

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

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**MINUTES**

Pittsfield School Board Meeting  
June 4, 2020  
Emergency Meeting

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Members Present:           Bea Douglas, Chair  
                                    Ted Mitchell, Secretary  
                                    Jessica Drouin  
                                    Adam Gauthier (exited meeting at 6:36 p.m.)

Others Present:           John J. Freeman, Superintendent of Schools  
                                    Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services  
                                    Melissa Brown, Director of Career Readiness  
                                    Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations  
                                    Danielle Harvey, Dean of Instruction  
                                    Kathy LeMay, Director of Interventions and Title I  
                                    Tobi Chassie, Recording Secretary  
                                    Members of the Public - via Zoom

Ms. Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

**II. DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY MEETING**

Ms. Douglas asked that speakers conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, libelous, defamatory, or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. She said she may terminate the speaker's privilege to address the Board if the speaker does not follow this rule of order (Pittsfield School Board Policy BEDH).

Ms. Douglas declared the meeting as an emergency: As Chair of the Pittsfield School Board, I find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

Please note that there is no physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting, which was authorized pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order. However, in

accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that we are:

a) Providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access possibilities by video or other electronic means:

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting.<sup>1</sup> All members of the Board have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously listen and, if necessary, participate in this meeting through dialing one of the following phone #'s: 1(929)205-6099 or 1(301)715-8592 and using meeting ID: 458 628 723; password: 029859.

b) Providing public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting:

We previously gave notice to the public of the necessary information for accessing the meeting, including how to access the meeting using Zoom or telephonically. Instructions have also been provided on the website of the Pittsfield School District at: <https://www.pittsfieldnhschools.org/board/agenda/>.

c) Providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting if there are problems with access:

If anybody has a problem, please call Danielle Harvey at (603)410-9559 or email at [dharvey@pittsfieldnhschools.org](mailto:dharvey@pittsfieldnhschools.org).

d) Adjourning the meeting if the public is unable to access the meeting:

In the event the public is unable to access the meeting, the meeting will be adjourned and rescheduled.

Please note that all votes that are taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

Roll Call: Ms. Douglas, present with no one in the room; Ms. Drouin, present, with no one in the room; Mr. Gauthier, present with no one in the room; Mr. Mitchell, present with no one in the room.

### III. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Planning for fall semester (Dr. Freeman)
- Eighth grade promotion (Dr. Freeman)

### IV. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as amended (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the minutes of May 21, 2020 as written. The motion passed unanimously (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

VI. PUBLIC ACCESS

**DIAL IN INFORMATION:**

1(929)205-6099 or 1 (301)715-8592

**Meeting ID:** 896 9537 3608

**Password:** 029859

No participant ID required (# to skip if requested)

If any member of the public has trouble accessing the meeting using the above information, please call Danielle Harvey at (603)410-9559, or email at [dharvey@pittsfieldnhschools.org](mailto:dharvey@pittsfieldnhschools.org).

VII. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION - No report

VIII. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Governor's New Order

Ms. Bickford reviewed three mandates made by Governor Sununu: 1) IEP team meetings for every student with an IEP to re-determine extended school year services; 2) IEP team meetings no later than the first thirty days of the district's 2020-2021 school year; and 3) no waivers for timelines in the special education process due to pandemic.

Ms. Bickford projected that it would cost no less than \$10,000 to pay teachers for extra time to conduct the mandated meetings. Ms. Douglas asked if the cost could be taken care of with the CARES Act, which Ms. Bickford answered in the affirmative. Dr. Freeman thanked Ms. Bickford for her work to stay on top of this issue.

IX. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

A. Coaching Stipends

Mr. Hamilton stated a decision must be made as to whether spring sport's coaches should receive their stipend, given that all sports have been cancelled. Ms. Douglas stated her opinion that the stipends for varsity coaches should be paid. Mr. Gauthier agreed and expanded that to the middle school coaches, as well. Mr. Mitchell, Ms. Douglas, and Ms. Drouin agreed. On a motion made by Mr.

Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board agreed unanimously to pay stipends to all spring sport's coaches.

#### B. Drake Field Requests

Mr. Hamilton reviewed a request from Stacey Morin, owner of Powerful YOU Yoga to use Drake Field for classes of ten people or less. A second request has been made by the Concord Cannons, a travel baseball and softball team for workouts of ten players or less. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve both requests to use Drake Field.

#### C. Senior Commencement Ceremony

Mr. Hamilton reminded the Board that the commencement was previously postponed by the Board. He said that as there is no projected change relative to the pandemic and personal safety between now and August, so the decision is being reconsidered.

Mr. Hamilton explained that four locations were suggested to the seniors. Several meetings were held with senior class officers to consider the choices available. Senior Class President Rebecca Smith was introduced by Mr. Hamilton. Ms. Smith explained that 69% of the class voted in favor of the Fisher Cats Stadium (Northeast Delta Dental Stadium) and 21% voted for Drake Field. Mr. Hamilton gave the Board the dates that the Fisher Cats Stadium was available.

Three dates are available: June 15, June 16, and June 21. Ms. Douglas stated she thought the seniors and their families should be in control of the date. Dr. Freeman stated that the Sunday date coincides with Father's Day. Mr. Hamilton stated that two students will be going to inducted into the military on June 31, 2020, so a June graduation would most likely to include all seniors. Mr. Gauthier stated his concern for the fact that some students did not vote. Ms. Douglas stated that they were given ample opportunity to vote and chose not to do so. Dr. Freeman commended Mr. Hamilton for the degree of effort he made to communicate with the senior class.

Mr. Mitchell and Ms. Drouin agreed that the decision should be consistent with the majority of the class and that the date should be left to the class. Ms. Brown stated there are thirty-one seniors graduating and all but nine voted. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted to allow graduation ceremonies to be held at Fisher Cat Stadium and to allow the students to choose the date by a majority vote.

Mr. Gauthier asked for clarification regarding social distancing at the Fisher Cat Stadium. He said some families may be concerned about the number of guests that will be allowed. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Fisher Cat Stadium has limited

attendance to four family members, but are willing to negotiate given the small number of students in the class.

The ticket management will be conducted by the Fisher Cat Stadium staff and a COVID-19 screening will be conducted as people enter. Family entrances and exits will be staggered using two entrances. Mr. Hamilton shared that seating blocks will be assigned, graduates will walk onto the field and sit in the infield; there will be a podium at home plate. Dr. Freeman paid accolades to Mr. Hamilton for the work he has done to organize the commencement exercises.

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve the scheduling of Fisher Cats Stadium for the graduation ceremony with the selection of the date to be decided by the students (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

X. . DEAN OF INSTRUCTION - No report.

XI. DIRECTOR OF CAREER READINESS - No report.

XII. DIRECTOR OF INTERVENTION - No report.

XIII. SUPERINTENDENT

A. Resignations

Dr. Freeman stated that resignations have been received for Rachel Elliot, PMHS nurse; Melissa Hamilton, PES teacher; Tessa Mancini, PES teacher; Mark McLeod, school psychologist; AmyBeth Engler, PMHS English teacher; and Steven Rossmeissl, PMHS math. Dr. Freeman stated that this year's resignations reflects about twenty percent of the professional staff. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignations of Ms. Elliot, Ms. Hamilton, Ms. Mancini, Mr. McLeod, Ms. Engler, and Mr. Rossmeissl. (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

B. Nominations

Dr. Freeman nominated Krista Critchett for a 3/4 teaching position. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Ms. Critchett (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

C. Planning for Fall Semester

Dr. Freeman explained that information has been collected from teachers on remote learning. Also, a survey will be sent out to families to gain an understanding of their opinion of remote learning. During the summer, a modified extended school year program and kindergarten boot camp will be

taking place, following CDC guidelines. A committee is working at the state level to develop guidelines. Additional information has been gathered from states who are ahead of New Hampshire in planning for the opening schools. Suggested protocols will be utilized during the summer programs. All of this information will be used as the administrative team considers a plan for fall semester. Dr. Freeman stated the Lakes Region superintendents want to remain consistent in their approach to reopening and will be reviewing plans together.

Dr. Freeman stated that the administrative team met with teacher leaders this week and asked if they would be willing to work remotely or on-site over the summer in order to review all plans. Three meetings have been scheduled with teacher leaders. Dr. Freeman stated there are three possible scenarios: full opening, full remote, and several hybrid models.

Dr. Freeman opined that he would prefer to use guidance provided by the New Hampshire Department of Education, but in absence of that to date, will move forward with making plans. Ms. Douglas thanked the administration and teacher leaders for their hard work in figuring this out. She stated she was grateful for the strong leadership of the district in considering the options and keeping students safe.

#### D. Eighth Grade Ceremony

Dr. Freeman stated that in recent years, the outcomes of the middle school have been disappointing. In fact, the middle school is now designated as a targeted support school by the state due to the learning outcomes in past assessments. Identified in the fall of 2018, the middle school has not received financial support for school improvement from the State.

Teachers and administrators have been meeting since the fall of 2018 on a monthly basis to identify needs and develop action plans for improvement. A research based improvement cycle - plan, do, study, act - has been used as a strategy to effect change. According to Dr. Freeman, mixed results have been realized by the team.

The administrative team, disappointed by the outcome, began a relationship with West Ed, a national education consultation company, to assist the middle school in developing a plan. Accessing Title II funds, \$24,000 was used to have West Ed assist in developing a plan for improvement; this initiative began in early 2020. The development of an improvement plan is now being finalized with West Ed and a team of teachers representing the middle grades from both schools, as well as administrators. Additional Title II funds will be used to have West Ed support the implementation of the plan with teachers and administrators.

Dr. Freeman stated that this year's eighth grade class has only about fifty percent of its membership that have met the criteria to participate in a promotion ceremony at this time. He stated this is a systemic problem that the administrative

team have been involved on the individual student level. A small number of students will be placed in grade nine due to individual circumstances. Dr. Freeman stated he is disturbed by the overall picture of student outcomes, but assures the Board that it is not related to the pandemic and remote learning.

The Board agreed that the situation is not good but appreciated the work that has been done to try to make improvements. Mr. Gauthier asked if there was any trend in the data. Ms. LeMay stated that science has been identified as a problem for many students. Ms. Douglas asked if the students in this class have had historical challenges. Ms. LeMay stated that class attendance in this group has been a constant challenge.

Dr. Freeman stated he would keep the Board abreast of the situation as it progresses.

#### XIV. SCHOOL BOARD - None

#### XV. PUBLIC INPUT

Tara Ash asked why the district did not consider working with a more local venue, such as the Concord School District. Ms. Ash stated Concord would make sense given the relationship that we have with the Concord Regional Technical Institute. She stated concern about a venue in Manchester, given issues of the pandemic, riots, and distance. Mr. Hamilton said there were several options explored, but not Concord. Dr. Freeman stated there were many potential venues considered and many that were not. Ms. Ash stated her concern about the number of students who participated in the decision. Ms. Douglas reiterated that the students had the opportunity to participate in the decision making process.

Justin Clough stated that the discussion on Facebook was very negative relative to the topic of location of the commencement ceremony. He commended the administration for their effort to attempt to have all seniors participate in the decision.

#### XVI. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee
- B. Drake Field and Facilities
- C. Negotiating Team
- D. Foss Foundation

#### XVII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 18, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School media center or by Zoom, depending on circumstances relative to the pandemic.

#### XVIII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 6:36 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 (c) to discuss three personnel issues. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to enter into a non-public session (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

No action was taken in non-public session.

At 6:54 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Drouin to exit from the non-public session and to re-enter into open session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes).

#### XIX. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Drouin, Mr. Mitchell, yes).

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Chassie  
Recording Secretary