

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
April 5, 2018
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson
Bea Douglas, Vice-Chairperson (exit meeting at 7:56 p.m.)
Heidi Asdot
Adam Gauthier
Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John Freeman, Superintendent of Schools
Melissa Brown, Director of College and Career Readiness
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
Members of the Faculty
Members of the Public

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

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Resignation (Dr. Freeman)

III. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot 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 Ms. Douglas to approve the minutes of the March 15, 2018 meeting. Changes included: 1) page 2, paragraph 8, change to, "By written request, Ms. Harvey requested a waiver to the Board's policy on film viewing to allow the film *Wonder*, which is rated PG, to be shown to

sixth through eighth graders. On a motion by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve the waiver and the showing of *Wonder* to students, as requested.”; 2) page 5, paragraph 1, change to “Ms. Chassie reviewed a series of meetings...”; and 3) page 5, paragraph 7, line 7, change to “More information about RENEW is ...” The Board unanimously approved the minutes as amended.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Chrissy Locke stated her opposition to the proposal to eliminate middle school athletics. She listed examples of bullying, school violence, social-emotional skills and suggested sports is one way to help those problems. She expressed how upset she is that middle school athletics will potentially be eliminated. Ms. Locke pointed out that when the students are in an athletic setting, they are learning many valuable skills.

Tina Cahill stated she is willing to donate her time to help keep the middle school athletics in place. She suspects there are more people in town that would also donate their time.

Donna Anderson stated there are many students who love sports, and sports are an incentive for going to school.

Ms. Douglas stated the Board understands the value of sports. She asked the audience to realize that the Board is making very difficult choices to respond to the default budget restrictions.

Donna Anderson stated she is willing to pay a participation fee.

Nicole Mooney stated she is very involved in the Pittsfield Parks and Recreation sports program. She pointed out that students start their athletic careers on town teams and then are reinforced in middle school before entering varsity sports in high school.

Alicia Smith asked if there could be fundraisers put in place to offset the cost of sports.

Paulette Wolfe stated that she is a member of the Booster Club. She stated the membership is at a critically low level. The fundraising efforts are lagging. She stated that help is needed and invited the audience to participate in the Booster Club efforts. She invited the audience to an Open House being sponsored in an effort to recruit more volunteers.

Mark Kelley asked what the current budget allocation was for middle school sports. Mr. Wolfe stated the overall cost of is \$22,418.90, not including volleyball.

Tracy Huyck asked for the status of insurance changes. Dr. Freeman stated the insurance choices have already changed in order to save money. Ms. Huyck

stated the information on the website is not up to date. Dr. Freeman explained that this is because the collective bargaining agreement that was recently approved has not yet been signed by parties involved. When this has been completed, the agreement will be posted.

Jessica Kennedy acknowledged the difficult decisions facing the Board. She also spoke in support of middle school athletics and asked the Board not vote to eliminate the programs. She stated the number of students on town teams has increased in recent years. She is concerned about the impact the elimination would have on students.

Lisa English explained the impact the athletics program has had on her family. She explained that student leadership, teamwork, and problem solving are the skills learned in athletics.

Ms. English read a statement explaining her support for the Substance Abuse Program counselor. She stated the services of the counselor has been instrumental for her family. She asked that the position be funded.

Dr. Freeman explained the Substance Abuse Program counselor is not currently on the list of potential budget cuts. He explained that Second Start has agreed to pay for one day per week through a grant. The position will remain a four day per week position.

Jody Cunningham asked if out of district placements of special education is affecting the increase in the budget. She suggested the budget support the training of the paraprofessional staff so these students can be educated in the district.

Tracy Huyck asked if students cannot be served in the district, should there be pressure applied for help from the State. Dr. Freeman explained special education aid is available for a portion of costs, but is only received during the following fiscal year, necessitating the dedication of funds in any given fiscal year.

Lisa English asked about the cost of transportation for late start Wednesday. Dr. Freeman suggested the Board close public comments and move into the explanation of the budget as it would answer many of the questions people have. Chairman Wolfe agreed and closed public input.

VI. SUPERINTENDENT

A. FY19 BUDGET

Dr. Freeman distributed a document, *2018-2019 Recommended Adjustments to Proposed District Budget*. He explained that after required adjustments were made, the sum of \$452,107.30 was required to be cut from the proposed budget. The School Board and the administrative team developed a list of

areas that could potentially be cut. The list actually totaled \$475,122.33, which meant \$23,015.03 could be added back in after the Board deliberated.

Dr. Freeman provided a list of the possible budget cuts. He reviewed the personnel related cuts including tech education salary and benefits, extended learning opportunities coordinator salary and benefits, Spanish teacher salary and benefits, twenty percent of the behavioral specialist (will be moved to a grant), part-time secretarial salary and benefits, community liaison salary and benefits, superintendent reduced from 80% to 50%, and English for speakers of other languages teacher reduced from two days to one day per week.

Dr. Freeman proceeded reviewing a list of non-personnel potential cuts. He pointed out that the highlighted items on the list were prioritized by the administrative team to return to the budget.

VII. PUBLIC INPUT (Continued)

Lisa English asked about the elimination of the foreign language teacher and how that need would be addressed. Ms. Harvey explained that the budget includes the use of *Rosetta Stone* with the assistance of a paraprofessional to supervise the students.

Lisa English asked if the transportation to the Concord Technical Center has been eliminated. Dr. Freeman stated it has not been eliminated.

Tara Ash asked what the community liaison does and what would be missed if the position is eliminated. Dr. Freeman explained that Mr. Morse is the voice of the public in meetings. His perspective has been very valuable to the district. Mr. Morse, when asked to address the audience by Dr. Freeman, underscored the fact that he is able to take the perspective of parents and community members when assisting the district in making decisions. Not an educator, he is able to add a perspective that would otherwise be minimized.

Stephanie Ricci asked if there is a game plan for how to make up for the cuts that have been proposed. Ms. Douglas explained that once cuts are made, then people can come together and create the game plan.

Paulette Wolfe asked if the gap can be filled by volunteers. She stated there are many people who are willing and able to volunteer. She felt it had been a long time since the district had reached out to the community to ask for volunteers.

Mary Cote stated Pittsfield Listen's FACE team is developing a volunteer handbook. She agreed that more people should volunteer to fill the gap the cuts will make.

Jennifer Tyrell asked if the day-to-day operations warranted six administrators and if those roles have been considered when determining potential cuts. Mr. Douglas stated that roles are always being considered.

Amber Ricci asked if student organizations will cease to exist with these proposed cuts. It was explained that teachers rely on the stipends to increase the low pay scale. It is feared that teachers may not be willing to supervise student organizations if a stipend to compensate them for the extra time outside of the school day that is required to manage the organizations is not offered.

Lisa English asked if learning studios will be affected, to which Dr. Freeman explained it is part of faculty's regular school day.

Mr. Wolfe stated the Board is worried about NEAS&C accreditation. Dr. Freeman explained when substantial changes are made, the administration is obligated to notify NEAS&C. The administration will not know if the budget changes will create a threat to accreditation until NEAS&C is notified.

Chrissy Lock asked what effect the loss of an extended learning opportunities coordinator would have. Dr. Freeman explained the program will be eliminated without a member of the faculty to coordinate the work between students and community partners.

Nicole Mooney asked about the state average per student cost, having made some comparisons online. Ms. Douglas explained the difference is not substantial between the cost in Pittsfield to the average cost across the state.

Rick Anthony asked when the decisions will be made regarding the proposed budget cuts. Mr. Wolfe explained personnel decisions must be made tonight. He stated he might need more time to consider the decisions; he did not want to rush into any decisions that have such a significant impact.

Jody Cunningham asked for clarification about the staff being eliminated. Mr. Wolfe said the Board cannot discuss the status of individual faculty members. She stated she hopes it will not be in the kindergarten and first grade as small class size is important at those levels.

Melissa Babcock stated her concern about the number of people who were not present to hear the discussion before the budget was voted on.

Erin Bozek, the adult co-chair for the Site Council, asked the School Board not to cut the co-curricular teacher stipends. The co-curricular activities are over and above the responsibilities of a teacher. If stipends are not offered, she fears a decrease in the number of teachers who will supervise co-curricular activities. She listed the benefits of the student organizations, such as Site Council.

Rebecca Smith, PMHS senior, stated the co-curricular activities have positioned her to be able to apply to college and receive scholarships.

Stepne Ricci, Darrin Dube, Shane Ricci, Courtney Butler, Abigail Cote, and Harrison Hill introduced themselves as members of *Pittsfield Youth Voice in it*

Together (PYViiT) students asked the Board to consider the value of co-curricular activities. Teacher relationships are critical to students and they voiced their concern about teacher turnover. It was stated that PYViiT is working on an effort to support many issues such as raising awareness about how schools are funded and inequities of school funding, including student voice on school budgets, student representation on the School Board, and building equitable funding for New Hampshire's schools, with increased funding for schools in working class and poor communities.

Diana Levesque asked if colleges and universities will accept *Rosetta Stone* as meeting the requirement for foreign languages. She also stated her support of field trips and the athletic program. She provided examples of how her son has benefited from the athletic program throughout middle and high school.

Louis Houle asked his community to keep the comments on *Facebook* polite and respectful. He asked the audience to support the school district by spreading good news and getting involved.

Mr. Wolfe expressed his trust in the administration and thanked them for the work they have done on the budget. Ms. Douglas also stated her appreciation for the administration.

Mr. Gauthier stated he would support cuts in technology and maintenance and is in favor of maintaining the middle school athletics.

Mr. Mitchell suggested using *Donors Choice* to raise funds for one of the positions that would otherwise be eliminated. Ms. Harvey described the impact *Donors Choice* has already had on our budget by providing materials and equipment for student and teacher use.

Melissa Babcock suggested the consideration of charging the parents of typical children who are in the special education preschool program.

Mark Kelly stated his concern about tech education being eliminated. He stated he is more concerned about the loss of the tech education teacher than he is middle school athletics.

Louis Houle volunteered to teach a class to help people better understand the school budget. He encouraged people to volunteer to help the school in any way that is possible.

Amber Ricci explained she has gone to school in other districts and considers her experience in Pittsfield far superior to other districts. She provided examples of how the work specific to student centered learning has transformed her life, as well as the lives of others.

Jodi Cunningham asked what the plan would be if the tech education teacher was eliminated. Ms. Harvey stated students can apply and attend the Concord

Regional Vocation Technical Center. Also, a current teacher has agreed to participate in the training for *Project Lead the Way*, an engineering program that will meet the New Hampshire Department of Education's requirement for tech education in middle school.

Courtney Butler stated that if the extended learning opportunities coordinator position is lost, it will take a long time to gain it back. Ms. Brown stated there are six students currently involved in an extended learning opportunity. There have been over two hundred community partners involved in the extended learning opportunities program since its inception. Dr. Freeman explained that the coordinator in the position left mid-year.

Ross Morse stated his support of the extended learning opportunities coordinator position. He said the program affords students opportunities not otherwise available.

Cara Peterson asked if the Board was expecting a decrease in elementary population and if that is why there is a loss of an elementary teacher. Ms. Harvey explained this is a very difficult decision as larger classes are very difficult to manage. Ms. Asdot stated her concern for the larger number of students in a class.

Nicole Moody asked the Board to consider the cuts from the perspective of our students who are at-risk.

A statement written by Jenny Wellington, adult chair of the Justice Committee, was presented to the Board. She stated her support of the Justice Committee and highlighted many benefits of the program.

Chairman Wolfe stated the Board would go into a non-public session in order to discuss personnel decisions and welcomed the audience to remain until they resumed their meeting in public.

VIII. NON PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:33 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas to enter into non-public session to discuss personnel under the authority of RSA 91-A:3, II(a). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to enter into non-public session.

The Board discussed the recommended non-renewal of educators and potential elimination of positions.

No action was taken in non-public session.

At 7:45 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to exit from non-public session and to re-enter into open session. The Board was

polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Ms. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into public session.

IX. SUPERINTENDENT

A. FY19 Budget (Continued)

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board unanimously voted to accept the proposed personnel cuts not highlighted on the handout for the 2018-2019 school year.

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted to investigate a combined position of community liaison and extended learning opportunities coordinator.

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to maintain all middle school athletic items, including volleyball. The motion was defeated with Ms. Asdot, Ms. Douglas, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Wolfe voting against the motion and Mr. Gauthier voting in the affirmative.

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to maintain middle school sports and all co-curricular lines in the budget for the 2018-2019 school year.

On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to maintain the Drake Field summer program for the 2018-2019 school year.

X. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Colby Wolfe stated Site Council has divided into five subcommittees to review sections of the *Student and Family Handbook* and to recommend revisions.

XI. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

A. Podcast

Ms. Harvey explained that as a part of the partnership with the NG² project, a podcast was published on the *Competency Works* website. She provided the article for the Board's review.

XII. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

A. School Safety

Mr. Hamilton stated he and Dr. Freeman attended a training offered by the New Hampshire Department of Education to familiarize schools on recognizing school threats and understanding how to prevent critical incidents.

On March 21, 2018, a school safety forum was hosted to provide a general overview of the district's emergency management plan and to have a dialogue with the community. Rob Freese, the Director of Emergency Management for the town of Pittsfield, was also present. More than fifty people attended the forum. The focus of the forum was the recent threat to school safety. The original agenda will be rescheduled to take place later in the spring.

On March 28, 2018, the Emergency Management Team conducted a review of a recent incident involving social media. It was suggested the district synchronize the statements made by the Pittsfield Police Department and the Pittsfield School District so there would be no gap in both entities getting information out to the community. A protocol will be developed for social media threats. According to the New Hampshire Department of Education, a social media protocol is a modern version of a bomb threat protocol.

Mr. Gauthier asked if the protocol includes keeping the members of the School Board informed of the details of the response. He suggested a notification to the School Board members be included in the protocol. Ms. Asdot supported the recommendation. Dr. Freeman acknowledged he did not notify the Board and will be more diligent about doing so in the future. Dr. Freeman will ensure the new members will be added to the alert call list.

B. Winter Athletics

Mr. Hamilton reported that on March 23, 2018, the Athletic Department and Booster Club held its end of season awards ceremony. Student athletes in grades five through twelve were recognized for their participation on girls and boys basketball. Mr. Hamilton expressed his congratulations to the varsity boys' basketball team for winning the Division IV state championship, the first boys' championship in the school's history. Dr. Freeman thanked Coach Darrah for his work with the team.

XIII. SUPERINTENDENT (Continued)

A. Policies

Dr. Freeman explained to the new Board members that the district's policies are being reviewed over a three-year cycle. Ms. Asdot and Mr. Gauthier both requested a hard copy of the policy binder.

Dr. Freeman presented Policy EBCE, School Closings; Policy EBCF, Pandemic / Epidemic Emergencies; Policy EC, Buildings and Ground Management; Policy ECA, Buildings and Grounds Security; Policy ECAA / EEAA, Video and Audio

Recordings in School and on School Property; Policy ECAC, Vandalism, and Policy ECF, Energy Conservation.

A motion was made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Mr. Mitchell to approve the policies as presented. Two typographical errors were identified. The Board voted unanimously to approve the policies with corrections noted.

B. School Calendar, 2017-2018

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to amend the 2017-2018 calendar with noted modifications: high school graduation will be held on Saturday, June 16, and the final day of school for the current school year will be held on Friday, June 22.

C. School Calendar, 2018-2019

Dr. Freeman presented the Board with a proposed 2018-2019 calendar. At PES, the schedule will be 8:00 to 1:00 on early release days. On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve the proposed calendar with noted typographical errors corrected.

D. Snow Removal Contract

Dr. Freeman presented bids from Scott Aubertin Excavation and K & B Excavation, LLC.

On a motion by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the bid from Scott Aubertin Excavation.

E. Transportation Contract

One bid was received for the general transportation and special education transportation.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to table the approval for general transportation. It was requested that confirmation of the bid be sought due to the change in the early release schedule.

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve the contract for special education transportation.

F. Professional Employee Nominations

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to accept the nomination list for the 2018-2019 school year.

G. Resignation

On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Marion Allen, PMHS foreign language teacher.

H. School Safety Threat

Dr. Freeman explained that Mr. Hamilton would report information about the social media threat and that he would provide additional information in a non-public session.

I. School District Celebration and Retreat

Dr. Freeman asked Susan Bradley to speak to the school district celebration and retreat. Ms. Bradley explained that seventy-two people attended a celebration of the student-centered work that has been accomplished over the past six years of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation grant.

Ms. Bradley explained that all faculty and staff participated in two half-day sessions designed to begin the revision of the district's vision, mission, and guiding principles. She stated that on April 11 and 18, 2018, community forums will be held to gain input from our community members on the revision of the district's vision, mission, and guiding principles.

J. State School Funding

Dr. Freeman explained he rescheduled the meeting with Attorney Andru Volinsky for the next School Board meeting due to the length of the agenda tonight. Attorney Volinsky will speak to the Board in a non-public session on school funding issues.

Additionally, Fred Bramante offered to speak with the Board at a future meeting about some ideas he has on a different approach to school funding. The Board declined Mr. Bramante's offer at this time.

K. Drake Field Maintenance Contract

Dr. Freeman informed the Board that there had been no bids received for the Drake Field maintenance contract. Continued attempts will be made to contact the current vendor, with whom the district has been happy.

L. Future School Board Meetings

Dr. Freeman apologized to the Board for not being able to attend their meetings on May 3 and June 21, 2018, due to family issues.

M. Document Request

Dr. Freeman explained the impact in the SAU office of a recent document request made at a recent board meeting. The request resulted in photocopying 5865 documents, twenty hours of work from the administrative assistant, technical assistance from the IT director, legal fees for guidance, and time for the superintendent to review all pages to redact any privileged information, such as individual student names and personnel actions.

Currently the Board's policy charges \$.10 per copy for documents that are requested. Dr. Freeman suggested the Board increase this fee and provided them with examples such as the Town of Pittsfield charging \$.50 per copy. The Board agreed to charge \$.20 per copy to cover costs.

Mr. Gauthier asked if the change would include the request recently made; Dr. Freeman said it would occur after the current request.

XIV. SCHOOL BOARD - None

XV. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee – None

B. Drake Field & Facilities - None

C. Negotiations – None

D. Foss Foundation – None

XVI. PUBLIC INPUT

Kim Pelletier asked if Kystop will accommodate children within the new schedule of early releases. Ms. Harvey said Kystop will be available on the afternoons of early release.

Melissa Babcock asked if the Board would approve the showing of the movie *UP*, rated PG, at a PTO event for students and families. On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board unanimously approved the viewing of *UP*.

Tracy Huyck stated her concern about not getting answers about the insurance policy offered to the teachers. She said she did not vote in favor of the budget because she was never provided information. Dr. Freeman asked Ms. Huyck if she had called the SAU office for the information; apparently she had not. Dr. Freeman stated he would have the financial manager call her to provide the information she is requesting and requested that Ms. Huyck provide contact information for this purpose.

Kathy Beltromi stated that she was impressed with PYViiT's presentation at tonight's meeting.

XVII. NON PUBLIC SESSION

At 8:31 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot to enter into non-public session to discuss a student matter under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 II(c). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes).

The Board discussed a student issue and disciplinary action resulting from the recent safety threat at PMHS.

No action was taken in non-public session.

At 8:40 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session.

XVIII. PLAN AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for April 19, 2017, at 5:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Middle High School.

XIX. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary