

Pittsfield School Board Meeting

DRAFT Minutes - October 1, 2026

Meeting Information

Attending: Becky Berk, Sandra Adams, Molly Goggin, Tim Robinson, Adam Gauthier (arrived 5:40 pm)

Administrators: Tim Herbert, Erik Anderson, Jerry Gregoire, Melissa Brown

Presenters: Joe Darrah, Jay Darrah, David Harper

Three members of the public

Agenda and Minutes Approval

- An acknowledgment of a 3D printer donation was added to the agenda. A non-public session was confirmed, and the upcoming Fire Prevention Week was noted. Becky motioned, Molly seconded to approve the amended agenda; passed 4-0.
- Becky motioned, Tim seconded to approve the public minutes from September 3, 2026, as written; passed 4-0.
- Non-public minutes from the same date required adding the last name "Beckman" for item four. Molly motioned, Tim seconded to approve the corrected non-public minutes; passed 4-0. Sandra motioned, Molly seconded to seal the non-public minutes; passed 4-0.

Donations and Project Approvals

- **Drake Field Gazebo ("Resting House") Renovation:**
 - A proposal was heard to accept a donation of \$93,000 from the Foss Family Foundation for the historic resting house (gazebo) at Drake Field. The 110-year old structure, damaged during a recent balloon rally, will be lifted and rehabilitated to preserve its traditional look, improve accessibility by making it flush with the ground, and ensure longevity.
 - The project, led by contractor Wardell & Harper, is targeted for a spring 2027 start. The total expense is quoted as \$92,780, so the donation is expected to cover the entire cost.
 - Molly motioned, Adam seconded, to formally accept the \$93,000 donation from the Foss Family Foundation for this work, with gratitude; passed 5-0.

- **PES Exterior Door Replacement:** Becky motioned to award the replacement of exterior and vestibule doors for PES under the Safe Grant Program to Integrated Door Solutions, for an amount not to exceed \$74,255, contingent upon satisfaction of all applicable state grant requirements and confirmation that the vendor can complete the installation by the end of the state grant period (2026) unless an extension is requested and approved by the state, and that the superintendent or designee be authorized to execute all necessary documents related to the awarded project consistent with the requirements of the State Grant Round Four Program. Seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
- **PMHS Hot Water Storage Tank Replacement:** Becky motioned, Adam seconded to approve a \$17,645 proposal from NorthPoint Heating and Cooling to replace four leaking hot water tanks with new, efficient ones. The state of the current tanks pose a risk to school operations. The motion passed 5-0.
- **3D Printer Donation:** Molly motioned, Becky seconded to accept a donation of two 3D printers (AnyCubic Mega X and AnyCubic Viper) from community members Sarah and Tom Chouinard for use in the 3D printing class. Passed 5-0, with gratitude.

School Reports and Student Performance

- **Elementary School (PES):**
 - Enrollment is stable at ~195 students. Benchmark testing (NWEA) will begin in mid-October.
 - Title One reading and math interventions are underway.
 - Chronic absenteeism is low (~2.5%), with 15 office referrals and 4 suspensions reported.
 - A monthly “Community Day” initiative was launched to recognize students and staff.
- **Middle/High School (PMHS):**
 - The school received a sportsmanship award for Division Four for the 2025-2026 school year. The Board extended congratulations and thanks to coach Jay Darrah, who credited a community effort for the recognition.
 - Enrollment has declined to 194 students, down from 242 last year.
 - Attendance is at 89%. There have been 76 discipline referrals with ~10% of students accounting for 90% of issues.
 - Trend analysis of enrollment data was shared, indicating that this year continues a five-year trend of withdrawals outweighing new enrollments.
- **Student Assessment and Academic Interventions:**

- Spring 2026 test scores showed that half or more of 8th-grade students below standard in ELA, Math, and Science. High school math scores have been low for years.
- The 11th grade SAT results showed that 36% of students were below standard in reading and writing, as well as 76% in math and 58% in science, respectively
- Interventions include dedicated math/reading periods for 7th/8th graders and a two-year algebra sequence in high school.
- The board discussed expanding adult/peer tutoring, leveraging Title I funds for middle school support, and better utilizing reading programs like Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (K-6) and Read 180 (7-8) for vertical alignment.
- The potential integration of HMM and NWEA assessment platforms was discussed to provide teachers with more actionable data.
- **Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs):** Five high school students are engaged in ELOs, including apprenticeships and a mini college fair has sparked interest in college applications.

Staffing and Professional Development

- **Paraprofessional Recruitment:** The district is facing a shortage of paraprofessionals, attributed to a reduction in hours and paraprofessional assessment requirements for a Title I school. The school is working with the recruitment firm ESS to find and certify candidates.
- **Instructional Improvement:** There was a focus on strengthening Tier 1 instruction and implementing a consistent Response to Intervention (RTI) academic model. The need for sustained professional development (PD) due to teacher turnover was highlighted. The district has contracted Northeast Passage (UNH) for on-site PD and is considering partnerships with UNH/Plymouth State for long-term Professional Learning Communities (PLC) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) training. A Title I-funded reading specialist position remains unfilled in Pittsfield.

Finance and Operations

- **Budget Process:** A draft budget calendar has been created. Building administrators have submitted needs, and the central office has compiled personnel data. A document outlining the SAU budget was requested.
- Sandra and several district and SAU administrators met with the Budget Committee on September 23 in a cordial, productive and well received meeting to discuss the process as well as the implications of HB 1300 (tax cap on school portion of property tax) and default budget preparation by the budget committee.

- **DOE-25 and Audit:** An extension for the DOE-25 report was granted until the end of October 2026, although Dr. Herbert expects it will be submitted next week. The FY25 audit is scheduled to begin in late October/early November.
- **Year-End Balance and IRS Penalties:** The FY26 closing balance is pending. There is a risk of significant IRS penalties (~\$17,000 per quarter) from past reporting issues. A tax advocate will be engaged to negotiate a settlement.
- **Facilities and CIP:**
 - The playground fence at PES is installed, with a handicapped-accessible ramp pending.
 - A new bid for mowing services will be issued in the spring.
 - The two-year snow plowing contract price is in question due to rising fuel costs and will be investigated.
 - End 68 Hours of Hunger has moved to a portion of the SAU 51 building and two weekends of food distribution have already occurred. Becky thanked the Board and in particular Jack Dunn for their help in finalizing the MOU.
- **Property Damage:** E-bikes are causing damage to the tennis and basketball courts at Drake's Field. The board discussed prohibiting e-bikes and creating a policy to allow for enforcement and accountability.

Administrative and Board Business

- **Legislative Updates:**
 - The board discussed HB 1300 (tax cap), finding it confusing. An informational session with the district's attorney will be scheduled to understand its legal implications before deciding on a public hearing.
 - The board discussed their engagement with the municipal budget committee regarding HB 1300 and HB 564 (budget committee preparation of the default budget).
 - Other legislative items noted included studies on special education costs (HB 1548) and a new law (SB 586) mandating state funding be withheld if audits are not submitted within nine months of the fiscal year's end. Dr. Herbert noted that districts across the state have informed the Department of Education that there are not enough firms in the state to complete an audit on every school district within nine months.
 - Adam will check his schedule to see if he can be an alternate (with Sandra) for the NHSBA delegate assembly on October 17th.
- **High School Options Study Committee:** The committee released a community survey to gather input on high school options and will

broaden the survey's reach in the coming week. The Committee will begin outlining its final report soon.

- **Website Updates:** The school website requires numerous updates, including adding new policies, correcting staff information, and re-linking prior documents. A meeting is scheduled to address this.
- **Policy Review:**
 - **Second Reading and Approved:**
 - DFA, Investment. Moved by Becky, seconded by Adam; passed 5-0.
 - JICD, Student Discipline Due Process. Moved by Adam, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - JICD-R, MOU. Moved by Adam, seconded by Tim; passed 5-0.
 - JICDD, Student Discipline, Out of School Actions. Moved by Adam, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use. Moved by Molly, seconded by Adam; passed 5-0.
 - JICI, Weapons on School Property. Moved by Adam, seconded by Tim; passed 5-0.
 - JICI-R, Modifications of a Weapons Expulsion. Moved by Adam, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - JIH, Searches of Students and Their Property. Moved by Adam, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - JJJ, Access to Public School Programs by Non-Enrolled Student Residents. Moved by Adam, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - **Rescinded:**
 - IKFA, Early Graduation (included under a different policy), Moved by Becky to rescind, seconded by Molly; passed 5-0.
 - ILBAA High School Graduation Competencies (now part of policy IK), Moved by Becky, seconded by Molly to rescind; passed 5-0.
 - **First Reading:** Policies ECAF, EHAG, GBEBB, JIC, and JICL will be reviewed for a second reading at the next meeting.

Public Input

- A member of the public raised concerns about cuts to benefits, hours, and retirement for paraeducators, suggesting this contributes to staffing shortages.

Non-Public Session

- Sandra made the motion to enter non-public session for 91-A:3 II (a and i) at 7:37 pm, seconded by Adam. Roll call vote; passed 5-0.
- The Board came out of non-public session at 8:41 p.m. on a motion made by Sandra and seconded by Adam, with a roll call vote 5-0.

Attorney Consultation for Public Hearing

- Dr. Herbert will reach out to Barbara Loughman, the Pittsfield School District's attorney, to set up an informational meeting with the Board about HB 1300, with no work session or actions taken.
- Molly Goggin will email some information and questions to Barbara in advance of the meeting to make best use of her time.

Title Research

- On a motion made by Adam and seconded by Molly, the Board approved with a 5-0 vote an amount of up to \$10,000 for Gallagher, Callahan and Gartrell to conduct title and background research on all Pittsfield School District property.

Handling of Specific Cases

- Molly made the motion, seconded by Tim, to accept the resignation of Jeannie Belanger, a member of the PMHS support staff. Passed 5-0.
- Tim motioned and Adam seconded to deny Amy Bilodeay's appeal for reconsideration of a \$1,000 breach-of-contract penalty; passed 5-0.
- A hearing for Eric Pascoal, currently suspended with a recommendation for termination, will possibly be held with the Board on Monday, October 5 at 6 pm at his request and per the requirements of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Becky made the motion, seconded by Molly to set this date and instructed the superintendent to notify the individual. Passed 5-0.

Meeting Adjournment

- A motion to adjourn was made by Becky and seconded by Molly; passed 5-0 at 8:46 pm.

Submitted by Becky Berk
October 2, 2026