

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

MINUTES

Pittsfield School Board Meeting
August 5, 2021
Pittsfield Middle High School

I. CALL TO ORDER

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

Others Present: Jessica Bickford, Director of Student Services
Melissa Brown, PMHS Assistant Principal
Derek Hamilton, PMHS Principal
Kathy LeMay, PES Assistant Principal
Michael Wylie, PES Principal
Members of the Public

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

II. AGENDA REVIEW

The following items were added to the agenda:

- School Funding (Ms. Drouin)
- Blizzard Bags (Ms. Drouin)
- Board Etiquette (Ms. Drouin)
- Tuition Study (Mr. Clough)
- Non-Resident Student Request (Ms. Chassie)
- Suncook Rotary (Mr. Gauthier)
- Website Suggestion (Ms. Rider)
- High School Summer Reading List (Ms. Rider)
- NHSBA (Ms. Rider)
- New Hire (Mrs. Brown)
- Letter of Resignation (Mr. Wiley)

III. ACTION ON AMENDED AGENDA

Ms. Drouin asked if she could move one of her items on the agenda to the beginning of the agenda. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board unanimously approved the agenda as amended.

Mr. Gauthier introduced Mr. Bryan Lane as the newly hired interim superintendent.

IV. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, to table the minutes of the June 21, 2021 non-public session.

A motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Rider to approve the minutes of the July 15, 2021 meeting. Change on page nine, paragraph one, from Groggin to Goggin. The Board approved the minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin to approve the minutes of the July 19, 2021 work session. Changes include moving the second paragraph of section II to become the second paragraph in section III; on page two, first paragraph, change to Renee Blattenburger; and on page two, paragraph two, omit space after Ms. Drouin's name. The Board approved the minutes as amended.

A motion was made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough to approve the minutes of the July 20, 2021 work session. The Board approved the minutes as written.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Katy Bachelder stated that according to the minutes of the previous meeting, a deadline for information has been set for tuitioning students out to another district. She suggested that the Board take action in a timely manner, given that the question has been on the table for some time. Ms. Bachelder suggested asking the Interim Superintendent Lane to make calls to other districts based on new information provided by the district's attorney.

Mr. Clough stated that the process must remain transparent and that the Board taking its time in making decisions is important. He stated that it is important that the information gathered be accurate and available to the public. He is interested in having clear, accurate, and transparent information for the community.

Tray Hyuck asked if during the conversation about the RFP and tuitioning students the public could offer input. Mr. Clough stated that opportunity would be provided in a second season of public input.

VI. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Matthew Wenson explained that the selection of Site Council members has been modified in the hopes of including a diverse membership to the group. He welcomed Ms. Drouin to the next meeting as a community member.

VII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. Public Hearing

The Rotary was present for a public hearing. Unfortunately, the public was not notified of the public hearing as is required. Ms. Chassis apologized to the members of Rotary for the oversight. The hearing was rescheduled until August 19, 2021 at 5:30.

B. Board Etiquette

Ms. Drouin submitted a document to the Board and read the contents aloud. The document described Ms. Drouin's allegations regarding the inappropriate behavior of Adam Gauthier, School Board chair. Ms. Drouin requested the school district investigate the reported incidents.

Mr. Clough stated that the document was disturbing and asked Mr. Gauthier if he had anything to say in his defense; Mr. Gauthier declined the opportunity at this time.

Mr. Clough directed the Interim Superintendent to investigate the allegations further. Mr. Clough asked Mr. Gauthier to keep his distance from Ms. Drouin until the matter is resolved. Mr. Clough stated that all communication between Ms. Drouin and Mr. Gauthier will go through the vice chair or the interim superintendent until further notice.

Mr. Clough stated that it is imperative that the Board maintain appropriate behavior. Mr. Clough stated that he believes that the Rotary business that comes before the Board warrants recusal from discussion from Board members who are also members of the Rotary.

Ms. Rider suggested that Mr. Gauthier provide information to the Board in writing. She suggested a deadline be given for Mr. Gauthier's response. It was decided that Mr. Gauthier's response would be provided at the next Board meeting.

Ms. Goggin asked the Interim Superintendent to consider the parameters of responsibility for Mr. Gauthier's alleged behavior as he conducts his investigation.

VIII. PES PRINCIPAL

A. Resignation

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignation of Ms. Gulley as secretary at PES.

B. New Hires

According to Mr. Wiley, the following people have been hired at PES: Anna Collins, Kaitlyn Simpson, Taylor Santti, and Kimberly Wesler.

C. Summer Update

According to Mr. Wiley, the PES Summer Camp is in full swing. There is an average of eighty five students attending each day.

New first grade teachers have been in their classrooms setting up.

On Saturday, July 24, 2021, Mr. Wiley and Mr. Curtin attended Old Home Day and participated as judges for the children's bike parade.

Mr. Wiley informed the Board of a Summer Drive Through held today. Students were provided summer reading books and other treats.

Interviews are continuing to complete the hiring process at PES.

According to Mr. Wiley, the custodial staff have been working diligently to prepare the building for the opening of school.

The first week of K camp began the week of August 2, 2021.

VIII. PMHS PRINCIPAL

A. Opening Plan

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a brief presentation highlighting the key components of the reopening plan. He explained that the District Leadership Team (DLT) used the framework of the 2020-2021 reopening plan to draft the plan for the 2021-2022 school year. The DLT also considered the most recent guidance and recommendations from a variety of sources including the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the NH Department of Public Health Services, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Key components of the proposed plan include:

- The Pittsfield School District will offer five days of in-person instruction.

- There will not be a remote option. If families want their child to work remotely, please contact the main office at PES or PMHS for homeschooling or Virtual Learning Academy Charter School (VLACS) information.
- Teachers will continue to utilize Google Classroom periodically for students to see and submit work to maintain that option in case of a change in status.
- The Pittsfield School District will continue to follow a status classification system to reflect the risk level (based on the changing conditions), which will correspond with the protocols in place at our schools.
- Based on the NH DPHS permissive recommendation that schools and childcare agencies can safely choose to remove face mask requirements indoors and the low community transmission levels in Pittsfield, masks will be optional to start the school year (this is subject to change by August 30 and/or throughout the school year).
- Other layered mitigation strategies will continue to be in place including healthy hygiene practices, staying home when sick, and maximizing physical distance to the extent possible between everybody with an ideal goal of at least 3 feet of separation.
- The Pittsfield School District will continue to align its cleaning practices to CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting schools.
- The wearing of masks on school transportation will coincide with the school status and protocols.

Mr. Hamilton reviewed the communication strategies that will be employed by the district to keep families aware of the reopening plan and any changes that potentially become necessary. He also reviewed the classification system that will be used to determine the status and therefore, the modality (remote, hybrid, in person) for educating students.

Ms. Rider thanked the DLT for using multiple sources while determining their proposed plan. Mr. Gauthier also stated his appreciation for the work of the DLT. Mr. Clough, after thanking the DLT, asked for clarification regarding the latest metrics for active cases, current level of community transmission, percentage of individuals fully vaccinated in Pittsfield. He suggested two systems be considered, one for PES and one for PMHS, due to the difference in demographics. Mr. Clough also pointed out that Concord has publicized that they will require masks so students attending the Concord Regional Technical Center are informed that masks will be required. Mr. Clough suggested using the website to communicate the classification status that the district is in at any given time.

On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board unanimously voted to approve the reopening plan and begin in the green status at the beginning of this school year.

B. Community Night Out

According to Mr. Hamilton, Leslie Vogt organized a planning meeting with community members to discuss the opportunity to offer a Community Night Out. The event will take place on Friday, September 17, 2021 from 5:00 to 7:00 at Dustin's Park. This will coincide with Homecoming events.

C. Hiring Update

Mr. Hamilton reported that Amy Guimond has been hired to teach 9/10 social studies and provided the Board with her resume. Positions yet to be filled include 11/12 science and middle and high school art.

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a letter of resignation from Joseph Montroy who had been hired earlier in the summer. On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the resignation of Mr. Montroy.

D. New York Times Article

Mr. Hamilton provided the Board with a copy of an article published in the New York Times on June 30, 2021 to reflect on our pandemic experiences.

Ms. Goggin thanked Mr. Hamilton for representing the district and our community in this prestigious publication.

E. Right-to-Know Request

Mr. Hamilton informed the Board that a Right-to-Know request has been submitted by a writer from the Concord Monitor. She is requesting information on the race, gender, and income demographics of PMHS advanced placement or equivalent honor classes from 2017 to 2021.

F. Summer Academies

The two Summer Academies offered this summer are *Create Your Own Summer Adventure* and *Sarah and Amber's Excellent Adventure*. A total of eighteen students participated in the programs.

IX. PMHS ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

A. Hiring Update

Ms. Brown notified the Board of the hiring of Erin Mullen as the media center specialist at PMHS.

X. DIRECTOR OF STUDENT SERVICES

A. Special Education Procedures Manual

Ms. Bickford provided the members of the Board with an updated copy of the Special Education Procedures Manual. She asked the Board for their approval of the manual at the next meeting.

B. Summer Programming

Ms. Bickford reported that summer programming has gone incredibly well. She provided attendance records for PMHS.

C. Alternative Assessment

Ms. Bickford provided information about four students who were assessed using the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), the alternative used to assess students with significant special education needs.

D. New Hires

Ms. Bickford stated that she is in the process of concluding the hiring process for special education positions at PES and PMHS.

XI. ACTING INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

A. Acting Interim Superintendent

Ms. Chassie stated that she has worked approximately fifteen hours as the acting interim superintendent. She shared that Mr. Lane will be officially in the position of Interim Superintendent on Monday, August 9, 2021.

B. Adequacy Funds

Ms. Chassie shared that the NH Department of Education has recalculated the funds Pittsfield will receive and is estimating the increase to be \$352,505. One option is to call a special meeting in order to spend the increase. The second option is to apply this unintended revenue to offset taxes in the local tax rate setting process.

Mr. Gauthier asked if this would offset taxes for this year 2021-2022 or next year 2022-2023. Mr. Lane stated that this would impact starting in December 2021.

Mr. Clough clarified that this is a re-calculation of state funds, not a “gift” from the state. Ms. Chassie stated that the Board must make a decision by the next meeting. Mr. Gauthier stated that he was in favor of holding a special meeting in order to spend the money to reinstate the deep cuts made in the budget process. Mr. Clough stated that he would like feedback from the administration on what to spend the money on.

On a motion made by Mr. Clough and seconded by Ms. Drouin, the Board unanimously approved calling a special meeting according to RSA 197:1-3A. Mr. Lane read the rules regarding SB2 for clarification. He stated that it would be helpful for the town to understand why there was a recalculation. The meeting will be held at the next School Board meeting on August 19, 2021.

Mr. Gauthier asked that the administration streamline their reports for the next meeting and to bring forward recommendations for line item considerations.

C. Hiring

Ms. Chassie asked for clarification around the timelines for administrators to be authorized to hire. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board unanimously authorized the administration to hire until August 9, 2021. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Ms. Rider, the Board unanimously authorized Mr. Lane to hire from August 9 to September 2, 2021.

D. Request for Proposals (RFP)

Ms. Chassie checked with legal counsel and Barrett Christina, Executive Director of NHSBA, in regards to the RFP process. It is recommended that the superintendent make informal phone calls to solicit information from districts, rather than issue an RFP. Ms. Chassie created a draft RFP for the Board to consider, as directed. Mr. Lane stated that when an RFP is sent out a district is held to that “contract” and it would be legally binding. He felt that informal conversations with districts could happen relatively quickly. Mr. Lane would also take a close look at transportation and special education costs as well.

Ms. Rider asked Mr. Lane if he would create an organized list of numbers, data, and other information that is gathered. Mr. Lane agreed that he would.

Mr. Clough thanked Ms. Chassie for her work and attention to this matter.

E. Request for Attendance

Ms. Chassie brought forth a request on behalf of a newly hired employee to have their child attend PES.

Ms. Rider stated that in a previous meeting the Board discussed the potential advantage of having staff have their children attend school in Pittsfield.

Mr. Gauthier asked how many other students are non-residents or staff members. Ms. Lemay responded only one at PES.

On a motion made by Ms. Drouin and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board voted unanimously to allow the child of Erin Mullin to attend the Pittsfield School District as long as the child has all current immunizations and with the understanding that transportation costs and special education costs are not included.

XII. SCHOOL BOARD

A. School Funding Lawsuit

Ms. Drouin asked if the Town needed to vote on whether the district joins the lawsuits on school funding. The Interim Superintendent was directed to research the details around joining the lawsuit.

B. Blizzard Bags

Ms. Drouin distributed information about Blizzard Bags, which are used in lieu of a snow day. Ms. LeMay stated that Blizzard Bags were considered in the past but were not supported by families. Mr. Clough pointed out that in order for the Blizzard Bag to be counted, eighty percent of the school population would have to complete the work in the Blizzard Bag. Discussion ensued regarding pivoting to remote and using Google Classroom. Ms. Rider asked if enough students would be able to participate in an online Blizzard Bag. Mr. Hamilton stated that there are logistical issues involved with Blizzard Bags that would need to be considered. Ms. Goggin stated that if using a Blizzard Bag, the work will not be timely and relevant to what the class is actually doing before the snow day. She stated that pivoting to a remote day might be a more effective way to continue students' education. The Board directed Mr. Lane to investigate options relative to the use of Blizzard Bags.

C. Tuition Study

Mr. Clough questioned the motivation of the author of the warrant article in order to better understand the intent of the warrant article. He further questioned what the word “viable” means in the language of the warrant article. Ms. Rider stated that she felt uncomfortable about asking the author of the warrant article identifying him/herself. Mr. Clough stated that he would like more information about what the person was trying to accomplish by writing the article.

D. Website

Ms. Rider stated that she feels that the professional development that is offered on Wednesdays be identified on the website.

E. Summer Reading List

Ms. Rider expressed her interest in having a reading list provided for middle and high school students.

F. NH School Board Association

Ms. Rider stated that the School Board is able to send a member to the NH School Board Association as a delegate to their annual meeting. On a motion made by Mr. Gauthier and seconded by Mr. Clough, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Ms. Rider as delegate to the NH School Board Association for their 2021 annual meeting.

XIII. COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

A. Budget Committee Representative - Mr. Clough

B. Drake Field and Facilities - Mr. Gauthier

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

D. Foss Family Scholarship - Ms. Drouin

XIV. PUBLIC INPUT

Katie Bachelor spoke to the character of Mr. Gauthier. She acknowledged the feelings of Ms. Drouin, but stated that Mr. Gauthier has never given her reason to feel uncomfortable.

Susan Bradley, a member of the Tuition Study Committee, read Bill Miskoe's interpretation of the word "viable", although he was not the author of the warrant article. She suggested asking Mr. Miskoe or Leslie Vogt for more information.

Fallon Reed stated that the Rotary would be willing to postpone the public hearing if not convenient on August 19, 2021. Mr. Clough stated that it would be possible to have the hearing. Ms. Reed asked if the Rotary can present first, which was approved.

Tracy Hyuck stated that she thought the topic brought up by Ms. Drouin regarding "Board Etiquette" should have been done in a non-public session. Ms. Chassie stated that the school's attorney was consulted. It is not appropriate for the School Board to enter into a non-public session to protect the reputation of a school board member (publicly elected official). Ms. Chassie further explained that she was advised by the attorney to inform Ms. Drouin that she had the right to raise the issue of "Board Etiquette" at the meeting, which was done.

XVII. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for Thursday, August 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. in the Pittsfield Middle High School Media Center.

XVIII. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion made by Ms. Rider and seconded by Mr. Clough, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tobi Gray Chassie and
Jessica Bickford
Recording Secretaries