

Fort Edward Union Free School District
Meeting of the Board of Education
220 Broadway, Fort Edward, NY 12828

DATE: November 8, 2021
TYPE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting
PLACE OF MEETING: YouTube Channel Link for Public https://youtu.be/_UvmGY3VnMk

MEMBERS PRESENT Thomas Roche, Christopher Miles, Ella Collins, Amanda Durkee, John Guglielmo, Christina Durkee, James Donahue

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph Carroll and Patricia Suprenant

OTHERS PRESENT via the above mentioned ways:
Interim Superintendent Mark Bessen, John Godfrey, Tobie Bessette, Jill Boucher, Maggie Torra, Daniel Boucher, Jodie Boucher, Jessie Smalls and David Cutler

President of the Board, Thomas Roche, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

I. Pledge of Allegiance - Mr. Thomas Roche asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call was made by Mrs. Bessette:

Tom Roche, Christopher Miles, (Joseph Carroll (absent), Ella Collins, Christina Durkee, Amanda Durkee, John Guglielmo, James Donahue and (Patricia Suprenant (absent)

II. Community Comments: Mr. Roche read the following:

A public comment period not to exceed thirty (30) minutes each shall be provided at each business meeting. In an effort to provide an opportunity for all interested speakers, all speakers shall be limited to three (3) minutes during the public comment period. Community members, who wish to address the Board, are requested to complete the speaker request form and submit it to the Clerk of the Board prior to the meeting. Comments regarding agenda items will be taken first. Speakers are reminded of the three-minute time limit. Should the 30 minute time limit expire additional written comments may be taken prior to the meeting's adjournment. A member of the Board or the Superintendent will respond that the BOE received and reviewed the comments.

When members of the public speak to the Board, they shall state their name and address, the name of the organization (if any) which they represent, and the agenda item they wish to comment on. Please be aware that by law individual student information or particular personnel issues cannot be discussed at public sessions of the board. The Board will not permit interruptions, slanderous remarks or "name-calling" by speakers or the audience. We take public comment very seriously and careful notes will be taken. However, the board generally does not respond while the meeting is in public session.

There were no Community Comments

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III. Presentations: Thomas Hosey from Marvin and Company, Independent Auditor:

Mr. Hosey reviewed with the Board the Independent Auditor's Report which included financial statements of the governmental activities and each major fund of the Fort Edward UFSD as of and for the year ending June 30, 2021.

IV. Recognition of Success: Mr. Godfrey shared with the Board that the Elementary School, second year in a row, its Pumpkin Patch on the Football field and students PreK-5 were able to pick a pumpkin. Thank you, to Ms. Brown, PTO Garden Time and many others for making this successful.

At High School level the National Honor Society students cleaned up the weeds at the community garden. The National Honor Society will rebuild some of the beds at the community garden in the Spring, as maintenance is an ongoing project for the National Honor Society. Thank you to Advisors, Mrs. Scotch and Mr. Herman. Mr. Roche stated that the photographs going out on social media are phenomenal. Mr. Roche thanked everyone that was involved.

V. Reports:

Board Committee Reports (9 Board Committees)

- i. Finance Committee (Met 11/8/21) Mr. Roche stated that they reviewed a presentation regarding the Business Official Office and information was presented about Aid and Transportation. The Board will discuss this further at upcoming budget meetings. Mr. Roche also stated that they learned that there are some factors of aid for transportation, one significant one is non allowable pupil decimal. This will affect students that live more than 1.5 miles away from the school of attendance. There is definitely a distance from the school that determines how much aid we can recoup. We do not have students that live more than a mile away.

Amanda Durkee stated that she and John Guglielmo attended the fiduciary training on Saturday shared with the Board that they were talking about transportation aid and Sharlene Petro-Durgan got together some information regarding this. There are many layers to this aid and there are also some things that will not be aidable. They will need to take a look at this.

- ii. Grievance and Negotiations Committee (next meeting TBD)
- iii. Curriculum Committee (next meeting TBD)
- iv. Policy Committee (Meeting was set for November 16, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.)
 - v. Athletic Committee (next meeting TBD)
 - vi. Strategic Planning Committee (next meeting TBD)
 - vii. Personnel Committee (next meeting TBD)
- viii. Building and Grounds Committee for Health & Safety (next meeting TBD)
- ix. Building Project Committee (next meeting TBD)

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- VI. Superintendent's Report:** Mr. Bessen thanked Sharlene Petro-Durgan for the information on the transportation aid and a chart on the lost aid. Other information Sharlene Petro-Durgan provided Mr. Bessen with is the NYS Retirement System which has already estimated their contribution rate for the 2022-2023 school year and the aid is going to be between 10 and 10.5% of the teachers salary for any member of NYSIR including administrative. The current percentage is 9.8%. We are looking at at least 1% contribution increase.

The other major thing Mr. Bessen would like to go over concerning the upcoming Budget the Governor made an announcement about making the schools whole on foundation aid. So when you hear that all these schools are getting this money for being made whole, Fort Edward is already made whole. Our foundation aid is already funded at 100%. We are called a whole funded school. There is a misconception through out the state that whole funded schools are your wealthy schools, so when in reality they are 50% of whole funded schools are high need rural and high need urban schools. When we can advocate whatever you can do to help close that foundation aid remember there are high need schools that are considered fully funded schools, that are in desperate need for State Aid.. In the past with Fort Edward it shows in the BOCES who is at 100%, Fort Edward is at 100% and the estimated potential for foundation aid is 0%, then look at every other district they received 3% at a minimum. Fort Edward received 2.8%. Reason is declining enrollment. We are asking for fully funded schools to also be considered for State Aid 3% increase across the board, to save Harmless schools. These are the numbers we need to remember when looking at the budget. A few Board members asked questions regarding the aid.

James Donahue, stated that we are always concerned about what the state is going to do, how much it changes, but if we are projecting for the next three years, the deficit is going to hit in 2024-2025 that is when the large deficits are going to hit the state. We are looking at three years of fully funded state aid, whether you're getting 0% increase we are still going to get that number. When you look at our budget the number we are looking at three years of state aid, so we have three years of numbers we can look at and have some idea what numbers we are working with.

Amanda Durkee asked for clarification that we are already at 1% of foundation aid but there is still a chance they are looking at 3% for the Save Harmless? Mr. Bessen stated that we are hoping that the state did pretty well and they are not approaching the fiscal cliff that they thought they were getting. That while they refund the schools they still have that gap and a lot of the schools that have that gap are wealthy schools, some are very poor schools but the majority of the ones find a way to meet the standards but not to forget the high need schools are in dire straits due to tax cap limits and inflation.

Another situation that Mr. Bessen informed the Board about the Board of Elections and the Voting Machines. Mr. Bessen stated that in 2010 Every Person Vote act, they stated to get rid of the old green machines, schools were able to hold on to them a little longer but in 2016 you had to go electronic, but when they were doing the funding for the machines for the machines, schools were asked by their

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county boards throughout the state of New York to go in with them so they could show shared services under the voting

district. That would drive some revenues to them as the state asked the feds for money to purchase them, they were going to house them, program them etc. But unfortunately as the state expanded their voting windows the turnaround time from the counties doesn't exist anymore. So by the time you do your budget they are trying to prep for the primaries so when Warren County and Saratoga County Board of Elections are allowing the schools to use their machines, Washington County told us they can't do it, so Mr. Bessen reached out to some Superintendents and some town supervisors and it looks like it is a dead issue. So now we have to go to paper ballots or there is a company, Honest Ballot, LLC that has voting machines, it is a little different from what we are use to. It is a touch screen, a digital machine, and it is instantaneous This company, and they would send as many people we need provide the election, they vote on the machines. There would be a cost, \$3,900 plus our own personnel.

A few Board members asked questions about having Honest Ballot, LLC come here to run our election. James Donahue will reach out to the Town Supervisor and will get back to Mr. Bessen.

VII. Treasurer Report: Report was in packet. The Finance Committee met prior to this meeting.

VIII. Principal's Report- The Elementary School is moving along with their Wonder's Program. Mr. Godfrey presented a slide show to the Board that Mrs. Smatko put together. This is our new Pre-K -6 reading program. Mr. Godfrey stated that late summer the program was going to be launched. Most of our materials are in and October was the launch date. The program has a lot to it and some of the things to work on are reading skills, comprehension and has workbooks and disposals, and also has an online part to it. Mr. Godfrey also stated that the interactive part is something we are just starting this provides us with another tool to provide to the students. This is our Road Map to Success. In November we will be having a guest speaker, December we will have our local reading and January we will assess and every month we will be meeting. Well planned and as part of the Professional Learning Committee PLC. Mr. Godfrey also explained that this program also has a professional development part to it. PLC meetings provides an opportunity for staying up to date on the science of reading PD. In November the special guest speaker will be Kathleen Skellie. Kathleen Skellie is the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and Assessment for Ballston Spa Central School District. She has piloted portions of the Wonders Program and is excited to share some ideas on implementation strategies for special educators, reading AIS, and grade level success. We are excited to have her. Mr. Godfrey thanked the Board for their support of the program and support of the kids. This is our uniform program and we are excited about it.

John Guglielmo asked how long has Ballston Spa been using this program? How do you gage the improvement in literacy? Christina Durkee asked if IReady is not being used? Mr. Godfrey stated that the IReady is still being used. This is in conjunction with IReady. Mr. Godfrey stated that the hope is that this program will show up in score improvement for the IReady. There will be different assessments. Mr. Bessen stated that we are using the IReady program for the school improvement plan (SIP). We will

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be benchmarking kids, you have kids that are in progress monitoring and they are using this program to see if there is a correlation that ties in what the testing modules are with this. If they are comparable then in the spring we may transition to this. There are some that are testing out. Mr. Guglielmo also asked if there are definitive goals with recent literacy. Mr. Godfrey stated that now we are working within the plan and we are hoping we improve our assessments within this program. Mr. Bessen stated that we do Benchmarking whole groups of kids that are in Progress Monitoring and test them every couple weeks to see what progress there is. We also benchmark whole groups of kids to see what results we will have.

Middle School/High School Level - All Seniors have been met with our Guidance Counselor, Joanna Scotch, met with their parents to discuss post graduate plans and there is a whole variety of plans we wanted to let them know what was out there for them. They have some good direction. A great group of Seniors, we will continue to meet with those Seniors throughout the year.

IX. Buildings and Grounds Report: None Mr. Bessen stated that we are getting ready for our fire inspection.

X. Discussion Items:

(1) Superintendent Search: Amanda Durkee stated she started the Superintendent Search on October 26th, they met with Jim Dexter and Tony Muller and they gave the timeline in addition to the things that will be required of us as a Board for decisions to be made and they also will need to gather initial information from us of what is important as we go through this process. All that was at the meeting really felt that it was imperative to involve all the stakeholders in the process which include students, parents, faculty, staff and community members. As we are moving forward the next steps we are working on we will need an online survey, which we have some information to look at and get back to Jim Dexter and Tony Muller with regards to what we want in that. Posting will be at the end of November/December. Also working on getting together a posting of the candidate profile, needs to be ready by mid December. Also looking to do a community forum in early January. The other piece brought up there is a lot of movement in the region with regards to superintendents. There are other districts that are going to be in superintendent search mode. We are hoping to get a number of candidates to interview and go through the process with and we are optimistic that we will find someone to meet our needs.

James Donahue stated that they did not discuss salary, that is up in the air. We need to be competitive as there are a lot of other schools looking for superintendents.

John Guglielmo stated that the community is very involved, be it a committee member, and very knowledgeable about this process. This is going to be a person that will lead our children for a good many years. Community interaction, community information, and community buy in is absolutely important in the decision. This is a decision that the 9 of us need to make without hearing the community. The passion that was there for the annexation, we need that passion here for the selection of the superintendent. The community has to be involved.

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Amanda Durkee shared with the Board a note from her committee meeting that was said “pay what you can but no more than what you can tolerate”. This should be our mantra and moving forward we need to be realistic.

James Donahue stated that the decision does not lay with Jim Dexter , they are administrative, it is all us.

(2) Extra Curricular Planning 2022-2023: Thomas Roche stated that he does not know when the last time that they surveyed the students about extra curricular activities. At one point we had a chess club for a while, and had a board game club going on. Mr. Ratti had an activities night, and had a bunch of kids signing kids up. Should survey students to see if there is a start of a club. James Donahue said maybe by incorporating into the Student Council or the Honor Society they have contact with the entire student body. Christina Durkee suggested using a google doc after we get some ideas. Amanda Durkee stated that get the faculty and staff involved as something that might have had 10 years ago maybe gathering from both avenues could be helpful. Mr. Godfrey could put it out to the students and this would be a good start. Christina Durkee stated maybe asking Joanna Scotch.

XI. Consent Agenda:

- (a) Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christopher Miles to approve the Board Minutes of August 16, 2021, September 13, 2021, September 23, 2021 and October 6, 2021. Motion carried 7-0.
- (b) Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by James Donahue to table the October 12, 2021 Regular Board Meeting Minutes. Motion carried 7-0.
- (c) Motion made by Ella Collins, second by John Guglielmo to approve consent items:
 - (i) Approval of Warrants and Claims for October 2021
 - (ii) Approval of Treasurer Report for September 2021
 - (iii) Approval of the Budget Transfers.Motion carried 7-0.

XII. Action:

- (a) Motion made by Christina Durkee, second by Amanda Durkee to approve the CSE/CPSE Recommendations as included in the Board Packets. Motion carried 7-0. Ella Collins had a few questions.
- (b) Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Ella Collins to approve the Independent Audit Report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, as presented by Marvin and Company at the October 12, 2021 Finance Committee Meeting with the final version included in the November Board packets. Motion carried 7-0.
- (c) Motion made by Christopher Miles, second by Ella Collins to approve the Independent Audit 2021 Corrective Action Plan. Motion carried 7-0.
- (d) Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christina Durkee to approve the Independent Audit 2021 ECAF Corrective Action Plan. Motion carried 7-0. Amanda Durkee and James Donahue had a few questions.

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- (e) Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christopher Miles to approve the Service Agreement between Casella Waste Management Inc. and the Fort Edward UFSD. Motion carried 7-0.
- (f) Motion made by Ella Collins, second by Christopher Miles to approve the Transfer, Relocation, Disposal of Fixed Assets (see attached) Motion carried 7-0.

XIII. Coaching: Mr. Roche read: 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 Christina Durkee, second by James Donahue to appoint Peter Prindle as Yearbook Financial Advisor for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (b) Motion made by James Donahue, second by Amanda Durkee to appoint Kristina Bump and Jessica Smatko as Freshman Class Co-Advisors for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate, prorated. Motion carried 7-0.
- (c) Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christopher Miles to appoint Laurie Desourdy as Sports Chaperone for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (d) Motion made by Christina Durkee, second by Amanda Durkee to appoint Laurie Desourdy as Detention Monitor for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (e) Motion made by Christopher Miles, second by John Guglielmo to appoint Lorinda Huntington and Jeffrey Durkee as Co-Athletic Directors at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 5-0-2, Christina Durkee and Amanda Durkee abstained. Christopher Miles questioned the reason for the split and Mr. Bessen explains that it splits the duties up a little so no one is overwhelmed.
- (f) Motion made by Christina Durkee, second by John Guglielmo to appoint Stuart Alheim as Boys Varsity Basketball Coach for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (g) Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christina Durkee to appoint John Boucher as Modified Boys Basketball Coach for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (h) Motion made by James Donahue, second by Christina Durkee to appoint Madeline Godfrey as JV Girls Basketball Coach for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (i) Motion made by James Donahue, second by John Guglielmo to appoint Nelson Chase as Bowling Coach for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.
- (j) Motion made by Christina Durkee, second by Ella Collins, to appoint Sarah Taylor as Drama Club Advisor for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0. John Guglielmo was not aware we had a Drama Club this year. Depending on involvement explained Mr. Roche, Christina Durkee stated she was going to get the ball rolling.

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- (k) Motion made by Christina Durkee, second by Amanda Durkee to appoint Sarah Taylor as Tri-M Music Advisor for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate of pay per contractual rate. Motion carried 7-0.

Second Community Comments: None

XIV. Executive Session:

At 8:15 p.m. motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christina Durkee to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters referring to employment of specific individuals. Motion carried 7-0.

At 8:56 p.m. Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christopher Miles to return to public session. Motion carried 7-0.

- XV. Adjournment:** There being no further business, motion was made by John Guglielmo, second Christopher Miles adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p..m. Motion carried 7-0.