

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
September 17, 2020
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Bea Douglas, 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 (Zoom)
 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:

- Minutes (Mr. Gauthier)
- Busing (Mr. Gauthier)
- Governor's Order (Ms. Bickford)
- Vacant Positions (Ms. Bickford)
- Special Education Manual (Ms. Bickford)
- Court (Ms. Bickford)
- Drake Field Update (Mr. Hamilton)
- Staffing Update (Mr. Hamilton)
- School Board Meetings (Mr. Hamilton)
- PES Handbooks (Ms. LeMay)
- Resignation (Dr. Graziano)

- NH School Boards Association (Dr. Graziano)
- Warrant Article 8 (Dr. Graziano)
- Superintendent Search (Ms. Douglas)
- Tuitioning Committee (Ms. Douglas)

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 Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to approve the minutes of the public meeting on August 20, 2020. Change on page 4, section E, change \$3,000 to \$2,485. The motion was passed unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the minutes of the public meeting on September 3, 2020. Change location of meeting to Pittsfield Elementary School. The motion was passed to approve the minutes as amended with Ms. Drouin, Ms. Douglas, Mr. Mitchell voting in the affirmative and Mr. Gauthier abstaining from the vote.

V. PUBLIC INPUT - None

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE - No report.

VII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. First In-person Days

Ms. Harvey provided an update on the first in-person days. She said that the pick-up and drop-off procedures have been tightened up and are taking less time. Safety measures are being followed diligently. Ms. Harvey shared a presentation of Class Dojo so the Board could see what it looks like for families and highlighted the method of communication.

B. PES Handbooks

Ms. LeMay informed the Board that changes have been made to the PES Family Handbook. She asked that the Board consider approving the handbook at the next meeting.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. Athletics

Mr. Hamilton stated that during the past week athletics moved to stage two of the fall athletics plan. The third stage will be in place during the week of September 18, 2020. Mr. Hamilton provided specific information regarding recommendations for scheduling, transportation, and spectators at matches.

Ms. Douglas asked if people are following guidelines. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the safety measures that are being taken. Mr. Gauthier stated his hesitancy regarding the playing of other towns, based on some issues that have been reported by the media. Mr. Hamilton provided an explanation of what measures will be taken to ensure students' safety.

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the athletic program going into stage 3 of the plan.

B. School Reopening

Mr. Hamilton stated that hybrid learning began on September 10, 2020. Students and staff are adjusting well to a variety of new routines and schedules. There are four lunch blocks in the cafeteria with approximately twenty-five students in each lunch group. According to teacher leaders, students are well engaged in learning, more so than last spring. According to Mr. Hamilton, devices have been issued to all students in grades six through twelve. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Class Tag is being used to communicate with families, much in the way Class Dojo is being used at PES.

C. Capital Improvement Projects

Mr. Hamilton explained that of the six potential capital improvement projects (three at each school), three have been completed or are in the process of being completed. The three completed or in process of completion are the HVAC controls at PES, heat loss in the cupola at PMHS, and replacing the windows at PMHS. The remaining projects include replacing the boilers at PES, redesigning the entryway at PES, and addressing the roof areas at PMHS that are subject to ice dams.

D. Drake Field

Mr. Hamilton explained that the basketball court has been resurfaced and new fencing has been installed. The gazebo area has been cleaned up. According to Mr. Hamilton, there are five trees that are old and are potentially dangerous. The

grandstand area has some significant graffiti, but will be painted this week. The Pittsfield Police Department has installed signs at the boat launch area.

Ms. Douglas asked if there was a Drake Field committee and if so, when did it last meet. Mr. Hamilton stated that meetings have not occurred recently. Ms. Douglas asked that meetings be reinstated and include Mr. Gauthier, who is the Board's representative on that committee.

Mr. Gauthier asked about trimming back on the growth at the river's edge. He volunteered to look into the legal considerations and to do the work.

Ms. Douglas asked Mr. Hamilton to seek bids for having the two old trees cut down.

E. Staffing Update

Mr. Hamilton explained that there is a vacancy of one math position. He explained that the person being hired will be in a long-term substitute position until he has a letter of eligibility from the NH Department of Education. In the meantime, the remaining math teachers are picking up the workload to meet the needs of students.

F. School Board Meetings

Mr. Hamilton asked for the Board's opinion regarding their preference for the location of the meetings. Ms. Douglas stated the media center may cause the public some anxiety about the space available for social distancing. She stated that the lecture hall has more room and is easier for social distancing. Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Gauthier expressed their agreement. The use of Zoom to have public present is supported by the Board.

Mr. Gauthier asked about the cost of graduation at the Fisher Cats arena. Mr. Hamilton stated it cost a flat rate of \$1,000.

Mr. Gauthier asked Mr. Hamilton what the final cost of window replacement was. Mr. Hamilton said that the work is being done within the budget set by the Board of \$100,000.

Mr. Gauthier asked how many people have had to be sent home for temperature readings. Ms. Harvey said there was one student at PES. Mr. Hamilton stated that three to four students and three to four staff have been sent home.

IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Governor's Order #48

Ms. Bickford stated that Governor's Order #48 was to provide meetings with parents on their student's IEP. Meetings are in progress.

B. Vacant Positions

Ms. Bickford anticipates having all positions filled by the end of the next week. The increase in base pay has made the task of hiring people easier. Also, she stated she has been able to be more discriminating on who she hires.

C. Special Education Manual

Ms. Bickford provided the Board with the revised Special Education Manual. She thanked Tobi Chassie for helping her to revise the manual. Ms. Chassie thanked Mr. Mitchell for his work to proofread and edit.

D. Court

Ms. Bickford stated that there are now twenty five open and active court cases for students and their families.

X. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Memorandum of Agreement

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with the finalized and signed copy of the Memorandum of Agreement with the Education Association of Pittsfield (EAP).

B. Draft of Budget Development Timeline

Dr. Graziano stated that the draft of the budget timeline was shared with counsel. January 12, January 19, and March 9 are firm dates within the schedule.

C. School Board Communication

Dr. Graziano stated he has been actively engaged with meetings of the Commissioner, NH School Boards Association, and NH School Administrator Association.

D. NH School Board Association

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with information from the NH School Board Association. He highlighted several training opportunities available to the Board.

E. Opening of Schools

Dr. Graziano complimented the administration on the hard work, energy, diligence, and vigilance of teachers, staff, administrators, and SAU staff as they work collaboratively to serve students, families, and community.

F. Letter of Resignation

Dr. Graziano provided the Board with a letter of resignation from MaryAnn Hatab, media specialist at PMHS and recommended the Board accept the resignation. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board unanimously approved the resignation of Ms. Hatab with regret.

G. Warrant 8 - Tuition Committee

Dr. Graziano has started contacting people to join the Tuition Committee. Ms. Asdot will represent the Board on this committee. Dr. Graziano will schedule the first meeting and begin the work of the committee.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Superintendent Search

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve using Barret Christina and Ross Morse from Bryan Associates to conduct the superintendent search. Ms. Douglas asked Dr. Graziano to contact them to let them know. She will contact Mr. Christina to discuss the fee.

B. Board Minutes

Mr. Gauthier stated that the Board minutes from November 21, 2019 and then all meetings in 2020 have not been posted to the website. Dr. Graziano will remind the administrative assistant at the SAU to be sure to post all minutes.

C. Busing

Mr. Gauthier asked about windows being open and heating the bus when cold weather arrives. Mr. Hamilton will contact Marston's Bus Company and ask these questions.

Mr. Hamilton stated that there are less than twenty students on the buses. Mr. Gauthier asked if this is because of the A/B groupings, to which Mr. Hamilton answered in the affirmative. Mr. Hamilton reviewed the safety procedures being followed on the bus.

XI. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS - New assignments to committees were made as follows:

- A. Budget Committee - Mr. Mitchell
- B. Drake Field & Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiations – Ms. Asdot and Ms. Douglas
- D. Foss Family Scholarship Foundation – Ms. Drouin

XIII. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Tracy Huyck presented masks to the district. She received a warm applause of appreciation.

Bob Schiferle asked about the number of court cases and if the number was typical. Ms. Bickford said she would ask colleagues in neighboring districts to provide context to the number.

Mr. Schiferle asked if there were alternative funding streams used for capital improvement projects. Mr. Hamilton reported that the projects were funded by money from the FY2020 budget. Mr. Gauthier reminded the public that \$1.00 on the thousand was returned to the Town.

John Christakos asked if a concession stand is being considered. Mr. Gauthier stated the Rotary Club is contemplating a gift to the district. Mr. Christakos asked how many trees are being cut at Drake Field. Mr. Hamilton stated that there are two trees that are potentially dangerous and were discussed tonight; bids will be sought for cutting them down and considered again by the Board.

Mr. Schiferle provided Mr. Christakos information with information relative to the capital improvement plan.

Cara Peterson (via Zoom) stated students are expressing that they are cold on the bus, especially those going to the Concord Vocational Technical program. Mr. Hamilton agreed to check on this.

Ms. Douglas stated she has received a call from a resident about the building of a softball field at Drake Field. She explained that the plan was discussed three or more years ago and was placed on a back burner; it is not being considered at this time.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for October 1, 2020 at 5:30 in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the meeting was adjourned at 6:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary