

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
April 19, 2018
Pittsfield Elementary School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson
Bea Douglas, Vice-Chairperson
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 (exit meeting at
6:10 p.m.)
Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations
Danielle Harvey, Dean of Instruction
Kathy LeMay, Director of Interventions & Title I Manager
Ross Morse, Community Liaison
Attorney Andru Volinsky
Members of the Public

Chairperson Wolfe called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Email (Mr. Gauthier)
- Requests for non-resident attendance (Dr. Freeman)
- *Pittsfield Youth Voice In It Together (PYViiT)* (Wolfe)

III. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Wolfe, 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. Asdot to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018 meeting. The following changes were made: 1) page 1, last paragraph, change to "...minutes of the March 15, 2018 meeting..."; 2) page 2, paragraph 7, change "career" to "careers"; 3) page 2, paragraph 7, change "fund raiser" to "fundraiser"; 4) page 3, paragraph 2, change "number" to "numbers"; 5) page 3, paragraph 6, change "effecting" to "affecting"; 6) page 4, paragraph 10, change "Mr. Wolfe" to "Ms. Douglas"; 7) page 5, paragraph 2, change "effected" to "affected"; 8) page 6, paragraph 11 change to "...would be if the tech..."; 9) page 9, paragraph 3, change "PPD" to "Pittsfield Police Department" and "PSD" to "Pittsfield School District"; page 9, paragraph 3, change to "...would be no gap in both entities..."; 10) page 12, paragraph 5 to "...if the Board would approve"; 11) change "approve" to "approved". The Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018 meeting as amended.

On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the first April 5, 2018, non-public meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Wolfe and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of the second April 5, 2018, non-public meeting.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Stefne Ricci presented the Board with a letter and thanked them for their support of the efforts of PYViiT.

Farah Lavigne read a letter to the School Board expressing her concern about the non-renewal of PES teacher Danielle Cormier. She stated it was a tragedy that the district will lose her as a teacher and provided examples of highlights in her teaching practice. She requested the Board reconsider the non-renewal of Ms. Cormier and to reconsider policies relating to fraternization of staff members.

Melissa Babcock stated she, too, has heard comments from several families about their disappointment in the non-renewal of Ms. Cormier's contract. She questioned the factors taken into consideration. Ms. Babcock asked when teachers are not offered a contract, who makes those decisions and are parents' opinions considered. She suggested asking parents via a survey for their feedback relative to teachers' performance.

Dr. Freeman stated there are four areas that govern employment decisions: the collective bargaining agreement, district policies, the professional growth and evaluation plan, and state laws and rules. Recommendations are provided to the board by the superintendent, which are based on input from the supervisors of specific individuals.

Danielle Cormier stated she has loved her time in Pittsfield and was surprised to learn she wouldn't be offered a continuing contract. She stated she is concerned about the practice of administrators not writing letters of recommendations, which is limiting her ability to secure further employment.

Mr. Wolfe stated that cutting positions is the most difficult part of the Board's work. He stated the issue of reference letters would be revisited.

Melissa Babcock stated the PTO has recently hosted a book sale. Points were earned by teachers and Ms. Cormier spent her points to ensure each student in her class went home with a book.

VI. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 6:01 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Mr. Gauthier to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 II (c) and (l). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to enter into non-public session.

The Board consulted with an attorney regarding a legal matter and potential litigation.

The Board considered two requests for non-resident attendance.

On a motion by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to grant a request for non-resident attendance to a PMHS student for the remainder of the school year.

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to grant a request for non-resident attendance to a PMHS student for the remainder of the school year.

The Board reconsidered a previously-granted request for non-resident attendance due to student behavior.

On a motion by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to rescind approval for non-resident attendance granted to a PMHS student should the student engage in inappropriate behavior of any kind.

At 6:43 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Asdot 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; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session.

VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Colby Wolfe stated that Site Council representatives would be meeting with the PES Student Council in the spring months to mentor the new organization.

VIII. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

A. Kindness

Ms. Harvey explained that on April 11, 2018, she offered a content block where she and students started planning how to spread kindness at PMHS. The movie *Wonder* will be used to help further the understanding of kindness among our students.

B. Universal Design for Learning

According to Ms. Harvey, a core team of teachers from both schools participated in the first training session for Universal Design for Learning (UDL), an approach to curriculum intended to better serve all students. The next step will be for the faculty to receive an overview and for the trainer to spend a day in the district. She shared a website with the Board where they could learn some background information on the initiative.

C. Teacher Observations

Ms. Harvey explained the observation process for the faculty. The goal is to observe self-directed teachers three times over the course of the year. Transitional teachers are observed five times over the course of the year. Teachers on an intervention plan are observed eight times. Summative conferences will be scheduled for May and June.

D. Third Quarter

Ms. Harvey reported that third quarter closed for students on April 4, 2018. Grades are reviewed at spring conferences. At PMHS, the reports are also mailed home to parents. Reports are handed to PES families at conferences. If a family isn't able to reschedule a missed conference, then the reports are mailed home.

IX. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

A. Transitions

Mr. Hamilton reported that transition planning for students from sixth to seventh grade and eight grade to ninth grade has begun. He shared that there are two upcoming family information nights. May 23 for the rising sixth graders and May 24 for the rising eight graders. Both events will begin at 6:00 p.m. and be held in the PMHS lecture hall.

B. Spring Concerts

Mr. Hamilton reported that the spring concert schedule is set with all concerts being held in the PMHS gymnasium at 6:30 p.m. on scheduled evenings. The first and second grades perform on May 8. The third and fourth grades perform

on May 9. PMHS band and chorus perform on May 30. Finally, the fifth and sixth grades (including the PES band) will perform on May 31.

C. End of Year Dates

Since the School Board set the last day of school to be June 22, many of the end of year events have now been scheduled. Mr. Hamilton shared an overview. Kindergarten celebration will be held on June 12, at 6:00 p.m. Senior awards night will be held on June 15, at 7:00 p.m. Commencement will take place on June 16, at 10:00 a.m. Sixth grade promotion will take place on June 19, at 6:00 p.m. Eighth grade promotion will be held on June 21, at 6:00 p.m.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Concord Hospital Resident Program

Ms. Chassie's report explained the recent training done for Concord Hospital resident doctors at PMHS. Ms. Douglas remarked on what a wonderful program this is. Ms. LeMay shared that it is a unique experience to share with the Concord Hospital Residents what education in Pittsfield looks like. Mr. Hamilton shared that these residents staff our PATCH program each week.

XI. DIRECTOR OF INTERVENTIONS

A. Family Voice

Ms. LeMay provided an update on the *Family Voice* project, which is intended to increase family engagement in the education of children and youth in the schools. The team participated in training on April 5 and April 18th. The district team is comprised of district employees and members of the Pittsfield Listens Family and Community Engagement (FACE) team. The team consists of Ross Morse, Mo Baxley (Pittsfield Listens assistant director), Jossie Rowell (parent and paraprofessional), Mary Cote (parent and paraprofessional), Kathy Vassallo (PMHS teacher), Elaine Ramsey (PES teacher), Carrie White (PES teacher), and Kathy LeMay. The first training was very well organized and thought provoking. The team reported the second day as less engaging, but they are hopeful for a positive next session. This program is co-sponsored by Scholastic, a provider of educational materials to schools, and the New Hampshire Department of Education.

B. Family Event Plan for 2018/2019

Ms. LeMay shared that the administrative team, with the support of Ross Morse, created a draft of family engagement events. The draft includes the event, the goal, and the target audience of each event for the course of the school year.

XII. SUPERINTENDENT

A. Policies

The Board reviewed recommended actions on the following policies: EDC, Authorized Use of School-Owned Materials and Equipment; EEA, Student Transportation Services; EEAE, School Bus Safety Program; EEAEA, Mandatory Drug and Alcohol Testing; EEAG, Use of Private Vehicles to Transport Students; EFA, Availability and Distribution of Healthy Foods; EFAA, Meal Charging; EFC, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch; and EDF, Access to School-Provided Meals. Mr. Mitchell requested that multi-page policies include page numbers for ease of reference.

Dr. Freeman presented policy revisions. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board unanimously approved the policies as presented with typographical errors corrected.

B. 2018-2019 School District Budget Recommendations

Dr. Freeman provided copies of the summary of proposed cuts to the board. Based on the adoption of the default budget, the Board will be required to make additional cuts, although action is not required at this time. Dr. Freeman shared a copy of the letter from Pittsfield Youth Voice in It Together (PYViiT) of Pittsfield Listens with their thoughts regarding budget adjustments.

Ms. Asdot asked if the budget numbers for the school transportation lines took into account the changes in the calendar to align early release and late start to be one bus run on Wednesdays. Dr. Freeman said that he would review the matter and report back to the Board.

C. Drake Field Maintenance Contract

Dr. Freeman presented the bid from Summer Scape for Drake Field Maintenance. He reported that the district has been satisfied with their service in the past, and that this was the only proposal received. Ms. Asdot made the motion, and Ms. Douglas seconded it. In discussion, Mr. Gauthier asked what the amount of the increase was. Dr. Freeman reported that it was a \$400, but the cost will stay the same for the two-year contract. Drake Field maintenance was budgeted at \$12,400 for this year and has come in at \$11,900. A motion was made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Ms. Douglas to approve the bid from SumnerScape for Drake Field maintenance.

D. Transportation Contract

Dr. Freeman presented the transportation proposal from H.A. Marston Transportation for general transportation. It was the only bid received and H.A. Marston has been the sole bidder for many years. The proposal was tabled at the last meeting because of the concern that the added runs on Wednesday might have been included. They were not included in the contract. Instead, the

district pays the per diem rate for the extra runs. On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the bid from H.A. Marston for three years with the possibility of extending for an additional two years.

E. Health Insurance

Dr. Freeman shared that Sally Blanchette, district financial manager, has been advised that the new health insurance plan will not be an option for retirees who buy health insurance through the district and now reside outside of New England. It was recommended the Board continue to offer the former plan for retirees to continue to purchase. On a motion made by Mr. Mitchell and seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to approve that Blue Choice 2 Tier Plan is continued for retirees who reside outside of New England at no cost to the district.

F. School Funding

Dr. Freeman summarized information from the nonpublic session in which Attorney Andru Volinsky discussed the funding issue with the Board, including a brief history of school funding challenges by districts, the process for challenging school funding at this time, and other thoughts on the issue. Board members asked a number of questions. Attorney Volinsky offered to provide a workshop on school funding for the Pittsfield community, which the School Board accepted; Dr. Freeman will work with Mr. Volinsky to schedule the workshop later in the spring.

G. Inappropriate Use of Email

Dr. Freeman shared a summary of the actions taken in response to Moderator Gerard LeDuc's concern regarding the inappropriate use of school email. Dr. Freeman summarized the incident and actions taken. At the outset, an email was sent by a staff member to other staff members regarding a local political issue. The subject of the email received a copy and contacted the staff member who originated the first email to object and explain his position. The staff member responsible sent a second email apologizing for his original email.

Dr. Freeman met with that staff member and advised him of the Board's policy regarding use of school email for political purposes. Dr. Freeman sent an email to all staff advising them on the Board's policy regarding inappropriate use of email. Mr. Gauthier asked if he could know the repercussions for the staff member. Ms. Douglas stated that staff matters are not discussed in public. Dr. Freeman said he did not have much to add other than what was outlined. Mr. Gauthier requested that the Board enter into non-public session to discuss further.

XIII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Pittsfield Youth Voice in it Together (PYViiT)

Mr. Wolfe shared a proposed *School Build* meeting with PYViiT. The Board agreed to schedule such a meeting from 4:00 to 5:15 p.m. on Thursday, May 17. Mr. Wolfe agreed to contact the group to schedule the meeting.

XIV. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee – None

B. Drake Field & Facilities - None

C. Negotiations – None

D. Foss Foundation – None

XV. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Bob Schiferle asked if it would be possible to change the practice of recommending that administration not write letters of recommendation for staff. He wondered if there was a way to exempt the practice for teachers who are cut due to budget. Farah Lavigne stated that she agreed with Mr. Schiefele's suggestion.

XVI. PLAN AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Middle High School.

XVII. NON PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:17 p.m. a motion was made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Asdot to enter into non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3, II (c). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to enter into non-public session.

The Board discussed a recent violation of Board policy relative to staff use of email.

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; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes) to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Asdot and seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary
(until 6:10 p.m.)

Danielle Harvey
Temporary Recording
Secretary
(after 6:10 p.m.)