

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

DATE: October 12, 2021
TYPE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting
PLACE OF MEETING: YouTube Channel Link for Public <https://youtu.be/MK7Nb7yx5Tk>

MEMBERS PRESENT Thomas Roche, Christopher Miles, Ella Collins, Amanda Durkee, John Guglielmo, James Donahue and Patty Suprenant

MEMBERS ABSENT: Joseph Carroll and Christina Durkee

OTHERS PRESENT via the above mentioned ways:
Interim Superintendent Mark Bessen, John Godfrey, Tobie Bessette, Ryan Herman, Maggie Torra, Daniel Boucher, Jodie Boucher, Danny Boucher, Marie Carter, Jeremy Carter, Tara Ryther, Doreen Rabine, Antoinette Toomey, Colleen Fisher, Vicki Plue, Taylor Boucher, CHris Boucher, Jill Boucher, David Cutler, Audra Aul, Joshua Plude and Marian Roberts.

President of the Board, Thomas Roche, called the meeting to order at 6:38 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(absent), Amanda Durkee and John Guglielmo, James Donahue

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.

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Daniel Boucher asked the Board for their thoughts on being able to use the small gym for the Youth Basketball Organization. “This is a very positive program that reaches children in grades K-6, both boys and girls. This has been an ongoing program that was first administered through the school district and now continues on as a community organization through a strong partnership with the Fort Edward UFSD.” Mr. Boucher does not want to buy an insurance policy if they will not be able to use the gym. Mr. Roche asked what the deadline is for him to know, Mr. Boucher stated by next Board meeting. Mr. Donahue said they will do what is necessary to get the kids in here.

III. Presentations: Mr. Godfrey presented a powerpoint from Mrs. Smatko regarding the \$250 donation towards magazines for our school library. Mrs. Smatko wanted to relay to the Board how proud she is of the third grade students. Last year Mrs. Smatko’s students realized that their classroom and school library did not have high interest magazines for students to read. “Did you know we don’t have any magazines in our school library? This is a big problem in our school. I think our school needs more magazines for kids. Magazines are a fun way to learn” said John Ignazio. Mrs. Smatko had the students write a persuasive speech. Students went through the writing process, writing speeches and included possible solutions to get magazines in the library. The students brainstormed the problems. Mrs. Smatko had the students write a persuasive speech. They then invited Mr. Garleanu to come and hear their speeches. Mrs. Fayette heard about these speeches and shared this information with an organization she belongs to called Woodmen Life and they gave the Fort Edward School Library a \$250 donation. A special thanks Woodmen Life for the \$250 donation and to Mrs. Fayette for her sending us in the right direction.

Principal Report: Mr. Godfrey presented to the Board his monthly report: Currently in Fall Sports season and Mr. Godfrey acknowledged the teams: Most of the teams are still playing but we have one team that has finished. For Football we have two varsity players, which are seniors, Anthony Torra and Edward Amell Coached by Jeff Tully, two JV players. We also have our Modified Football Club, coached by Jeff Durkee with 12 Players and they have been doing drills and weight training. Volleyball there are 8 players on the Varsity team, one Senior, Maggie Delong, one Junior, Lenell Colvin and the rest are underclassmen which are coached by Christina Durkee, they have improved every week. We have 10 Modified players, coached by Amelia Taylor and assisted by Page Toomey. We also have a Golf Team that just finished up, we have 9 varsity players, and two juniors on the team with Beau Boucher and Michael Glass, coached by John Boucher, and they had 5 wins this season. We also have a Pep-Squad, 11 members which are run by Nicole Schilling, they put on this to help with spirit week, pep rallies. Thank you to all our coaches and players from this Fall.

IV. Superintendents Report: Mr. Bessen reported that they are working on a few goals: **Financial** we are digging in deeper on the 2022-2023 Budget and developing on a few different courses of action, If we come up with a budget that restores Fort Edward we are looking at Transportation, the Business Office, Custodial Services and other things that we had lost and we are starting to feel the pain, We did not fill due to the students being out due to COVID. These things need to be looked at. We are also doing a second Budget which we have without restoring those things. We will be bringing those back to the Board and Board Workshops which are open to the community. We will go through line by

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line to see what can be cut or restored.

Personnel- Mr. Bessen reached out to Jim Dexter and he provided three dates to start the Superintendent Search October 25, 26, November 3rd and Mr. Bessen needs to give a date. October 26th was the date set. Mr. Godfrey and Mr. Bessen will start working on Principal search based on the timeline of the Superintendent search. Once the new Superintendent is hired Mr. Bessen would like that person to be included in the finalist interviews so they will have a say in who they will be working with.

Business Office: There have been discussions with FEH BOCES about separation of duties with the shared Business Office. One of the things they are recommending is hiring a principal account clerk, which would be hired by FEH BOCES and be based here by FEH BOCES. They would help with managing grants.

COVID Liaison: Will be on tonight's agenda but this person is helping with contract tracing within the school, supervises the isolation room, calling parents. Mr. Bessen is working with the County to see if parts of this will be covered by the grant that they have for COVID

Psychologist services: You will see on tonight's personnel a retired psychologist, Barbara Fribourg, retired from Fort Edward and she currently works in Hudson Falls and an other districts, very experienced School Psychologist. We are also in need of CSE Chairperson and Barbara Fribourg will be here per diem doing this as needed. This is separate from the Psychologist work. BOCES is looking into a shared psychologist with Abe Wing. We also have posted for a School Psychologist.

On the 14th Amanda Durkee and I will meet with the Education Commissioner. Superintendents will meet prior about teacher shortage, plus the current applicant pool. The Psychologist is one issue, having trouble finding Health Teachers, having trouble finding Special Education Teachers. Going to go over Federal monies how districts are using them, managing COVID from a Superintendent's perspective, and State Aid advocacy items. Over Graduation requirements and how COVID might have affected the student coming back from virtual. There still may need some modifications. as well as mental health services.

Last Monday Superintendents also met with Deputy Commissioner and Superintendents from BOCES about Teacher shortage and the way the applicant pool is dried up. About 15 years ago State Education had a wonderful idea, there were too many that applied for a position, State Education had those Teachers become Special Education Teachers hence the reason for the dual certification. The master plan did not work and we need to start seeing relief in another area and start servicing our children. We will continue to work with the State Education Department and our Legislatures.

Amanda Durkee stated that she is glad to see advocacy efforts for the teacher shortages and she believes there is a shortage of custodian, bus drivers, teaching assistants, aides in all of the districts across the states are experiencing shortages and this is debilitating. Massachusetts brought in the National Guard to

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start transporting their children to school.

The teacher they made the certification piece is so narrow, then that person gets so locked in then a small district such as ours can't tap into that person to use them elsewhere, and good teaching is good teaching and she feels that State Education needs to realize that they are tying peoples hands. She is glad for the advocacy piece.

John Guglielmo stated that New York should look at other states that, in Virginia there is a severe shortage and they are going full remote not due to Covid but teacher shortage. Mr. Bessen and Mr. Guglielmo spoke about Transitional degrees and different degrees that cost money and time. Some schools will pay you to get the certification.

IV. Treasurer Report: Report was in packet. Amanda Durkee will email her questions to Sharlene Petro-Durgan

Mr. Roche asked if there were any questions regarding the Principal Report? Amanda Durkee stated that she heard there was some destruction of property. Mr. Godfrey addressed the questions stating that it has slowed down it apparently was something to do through a tik tok. Mr. Godfrey has been checking cameras.

V. Buildings and Grounds Report: (Mr. Masten's Report Below)

There is not too much to report at this time. I did hire a cleaner that will help with the night shift but I still need at least a Building Maintenance Worker to fill my staff. Bus drivers are another issue, but our Grounds person just acquired his passengers licence which will allow him to drive students in a van. I will be completing my 30 hr course next week.

I will be starting the boilers up next week and also scheduling our yearly fire inspection. I have given Mark the information to possibly have AC installed in the Library and copy room which is a tremendous upgrade. Other than that things are okay. Feel free to reach out to me with any concerns.

VI. Consent Agenda:

- (a) Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christopher Miles to approve the Warrants and Claims for July and August 2021. Motion carried 7-0.
- (b) Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Amanda Durkee to approve the Treasurer Report for June 2021. Motion carried 7-0.
- (c) Motion made by Christopher Miles, second by Ella Collins to approve the Budget Transfers. Motion carried 7-0.

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(d) Amanda Durkee had a few questions regarding the August 2021 Board Minutes therefore: Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christopher Miles to amend the August 2021 Board minutes to add verbatim Amanda Durkees' statements regarding the timeline regarding Anita Tripps resignation and to fill the vacant seat.

Amanda Durkee also had a few comments regarding the September 13, 2021 BOE Minutes. There were appointments there that were already approved. Therefore the September 13th minutes will be tabled, Motion carried 7-0.

VII. Action:

- a. Motion made by Patty Suprenant, second by Christopher Miles to approve the contract between Barbara Fribourg (Consultant Psychologist) and the Fort Edward School effective September 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Motion carried 7-0
Amanda Durkee thanked Barbara Fribourg for coming out of retirement to be a School Psychologist..
- b. Motion made by John Guglielmo, second by Christopher Miles to table the proposal from Carol Abbattisti and her Service Dog Luna. Motion carried 7-0.

There was discussion about the allergies of students with dogs, Amanda Durkee asked if there was a Board Policy and was looking for more information before they proceed. Christopher Miles also stated he would like more information in regards to insurance and what other districts were doing.

Mr. Bessen was under the assumption that this was done last may, Mr. Bessen recommended that the Policy Committee look into the plan and determine what the committee thinks and make a recommendation to the Board.

Amanda Durkee feels these dogs are a terrific idea. She would like to see if we have a policy in effect.

VIII. Personnel:

- a. Motion made by James Donahue, second by Amanda Durkee to accept the letter of intent to retire from Debra DeLisle effective November 30, 2021. Motion carried 7-0. Tom Roche thanked Debra for her service and she will be missed. Other Board members echoed the sentiments.
- b. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by James Donahue to approve the appointment of Barbara Fribourg as Interim Part Time, Per Diem CSE Chairperson at a rate of salary of \$300 per day. Motion carried 7-0.
- c. Motion made by Patty Suprenant, second by Amanda Durkee to approve the appointment of Debra DeLisle as At Home Instruction Teacher for a special needs student at a rate of \$69.89 per hour. Motion carried 7-0.
- d. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christopher Miles to approve the appointment of Heather Havens as co-advisor for the Sophomore Class for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate per FETA Contract. Motion carried 7-0.

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- e. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by James Donahue to approve the appointment of Laurie Desourdy as co-advisor for the Sophomore Class for the 2021-2022 school year at a rate per the FESS Contract. Motion carried 7-0.
- f. Motion made by Patty Suprenant, second by Christopher Miles to appoint Joanne Eggleston to Part-Time Temporary COVID Liaison at a rate of pay \$14.20 per hour effective September 27, 2021. Motion carried 7-0. John Guglielmo asked what a typical day would look like. Mr. Donahue asked about her down time, is there something for her to do and Mr. Bessen stated that she would be entering information in the system for the nurse.
- g. Motion made by James Donahue, second by John Guglielmo to appoint Kristi Veach as Cafeteria Aide effective October 6, 2021 at a rate of pay \$13.20 per hour. Motion carried 7-0.
- h. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Ella Collins to appoint Albert Latterell as Full-Time Cleaner effective October 12, 2021 at a rate of pay per the FESS Contract. Motion carried 7-0. Mr. Roche questioned the appointment of last month do we have all class advisors and Mrs. Bessette informed him that the Freshman Class is still vacant for advisors, but it is going to be posted again.

Second Community Comments: None

IX. Executive Session:

At 7:32 p.m. motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by Christopher Miles to enter into Executive Session to discuss matters referring to employment of specific individuals. Motion carried 7-0.

At 8:10 p.m. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, second by James Donahue to return to public session. Motion carried 7-0.

- X. Adjournment:** There being no further business, motion made by Ella Collins second by James Donahue adjourned the meeting at 8:11 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.