

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
June 17, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

Members Present: Adam Gauthier, Chairperson
Justin Clough, Vice Chairperson
Jessica Drouin
Molly Goggin
Diane Rider

Others Present: John Graziano, Interim Superintendent of Schools
Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Danielle Harvey, PES Principal (via Zoom)
Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
Members of the Public (some via Zoom)

Chairperson Gauthier opened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- Policy JICA, Dress Code (Mr. Clough)
- Positions (Mr. Clough)
- Leadership (Mr. Clough)
- Contact with Community Members (Ms. Goggin)
- Masks (Ms. Rider)
- Summer Schedule (Mr. Gauthier)
- Superintendent Search (Mr. Gauthier)
- PES Principal (Mr. Gauthier)
- Policy Review (Mr. Gauthier)
- Non-Public Session (Mr. Gauthier)
- General Assurances (Dr. Graziano)

- Resignations (Dr. Graziano)
- Out of District Placements (Ms. Bickford)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as amended.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin to approve the public minutes for May 20, 2021. Changes were made: on page nine, section E, capitalize Policy; on page nine, paragraph one, change to "...an attorney from the New Hampshire School Board Association will..."; on page twelve, paragraph three, change to "Ms. Goggin nominated Mr. Clough to the Negotiations Committee. Mr. Clough nominated Mr. Gauthier to the Negotiations Committee. The Board voted to approve Mr. Clough and Mr. Gauthier to the Negotiations Committee with Ms. Drouin, Ms. Goggin, Ms. Rider, and Mr. Clough voting in the affirmative and Mr. Gauthier abstaining from the vote."; on page thirteen, paragraph four, change to "...the Board voted to approve the non-resident student request with Ms. Drouin, Ms. Goggin, Ms. Rider, and Mr. Clough voting in the affirmative and Mr. Gauthier abstaining from the vote. The minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and second by Mr. Clough, the minutes of the non-public meeting on May 20, 2021 were approved unanimously as written.

A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin to approve the public minutes of June 3, 2021. Changes include: on page one, omit "via Zoom" after Ms. Drouin's name; on page eight change committee assignments to: Budget Committee to Mr. Clough and Negotiating Team to Mr. Gauthier and Mr. Clough.

V. PUBLIC INPUT- None.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Matthew Swenson, reported that the Site Council has planned the process for electing at-large members. A debate or forum will be organized and a more realistic voting process will be used. Ms. Drouin stated that she is interested in being a member of the Site Council. Ms. Goggin stated that she has names from community members who may be interested in participating.

VII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. Movie Request

Ms. Harvey requested permission from the Board to show a movie called Inside Out. Ms. Rider stated her reasons for being opposed to the movie request. A motion was made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the use of the movie. Ms. Drouin stated her opinion that social emotional learning is important and that the movie will support student learning. The motion passed with Ms. Drouin, Ms. Goggin, Mr. Gauthier, and Mr. Clough voting in the affirmative and Ms. Rider opposing the motion.

B. Summer Program Update

Ms. LeMay reported that there are twenty five students signed up for Kindergarten Camp and numerous students signed up for PES Summer Camp. Activity books will be sent home to students leaving Kindergarten through grade two and summer reading books will be made available for students in Kindergarten through grade five.

C. Assessment Data

Data from state assessments will be analyzed and reported to the Board at a future meeting.

D. Field Days

According to Ms. LeMay, Brandon Balsler set up two successful field days for Kindergarten through grade two and grade three through six, respectively.

E. Last Day of School

Ms. Harvey and Ms. LeMay reported that the last whole school morning meeting would be at 8:30 on June 18, 2021. Awards will be awarded at that meeting.

F. New Principal

Mr. Gauthier asked Dr. Graziano to make more frequent trips to PES during the transition from Ms. Harvey to the new principal.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. District Newsletter

The final edition of the newsletter will include information relative to device collection, summer meals program, and the end of year events.

B. End of Year Events

Mr. Hamilton reviewed end of year events.

C. State Assessment Data

Mr. Hamilton confirmed that state assessment data will be shared with the Board at a future meeting.

D. Budget Balance Considerations

Mr. Hamilton shared a quote from Collins Sports Center for \$5,630. Additional quotes will be coming in for repairs of nets and extension of fencing. He opined that an extension of fencing will not reduce the number of foul balls that go over into the neighbor's yards. Furthermore, he recommended the installation of a batting cage to limit the danger of balls. Discussion ensued regarding the position of foul balls and the potential solutions, none of which will entirely eliminate the problem. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the batting cage and repair of the netting not to exceed \$5,630, but not the extension of the fence.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the quote from Beltronics for providing radio equipment that will be synched with the Pittsfield Police Department. On a motion made by Ms. Goggin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to approve the expenditure for radio equipment.

Mr. Hamilton provided a quote from Johnson Controls to update the control system, including the addition of four doors at PES. Chris Lowe, an executive from Johnson Controls, was present to answer questions. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the update of the control system.

Mr. Gauthier asked Dr. Graziano for information about the fund balance. He stated that he is interested in having the district join the parties in the lawsuit relative to school funding. Mr. Clough explained that the Board has to wait for the window to open to join the lawsuit. Discussion ensued regarding encumbering funds to join the two lawsuits. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Goggin the Board voted unanimously to approve

encumbering a sum of \$300,000 for the purpose of joining the Claremont and/or Con-Val lawsuits.

IX. PMHS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL - No report.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Out of District Placement

Ms. Bickford stated that a student has graduated from an out of district placement with a Pittsfield High School diploma. Two students graduated from eighth grade in out of district statements, one of which joined the celebration at PMHS.

XI. INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. End of Year Celebration

Dr. Graziano stated that a celebration will be held on Friday, June 18, 2021 for people retiring or leaving the district.

B. School Board Policy Review

Dr. Graziano stated that the attorney from the NH School Board Association will be auditing the district's policies. A committee will be convened to work on policies that will be presented to the Board for final approval. A motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin to send the policy book out for review by an attorney at the NH School Board Association for \$1,700. Discussion ensued. The motion was approved unanimously.

C. Transportation Contract

Dr. Graziano stated that the contract for transportation with Marston Bus Company is up and he recommends the Board approve an extension of the contract. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board unanimously approved extending the contract with Marston Bus Company.

D. Assurances

Dr. Graziano reminded the Board that it is necessary for the approval of assurance in order to receive grants. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board unanimously approved the assurances.

E. Resignation

Dr. Graziano recommended the Board accept the resignations of Jessica Wilcox and Ryan Keefe. On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Ms. Goggin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignations of Ms. Wilcox and Mr. Keefe.

F. New Hires

Dr. Graziano nominated Trevor Gardner as a PMHS social studies teacher. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the hiring of Mr. Gardner.

Dr. Graziano nominated Caitlin Gagnon as a PMHS English teacher. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board unanimously approved the hiring of Ms. Gagnon.

Dr. Graziano nominated Krys Anderson for the SAU administrative assistant position. A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Ms. Goggin to approve the hiring of Ms. Anderson. Discussion ensued regarding the experience of the candidate. The motion failed with Ms. Goggin and Ms. Drouin voting in the affirmative and Ms. Rider, Gauthier, and Mr. Clough voting to oppose the motion.

G. Tuition Study Committee

Dr. Graziano asked the Board for the next step and how they want him to move forward. Seven districts have expressed interest in having Pittsfield students attend their schools. Mr. Gauthier read the warrant article and stated that the Board was instructed to investigate the viability of sending students to other districts. Discussion ensued regarding costs, board representation, and fact finding in other districts. Dr. Graziano suggested, when asked by Ms. Goggin, that schools be ruled in or out and then interviews set up with a reduced number of districts in order to gain further information. Further discussion ensued regarding having an agreed upon set of criteria in order to make decisions, such as distance to the school, assessment data, and capacity to accommodate Pittsfield students. Mr. Gauthier suggested eliminating Gilford, Merrimack Valley, and Winnisquam and pursuing Prospect Mountain, Coe Brown, Pembroke Academy, and Concord. In the end, it was agreed that Dr. Graziano would draft the language for the bid and return it to the Board for review. Factors to be considered in the wording of the bid should include population, incremental admission, social-emotional concerns, and transportation.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Policy JICA, Dress Code

Mr. Clough questioned dress code differences for the sixth graders who are now attending PMHS. He provided an example of foot attire; flip flops are not allowed at PES and are allowed at PMHS, but sixth graders were held to the PES rule. Mr. Hamilton stated that parents with concerns of inconsistencies should follow up with the teacher or administration.

B. Positions

Mr. Clough asked how many positions remain vacant. The administration confirmed that there are thirty-three positions turning over. There are a minimum of seventeen positions still vacant and very few applicants.

C. Leadership

Mr. Clough asked if there is a policy in place regarding the training in leadership and mentoring, which might mitigate turnover. Mr. Hamilton stated that there is a mentor program in place for new teachers. Discussion ensued regarding the support that is needed for the leaders in the district. Ms. Bickford provided an example of the way in which she seeks support from her colleagues.

D. Contact with Community Members

Ms. Goggin stated her question about the approach of School Board members to emails and other contact made by community members. Discussion ensued regarding a chain of command, policies that require a position by the Board, personal autonomy, and stating opinion on issues not yet addressed at the Board level.

E. Masks

Ms. Rider stated she was approached by community members regarding the usage of masks. Issues being discussed are medical issues, the efficacy of masks, social-emotional impacts, and unintended consequences of mask wearing. Ms. Rider stated reasons why she thought the mask issue should be discussed and made a motion to eliminate masks immediately. Mr. Hamilton stated that the Department of Human Services continues to provide school districts with recommendations. Currently the Department of Human Services is leaving the wearing of masks to the discretion of the school district. The Leadership Team will be meeting next week to discuss the wearing of masks over the summer months. Mr. Hamilton asked the Board for the ability to have the Leadership

Team meet and make a recommendation to the Board relative to mask wearing, to which they agreed. Ms. Rider rescinded the motion.

F. Summer Schedule

Mr. Gauthier raised the issue of a summer meeting schedule. He suggested cancelling the July 1st meeting and then resuming the regular schedule for the remainder of the summer. The Board was in agreement with this suggestion.

G. Superintendent Search

Mr. Gauthier stated that Barrett Christina suggested resuming the search in September with the NH School Board Association. The first step would be having representatives from the Bryan Corporation, a consultant group, hired by the NH School Board Association to come in to talk to the Board. The Board would like this to happen immediately after Labor Day. Mr. Gauthier will contact Ms. Christna to inform him of this decision.

H. PES Principal

Mr. Gauthier raised the issue of providing the Board with information relative to salary when hiring a candidate. Dr. Graziano stated that salary information will be included for upcoming hires.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Budget Committee Representative - Mr. Clough
- B. Drake Field and Facilities - Mr. Gauthier
- C. Negotiating Team - Mr. Clough and Mr. Gauthier
- D. Foss Family Scholarship - Ms. Drouin

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Katie Bachelder stated her opinion that reducing the number of schools in the running for tuitioning students out was a good idea. She further suggested that a public forum be provided to the community. The last forum was for the Tuition Study Committee to field questions. She suggested an opportunity to hear the opinion of community members is important.

Mr. Clough provided accolades to the administration on the Commencement events, as well as eighth grade celebration.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin , the Board voted unanimously to approve hiring by Dr. Graziano until July 15, 2021

XV. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

At 7:49 p.m. a motion was made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Drouin to enter into a non-public session under the authority of RSA 91-A:3 (c) to discuss student matters. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to enter into a non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

At 8:44 p.m. a motion was made by Adam Gauthier and seconded by Justin Clough to exit from a non-public session. The Board was polled and voted unanimously to exit the non-public session (Mr. Clough, yes; Ms. Drouin, yes; Mr. Gauthier, yes; Ms. Goggin, yes; Ms. Rider, yes).

XVII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, July 15, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Lecture Hall.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Goggin , the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie
Recording Secretary