



Hampton Board of Education
380 Main Street
Hampton, CT 06247
June 24, 2024
Minutes
7:00 pm
HES Library Media Center

1. Call to Order

Chair Bisson called the meeting to order at 7:06. Present were board members Juan Arriola, Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon (via phone), David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff and Dennis Timberman. Also present were Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux and Superintendent Andrew Skarzynski.

2. Audience for Citizens and Staff

None

3. Correspondence to the Board

Juan Arriola read part of the decision of the Freedom of Information Commission that he received.

4. Approval of Minutes from Board Meeting on May 22, 2024

Motion: Mark Becker moved to approve the minutes of May 22, 2024. Juan Arriola seconded the motion. Discussion included multiple changes. The changes will be put in writing for the next board meeting.

Motion: Mark Becker moved to table the minutes of May 22, 2024. Juan Arriola seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Juan Arriola, Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Elizabeth Lindorff and Dennis Timberman. Diane Gagnon and David Halbach abstained. The motion carried.

5. Principal's Report

Superintendent Skarzynski read Principal Merendina's report that included information about the sixth grade celebration, summer reading including team B partnering with Fletcher Memorial Library, teacher professional professional development and work, staff attendance report, 16 student screened for preschool, Office of Early Childhood approval of 16 slots, and the number of students anticipated in HES by team.

Superintendent Skarzynski stated that if all the students who came to preschool screening do not enroll, the slots will be open to others. A request was made to list the number of students

by grade and team and the number placed out. Data about student learning will likely be reported in July. Due to multiple changes of superintendents during the school year, a written evaluation of the principal has not yet been accomplished.

6. Superintendent's Report

A. Staffing update

- a. Melissa O'Donovan has been hired as the Team A classroom teacher. Melissa served as the long term substitute after Ms. Hawkins resignation. Melissa recently completed her student teaching in Ashford and finished her Masters degree. Melissa has previously worked in Putnam as well. We are thrilled to welcome Melissa to the HES family.
- b. Contracts and salary agreements will be distributed for non-bargaining unit members in the coming days. All salary agreements are pending passage of the budget.

B. Summer priorities

- a. Onboarding of PowerSchool as the student information system
- b. Development of the school improvement plan
- c. Creation of employee handbook
- d. Review and revision of non bargaining unit job descriptions as necessary

C. Operational review as part of ongoing work in enhancing the work of the Board and Superintendent so that efforts are focused on students and student outcomes

- a. Policy 9131 contemplates the role of the Board in that "the Board of Education shall act as a committee of the whole in final consideration of all matters."
- b. Policy 9271 in the Bylaws of the Board considers the Code of Ethics and the importance of the working relationship between Board of Education and the Superintendent in the success of the school system; salient items that stand out in guiding our work:
 - I. Board members and Superintendents ensure the opportunity for high quality education for operational review as part of ongoing work in enhancing the work of the Board and Superintendent so that efforts are focused on students and student outcomes
 - II. Board members and Superintendents will relentlessly focus on student outcomes and make the well being of students the **fundamental goal** of all decision-making criteria
 - III. Board members and Superintendents recognize that clear and appropriate communications are key to the successful operation of the school district
 - IV. Board members and the Superintendents will always carry out their roles with the highest levels of **professionalism, honesty, and integrity**
 - V. Superintendents and Board members recognize that the Superintendent serves as the Board of Education's agent and will, in that role, faithfully apply the policies and contracts adopted by the Board
 - VI. Board members adhere to the principle that they shall confine the Board's role to policy-making, planning, and appraisal while the Superintendent shall implement the Board's policies

- VII. Board members and Superintendents both recognize that they serve as a part of an educational team with mutual respect, trust, civility, and regard for each other's respective roles and responsibilities
- VIII. Board members and Superintendents practice and promote ethical behavior in the Boardroom as a model for all district employees
- c. Policy 2131 Administration, Superintendent of Schools - this policy articulates the role of the Superintendent; among the critical points are the following:
 - I. Relationship within the School Organization:
 - (i) "In harmony with the policies of the Board of Education, State laws, and the State Board of Education Regulations, the Superintendent has executive authority over the school district and responsibility for its supervision and direction."
 - (ii) "The Superintendent shall be responsible to the Board as a body and not to the individual members of the Board."
 - II. Personnel and Staffing
 - i. The Superintendent will administer all personnel policies and procedures and ensure adherence to all legal and contractual requirements regarding personnel. The Superintendent will select and employ the best qualified and most competent personnel available to serve the district... The Superintendent will discipline and suspend personnel from duty for serious misconduct and behavior detrimental to the welfare of the schools.
- d. Policy 4135.2 Communication with the Board - this policy considers the essential role of the Superintendent and reinforces the nature of the critical boundary between Board of Education members and school staff
 - I. "Communications between the Board of Education and the staff shall be carried out through the Superintendent of Schools."
 - i. Requests for meetings with the Board shall be made in writing to the Superintendent and should include agenda items.
- e. 4217.4 Personnel - non-certified
 - I. Support staff dismissal procedures and employee terminations or suspensions are the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools, or designee, and shall be in accordance with current state statutes and negotiated employee contracts and with appropriate consideration of an affected employee's constitutional and due process rights and protections.

In answer to a question, Superintendent Skarzynski stated that it is important for board members to not become involved in personnel matters so that they are unbiased if a complaint comes before the board.

Asked if he had received a CHRO complaint, Superintendent Skarzynski said that he had not received correspondence to that end.

- 7. Business Coordinator's Report
 - Business Coordinator Sally Lehoux reviewed her report.

Motion: Mark Becker moved to move \$57,500 from (100) Salaries/Wages to (200) Benefits; \$70,000 from (100) Salaries/Wages to (300) Purchased Professional Services; \$30,000 from (100) Salaries/Wages to (500) Other Purchased Services; \$10,680 from (100) Salaries/Wages to (700) Equipment. Dennis seconded the motion. Voting yes were Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, David Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff and Dennis Timberman. Voting no was Juan Arriola. Diane Gagnon abstained. The motion carried.

In answer to a question, Sally Lehoux works 29.75 hours per week during the times that are necessary to complete work including working remotely.

All requests for financial information are to be directed to the Superintendent Skarzynski.

8. Committee and Liaison reports

Finance and Operations

The First Selectman did not sign the Eversource Letter of Agreement. The priorities are sunroom and oil tank removal and replacement. Superintendent Skarzynski has prepared Requests for Qualifications and Requests for Proposals.

EASTCONN

Maryellen Donnelly reported that EASTCONN has a new facility at Tyler Square being used for transitioning post high school students to employment and independent living. Transportation in northeast CT continues to be looked at for access to services for all ages. Diane Dugas who worked at HES as a consultant has left EASTCONN and will do work for the state. Reorganization will merge her department of Leading and Learning with Psych/Behavioral Clinical Services led by Dr. Ravit Stein. A \$2,727,174 grant has been awarded to update the ACT facility and a \$163,483.19 grant was awarded for HVAC work. EASTCONN continues to look at facility options that will enable increased enrollment and sharing of staff and vehicle maintenance.

9. Discussion and possible action on Superintendent's contract

Copies of the contract were distributed. The salary in the contract was determined by a 3% increase and prorating the 2.0 FTE to 1.5 FTE.

Motion: Juan Arriola moved to table action on the contract until we meet on Monday, July 1 at 5 PM via Zoom. Dennis seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Rose will provide email addresses to Dennis who will set up the Zoom meeting. Juan will bring written contracts to Diane Gagnon and John Russell for their review.

10. Discussion and possible action on establishing Board of Education non-lapsing fund for educational purposes.

Legislation was passed that allows up to 2% of unexpended funds to be placed in a non-lapsing account for educational purposes effective June 30, 2024.

11. Possible action: vote on board of Education non-lapsing fund for educational purposes

Motion: Mark Becker moved to establish a non-lapsing educational account for educational purposes in accordance with Public Act 24-45. Dennis Timberman seconded the motion.

Voting yes were Mark Becker, Rose Bisson, Maryellen Donnelly, Diane Gagnon, David

Halbach, Elizabeth Lindorff and Dennis Timberman. Voting no was Juan Arriola. The motion carried.

12. Possible action: shall the board Chairperson establish an ad hoc committee for the purpose of:

- preparing a report on the legal costs of the district
- analyzing key factors impacting legal fees
- comparing legal costs to similar districts and situations
- identifying rates of comparable legal firms with similar expertise and understanding of school and employment law

Discussion was held. The board did not make a motion to form the ad hoc committee.

13. Additions to the agenda

Motion: Juan Arriola moved to discuss representation of non-certified staff at HES school. David Halbach seconded the motion. Voting yes were David Halbach and Juan Arriola.

Voting no were Rose Bisson, Elizabeth Lindorff and Dennis Timberman. Abstaining were Mark Becker and Maryellen Donnelly. The motion did not carry.

Chair Bisson will request that the item will be added to the July Board of Education meeting agenda.

14. Next Agenda Planning

Approval of May 9 and May 22 minutes; representation of non-certified staff.

15. Audience for Citizens and Staff

None

16. Adjournment

Motion: Mark Becker moved to adjourn. Dennis Timberman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 9:03.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryellen Donnelly