

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

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**MINUTES**

Pittsfield School Board Meeting  
June 14, 2018  
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Michael Wolfe, Chairperson  
Bea Douglas  
Heidi Asdot  
Adam Gauthier  
Ted Mitchell

Others Present: John Freeman, Superintendent of Schools  
Melissa Brown, Director of College and Career Readiness  
Derek Hamilton, Dean of Operations  
Danielle Harvey, Dean of Instruction  
Kathy LeMay, Director of Interventions and Title I  
Ross Morse, Community Liaison  
Colby Wolfe, Site Council Representative  
Members of the Public

Chairperson Wolfe called the meeting to order at 5:32 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Facilities request (Mr. Hamilton)
- CRTC Summer Camp (Ms. Brown)
- Resignations (Dr. Freeman)
- School Funding Workshop (Dr. Freeman)

III. ACTION ON AGENDA

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier 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 Mr. Gauthier to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2018, meeting. The following changes were made:

- On page 3, first paragraph, change Conservation Committee to read “Conservation Commission” and Committee to read “Commission,” in the last sentence.
- On page 4, first paragraph, change sixth grade to “seventh grade.”
- On page 4, the facilities request vote should reflect a 4-0 decision with 1 abstention (Mr. Gauthier).

The Board voted 4-0 to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2018, meeting as amended with 1 abstention (Ms. Douglas).

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Wolfe to approve the non-public minutes of the May 17, 2018 meeting. The Board voted 4-0 to approve the non-public minutes of the May 17, 2018, meeting with 1 abstention (Ms. Douglas).

## V. PUBLIC INPUT

Ms. Cara Peterson spoke against the proposal to move to a multi-age approach to accommodate class sizes by mixing seventh grade students with eighth grade students for the upcoming 2018-19 school year. Ms. Peterson shared a letter including the reasoning behind why she felt this proposal would not benefit the students. Ms. Peterson asked about the option of opting out of the mixed-age classroom, if the proposal was accepted by the School Board and was informed that it would not be optional.

Ms. Dawna Mayo spoke against the proposal and included behavioral concerns and the disruption it could bring to the current seventh grade class. Ms. Mayo also supported the need for a School Resource Officer.

Ms. Karen Perras spoke against the proposal and questioned the time allotted to deliver differentiated instruction in a multi-aged middle school classroom. Ms. Perras also raised concerns around what the curriculum might look like and how it would be differentiated for students in different grade levels. Dr. Freeman responded to the concern, stating that middle school curriculum was developed in “bands” that spanned across grade level. He further shared that the curriculum was not specific to grade level and could be delivered to differing grades by assessing students at a depth of knowledge appropriate for each grade level. Ms. Harvey, Dean of Instruction, shared that differentiating math was focused on getting students to be “algebra-ready.”

Ms. Marissa MacLellan spoke against the proposal and asked if the decision had already been made. The answer from the Board was that the decision had not yet been made. Ms. MacLellan was also informed that even with the multi-age approach, a high school educator would be needed to support the high number of science students and, in effect, remove the opportunity of a high school elective to be offered to high school students.

Mr. Michael Mayo spoke against the proposal and questioned the impact of mixing retained eighth graders with incoming seventh graders and the negative consequences due to developmental levels of each. Ms. Douglas responded that, as a teacher, educators manage a wide spectrum of learning abilities within a single classroom. Dr. Freeman added that a wide range of abilities would be present in classrooms, regardless of whether or not the middle school moved to a multi-age format.

Miss Juliana Morse spoke against the proposal. As a current seventh grader she was not in favor due to the negative impact this would have socially with relationships she has created.

Miss Amber Peterson spoke against the proposal. As a current seventh grader she recalled being overwhelmed as an incoming seventh grade and had concerns of how a multi-age classroom might negatively impact and increase the anxiety of next year's seventh graders.

Mr. Colby Mayo spoke against the proposal. As a current seventh grader he was concerned on how the multi-age classes might impact fundraising and the camaraderie that has been grown in his class.

Mr. Devon Thompson spoke against the proposal. As a current seventh grader he discussed the impact of managing difficult behaviors and how it would potentially impact academics for all students.

Mr. Gauthier informed members of the public that the grades would still be separate in that students would still be identified as grade seven and grade eight. He also mentioned that fundraising accounts would continue to be discreet to each class and not comingled.

Ms. Douglas informed members of the public that all factors would be taken into consideration and that the Board would make the least negative impactful choice.

Ms. Harvey added that there was also a need to schedule for the upcoming school year and how smaller class sizes would allow for a greater opportunity for differentiation of instruction.

Ms. Jillian Gauthier spoke against the proposal and the negative impact it could potentially have with concern for retained eighth grade students.

Ms. Tara Ash spoke against the proposal and raised concern about the potential issues creating more of a struggle for incoming seventh grade students.

Mr. Ross Morse advocated for families opposed to the proposal. Mr. Morse shared that the proposal appeared to families to be more about the number of students and less about meeting the needs of each one. Mr. Morse also referenced the positive approach to multi-age classrooms at the elementary school and the efforts made to inform families of the benefits, as well as allowing an opportunity for

families to opt out if they did not feel a multi-age classroom was a good fit for their student. These same efforts appear to be missing from this attempt at a middle school multi-age classroom.

Ms. Paulette Wolfe spoke in support of the School Board and the impact the difficult decision will have beyond middle school, affecting all students at Pittsfield Middle High School. Ms. Wolfe added that the decision was due, in large part, to the 2018-19 operating budget of the district voted on by community members.

Ms. Melissa Babcock noted that there were multi-age or mixed classrooms already. Ms. Babcock gave examples of how students participated on sports teams and had lunch together. Ms. Babcock was hopeful that this would be a positive experience.

## VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Colby Wolfe explained that the Site Council had voted not to approve a recent proposal pertaining to changing the Wednesday schedule. While membership was in favor of exploring an alternative lunch schedule, they were not as supportive of the remaining proposed changes. The Council voted the proposal down as a whole. Colby also shared that the Council had had its elections and he would be continuing as representative to the School Board. He also shared the summer schedule of Site Council to meet on July 19 and August 9, 2018, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.

## VII. DEAN OF INSTRUCTION

### A. Exhibition Night

Ms. Harvey shared feedback of Exhibition Night. Mr. Wolfe commented positively on the showcasing of student work. Mr. Gauthier brought up the idea of entertaining use of the lower field as a temporary parking lot to accommodate the overflow of vehicles seeking a place to park. Board members appreciated the use of the elementary school gym to house sixth grade exhibitions. Ms. Harvey also shared the data from spring student led conferences. While the middle high school numbers appeared to be strong, Ms. Douglas commented on her expectation of the elementary conferences returning larger participation numbers.

## VIII. DEAN OF OPERATIONS

### A. Facilities Request

On a motion by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously in favor of the request of the Pittsfield Old Home Day Committee for use of Drake Field for the July 14, 2018, fireworks. The fireworks are scheduled for between 9:15 and 10:00 p.m.

B. End of Year Events

Mr. Hamilton reviewed end of year events with the Board and clarified that the Senior Awards Night was schedule to being at 7:00 p.m. Sixth and eighth grade promotional ceremonies were both scheduled for a 6:00 p.m. start.

IX. DIRECTOR OF COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

A. Concord Regional Technical Center

Ms. Brown shared information about the Concord Regional Technical Center's 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Camp for middle school students.

B. New Hampshire Scholars

Ms. Brown also shared data pertaining to the New Hampshire Scholars program at PMHS. This year's graduating class of thirty-one has fifteen NH Scholars.

C. 2018-2019 Schedules

Ms. Brown also commented that the schedules would not be ready to send home with students by year's end and would, instead, be mailed home with the annual welcome packets prior to the start of the next school year.

D. Eighth Grade Promotion

An update of the eighth grade promotional status by Ms. Brown included the potential of three students being retained.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Court Involvement

By report, Ms. Chassie informed the Board of the increase in the number of cases in which the district has been joined in court. The increases are significant when compared with previous years. There is a possible correlation between the increase and cases of substance misuse as indicated in an article shared by Ms. Chassie. All cases in which the district is joined are through the Division of Children, Youth, and Families' child protection services. It is unusual that there are no cases through Juvenile Justice, which may be due to the decrease in police force in Pittsfield. Ms. Chassie's report explained that the lack of court involvement will reduce potential services and resources to students and their families and could potentially create additional out-of-district expenditures for the district. Dr. Freeman added that an appointment has been made to speak with interim Pittsfield Police Department Police Chief Collins. On the agenda is a review of the Memorandum of Understanding between the department and school district.

## B. New Hampshire Special Education District Report

Ms. Chassie provided the Board with a copy of the New Hampshire Special Education District Report for the period July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017.

## C. New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation

Ms. Chassie's report explained that the New Hampshire Vocational Rehabilitation program is undergoing significant changes, which will adversely affect students' access to services and may require the district to fund vocational training programs for students with disabilities.

## D. Nurtured Heart Approach

A workshop was conducted on June 2, 2018, for parents and employees on the Nurtured Heart Approach® on parenting. Four parents and four employees attended the workshop.

## E. Extended School Year Programs

According to Ms. Chassie's report, special educators have been busy finalizing plans for the students who meet the criteria to be included in an extended school year program. The program for students who meet the criteria will be running from July 16 through August 2, Mondays through Thursdays, from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. Currently, there are seven preschool students, thirty-eight elementary students, thirteen middle school students, and eleven high school students who meet the criteria and whose parents' have agreed to their attendance.

# XI. SUPERINTENDENT

## A. POLICIES

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following policies with corrections:

- EGA, Acceptable Internet Use
- EHB, Records Retention and Disposal Schedule
- GCCBC, Family and Medical Leave Act
- JICD, Student Conduct, Discipline, and Due Process – Safe School Zone
- KDB, School District Use of Social Media Websites

## B. FEDERAL FUNDS ASSURANCES

On a motion by Ms. Asdot, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to approve Federal Funds Assurances in regards to time to review for participation in receipt of Federal Funds and to appoint the Chair of the School Board to sign assurances.

## C. RESIGNATIONS

On a motion by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Pittsfield Elementary School learning commons teacher, Kali Mara, with regret.

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to accept the resignation of Pittsfield Middle High School social studies teacher Erin Bozek, with regret.

## D. BUDGET; FUND BALANCE AND FY19 BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

On a motion by Ms. Douglas, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to reinstate one Special Education position using funds from the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund.

Mr. Gauthier requested that the figures for the transportation line be reviewed for accuracy.

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to fund Transportation Field Trips lines 1-01-2725-55190 and 1-03-2725-55190.

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to fund the Guidance Purchased Services lines 1-02-2120-55900 and 1-03-2120-5590.

On a motion by Mr. Wolfe, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to cut funding from the Building Maintenance New Furniture lines 1-01-2600-57350, 1-02-2600-57350, and 1-03-2600-57350.

On a motion by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted 4-1 (Mr. Gauthier, dissenting) to cut funding from the Athletic – Volleyball MS & HS line 1420 FUNCTION & ATHL TRANSP

On a motion by Mr. Wolfe, seconded by Mr. Gauthier, the Board voted unanimously to cut funding from the lines identified on the POSSIBLE BUDGET CUTS document (APPENDIX A) as identified as not highlighted and not asterisked.

Motion to fund highlighted and asterisked items from the POSSIBLE BUDGET CUTS document (APPENDIX A) by Ms. Asdot, seconded by Ms. Douglas. Upon further discussion, motion rescinded by Ms. Asdot, second motion rescinded by Ms. Douglas.

On a motion by Ms. Asdot, seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted unanimously to approve the funding of items identified as highlighted on the POSSIBLE BUDGET CUTS document (APPENDIX A).

On a motion by Ms. Asdot, seconded by Ms. Douglas, the Board voted 4-1 (Mr. Gauthier dissenting) to approve the funding through a pre-buy from the 2017-18 fund balance to purchase the asterisked items from the POSSIBLE BUDGET CUTS document (APPENDIX A).

On a motion by Mr. Gauthier, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, the Board voted unanimously to defund the items identified by asterisks on the POSSIBLE BUDGET CUTS document (APPENDIX A) for the 2018-2019 budget.

On a motion by Mr. Mitchell, seconded by Ms. Asdot, the Board voted unanimously to create the position of Behavioral Specialist Para-Educator to be funded within the constraints of the Fiscal Year 2019 Budget.

E. Pittsfield Police Department

Concerns were raised about the Pittsfield Police coverage.

F. Summer School Board Meetings

Summertime meeting schedule will follow as: July 19, 2018, and August 23, 2018 at 5:30 p.m.

G. School Funding Workshop

The School Funding Workshop was discussed as being well received. Superintendents from four other New Hampshire school districts were in attendance (Berlin, Cornish, Franklin, and North Haverhill). The Board agreed to maintain communication with these districts and to pursue additional strategies to address state school funding.

H. Middle School Organization

Ms. Douglas voiced her recommendation to consider alternative options to the multi-age proposal for the 2018-19 middle school.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD - None

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee – None

B. Drake Field & Facilities – None

C. Negotiations – None

D. Foss Foundation – None

#### XIV. PUBLIC INPUT (Second Session)

Mr. Robert Schiferle questioned the legality of a pre-buy from unexpended funds and shared concerns of potential complaints from the community. Mr. Schiferle recommended more thought be put into the decision to expend these funds.

Ms. Melissa Babcock requested the Board look into offering an opt out of the multi-age middle school classrooms.

Ms. Marissa MacLellan asked if the Special Education Capital Reserve Fund might be used for other purposes. The Board responded that this capital reserve fund could not be used for purposes other than special education.

Ms. Cara Peterson requested that the Board look into an alternative solution to meet the middle school science lab requirements.

Ms. Karen Perras requested that the Board reach out to other middle schools to discuss alternative scheduling methods being used. Dr. Freeman noted the differences between a kindergarten through grade eight school and Pittsfield Middle School of grades seven and eight. The latter having different requirements than the former. Ms. Perras added for consideration that the Board look into the potential of semi-retired teacher to fill a position to alleviate the burden on class sizes.

Ms. Marissa MacLellan asked if the Board would be deciding on the multi-age proposal at the next meeting, June 28. The Board responded that the decision would be made at the June 28 meeting.

Ms. Jillian Gauthier raised concerns over a number of families potentially choosing home schooling as an alternative, if the decision wasn't favorable to them.

#### XV. PLAN AGENDA FOR NEXT MEETING

The next School Board meeting is scheduled for June 28, 2018, at 5:30 p.m. at the Pittsfield Middle High School.

#### XVI. NON PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:48 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Wolfe to enter into non-public session to discuss a student matter and a personnel matter under the authority of RSA 91-A:3, II (a) and (c). The Board was polled and voted unanimously (Ms. Asdot, yes; Ms. Douglas, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes).

The Board discussed two personnel issues and one student issue.

No action was taken in non-public session.

At 8:10 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Wolfe 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, Ms. Douglas, yes; yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Mr. Mitchell, yes; Mr. Wolfe, yes).to exit the non-public session and to re-enter into open session.

#### XVII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Douglas and seconded by Ms. Asdot the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ross Morse  
Recording Secretary