



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
December 20, 2021
Approved Minutes

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 6:30 pm and the Pledge of Allegiance was said.

B. Public Input

None.

C. Good News Update

Ms. Organek shared a slide from today's Computer Science Career Day at Hudson Memorial. Secondly, Alvirne junior Thomas Peaslee has been selected to participate in the AFJROTC Flight Academy this coming summer. The only choose 200 cadets from over 1800 applicants and this is the first time we've had a cadet from Alvirne accepted. Completion of this program will result in Thomas' pilot's license, college credit, and a college experience before finishing high school.

D. Old Business

1) Strategic Plan Update

Terry Wolf provided a status report on the plan. Making it more user-friendly. A lot has been accomplished from the plan, especially given that almost two of the two and a half years since its creation, we've been dealing with the pandemic. The updated plan will be presented to the board on January 24th. Mr. Gasdia asked the board to email Terry with any questions or anything they'd like to see on the plan.

2) Warrant Articles

Ms. Burk presented the draft warrant articles and hopes to present the CBAs at the January 3rd meeting as they're nearing finalizing negotiations. She then asked the board if they wanted to keep warrant article 6, increasing funds in the Capital Reserve. The warrant will go the January 5th meeting of the Budget Committee. Ms. LaMothe attends the Budget Committee meetings and replied that although it's a great idea to build up the reserve, she is not sure this is the year to do so. Mr. Beals shared his support of the warrant article. Ms. Burk answered some questions from the board. Ms. Whiting requested that something be put on our website explaining the difference between Fund Balance Retention and Capital Reserve Funds. Mr. Gasdia shared that warrant article explanations are available on the website and Deliberative Session. Ms. LaMothe suggested that \$100k might be better received than \$250k. Mr. Beals reiterated his support of the warrant article as is. The board will vote on warrant articles on January 3rd in preparation for the January 13th Budget Committee Public Hearing.

3) Capital Improvement Plan

Ms. LaMothe stated that the draft plan was presented to the board December 6th and it was decided to wait until the full board was present before voting.

Mr. Beals moved to accept and approve the Capital Improvement Plan, second by Ms. LaMothe. Motion passes 5-0.

Ms. Burk presented the Alvirne renovation timeline from Lavallee Brensinger to prepare for the 2023 vote.

4) Grant Follow-up

Ms. LaMothe shared that at the last board meeting there was a discussion about what the board's purview was when it came to grants and that it also came up during a Budget Committee meeting. Mr. Beals reached out to the New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) and during a very informative Zoom discussion with Director of Governmental Relations Rebecca Wilson, the board was told that ESSER grants and all grants are overseen by the federal government and the Department of Education. Ms. LaMothe mentioned board policy DAF Administration of Federal Funds. Mr. Beals explained that different school boards have different roles, some narrow, some expansive and he believes the citizens of Hudson would expect this board to have a more expansive role. Mr. Gasdia stated that the ESSER spending has been transparent and to keep it that way, he suggested information on how the district comes to decisions regarding the spending of ESSER funds be put on our website for the board and the public.

E. New Business

1) Website Proposal

Kevin Peterson and Terry Wolf presented a proposal for a new vendor for our website. After looking at many websites last school year, Campus Suite was chosen but then it was realized that our contract with the current vendor had not yet expired so we couldn't move forward. In November 2021, staff met again with Campus Suite and a second vendor and

Campus Suite was still the preference. Very user-friendly, reasonably priced, and ADA compliance is a priority, excellence references. Ms. Whiting asked about an app as it's not mentioned in the documentation provided. Mr. Peterson replied that apps are not included in the price but the sites are mobile-friendly so they adjust for screen size. Adding the app option would cost another \$10k. Ms. Wolf relayed that some vendors are moving away from apps and focusing on mobile-friendly. Ms. Whiting asked if we could do a survey. Ms. Wolf explained that there would be some overlap between Schoology and Campus Suite if we purchased all the options. Ms. Whiting asked to see the overlap. Ms. LaMothe asked about pricing for other vendors. They were more expensive for a lesser project. Mr. Gasdia asked about the search feature and if it would search within a pdf. Ms. Wolf replied that it will. Mr. Gasdia asked about the ADA compliance piece and if the vendor will ensure that content is compliant. Ms. Wolf replied that we would be responsible for that which will require training.

Ms. LaMothe moved to approve the three-year contract with Innersync Studio for Campus Suite, second by Mr. Campbell. Ms. Whiting asked about an app again. Other board members with students do not use the current app. ***After discussion, motion passes 4-0-1 with Mr. Gasdia abstaining.***

2) Policies

Ms. Organek presented two policies for a first reading: IHAM Health Education and Exemption from Instruction and KF Use of School Buildings and Facilities. IHAM is new and KF had been reviewed. Mr. Beals asked why the Hills House field usage is different than any other facility usage and feels that the board should approve usage of all district facilities. Mr. Russell replied that the Hills House usage falls under the purview of the board and the schools fall under operations. Ms. Burk added that the Historical Society also must approve use of the Hills House property. Mr. Gasdia shared that if the board had to approve all requests, it would be a lot and if we wanted to make the process uniform for all facilities, he would prefer that the district also approve the Hills House as opposed to the board approving all. Ms. Whiting agreed with Mr. Gasdia.

F. Recommended Action

1) Manifests are all set.

2) Minutes

09/20/2021

10/18/2021

10/25/2021

11/18/2021

Mr. Campbell reviewed the video of the vote on page 2 of 10/25 motion to add \$10k for classroom management software failed 2-2 with Mr. Beals and Mr. Gasdia voting no and Mr. Campbell and Ms. LaMothe voting yes.

Ms. LaMothe gave an overview and would like to discuss a process because they didn't see the minutes until tonight. She would like them watermarked DRAFT and posted and then they could review them and approve at the next meeting. Mr. Gasdia agreed that posting the drafts would be the way to go. Then if anyone has changes, they can send an email.

We will have quite the list on January 3rd but even if they don't get approved, they will be available on the website. Ms. LaMothe shared that the new minute-taker is doing a great job.

G. Committee Reports

1. Superintendent Search Committee

Mr. Beals and Mr. Campbell provided an update. Mr. Beals thanked the committee members and Terry Wolf, Gail Porter, and Joyce Coll for all of their help on this. Second meeting complete, third and final of this year tomorrow. Posting will go out later next week. Six focus groups were held and a survey went out with 332 responses. Work continues on looking at data and the draft posting. Mr. Campbell added the meeting will be at 4:00 and on HCTV. Ms. Whiting likes the draft posting and asked why the current letters must be within six months. That's what was recommended to them. Mr. Gasdia also likes the posting.

2. Budget Committee

Ms. LaMothe: January 5th is the wrap-up for the school budget and a vote will be taken on the warrant articles.

H. Reports to the Board

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Russell shared that last week there was a nation-wide threat to schools on TicTok that was deemed not to be credible. He thanked the Hudson PD who took it very seriously and stationed uniformed and plain-clothed officers at the schools which provided assurance to parents, student, and staff. There were several rumors going around but they were untrue. Mr. Russell thanked the staff for all of their hard work during this very tough year. He presented his second State of the District which highlighted challenges and accomplishments over this past year. Ms. LaMothe and Mr. Gasdia offered kudos to all involved.

2. Assistant Superintendent's Report

Ms. Organek address the board. Preparing for January 14th professional development (half day) which will be suicide prevention training. Last Friday she read to students at Nottingham. Also read a story on HCTV. Wished everyone a happy holiday season.

3. Director of Special Services' Report

Ms. Borge recognized special education staff for consistently going above and beyond for our students.

4. Business Administrator

Ms. Burk acknowledged efforts of food service staff with handling supply chain issues and covering shortages.

I. Correspondence

1. November Discipline Report

Mr. Russell presented the report comparing November to October. This will be the last report without the details of how many offenses were made by how many students. Mr. Beals shared that in the survey results, an identified weakness is student behavior and requested that in a future meeting there could be a larger conversation on the topic.

Second meeting in January is Mr. Beals' suggestion to give principals time to prepare. Ms. Whiting would like a chart. Mr. Russell offered that numbers are affected by a number of things such as social media and the impact of COVID. Learning loss, mental health, and student behavior in general have been impacted nationwide. Agrees that taking time to put data together is a good idea considering its important.

J. Board of Selectmen Liaison Comments

Mr. Gasdia relayed that Ms. Roy apologized for not being here tonight. She also thanked the Hudson PD for keeping our students safe. Threats were not credible but it's the same response as if they were. At last Board of Selectmen meeting there was a conversation about voting elections and Moderator Paul Inderbitzen presented a proposal with three locations, Alvirne, Hudson Community Center, or Hudson Memorial. Final decision was that it will be Alvirne High School and the Hudson Community Center.

K. Board Member Comments

Mr. Campbell: Took apart in Wreaths Across America with his son. Wonderful event. Thanked all staff and fellow board members for their support this year and wished everyone a wonderful holiday.

Ms. Whiting: Thanked the district for continuing the higher level of education we provided, for rallying again at the beginning of the year and how we're ending the calendar year on a good note. Wished all a happy holiday and happy and healthy new year.

Mr. Beals: Thanked all staff for everything they do; truly making a difference in a lot of students' lives. Hopes all have a safe and happy holiday break.

Ms. LaMothe: January 13th is Budget Committee Public Hearing at 7:00 pm at the Hudson Community Center and asked if there would be a Zoom option this year. She will ask Paul Inderbitzen. School Deliberative Session is 9:00 am on February 5th and the town's in on February 12th. Hoping for a large showing. March 8th is voting day. Wished everyone a great holiday, merry Christmas; have some down time and relax and happy new year.

Mr. Gasdia: The thanks have gone all around tonight and we have great partnerships. HCTV is behind the scenes and want to thank them for all of the things they cover all over the district. Thanked Grace for homemade cookies. An honor to serve with those around this table. Wish everyone happy and safe holidays.

L. Non-public Session

Mr. Beals moved to enter non-public under RSA 91-A:3 II (b, c), second by Mr. Campbell. Rollcall vote: Mr. Campbell, aye; Ms. LaMothe, aye; Ms. Whiting, aye; Mr. Beals, aye; Mr. Gasdia, aye. The board entered non-public session at 8:27 pm.

Mr. Beals made a motion to approve the nomination of Andrea McCarthy, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passed 5-0.

Mr. Russell, Ms. Organeck, Ms. Burk, and Ms. Borge left the meeting at 8:50 pm.

The Board discussed the superintendent search, job description, salary, and some personnel issues around potential internal candidates. A back-up plan may be needed if no qualified candidates apply.

Superintendent search survey results were discussed, specifically some bullying concerns. The Board has requested a more detailed discipline report; this topic will be discussed further in a regular meeting. The Board agreed that they would like to see the survey results. Results will also be shared with the public.

M. Adjourn

Mr. Beals made a motion to exit non-public and adjourn at 10:26 pm, second by Ms. Whiting. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

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