

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
October 15, 2020
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Bea Douglas, Chairperson
 Heidi Asdot, Vice Chairperson
 Jessica Drouin
 Adam Gauthier
 Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John Graziano, Interim Superintendent of Schools
 Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
 Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
 Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
 Danielle Harvey, PES Principal
 Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
 Members of the Public

Ms. Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items was added to the agenda:

- Drake Field (Mr. Gauthier)
- Parent Letter (Ms. Douglas)
- Beautification Committee (Dr. Graziano)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to approve the minutes of the public meeting on October 01, 2020. Changes include: page 2, change to "...staff and family handbooks at PES."; page 4, change to "...regarding any changes in school status."; page 6, change C to B; page 7, change D to C and E to D. The motion was passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to approve the minutes of the non-public meeting on October 01, 2020. The motion was passed unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Jodi Cunningham asked if student meetings were being held for students with Section 504 plans. Ms. Bickford stated the Governor's order only mandated meetings for students with IEPs, not students with Section 504 plans.

Ms. Cunningham asked about the emails being sent two times per week to keep parents informed. Ms. Harvey clarified by stating that assignments are being posted on Sunday night and then a follow up email is sent to inform the student/family of unfinished work. Ms. Cunningham stated she is not being contacted. Ms. Douglas asked Ms. Harvey and Mr. Hamilton to follow up with Ms. Cunningham.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE - No report

VII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Presentation

Ms. Douglas presented an award of appreciation to Mr. Michael Wolfe for his years of dedicated service on the Pittsfield School District School Board. A gift was given to Mr. Wolfe as a token of appreciation.

VIII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. Attendance

Ms. Harvey provided information relative to attendance of students.

Ms. Douglas stated concern about the number of absences of remote learners. Ms. LeMay stated the trend is improving. She said that communication has been made to families of students who are not attending. There has been more of a focus on the students who are not completing remote assignments. Ms. Douglas stated she is aware of the struggle to monitor the attendance of remote learners and thanked the administration for their attention to this matter.

B. COVID Tracking

According to Ms. Harvey, to date, fourteen students and six staff have been out with symptoms but no Covid cases have been confirmed.

Mr. Gauthier asked if students sent home have to be Covid tested. Ms. Harvey said they could not demand a test, but in lieu of a test, they will be required to quarantine for fourteen days.

Ms. Asdot asked if holiday plans for students and staff have been considered. Ms. Harvey stated that staff have been asked to notify the administration if they intend to leave New England or have company from outside New England. This information gathering is the first step in determining next steps.

C. Segment Two

Ms. Harvey reported that eleven students made changes for attendance for segment two; Four needed to switch days and seven students who were remote are now coming in for hybrid days.

Ms. Harvey stated that there are 105 students in the A group, 119 in the B group, and 52 learning remotely.

D. New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC)

On Wednesday, October 14, 2020, the staff participated in a Collaborative Conference with the NEASC team.

E. Cares Act Fund

Mr. Gauthier asked about CARES Act expenditures. Ms. LeMay stated all but \$1,000 has been spent. Some funds still remain for personal protective equipment. Mr. Gathier stated more money is being allocated by the State of New Hampshire.

Mr. Gauthier asked if the car ports had been delivered. Ms. Harvey said they have not been installed yet. She is making a weekly call to monitor the anticipated delivery.

IX. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. Fall Athletics

Mr. Hamilton stated the third stage of the fall athletic plan is coming to a close. There have been no issues among the teams with whom our teams are playing. He asked the Board to consider moving to stage four of the plan. Jay Darrah provided information to the Board. He stated that NHIAA is working to develop tournament plans for Division IV.

Mr. Gauthier asked if we would be playing teams who are in high Covid areas. Mr. Darrah said he could not speculate on what the NHIAA would decide.

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to move into stage four of the athletic plan in order to participate in the Division IV state tournament.

B. Oil Tank

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the quotes that have been received to replace the spill buckets in both tanks at PES and PMHS. He recommended purchasing double-wall stainless steel spill buckets. A bid was received from M. B. Maintenance for \$4,850 for the buckets. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the bid from M.B. Maintenance for the double-wall stainless steel spill buckets.

C. District Leadership Team Update

Mr. Hamilton reported on the District Leadership Team's (DLT) recent meeting. The three topics reviewed included: 1) school status; 2) daily screening procedures; and 3) co-curricular activities.

Mr. Hamilton reported that the DLT decided that struggling students will be offered an option of attending school four days per week, a decision that is being made by the students Progression of Support (POS) team or IEP team on an individual student basis.

Mr. Mitchell asked if consideration has been given to an alternate week schedule. Mr. Hamilton agreed to take this option to the DLT for their consideration.

Mr. Hamilton explained that the DLT has considered the screening process relative to temperatures being taken in cold weather. The committee is suggesting temperatures being taken of all students during the mid-day. Students will continue to self-monitor and staff will monitor, as well. DLT proposed temperatures being taken at PES before recess and at PMHS after lunch.

Ms. Asdot expressed concern about the temperatures being taken mid-day as by that time students' body temperatures may be on the rise.

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to amend the screening procedures being used.

D. Reopening Plan Steering Committee

The Steering Committee held its first meeting, according to Mr. Hamilton. The committee will work in consultation with public health organizations to determine if any changes to school status are necessary.

Mr. Gauthier asked if further consideration is being given to the wearing of masks. Mr. Hamilton stated that the DLT is still in favor of students wearing masks.

Mr. Hamilton raised concern about the consequences of students and staff traveling during the holidays. He is concerned about the ability to maintain the schedule if there are inordinate numbers of people leaving the New England area for the holidays. This may require the Board's reconsideration of the school calendar, according to Mr. Hamilton.

E. Student Attendance

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with attendance statistics for hybrid and remote students.

F. Student and Staff Pandemic Report

Mr. Hamilton stated there have been no active cases in Pittsfield. There were twelve students and two staff members who self-reported or were sent home with symptoms and/or referred for Covid-19 testing with no positive reports.

G. Snow Plow Specifications

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with the snow plow specifications for 2020-2021. The bid has been posted by the SAU.

Mr. Gauthier asked how much time and money is spent for cleaning up the sand that is left after the winter. He questioned if the clean up should be included in the snow plowing bid. Mr. Hamilton speculated that there would be different equipment needed for the two jobs so would require two contracts.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Medicaid Update

Ms. Bickford informed the Board of the work that is being done to meet the requirements of new rules and regulations regarding Medicaid to Schools. She has sought assistance from Dan Couter from Boothby Services to ensure all forms and practices are updated according to the new rules. A mock audit will be conducted in the spring to ensure the district is prepared for a future audit conducted by the federal government. Ms. Bickford will be informing the Board of the reimbursements that were received during the last quarter at a later date.

B. Special Education Services and Hybrid

Ms. Bickford updated the Board on the services that are being provided by special educators to assist students with IEPs. She reported that special education staff have been extremely creative and flexible in trying to meet the needs of students.

C. Proposed New Position for 2021-2022

Ms. Bickford provided a justification for a new position that is in the proposed 2021-2022 budget. She is requesting that a full-time position take the place of a part-time position that is currently in the special education grant. Currently \$155,627 of the total grant of \$170,740 is being spent on funding positions, leaving very little for the other needs of students with disabilities. Ms. Bickford reported that there are currently twenty-two students active in the court system, eight students in foster care outside the district, and four students living with foster families in Pittsfield. These require case management and supervision.

Ms. Douglas asked how often Ms. Bickford is being required to attend court. Although many are remote now, the cases are starting to resume face-to-face. She is required in a number of courts across the state, which means varying amounts of time out of the district on a weekly basis.

XI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Budget FY2020

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with an overview of the budget process. He stated that health insurance is anticipated to raise 12.6%. Retirement for teachers will move from 17.8% to 21.02% and for staff from 11.17% to 17.06%. These increases will impact the budget, according to Dr. Graziano.

Dr. Graziano will be asking the Board to consider a 1.6% increase for support staff.

Ms. LeMay explained that her position has changed dramatically. The position is currently being funded in part from the Title I budget. However, in this new position, she is not working fifty percent in Title I. The numbers need to be reconciled so that the amount of time she is paid from the grant matches the time

that she is working on grant-related projects. Currently, she said the split is approximately 80-20; she would recommend moving to a 40-60 split in the budget.

Mr. Graziano reported he would be meeting with the Budget Committee on October 21, 2020, although he will be just making an introduction, not providing any information.

Ms. Asdot asked Dr. Graziano if he had met with the administrators about their budget proposals. He said that they had met but not to the level of detail that is necessary, so future meetings will be convened to go through the budget line by line in order to be prepared for the presentation to the Budget Committee. Ms. Douglas stated that the Board is willing to participate in budget work sessions with the administration, if necessary. Mr. Mitchell asked Dr. Graziano for a draft prior to the next meeting so Board members have time to review it before a discussion.

B. High School Tuition Study Committee

Dr. Graziano stated that the High School Tuition Study Committee met on October 7, 2020. He provided the minutes of the meeting to the Board.

C. Superintendent Letter

Dr. Graziano stated he has sent a letter to regional superintendents to make inquiries about potential opportunities for acceptance of students.

D. Letter from Counsel

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with a letter from Barbara Loughman, the district's attorney regarding the fund balance issue. Attorney Loughman made it clear that the School Board has full authority to make transfers in the budget with the fund balance.

E. Good to Great Team

Dr. Graziano reported the Good to Great Team met on October 13, 2020. Mr. Mitchell explained that there was a question about whether the Good to Great Team should be helping the High School Tuition Study Committee, as it was not in their charter to do so. He went on to explain that the Good to Great Team was interested in facilitating a process of developing process maps for the position of financial manager, but was sensitive to the time that Sally Blanchette has to work on them.

F. Beautification Committee

Dr. Graziano received a letter from the Beautification Committee. Ms. Douglas asked to have that added to the agenda of the next meeting.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Parent Letter

Ms. Douglas stated the Board has received a letter from a parent concerned about the hybrid model. Ms. Douglas asked that Ms. Harvey reach out to the parent and explain how decisions are being made. Ms. Douglas wants the parent to be heard but felt Ms. Harvey and/or Mr. Hamilton are in a better position to answer the parent's questions.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee - Mr. Mitchell

B. Drake Field & Facilities - Mr. Gauthier

Mr. Gauthier provided the Board with information regarding vegetation management of land adjacent to a waterway. He explained that there is a waterfront buffer and a woodland buffer. According to Mr. Gauthier, a permit is not required for vegetation management at Drake Field. Any dead, diseased, or unsafe trees may be cut to ground level at any time. There are town ordinances that Mr. Gauthier will also follow. The Board thanked Mr. Gauthier for his work to take care of Drake Field.

C. Negotiations – Ms. Asdot and Ms. Douglas

D. Foss Family Scholarship Foundation – Ms. Drouin

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Michael Wolfe thanked the Board for the time he spent working with the Board and thanked them for the work that they continue to do for students.

Bob Schiferle stated his appreciation for the status reports he receives via ClassDoJo. He looks forward to seeing the updates.

Girard LeDuc stated his appreciation for the consideration of having students with special needs being in the school four days per week.

XV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for November 5, 2020 at 5:30 in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary