

APPROVED BY THE PITTSFIELD SCHOOL BOARD

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
January 20, 2022
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson (via Zoom)
Sandra Adams
Molly Goggin
Diane Rider

Others Present: Bryan Lane, Interim Superintendent
Derek Hamilton, Principal, PMHS Principal
Mike Wylie, Principal, PES
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Members of the Public

Chair Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:30 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Gauthier.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added:

- Curriculum Advisory Committee (Ms. Rider)
- Showcase (Ms. Rider)
- Zooming Meetings (Ms. Adams)

IV. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Rider and seconded by Ms. Adams, the Board unanimously approved the amended agenda. (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes)

V. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The January 6, 2022 public minutes were considered by the Board. Changes include on page three, paragraph four, change “Picture of the Graduate” to “Vision of the Graduate (in two places); on page four, paragraph one, change “IT” to “It”; on page five, paragraph one, add the sentence, “Impact and fund balance amounts will need to be updated, according to Mr. Gauthier.”; and on page six, paragraph six, omit, “The Deliberative Session will open at 6:30 and the School Board meeting will resume, if necessary, after the Deliberative Session.” On a motion made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Ms. Adams, the Board approved the minutes as amended. (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, abstain)

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

Jaime Koladish thanked Mr. Lane for his communication with her via email. Ms. Koladish stated that the recent outbreak of the COVID-19 happened with masks so she asks that the Board consider omitting the requirement.

VII. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Matthew Swenson reviewed a proposal from the Site Council for a revised dress code. Ms. Rider asked about the enforcement of dress code being a motivation for the proposed change. Mr. Swenson stated that the Site Council thinks the current policy is outdated and that enforcement is not consistent; teachers are sometimes uncomfortable enforcing an out of date code. Mr. Gauthier asked if there is consideration of dress length, which Mr. Swenson answered. Ms. Rider asked if sunglasses are currently allowed; Mr. Hamilton stated that they are not currently allowed. Ms. Rider asked if the present dress code goes into the same anatomical detail; Mr. Swenson said no. Mr. Swenson stated that dress codes from other schools were used as a resource for the proposed dress code. Ms. Rider asked that the language relative to “hate speech” be more specifically designated. Ms. Goggin stated her concern about the statement relative to what a student should wear; she felt it was too wordy. She stated that she likes the choice the code provides students. She agreed with Ms. Rider about the ambiguity relative to hate speech. Ms. Adams asked if there was full administrative support; Mr. Hamilton said that if he opposed it, he would have vetoed it before it went to the Board. Mr. Clough questioned the enforcement issues experienced now. He suggested a poll that would survey the opinions of the students and staff relative to the proposed dress code. Ms. Goggin explained the difficulty that teachers have in enforcing dress code; she agreed that having teachers’ perspective is important. Ms. Rider spoke to how dress code standards should work to help students prepare for post-graduation; she, too, would be interested in how teachers feel about the proposal. Mr. Hamilton explained the process the proposal followed before sending it to the Board, including having teachers’ representatives on Site Council sharing the proposal with their colleagues. Mr. Clough spoke to the importance of the dress code in helping everyone to feel comfortable in school. He reiterated the point that dress code is important in the role of the school in preparing students for the workforce. Ms. Adams asked if there was merit in asking the

community for their input; Mr. Hamilton explained that the community is represented on the Site Council. Mr. Lane spoke to the uncomfortable nature of teachers speaking to students about such things as the length of a dress or the cut of a shirt. Further discussion ensued regarding the proposed dress code.

Mr. Clough suggested an amendment to the proposed dress code. Mr. Lane asked Board members to email him concerns and he would forward them to Mr. Hamilton; he assured the Board that work would continue on the wording of the proposed dress code. Ms. Rider suggested designating a male and female staff member the responsibility of addressing dress code issues with students of the same gender. Mr. Gauthier assured Mr. Swenson that the Board would reconsider the dress code at a future meeting.

IX. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Compliance

Ms. Bickford explained the compliance indicator relative to determination of significant disproportionality, which is relative to race and ethnicity and the identification of students with disabilities. In review of Pittsfield's three-year analysis, no determination of significant disproportionality has been made; the district is in good standing.

B. Special Education Survey Information

Ms. Bickford reported statistics relative to the number of students who are identified as having a disability at PES and PMHS. At PES there are 77 students or 31% and at PMHS there are 72 students or 24%.

C. Parent Resource Sheet

As requested by the Board, the Parent Resource Sheet for special education has been updated and was provided to the Board for their review.

X. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOL

A. Deliberative Session

Mr. Lane stated that the Deliberative Session will be scheduled for Thursday, February 10, 2022 at 6:30 at PMHS. A snow date of Saturday, February 12, 2022 has been set.

B. COVID-19

Mr. Lane explained that the statistics continue to exceed threshold levels for mask requirements. He stated that the district continues to struggle with staffing issues due to illness, primarily due to COVID-19.

C. Budget

Mr. Lane updated the Board on the progress of the budget with the Budget Committee. The Committee has voted on warrant articles, but exact vote counts were not available. Mr. Lane will report the votes to the Board upon receipt. Ms. Goggin commended Mr. Lane for his presentation to the Budget Hearing.

D. Broken Pipe

Mr. Lane reported another broken pipe at PES; necessary repairs were made.

E. Targeted Mask Policy

Based on a request from the community, Mr. Lane has researched targeted mask policies. Information was provided to the Board via a memo, which was included in the Board packet. Mr. Lane has spoken to the school nurses and there is agreement that when the numbers drop, adjustments can be considered relative to mask wearing. Ms. Rider stated her concern about mandates relative to mask wearing. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of a mask mandate.

A motion was made by Ms. Rider for the current policy to change to make the wearing of masks optional. The motion was seconded by Ms. Adams. Mr. Lane noted that if the motion is approved, changes will need to be made to the isolation policy. Mr. Hamilton read the guideline that requires people who have tested positive wearing a mask for ten days after they return from having COVID for five days. Ms. Adams stated that the CDC has only issued recommendations, not requirements. Mr. Clough stated that if the motion were to pass, the current COVID policy would need to be revised. Ms. Goggin opined that an optional mask policy would be in contradiction to a targeted mask policy. The motion was defeated - (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, no; Mr. Gauthier, no; Ms. Goggin, no; Ms. Rider, yes)

Upon request, Mr. Hamilton reviewed the current policy relative to isolation and mask wearing when some with vaccinations and without have COVID. Ms. Rider made a motion that the quarantine period for both vaccinated and non-vaccinated be the same (five days out and five days with a mandatory mask). Mr. Clough suggested tabling the motion until further information is gathered. Ms. Rider's motion was not seconded; Mr. Gauthier declared the motion as having died.

F. Opioid Litigation

Mr. Lane provided the Board with information relative to a class action lawsuit being filed on behalf of school districts regarding the responsibility of pharmaceutical companies being culpable for the opioid crisis in our country. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board voted unanimously to direct the Superintendent to contact the law firm of Drummond

and Woodsum and allow the District to be a party in the litigation (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

XI. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Policy Review

Mr. Lane presented Policy JLCD-R, Administering Medication to Students; Policy CA, Administrative Goals; Policy DAF, Administration of Federal Grant Funds; and Policy JFABD, Admission of Homeless Students. He stated that these policies will warrant a decision of approval at the next meeting.

Mr. Lane presented Policy EGA, School District Internet Access for Students. There were no motions relative to this policy. It will be documented as reviewed on January 20, 2022.

Mr. Lane presented Policy BEDG-R, Access to Minutes and Public Records. A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Rider to change the cost per page from \$.20 per page to \$.10 per page. The motion failed (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, no; Mr. Gauthier, abstain; Goggin, no; Ms. Rider, yes), Ms. Adams suggested some changes in grammatical and typographical errors. The policy will be documented as reviewed on January 20, 2022.

Policy EBBB, Accident Reports. There were no motions relative to this policy. It will be documented as reviewed on January 20, 2022.

B. Zooming Board Meetings

Ms. Adams asked if all meetings can be available via Zoom. Mr. Lane stated that all meetings will have a Google Meet link attached to the agenda so that people can attend electronically.

C. Winter Showcase

Ms. Rider attended the Winter Showcase; she enjoyed conversations with students and staff. Ms. Rider asked if the same topics would be repeated or if there would be new topics. Mr. Hamilton explained that the topics highlighted in the Winter Showcase are from the students' learning studio work. The topics for the Spring Exhibition will be expanded. Mr. Hamilton explained that learning studios can be done for credit, community service, or as an audit.

D. Curriculum Advisory Committee

Ms. Rider stated that she has talked to Mr. Laliberte, Assistant Superintendent, in the Bedford School District and was interested in the structure that the district has

created for community inclusion in curriculum development. Ms. Rider made a motion to form a Curriculum Advisory Committee existing of two Board members, two faculty members, and five rotating community members determined randomly. Mr. Lane clarified that the Bedford committee does not look at the current curriculum, but only looks at newly proposed curriculum. Ms. Rider stated that she is interested in having the committee review current curriculum relative to three criteria, including balance, tone, and age-appropriateness. Mr. Lane suggested that Ms. Rider put in writing a proposed motion for future consideration. Mr. Clough stated that a proposed motion should be specific including the number of people, the charge of the committee, and whether the committee would be advisory or decision-making. Ms. Rider rescinded her motion.

E. Superintendent Survey / Search / Extension

Mr. Lane provided permission to the Board to have the discussion relative to the survey completed about the superintendent search in public session. Mr. Gauthier explained that there were 152 responses; documents were distributed with results. On a motion made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to extend the current superintendent's contract for one year at the current salary and with no additional benefits (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

XII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee Representative - Mr. Clough

According to Robert Schiferle, the school's proposed budget was approved by the Budget Committee. All warrant articles were approved with the exception of the one relative to using the fund balance to offset the tax rate or to be used for an approved project; there were questions that could not be answered. Mr. Schiferle stated that more information would be needed for the Budget Committee to be in favor of the warrant article. Mr. Lane suggested that more details can be provided at the Deliberative Session.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin the Board voted unanimously to remove the Budget Committee recommendation from warrant article IV. (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes)

B. Drake Field and Facilities - Mr. Gauthier

C. Negotiating Team - Ms. Goggin & Mr. Gauthier

D. Foss Family Scholarship - Ms. Rider

XIII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, February 3, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Sarah Marston thanked the Board for their honesty relative to mask wearing.

Gerard LeDuc stated his appreciation for receiving the warrant articles in advance of the meeting. Mr. LeDuc explained procedures that are in place. He suggested the Board be sure to provide the public with well-prepared statements in support of their warrant articles. Mr. LeDuc stated he would be running a fair and equitable meeting; he will not allow people to single out members of the Board.

XVI. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin to adjourn the meeting. The Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. (Roll Call: Ms. Adams, yes; Mr. Clough, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes)

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary