



Fort Edward Union Free School District
Meeting of the Board of Education
April 17, 2023
Board Minutes

Members Present: Thomas Roche, Ella Collins, James Donahue, John Gugliemlo, Timothy Clark and Taylor Boucher

Members Absent: Christina Durkee and Ella Aul

Others Present: Richard DeMallie, Keaysie Ferguson, Christopher Rayder, Erin Russo, Sarah Bradshaw, Greg Weeks, Nicholas Robinette-Dixon, Bobby Bain, Daniel Boucher, Noel Dickinson, Abigail Foster, Kaelyn Nichols, Ollie Cutler, Ashton LeGodais, Lynelle Colvin, Jaelin Taylor

- I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Time: 6:34pm

- II. Recognition of Successes:**
 - A. Unified Bowling:** Coach Nelson Chase, YAC Advisor Kilee Westad, Leah Coss-Bryant, Rhyley Howard, Nicholas Robinette-Dixon, Bobby Landon, Bobby Bain, Dominic Kline, Michael Glass, Zachary Bartholomew, Daniel Boucher, Spencer Smith, Sofia White, Rheanna Plude
 - B. Washington County Area Music Teachers Association All County Music Festival**
Participants: Hillary Boucher, Noel Dickinson, Abigail Foster, Kaelyn Nichols, Trey Tiderencel, Addison Perkins, Gabrielle Durkee, Ollie Cutler, Natalie Durkee, Ashton LeGodais, Lynelle Colvin
 - C. Chronicle Newspaper Publication:** Jaelin Taylor

- III. Special Recognition:**
 - A. Irving Tissue:** \$13,000 donation to the After School Enrichment Program and cases of facial tissue and paper towels
 - B. Adirondack Car Enthusiast Car Club:** \$500 donation to Fort Edward Union Free School District
 - C. Patrick Columbetti:** Donation of softball catcher's gear

- IV. Community Comments** - None

- V. Presentations:**
 - A. Update on the 5-year long range plan** - Sarah Bradshaw (Bernie Donegan Fiscal Advisor)
 - 1.LFRA = project future general fund revenues and expenditures and fund balance use
 - 2.Capital outlay project = \$100,000 and get building aid back the next year
 - 3.Capital outlay projects are built into budget and do not require proposition/voter approval
 - 4.We have been doing well and building overall fund balance and reserves over past 3 years
 - 5.Long range plan has foundation aid as flat (if it increases, that is great but better to plan with no increase)
 - 6.Emergency project aid coming back next year is great (better than getting back over next 15 year time span); Sarah thanked the Fort Edward team for their efforts in that
 - 7.Champlain Hudson Express Pilot is new revenue planned



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8. Jump up in expenditures is building back salaries out of general fund, capital outlay, transfer of funds to capital project and emergency project
9. Adjustments are made every year to ensure that goals are being met
10. Update overall picture with new numbers, contract negotiations, etc. to get better idea as we go along

VI. Reports:

A. Board Committee Reports (9 Board Committees)

1. Budget, Finance and Audit Committee

- a) Met tonight 4/17/23 = Christopher Rayder presented Budget Workshop #5
 - (1) School Resource Officer (SRO)
 - (2) Extraclassroom Activity Funds
 - (3) Final Review of 2023-2024 Budget
 - (4) Updated Administrative / Program / Capital
 - (5) Updated Expenditures & Revenue Estimates
 - (6) Property Tax Report Card

2. Policy Review Committee

- a) Met 3/22/23 = the committee made it through policy audit and have put forth the policies for the first reading

B. Superintendent Report

1. Healthy Kids Program inquiry yielded five interested families; looking at moving forward

2. May Board Meeting = being held after budget hearing 5/8/23

3. Items since last BOE Meeting

- a) Adirondack League Meeting = basketball for 2023-2024 is moving to one division; will play all teams one time and have a bracketed tournament at the conclusion of the season based on your order of finish; league will try this next year and re-evaluate; will have 7 non-league games to fill
- b) ESports meeting = as we have learned the rules on funding extraclassroom activities, we will be looking into "bring your own device", etc.
- c) Boilers = all 4 new boilers are in and being plumbed in; we are hoping to fire them up by the end of the month
- d) In talks about end of year events and graduation with Erin Russo and Mindy Gregory
- e) Attended a county supervisors meeting with Mr. Ward and Mr. Bessen regarding the IDA. Things will remain status quo.
- f) Erin Russo and Richard DeMallie met with all non-tenured staff
- g) Thank you to Fort Edward Public Free Library for sponsoring Jeff Boyer's Big Bubble Show
- h) 4/4/23 = Swatting incident that encompassed many upstate NY Districts lead to a 2-hour delay
- i) Met with Gail Gelusha and we will have to move to 2-step authentication next year. Additionally, she was very satisfied with our website and its security of



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private information. Richard DeMallie thanked everyone that contributes to our website, especially Ryan Herman.

- j) Attended BOCES Annual Budget Meeting on 4/4/23

4.Future Items

- a) Bomb Threat Overview Training on 4/21/23
- b) Healthy Kids Program to visit on 4/21/23
- c) New Meadow is looking forward to renewing their contract with us another year or two at this time. They are looking for 3 additional rooms so we may need to shuffle classrooms around, etc.
- d) 4/25/23 = Meeting to adopt BOCES Budget
- e) 4/26/23 = FESS Negotiations Continue
- f) 4/28/23 = DEI Meeting at Ballard Road
- g) 5/2 = Graduation Discussion
- h) 5/16 = Budget Vote

5.Presentation on behalf of Steve Neron

- a) Mike Sharkey has been prepping baseball and softball fields
 - (1) James Donahue stated that these fields looked great and thanked him for his efforts
- b) Fixed a frozen spigot by the bus garage
- c) Ran new lighting in the boiler room
- d) Ran a class with cleaners, including new staff, on proper procedures for cleaning rooms and bathrooms, including how to avoid cross contamination
- e) Sanitized the entire school top to bottom, including buses (inside and out)
- f) Fixed plow damage on the grounds from the winter
- g) Beginning to remove bees nests

C. Treasurer Report (Reports in BOE Packets)

D. K-12 Principal Report

1.Upcoming Events

- a) Book Fair is currently happening in the library
- b) John Farrell is coming 4/18/23 for PK-2 and 3-5 for Peace and Hope concert (with a focus on Earth Day). Thank you to PTO for generously sponsoring this.
- c) Grade 3-8 ELA Testing is happening Thursday and Friday
- d) 4/28/23 = 10th and 11th Graders are going to the Holocaust Museum and 9/11 Memorial in New York City. Amanda Durkee suggested that some students attend the May board meeting to present pictures/their experiences.
- e) Grade 3-8 Math Testing 5/2/23 & 5/3/23
- f) 5/2/23 = Will be meeting with Assistant District Attorney to discuss extreme cases of non-attendance and attendance intervention
 - (1) Attendance Rate = 89.63%
 - (2) 12th graders and 2nd graders = 93%
 - (3) 9th graders remain most room for growth = 80%



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- g) 4/18/23 = NYS Maple Experience, Patrick Kenneally has organized a Mobile Maple Syrup Shack to give tours to elementary students. Richard DeMallie also thanks Jessica Smatko for organizing the spreadsheet of tour times.
 - h) Regents review will begin in May
 - i) Pilot of Hapara = allows teachers to see what students are doing, send a message to the student or shut off tasks that the student should not be working on/are inappropriate
2. Jr./Sr. High Code of Conduct Committee has met once; they are looking for student interest in providing input. James Donahue suggested that she inquire with parents as well.
3. Virtual NED show = Character Education of Respect awards and perfect attendance awards. Rockin Respect Winners were treated to Pancakes with the Principal.
4. New cell phone collection method has had positive teacher feedback and yielded only a handful of confiscated cell phones due to student refusal (these phones were then picked up by the parent/guardian after school)
5. Sports = 3 students playing tennis in Argyle and all three levels of baseball and softball are happening
6. Update on bathroom discussion from last meeting = Investigated the upstairs boys' bathroom and determined that you cannot see anyone in the bathroom from the hall, if you duck down, you can see feet. Erin Russo has requested that a new divider between urinal and sink be installed as there is currently not one and should be. If the students can go one month with no more than 3 people in the bathroom at a time, no reports of vaping or marijuana smells, no vandalism and no tardiness due to time spent in the bathroom, then the door being put on will be re-considered. However, if these parameters are not being met, that indicates that the door should remain off.
- a) John Guglielmo inquired if the rules are being followed now and Erin Russo noted that there often more than three pairs of feet in the bathrooms but that staff are actively working on breaking up these groups as they occur
7. Student of the Quarter Update = happy to bring back; will look at doing so next year to encompass the entire year

VII. Discussion Items:

- A. Cohort Wash Information = Erin Russo showed a presentation on predicated graduation rates through 2026
- 1. 2019 Cohort (2023 graduation year)
 - a) 30 students
 - (1) 3 out of district
 - (2) 1 out of cohort (Data Coordinator to rectify this one)
 - (3) 21 on track to graduate in June
 - (4) 2 on track to graduate in August
 - (5) 1 on track to graduate in 2024 (too many credits needed to catch up)
 - (6) 5 dropped - lack of attendance, family instability (2 were out of district)
 - b) District level stats: if our out of district students all graduate



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- (1) 21 of 30 students = 70% graduation rate in June (72.7% after cohort adjustment)
 - (2) 23 of 30 students = 76% graduation rate in August (79% after cohort adjustment)
 - c) Building level stats:
 - (1) 20 of 27 students = 74% grad rate in June (76.9% after cohort adjustment)
 - (2) 22 of 27 students = 81% grad rate in August (84.6% after cohort adjustment)
- 2.2020 Cohort (2024 graduation year)
- a) 29 students
 - (1) 2 out of district placements
 - (2) 20 currently on track to graduate on time
 - (3) 2 will be on track to graduate on time after summer school (others may need, but these 2 definitely need summer school to stay on track)
 - (4) 1 on track to graduate in 2025 (needs too many credits to catch up)
 - (5) 1 transferring to homeschooling (will not count against us)
 - (6) 5 dropped - lack of attendance, family instability (1 out of district placement)
 - b) District level stats: if our out of district students all graduate
 - (1) 22 of 29 students = 75.8% graduation rate
 - (2) 22 of 28 students (after transfer to homeschool) = 78.5% graduation rate
 - c) Building level stats:
 - (1) 21 of 27 students = 77.7% graduation rate
 - (2) 21 of 26 students (after transfer to homeschool) = 80.7% graduation rate
- 3.2021 Cohort (2025 graduation year)
- a) 31 students
 - (1) 3 out of district
 - (2) 2 out of cohort
 - (3) 21 on track to graduate
 - (4) 3 out of sequence - have catching up to do; it's possible
 - (5) 2 transferred to homeschool - does not count against us (cohort down to 27)
 - (6) 3 transferring to homeschool - will not count against us (cohort down to 24)
 - b) District level stats: if our out of district students all graduate
 - (1) 24 of 31 students (worst case scenario) = 77% graduation rate
 - (2) 24 of 27 students (after deducting for cohort adjustment, confirmed homeschooling) = 88.8% graduation rate
 - (3) 24 of 24 students (if students transfer to homeschooling rather than dropping) = 100% graduation rate
 - c) Building level stats:
 - (1) 21 of 28 students (worst case scenario) = 75% graduation rate



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- (2) 21 of 24 students (after deducting for cohort adjustment, confirmed homeschooling) = 87.5% graduation rate
- (3) 21 of 21 students (if students transfer to homeschooling rather than dropping) = 100% graduation rate

4.2022 Cohort (2026 graduation year)

- a) District Level = 24 students
- b) Building Level = 21 students
 - (1) 16 students are passing all classes
 - (2) 5 students failing at least one class

5. What we are doing to improve

- a) Academic recovery
- b) Letter home every 2 weeks
- c) Teachers available after school Monday - Thursday
- d) Looking at AIS to build skills
- e) Looking at offering summer school to recover credit
- f) Implementing and advisory program next fall
- g) Encouraging students to register for homeschool rather than dropping

John Guglielmo inquired if we know why there is a large percentage of students electing to homeschool. Erin Russo speculated that students who are homeschooled may have chosen to do so as their attendance is poor, they do not feel successful within the classroom or they may not be making connections within the school. She noted that we have not done a root cause analysis for this but that it could be beneficial to investigate that.

Amanda Durkee noted that online homeschool programs are more readily available and affordable. She further noted that this is a family decision and many families across the state have chosen this option, which leads to enrollment drops. Amanda Durkee also spoke about the archaic graduation requirements, including regents exams that are still performed with paper and pencil. Amanda stated that the New York State Education Department needs to change what we are doing and expecting of our students as we lose students trying to get them through Earth Science, Algebra and Global Studies before they can get to a CTE program that they actually enjoy and do well in. It is Amanda's hope that NYSED can change things so that we can track students earlier and enroll them in technical programs as early as 7th grade.

John Guglielmo noted that parental involvement is key to student success.

Erin Russo agreed with Amanda Durkee that it is disheartening to see students that would be successful in a CTE program but cannot attend because they are not on track with graduation requirements. She commended Eric Becker for his English 11 section students who are mostly CTE students. During the first half of the year, they were working on literally based topics that are necessary for the regents exam and once they got through the regents exam, he was able to change what he was doing with these students. They are choosing books, have task oriented things each week and next quarter they are working with job descriptions, pay rates of their chosen trades, etc.

John Guglielmo noted that with such a small class size, having failing students is a problem. Taylor Boucher stated that sometimes it is impossible to capture all of the students and that



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schools cannot affect every household. She noted that some students go through more than any person can imagine and engaging them can be difficult.

Amanda Durkee commented that looking at the 2019 cohort alone, with five students that dropped out, there are people at Fort Edward School that know those five by name and did everything in their power to try to reach out to the family, try to engage the student and try to get those students to not drop out. She noted that some things are simply out of the school's control and it doesn't mean that we don't try. Taylor Boucher added that having dealt with COVID and remote learning for half of their high school experience, it is easy to understand how we could lose students due to that.

Thomas Roche stated that the unfortunate reality is that graduation rates are what we are compared to as you look at our report card and we need to look at similar districts to see what we can do better.

James Donahue commented that summer engagement with programs and maintaining friendships is important in getting students to want to return the next year.

- B. Funding bus driver qualifications = Richard DeMallie noted that FESS negotiations are coming up and that in an effort to be as competitive as we can, he would like to try to negotiate in paying for bus driver qualification training, licensure and physicals with a stipulation that the driver would remain employed with Fort Edward School for a set period of time. Thomas Roche noted that the language of agreement would need to state that the driver would either stay employed with Fort Edward School or that the individual would pay back the funds spent on training.
- C. April 25th Meeting for BOCES Vote = Richard DeMallie wanted to confirm board member attendance for the meeting/vote scheduled for 6:30pm
- D. Gender Neutral Bathrooms = The single stall bathrooms by the gymnasium will be converted to gender neutral bathrooms. During a Policy Committee meeting, it was believed that this had been done previously for a specific reason but no one could come up with why; Richard DeMallie checked with the full board to ensure that they did not have a reason for the bathrooms to be changed to gender neutral.

VIII. Consent Agenda:

Although Board action is required, it is generally unnecessary to hold discussion on these items. With the consent of all members, they are therefore grouped and approval is given in one motion. In the event a Board member wants to discuss any item, it is moved to an appropriate place on the agenda.

- A. Approval of Minutes for Board Meeting held March 13, 2023.
- B. Approval of Minutes for the Special Board Meeting held March 31, 2023.
- C. Approval of Treasurer Reports for March as included in the Board packets.
- D. Approval of Budget Transfers for March as included in the Board packets.
- E. Approval of the Warrants and Claims as included in the Board packets.

Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by Amanda Durkee to approve items A-E. Motion carried 7-0.



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IX. Action:

- A. Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve the CSE/CPSE Recommendations, as included in the Board packets. Motion carried 7-0.
- B. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by Ella Collins to adopt the District's 2023-2024 Budget in the amount of \$12,449,626.16 as stated on the Budget Notice & Property Tax Report Card. Amanda Durkee thanked Christopher Rayder for his efforts, noting that he was new to the district in December and has done a great job with the budget and timeline. Motion carried 7-0.
- C. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by James Donahue to accept the generous donation from the Adirondack Car Enthusiast Car Club in the amount of \$500. Thomas Roche thanked ACE. Motion carried 7-0.
- D. Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by Ella Collins to accept the generous donation from Irving Tissue in the amount of \$13,000 for the After School Enrichment Program. Thomas Roche thanked Irving for their continued support. Motion carried 7-0.
- E. Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by John Guglielmo to accept the generous donation of softball catcher's gear from Patrick Columbetti. Thomas Roche thanked him. Motion carried 7-0.
- F. Motion made by Timothy Clark, seconded by Amanda Durkee to adopt the following amendment to the resolution passed on March 13, 2023, to transfer a portion of the real property located at 220 Broadway, Fort Edward to the Village of Fort Edward and the Town of Fort Edward, for public use. James Donahue noted that this was at the request of the Village Attorney and questioned if the town was aware that this was happening as the only conversations that he was aware of had occurred with the village. Amanda Durkee inquired if the board could approve the amendment and then get clarification and confirmation from the town of Fort Edward. Motion carried 7-0.
- G. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by Amanda Durkee to approve the first reading of the following revised policies:
 - #1510 - Regular Board Meetings and Rules (Quorum and Parliamentary Procedure)
 - #3220 - Use of Assistance Animals
 - #3221 - Social Service Dogs
 - #3230 - Public Complaints
 - #3310 - Public Access to Records
 - #5130 - Budget Adoption
 - #5150 - Contingency Budget
 - #5230 - Acceptance of Gifts, Grants and Bequests to the District
 - #5570 - Financial Accountability
 - #5640 - Smoking/Tobacco Use
 - #5683 - Fire and Emergency Drills, Bomb Threats and Bus Emergency Drills
 - #5730 - School Bus Safety Program
 - #5731 - Idling School Buses on School Grounds
 - #5740 - Qualifications of Bus Drivers
 - #6121 - Sexual Harassment in the Workplace



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- #6140 - Employee Medical Examinations
- #6150 - Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and Other Substances (Staff)
- #6160 - Professional Growth/Staff Development
- #6213 - Registration and Professional Development
- #6220 - Temporary Personnel
- #7131 - Education of Students in Temporary Housing
- #7320 - Alcohol, Tobacco, Drugs and Other Substances (Students)
- #7540 - Suicide
- #7552 - Student Gender Identity
- #8110 - Curriculum, Development, Resources and Evaluation
- #8210 - Safety Conditions and Prevention Instruction
- #8240 - Instruction in Certain Subjects
- #8280 - Instruction for English Language Learners
- #8320 - Selection of Library and Multimedia Materials
- #8330 - Objection to Materials and Controversial Issues
- #8340 - Instructional Materials

Motion carried 7-0.

X. Personnel:

Thomas Roche read the following: All appointments are subject to change and compensation proration, pending emergency school closing and required reductions in force. All coaching appointments are made pending completion and verification of all required coaching credentials, with the stipend per FETA contract commensurate with experience and no other salary or benefits. All coaching, extracurricular appointments are subject to reduction and compensation proration, pending final student enrollment numbers, and pending the outcome of any potential mergers and emergency school closings.

- A. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Fort Edward School District, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby grants tenure by estoppel to Amber Bement in the tenure area of English Teacher, effective November 16, 2021. James Donahue asked if this was missed as its effective date was a while back. Richard DeMallie noted that there was a year that was not counted that should have been and that her years of service were reviewed by him and Labor Relation Specialist, Rachel Risetto. Amanda Durkee inquired if this had been acted on previously and James Donahue clarified that tenure by estoppel means that no action had been taken. Thomas Roche further noted that COVID occurred during this tenure timeframe. Amanda Durkee offered a very belated congratulations. Motion carried 7-0.

- B. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by James Donahue to approve the appointment of John Sharkey as Substitute Bus Aide at a rate of \$14.20 per hour, as per the FESS contract, effective October 26, 2022. Motion carried 7-0.



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- C. Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve the appointment of William LaFountain as Part-Time Bus Driver at a rate of \$18.47 per hour, as per the FESS contract November 12, 2022. Motion carried 7-0.
- D. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by Taylor Boucher to approve the appointment of Anna Lamphear as Part-Time Cleaner at a rate of \$14.20 per hour, as per the FESS contract, effective April 3, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.
- E. Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve the appointment of Dakota LaRock as Substitute Cleaner at a rate of \$14.20 per hour, as per the FESS contract, effective April 17, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.
- F. Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by Taylor Boucher to approve the appointment of Andrew Fish as Substitute Cleaner at a rate of \$14.20 per hour, as per the FESS contract, effective April 3, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.
- G. Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve the appointment of Sarah Tucci as (.4) School Psychologist, Step 12, M +30, as per FETA contract, effective April 3, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.
- H. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by James Donahue to table the approval of the appointment of Kim Rivers as Substitute Teacher at a rate as per the SASTA contract, effective April 17, 2023, as requested by Thomas Roche. Motion carried 7-0.
- I. Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by Amanda Durkee to accept the letter of resignation from Cristina Marchese, effective May 3, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.
- J. Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by Timothy Clark to accept the letter of resignation from Anna Lamphear, effective April 21, 2023. Motion carried 7-0.

XI. Coaching - None

XII. Second Public Comment Period - None

XIII. Executive Session

Motion made by John Guglielmo, seconded by Taylor Boucher to enter into Executive Session at 8:47pm. Thomas Roche stated that Board of Education Members and other individuals invited into executive session are reminded that all matters discussed during executive session must be kept in the strictest confidence. Motion carried 7-0.

XIV. Return to Public Session

Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by John Guglielmo to return to Public Session at 9:58pm. Motion carried 7-0.

Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by John Guglielmo to approve Personnel Item H that was tabled earlier in the meeting. Motion carried 7-0.

XV. Adjournment

Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by Taylor Boucher to adjourn the meeting at 10:02pm. Motion carried 7-0.