU.

#### I. Committee Reports [2:53:49]

##### 1. Committee Reports

Mr. Campbell congratulated Kendall Nangle who won the four-year Hills Family Scholarship and Grace Boudreau and Emily Dozois who won \$2,000 scholarships. He thanked the Trustees.

Ms. Dionne mentioned that the JEDI committee met and there was discussion regarding the use of ESSER funds for a DEI officer and bringing it to the Policy Committee.

Ms. Whiting reported that the Budget Committee met on June 1st where there was discussion regarding the School Board complaint with the Town of Hudson. The hearing is scheduled in Superior Court on June 16th at 2pm. She will attend.

#### J. Board of Selectmen - Liaison Comments [2:55:14] - N/A

Mr. Gagnon was absent tonight.

#### K. School Board Member Comments [2:55:18]

Emily Dozois congratulated the Class of 2022 and all the students stepping up next year and wished everyone a nice summer.

Mr. Campbell noted that *NH Gives* was being held tomorrow.

Ms. Dionne congratulated the graduating seniors. She mentioned that the Rogers Memorial Library became a partner with 14 area libraries in the Greater Manchester Inter-library Consortium in April. As a result, the collection grew from 45,000 in Hudson to 1.4 million which benefitted students.

Mr. Beals and Ms. Whiting congratulated graduating seniors and the other grades who are stepping up. Mr. Gasdia spoke about the different events the past few weeks and he commended students and staff.

#### L. Non-Public Session - RSA 91-A:3 II c. Personnel Matter [2:58:57]

*At 9:45pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to enter into non-public session per RSA 91-A:3 II c. Personnel Matter. Maureen Dionne seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.*

#### M. Return to General Session

*At 10:52pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to return to general session. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.*

**N. Adjournment**

*At 10:52 pm, Ethan Beals made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Campbell seconded the motion. Motion passed 5:0. Roll call vote.*

Respectfully submitted by  
Susan DeFelice