

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
November 2, 2017
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson
Bea Douglas
Linda Freese
Ted Mitchell
Ralph Odell

Others Present: John Freeman, Superintendent of Schools
Tobi Chassie, Director of Student Services
Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations
Danielle Harvey, Dean of Instruction
Kathy LeMay, Director of Intervention & Title I Manager
Ross Morse, Community Liaison
Colby Wolfe, Student Representative
Tucker Wolfe, Student Representative
Members of the Public

Chairperson Wolfe called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added:

- Budget Committee (Mr. Odell)
- Power Outage (Mr. Hamilton)
- Administrative Contracts to Non-Public (Dr. Freeman)

III. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Freese and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, 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. Odell to approve minutes of the October 19, 2017, meeting. On page one, add under Members Present and

next to Mr. Odell's name "(exited meeting at 6:00 p.m.)." The minutes were approved unanimously as amended.

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Freese, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 19, 2017, non-public session.

On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Ms. Freese, the Board voted unanimously to approve the non-public minutes of October 12, 2017, with the following changes: Remove Ralph Odell from the members present list, the roll call for going into the non-public session, and the roll call for exiting the non-public session.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Ross Morse acknowledged the service of Tucker Wolfe as student representative. Appreciation was expressed for the time Tucker has spent working with the School Board. He will be succeeded by Colby Wolfe.

Gerard LeDuc asked to have a copy of the deliberative session minutes emailed to him. Dr. Freeman agreed.

Kevin Gibson asked for access to the internet. Mr. Wolfe told Mr. Gibson he was free to videotape the meeting, but would not entertain questions from people who are not present in person.

Justin Clough stated he has five children who attend the Pittsfield schools. He complimented the advisory program, but expressed a concern about the lack of engagement of his daughter's advisor. He has seen the difference in her grades related to who her advisor was.

Mr. Clough stated one of his children is being sexual harassed and another is being victimized by what could be considered sexual assault. He asked the Board to take the situation seriously and to take steps to curtail bullying in the school.

Erin Butler stated she believes there are policies in place to address student bullying, but she is not confident the policies are being followed.

Dr. Freeman informed Mr. Clough he would have Melissa Brown contact him about advisories and Mr. Hamilton contact him about the allegations of sexual harassment.

Desiree Holland stated she took Mr. Wolfe's advice and researched bullying. She was disappointed that there was only a brief paragraph in the PMHS handbook stating there is a policy regarding bullying. Ms. Holland stated her disappointment when she asked for the policy at PES and was told she could find it online herself. When she asked Mr. Hamilton, he provided her with a copy of the policy.

Ms. Holland read an excerpt that she posted on a social media platform asking for input about peoples' experience with bullying. She received over three hundred responses from community members. Ms. Holland went on to express her concerns about what she views as a lack of response from the administration.

Mr. Clough stated that he believes staff is overlooking serious incidents to the point that things are out of control. He has previously advised his children to refrain from physical violence but has now told them to protect themselves in any way they need.

Tracy Huyck stated she is willing to assist in fundraising efforts in order to bring in help to the community. She agreed the situation has risen to a serious level.

Dr. Freeman assured the audience that situations brought to the administrators are fully investigated. Unfortunately, many students are reluctant to report for fear of reprisals; additionally, bullying tactics are effective in escaping notice of adults. Dr. Freeman stated the administrative team has created an action plan regarding discipline at PES in hopes of bringing this situation under control. A forum will be planned in order to hear the voices of community members' relative to the issue of bullying. He stated the School Board's goal for the year is to research and subsequently develop a plan to address bullying. Finally, Dr. Freeman stated information will be sent to parents within the next two weeks outlining the steps.

Ms. Douglas also assured the audience the Board is taking this issue very seriously.

Mr. Clough stated the community is past the need to talk about it. He stated action is required.

Ms. Butler stated concern that teachers' responses are sometimes inappropriate when students disclose incidents of sexual harassment. Dr. Freeman encouraged Ms. Butler to submit a formal complaint under such circumstances.

Ms. Holland asked what immediate steps will be taken regarding bullying behaviors. Dr. Freeman stated the administration will be reviewing high standards for behavior with faculty and staff. He also stated another step being taken is investigating anti bullying programs, for which fundraising may be necessary. Finally, Dr. Freeman encouraged everyone to report all allegations of bullying so an investigation can be conducted.

Julie Schafer stated she graduated in 2008. She was a victim of bullying when she was in school and is disturbed to see that her nephew is experiencing a similar situation now.

Ms. Butler stated that some actions are being taken. She thinks further action can be taken to do better.

Ms. Douglas stated the Board is committed to remedying the problem. She stated the Board will continue to work on this serious issue.

Mr. Clough stated the community should be working together as a family to address these issues. He stated people want to know that when their children are at school, all staff will treat their children in the same way in which they would treat them themselves.

Sean Asdot asked if the number of reports on bullying has increased since the elimination of the school resource officer. Dr. Freeman explained Jeff Martel, the high school guidance counselor, is researching responses on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey to see if there is an increase in incidents.

Mr. Wolfe thanked the audience for their input.

Ms. Holland stated she would be willing to send the superintendent screen shots of the comments being made on social media. Dr. Freeman thanked her for doing so. She stated the response from the administration is not the problem.

Ms. Butler explained that the administration is not at liberty to divulge confidential information about the action being taken with other students. Although that is very frustrating, she assured the audience that just because someone doesn't know what is being done to address a complaint, doesn't mean nothing is being done.

Mr. Gibson suggested the administration has to take a strong stand against allegations of bullying.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Tucker Wolfe introduced Colby Wolfe, who will assume the responsibilities of the student representative on the School Board. Tucker stated Site Council is now working on revising their team charter.

VII. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

A. Conference Presentation

Ms. Harvey explained that she made a presentation at a national conference of iNACOL. She expressed her pride of four students - Bailey Long, Addison Babcock, Brayden Pelletier, and Iris Argue - who shared their passion for learning via Skype to the audience at the conference.

B. State Assessment Scores

Ms. Harvey stated the Smarter Balanced scores have been released; scores were shared with the Board. PACE assessments results have not yet been released. Ms. Harvey will provide further details once PACE results are available. Ms. Douglas confirmed that the state will no longer be using Smarter

Balanced, which makes it difficult for fair comparisons with statewide assessment results.

VIII. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

A. Bullying Reporting

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with two policies relative to bullying. He stated he has conducted four bullying investigations this year so far.

B. Facilities Management Transition

George Szelest, head custodian at PES, retired as of October 27. Susan Barrett, a night custodian at PES, transitioned to the role of head custodian as of October 30, 2017.

C. Halloween Parade

Mr. Hamilton shared a letter sent to families informing them of the revised Halloween parade route. He said that after hearing feedback from the community, a compromise in routes was established.

D. Power Outage

Mr. Hamilton stated there was minimal damage to the facilities, other than some shingles from the PMHS roof, broken branches, and lost food in the refrigerators. The cost of the food lost totaled approximately \$1,200. The Pittsfield Fire Department supplied a generator to maintain the air ventilation system. Mr. Hamilton explained there was a problem with our ability to do an all-call for family notification, but solutions have been identified since the weather event.

IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Behavior Program Research Team

Ms. Chassie reported a team of individuals, including Jess Bickford, Mike Curtin, Gloria Kaplan, Kathy LeMay, Kim Morganti, and Ms. Chassie will be researching the prospects of a classroom designed to meet the needs of students exhibiting challenging behavior. The Board will be kept abreast of developments.

B. Family Engagement

Ms. Chassie reported the success the special education teachers have experienced contacting each family by telephone or in person to make introductions as the school year began. Families have responded positively.

C. New Hampshire Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

Seth Hussy from the New Hampshire Office of Vocational Rehabilitation will be visiting teachers and students in the coming weeks. He will be reviewing the opportunities available through his office to help students prepare for college and career.

D. Progress Reporting and Conferences

Ms. Chassie explained the process for special education teachers to collaborate with their regular education counterparts to participate in parent-teacher conferences, student-led conferences, and progress reporting for students with disabilities.

E. Special Education Newsletter

It was explained by Ms. Chassie that the power outage had delayed the distribution of the October newsletter. She will be merging the October newsletter with the November newsletter and will share a copy with the Board at a later date.

X. DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

A. *I Am College Bound – I Applied*

In the absence of Ms. Brown, Mr. Hamilton disseminated information on the *I Am College Bound – I Applied* Event. Ms. Harvey informed the Board this program affords students the opportunity to have college application fees waived.

B. Class of 2018 Graduation Status

Ms. Brown, by report, stated there are thirty-six students in the class of 2018. Three students are intending to complete the HiSET and three will not be graduating with their cohort. In addition, there are three students in the 2017 cohort who are planning to graduate in June and one student in the 2019 cohort who will be graduating early.

C. College Board

On October 11, 2017, students in grades 8 through 11 participated in College Board Testing Day. On October 25, 2017, the SATs were administered to seniors.

D. PES and PMHS Registration Process Map

Mr. Hamilton distributed a process map depicting the steps that are taken when there is a new student registration.

E. Online Learning

There are fifty-one high school students taking an online course either through Virtual Learning Academy Charter School or Odysseyware.

XI. SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. 2018-2019 School District Budget

Dr. Freeman reviewed the proposed 2018-2019 budget. Dr. Freeman highlighted the following:

- Salaries have increased, not because of increase in number of teachers, but the hiring of more experienced teachers;
- The position for Extended Learning Opportunities / RENEW counselor has been added to the budget and taken out of the NMEF grant;
- Special education salaries have risen, but because of the trading in of paraprofessional positions for professional positions, the paraprofessional salaries have decreased;
- Out of district tuition has been reduced, but this may not be maintained;
- Salary for a media specialist has been returned to the district budget after having it in a grant for the current year;
- Technology increases are due to replacement of equipment;
- The community liaison position has been moved to the district's budget, previously included in a grant;
- Electricity and oil reductions have been made;
- The school resource officer position has been removed;
- The total budget reflects an increase of \$261,619.

Dr. Freeman distributed a copy of the revenue summary for 2018-2019. Based on this first draft of the budget, the tax increase totals \$.54. The revenue summary includes an estimate for potential kindergarten aid.

Dr. Freeman provided the Board with a comparison of health insurance options. The Board's goal is to get from the current 95%-5% to a 80%-20% split in two years for full-time employees who are not included in the collective bargaining agreement.

Mr. Wolfe asked if there would be an additional position for the management of student behavior, given a position was cut last year. Dr. Freeman said that a new position has not been added, but that he would not be opposed to that suggestion.

Ms. Douglas asked if the Board should engage in a work session around the budget. The Board agreed and scheduled Wednesday, November 15 at 4:30 p.m. for the work session.

Dr. Freeman thanked the people who have played a part in developing this draft, especially Sally Blanchette.

B. Policy Recommendations

Dr. Freeman presented the following current policies: Policy BBBF, Student Members of the School Board; Policy BCF, Advisory Committees to the Board; Policy BEDH, Public Participation at Board Meetings; Policy BFE, Administration in Policy Absence; Policy BFG (BGC), Policy Review and Evaluation and Manual Accuracy Check; and Policy BHE, School Board Use of E-Mail. Dr. Freeman presented the following new policies: Policy BEDB, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination; Policy BBAA, School Board Member Authority; Policy BGF, Suspension of Policies.

A motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Freese. Discussion ensued. Mr. Mitchell identified a typographical error in Policy BBAA. The motion carried unanimously, with the correction of the error.

C. 2017-2018 School Board Goals

Dr. Freeman distributed a document outlining the goals for himself and the five administrators. He reviewed the goals for each administrator.

Dr. Freeman reminded the Board of the work they engaged in last year to identify goals. He suggested prioritizing a single, meaningful goal around the issue of bullying. The Board agreed. Dr. Freeman volunteered to draft a work plan for the year relative to the goal.

D. Budget Development Events

Dr. Freeman provided the Board with a revised timeline for the development of the budget.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Varsity Soccer

Mr. Wolfe congratulated the varsity soccer team for their successful season.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget

Mr. Odell stated the Town is investigating the merging of the town's employees with the school's employees as a group for insurance rating purposes.

SB2 requirements are being taken into consideration through the budget process.

B. Drake Field & Facilities - None

C. Negotiations – None

D. Foss Foundation – None

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Gerard LeDuc thanked the School Board for the new configuration of the seating arrangement. Ms. Holland stated it was much more welcoming than the previous seating arrangement.

Mr. Clough stated there is a relationship between the quality of the school and the willingness of the public to fund the proposed budget. Mr. Gibson stated his appreciation for the work of the School Board.

Mr. Clough stated he usually feels comfortable with the work of the Board. However, the current situation regarding bullying precipitated his decision to attend and have his voice heard.

Mr. LeDuc stated the Budget Committee is fully staffed this year. He and Bob Schiferle have created a training program for members of the committee.

Ms. Huyuk stated an appreciation for the Board's consideration of employees paying a larger share of their insurance costs.

Jody Cunningham stated students should be sitting in their seats and paying attention. She suggested if students were punished and held accountable, maybe the bullying problem would decrease.

Mr. Clough stated if people want to be part of the solution, they should bring forward complaints and attend school board meetings.

Mr. Schiferle stated his appreciation for the Board's work on the budget process. He stated there would be a \$1.21 increase in the tax rate for the upcoming year, which the State of New Hampshire just released.

XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:34p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Odell to enter into non-public session to discuss employee compensation and negotiations with the Education Association of Pittsfield under the authority of RSA 91-A:3, II (a). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Freese, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Odell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes).

No action was taken in non-public session.

At 7:52 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Odell to exit from non-public session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Douglas; Ms. Freese, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Odell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes).

XVI. PLAN AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 15, at 4:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Middle High School. The next regular School Board meeting is scheduled for November 16, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Middle High School.

XVII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary