

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT #51
PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
July 15, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson
Jessica Drouin
Molly Goggin
Diane Rider

Others Present: Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
Michael Wylie, PES Principal
Members of the Public

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Fund Balance (Mr. Gauthier)
- RFP for Tuition (Mr. Gauthier)
- Hiring Update (Ms. Bickford)
- District Provider Contract (Ms. Bickford)
- Compliance (Ms. Bickford)
- School District Website (Mr. Hamilton)
- School Meals Program (Mr. Hamilton)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as amended.

IV. PES Principal

A. Suncook Valley Rotary Club

Laura Okrant and Stan Bailey, representatives from Rotary, were present at the meeting to discuss a twenty-four foot by forty foot pavilion proposed to be built at Drake Field. Ms. Okrant provided a picture of the proposed building. Mr. Bailey explained the project and asked the Board for approval. He explained that after approval, the exact location will need to be determined, with the help of district personnel. Excavation will be required. Bids would be sought for the construction of the building.

Mr. Gauthier stated that he is in favor of the project but would like to suggest having a public hearing in order to remain transparent to the community. Mr. Clough agreed with the idea of having a public hearing and suggested it may assist in finding people who are willing to help. He stated his concern about the pavilion attracting vandalism and suggested plans be made to deter this, such as cameras. Discussion ensued regarding the cost, which will be assumed in its entirety by the Rotary. Ms. Okrant stated that the Rotary feels this project would benefit the town in several ways, such as the Balloon Rally and Old Home Day.

Mr. Gauthier stated a public hearing would be scheduled for August 5, 2021 at 5:30.

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin to approve the public minutes for June 17, 2021. Changes were made: on page three, paragraph one, add “According to Ms. Rider, the movie requested is five years old, so most students have already seen it and had an opportunity to discuss it with their parents. The students are under fourth grade level and have been subjected to an inordinate amount of screen time during school year 2020-2021 already, due to Covid 19 remote learning. Social emotional learning is gradually consuming more class hours which leaves less class hours for learning the facts and practicing the skills necessary for a rigorous education in future.”; on page six, paragraph four, change to “Ms. Goggin”; and on page eight, paragraph three, change to “Mr. Gauthier will contact Mr. Christina...”.

Discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the minutes to the meeting. Mr. Clough confirmed that the RSA states the minutes should be a summary of discussion. Ms. Chassie suggested that if a member of the Board would like a specific statement recorded, they should indicate so by saying, “ Let the minutes reflect...”.

The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the minutes of the non-public meeting on June 17, 2021 were approved unanimously as written.

Mr. Gauthier explained the rules around sealing minutes.

Mr. Gauthier made a motion and Ms. Rider seconded to seal the June 17, 2021 non-public session minutes.

A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, to approve the minutes of the June 21, 2021 non-public session. Ms. Drouin asked if the amount of Dr. Graziano's payout needed to be specified in the minutes. Mr. Gauthier agreed to confirm the amount. Ms. Drouin and Mr. Clough rescinded the motion to approve the minutes. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin the Board unanimously agreed to table the June 21, 2021 non-public minutes until the next meeting.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Tracy Hyuck asked why Dr. Graziano was paid through the month of June, when he left voluntarily on June 17, 2021. Mr. Gauthier stated that the district's lawyer was consulted and the Board decided to pay out the remainder of his contract based on several considerations.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE - No report.

VII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. Summer Update

Mr. Wiley explained the progress being made to hire administrative assistants at PES and the SAU.

Mr. Wiley explained the progress being made to hire positions for Kindergarten, grades one, two, three, and four staff. Ms. Goggin asked for details, which Mr. Wiley provided. She stated her concern for the number of good teachers lost this year due to resignations.

According to Mr. Wiley work is being done with a professional development consultant, Michael Anderson, to help engage students, staff, and families in PES during the 2021-2022 school year. With the help of the consultant, a normal return to the school year is promising. Mr. Wiley reassured the Board that there will be ample time for staff to process information shared by the consultant to ensure implementation. Ms. Goggin asked if attention would be paid to literacy. Ms. LeMay explained the potential use of ESSR grant funds to hire math and reading interventionists. Mr. Gauthier asked about the timing of the ESSR grants. Ms. LeMay stated that the funds will be in place until June of 2023.

B. Assessment Data

Assessment data was shared by Mr. Wiley and Ms. LeMay. Mr. Gauthier asked about the sixth graders being included in assessment data for PES. Sixth grade assessment data is being analyzed by the middle school. Mr. Hamilton agreed to check with the NH Department of Education about whether the sixth grade has been moved to the middle school designation.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL (continued)

A. 2021-2022 School Meals Program

Mr. Hamilton explained that a waiver is needed to continue the school meals program. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the meals program waiver.

B. Hiring Update

Mr. Hamilton stated that PMHS is in need of an 9/10 English teacher, a 9/10 social studies teacher, and an 11/12 science teacher. Unfortunately, the candidates approved for two of these positions, turned down the offer.

Mr. Hamilton nominated Ms. Anne Disney Korzynioski. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board approved hiring Ms. Korzynioski as a 9/10 English teacher.

Mr. Hamilton stated that he hopes to have a nomination for the remaining two positions at the next meeting.

C. HVAC Contract

Mr. Hamilton stated that the contract with the HVAC provider, Control Technologies, expired on June 30, 2021. Preventative service work is being done at cost until a new contract is agreed upon. Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with options to remedy the problem: 1) seek bids from HVAC providers while continuing with services at cost; 2) approve a one-year contract renewal with Control Technologies for \$21,195, or 3) approve a three-year contract renewal with Control Technologies for \$63,585.

Mr. Gauthier stated that he would like to see the bidding process begin; Mr. Clough agreed. The Board was unanimous in their desire to have the contract go out to bid. Mr. Gauthier agreed to notify the SAU of this decision.

D. Summer School Health and Safety Regulations

According to Mr. Hamilton, the District Leadership Team met on June 24, 2021 to review the latest health and safety guidance in order to determine the health and safety protocols for summer programs. He reviewed screening protocols, self-isolation, self-quarantine, and self-observation as recommended by the Center for Disease Control.

Mr. Hamilton stated that a three-foot social distance will continue to be emphasized during school-related activities this summer. Due to low community transmission rates and hot/humid conditions indoors over the summer months, face masks will be optional during summer programs. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and second by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the District Leadership Team's recommendation for summer school health and safety recommendations as written.

E. Website

Mr. Hamilton introduced Clayton Wood to discuss the district's website. Mr. Wood stated that he has managed the website since 2008. The district owns the domain, which has evolved into a very solid website with few problems. Mr. Wood stated that a new platform is now needed; a new website will be up and running by mid-August.

Ms. Rider asked if an icon for the curriculum could be added to the website. Mr. Wood stated that there are many options available and would like to work with people to identify further changes. Ms. Rider stated she would like to see a list of materials identified by each grade level. Ms. Goggin explained the fluid nature of this information. Mr. Clough suggested converging the PES and PMHS websites to make it easier for parents to access.

Mr. Gauthier thanked Mr. Wood for his time and effort in running the district's website.

F. Class of 2021

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a recap of the senior achievements and recognitions that were acknowledged at the Senior Awards Ceremony. He included the Foss Family Scholarship awards. The results of a senior exit survey completed by graduates were shared.

G. District Leadership Team Update

The District Leadership Team will meet on July 27, 2021 to determine the fall reopening plan.

H. Eighth Grade Promotion

Mr. Hamilton provided information relative to the eighth grade promotion.

IX. PMHS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

A. New Hampshire Scholars

According to Ms. Brown, nine seniors earned the distinction of meeting the NH Scholars requirement for the 2020-2021 school year. She provided information relative to the program.

B. Social Worker Report

District social worker, Lisa Gauthier, provided an end-of-year report for the Board's review. Currently, there are twenty-four high risk families with whom Ms. Gauthier is working.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Hiring Update

Ms. Bickford nominated Kara Gallagher as teacher for the preschool special education program. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board unanimously approved the hiring of Ms. Gallagher.

B. District Provider Contract

Ms. Bickford asked the Board for their approval for Ms. Bickford to develop the district's behavior specialist's contract. The behavior specialist has received a certification that will allow the district to discontinue outside consultation.

Ms. Rider asked if there is data associated with this position relative to classroom disruptions. Ms. Bickford provided an explanation of the work that is done by the behavior consultant, pointing out that the disaggregation of these data would be difficult. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board unanimously approved contract adjustments to the district behavior specialist contract by Ms. Bickford.

C. Compliance

Ms. Bickford presented the annual report on thirteen indicators that are monitored by the NH Department of Education. The report was very positive.

D. Year End Data for Students in Special Education

Ms. Bickford provided data demonstrating how Pittsfield's students with special needs performed according to formal standardized assessment, NWEA, and informal DRA reading assessment. Ms. Bickford stated that eligibility data will be provided to the Board in the fall.

XI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS - No report

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Resignations

Mr. Gauthier listed the resignations of Lenore Coombs, grade one and two multiage teacher; Carrie White, grade three and four multiage teacher; Sarah Ball, Kindergarten teacher; Kristen Brown, grade one and two multiage teacher; and Jodi Biron, grade one and two multiage teacher.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignations of Ms. Coombs, Ms. White, Ms. Ball, Ms. Brown, and Ms. Biron, all with regret.

Ms. Goggin stated her concern about seeing experienced teachers leave the district. She said that the district needs to work to create a more positive environment so that people will want to remain in Pittsfield despite the lower pay in comparison to neighboring communities. Mr. Clough stated that the Board needs to work together as a team to improve conditions in our schools for the benefit of our students. Ms. Goggin agreed that it is to benefit our students, as well as to create a positive environment for teachers. Ms. Rider stated that there is upheaval in many communities and that this may be an opportunity for change and improvement.

B. SAU Administrative Assistant

According to Mr. Gauthier, Sheila Dupere is willing to work up to ten hours per week to keep things afloat until a new administrative assistant is hired. A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough to hire Ms. Dupere for up to ten hours at the rate of \$25 per hour. Discussion ensued regarding hiring Ms. Dupere to help train the newly hired administrative assistant. Mr. Gauthier agreed to contact Ms. Dupere to discuss this further.

C. Acting Interim Superintendent Proposal

Mr. Gauthier stated that Tobi Chassie has offered time to fill the gap while hiring an interim superintendent. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board unanimously approved hiring Tobi Chassie as acting interim superintendent until August 5, 2021.

D. Fund Balance

Mr. Gauthier explained that the \$300,000 that was voted for by the Board to be encumbered for the purpose of joining the two school funding lawsuits cannot be used for this purpose as it was not spent before the end of the fiscal year.

E. RFP for Tuition

Mr. Gauthier stated that it will be difficult to issue RFPs for tuitioning students, which was confirmed by the NH School Board Association. Mr. Clough suggested publishing the RFPs but with a longer submission date. Mr. Gauthier will have the RFPs sent out with a submission deadline of October 1, 2021.

Ms. Goggin will include information about the RFPs in the Pittsfield Post School Board update. Mr. Hamilton suggested disseminating the message written for the Post to staff to ensure their understanding of the current status of the district. It was decided that Ms. Goggin will send the message written for the Post to the principals, who will summarize and send to staff.

Discussion ensued regarding the steps that will need to be taken by the Board as the process continues in determining the viability of tuitioning high school students to another district.

F. Superintendent Search

Mr. Gauthier reported that there are four candidates for the position of interim superintendent. The Board decided to interview all four candidates. Mr. Gauthier asked the administrators if they would participate in the interviews; there was a positive response. Dates and times were identified for the interviews to take place.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee Representative - Mr. Clough
- B. Drake Field and Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiating Team - Ms. Goggin and Mr. Gauthier
- D. Foss Family Scholarship - Ms. Drouin

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Tracy Hyuck asked if there would be guidance sought from the NH School Board Association for hiring the interim. Mr. Gauthier stated he would be contacting them.

Ms. Hyuck asked if the RFPs for tuitioning out high school students will eventually be shared with the community. Ms. Groggin explained that the purpose of the RFP was to do a financial analysis, which will be shared with the community.

XVII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, August 5, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin , the meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary