



Fort Edward Union Free School District
Meeting of the Board of Education
May 8, 2023
Board Minutes

Members Present: Thomas Roche, James Donahue, Amanda Durkee, John Guglielmo, Timothy Clark, Taylor Boucher and Ella Aul (student member)

Members Absent: Ella Collins and Christina Durkee

Others Present: Richard DeMallie, Christopher Rayder, Erin Russo, Joyce Long, Jessica Smatko, Lynelle Colvin, Jules Mercier

- I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance** - Time: 6:33pm

- II. Recognition of Successes:**
 - A. Painting canvases to be sold to the public with money to be donated to the Lucky Puppy Adoption Center in Argyle, NY:** Lynelle Colvin, Sofia White, Spencer Smith, Jules Mercier, Calvin Boucher, Felicity Columbetti, Ollie Cutler, Alexa Dubay-Hensler, Ella Duket, Olivia Mattison, Maharet Monroe, Silas Monroe, Liliana Starke, Eva Stewart, Hannah Waterhouse
 - B. "Horsing Around with the Arts" student competition at the National Racing Museum in Saratoga Springs, NY:** Lynelle Colvin, Sofia White, Spencer Smith, Jules Mercier, Felicity Columbetti, Ollie Cutler, Alexa Dubay-Hensler, Ella Duket, Olivia Mattison, Silas Monroe, Eva Stewart, Maharet Monroe
 - C. Fidelis Coloring Contest - 2nd Place Winners:** Emily Gardner, Serenity Gamble

- III. Special Recognitions:**
 - A. American Legion Post 574:** Donation of an American flag for the Fort Edward Union Free School District's front yard display
 - B. Bob Bearde:** Organizing the American Legion Post 574's donation of an American flag for the Fort Edward Union Free School District's front yard display
 - C. Lecia Carpenter:** Donation of a new POW flag for the Fort Edward Union Free School District's front yard display

- IV. Budget Hearing**
 - A. Christopher Rayder presented a powerpoint
 - 1.The goal of the budget hearing, the same as all of the budget workshops, is to provide business direction through transparency and detail.
 - 2.Updated 3-Part Budget
 - a) Administration = 12% of budget \$1,548,772.83
 - b) Capital = 14% of budget \$1,722,544.15
 - c) Program = 74% of budget \$9,1781309.18
 - d) Total budget = \$12,449,626.16
 - e) Total budget percentage difference from 2022-2023's budget = 5.690%
 - (1) Keep in mind that current inflation rate is 8%
 - 3.Estimated Expenditures
 - a) Total = \$11,779,348.00



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- b) More details on expenditures can be found within the budget workshop information which is posted on the school's website
- 4. Estimated Revenues
 - a) Numbers are based off the latest state projection
 - b) Projected state aid = \$8,303,902.00
- 5. School District Budget Notice
 - a) Was listed on Pathways Budget Newsletter that was mailed to all homes within the school district
- 6. Estimated Fund Balance
 - a) Adjusted restricted fund balance = \$1,964,563.00
 - b) Assigned appropriated fund balance = \$361,453.16
 - c) Adjusted unrestricted fund balance = \$674,162.79
- 7. Estimated Property Tax
 - a) Based on tentative figures with an assessed value of \$100,000 and the estimated tax of \$18.38 per \$1,000 of assessed value
 - b) No STAR
 - (1) Current taxes = \$1,798
 - (2) Estimated taxes = \$1,838
 - (3) Estimated tax increase = \$40/year which is \$3.33/month
 - c) Basic STAR
 - (1) Current taxes charged = \$1,798; STAR Savings = \$536; you paid \$1,262
 - (2) Estimated taxes charged = \$1,838; STAR Savings = \$536; will will pay \$1,302
 - d) Enhanced STAR
 - (1) Current taxes charged = \$1,798; STAR Savings = \$1,072; you paid \$726
 - (2) Estimated taxes charged = \$1,838; STAR Savings = \$1,072; will will pay \$766
- B. Christopher Rayder then opened for questions from the community. The questions and responses are as follows:
 - 1. Can you please explain the proposition of establishing the capital reserve? Where does the money for capital reserve come from?
 - a) The initial money going into the fund is from excess fund balance. There is a five-year plan that details how this money will be generated over the course of time. The plan includes a potential PILOT Program that would increase revenue. The five-year plan includes no additional burden on the taxpayer for projected capital projects. Amanda Durkee suggested that the plan be added to our website and be made available for printed copies at request.
 - 2. What is the PILOT Program that Christopher Rayder previously mentioned?
 - a) The Champlain Hudson Power Express® (CHPE) power transmission project.
 - 3. Are you taking money out of the general fund?
 - a) The proposed fund balance appreciation is \$361,463.16 which is 10.271% less than 2022-2023.
 - 4. What did you do with the annex? Is that going to the town or the village?



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- a) If passed, we are moving forward with that going to the Town and the Village of Fort Edward; all parties involved have signed off on that. It is the storage building and two parking spaces.
 - 5. What is the Adjusted Restricted Fund Balance (\$1,964,563) listed on the Property Tax Report Card?
 - a) This is the fund balance before funds are allocated to the various reserves (i.e. Capital Reserve).
 - 6. In the past few years, have any of the new staff been hired through COVID money?
 - a) Prior to the new Superintendent's arrival, there were people on staff whose salaries were coming out of the COVID money. Through the help of Christopher Rayder and the Business Office, that has been moved into the general fund and away from that federal money.
 - 7. If those people were hired with COVID money and the money goes, what happens to those people?
 - a) We have taken measures to protect those people, we have adjusted the budget so that those salaries are coming out of the general fund and the COVID grant money is being allocated elsewhere. The previous budget workshops also address, in detail, what happens when that money goes away.
 - 8. Is there COVID money left?
 - a) The aforementioned COVID money is called ESSR and there is currently roughly \$800,000 left. Not all of that is going to salaries and we have strategically addressed that to be in the general fund moving forward and no one will lose their jobs as a result of losing that money.
 - 9. A community member commented, "people did a good job on this year only raising the budget \$40" (this presumably refers to the roughly \$40 effect on the taxpayers) and thanked the board.
- C. Thomas Roche closed the Budget Hearing part of the BOE Meeting at 7:02pm.

V. Community Comments - None

VI. Presentations:

- A. Jessica Smatko presented a powerpoint depicting her After School Enrichment Wrap Up Report
- 1. How does this program help our students?
 - a) Builds confidence
 - b) Allows them to explore topics that might not be covered within the classroom
 - c) It's a safe place to come after school
 - 2. 2022/2023 Facts
 - a) 15 courses offered = STEM, Sports, Mindfulness, Arts, Music, Health & Fitness, Theater and more
 - b) 185 students = total registered students, grades 3-6, for sessions 1, 2 & 3
 - c) 800+ minutes of extra support time provided prior to programming for homework help November - April.
 - 3. 2022/2023 Sessions



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- a) Session 1 = November 28 - December 21; 8 courses
 - (1) Reindeer Games: Board Games Galore = 26 students
 - (2) Holiday Drawing, Painting and Graphic Design = 10 students
 - (3) Readers Theatre and Puppetry = 12 students
 - (4) Holiday Woodworking: Design Technology = 9 students
 - (5) Holiday Kitchen: Baking Buddies = 15 students
- b) Session 2 = January 9 - February 15; 11 courses
 - (1) Mission STEM = 9 students
 - (2) Introduction to Wrestling = 11 students
 - (3) Morey's Musical Marvels = 9 students
 - (4) Yoga/Mindfulness = 13 students
 - (a) This was a new offering and there ended up being a waitlist for the class
 - (5) Forts First Responders = 9 students
 - (a) Also a new offering with our in-house nurse who did information on nutrition and brought the Fort Edward Rescue Squad in who allowed students to tour their rescue vehicle
- c) Session 3 = March 6 - April 5; 10 courses
 - (1) Hard to compete with the start of baseball and softball season
 - (2) Happy Feet Club (Adventure Club) was broken out into 2 sessions = 15 students in each class
 - (3) Artworks: Ceramics = 12 students
 - (4) Pin Pals Bowling Club = 20 students
- d) Surveys
 - (1) Student = 95.5% liked coming to after school enrichment (44 responses)
 - (2) Parent = 100% thought it was a positive experience for their child (15 responses)
 - (3) Staff = 100% thought that students benefited from the program (8 responses)
- e) Suggestions/Recommendation for 2023/2024
 - (1) End of session parent showcase
 - (2) Add another session starting in October
 - (3) Recognize students with perfect attendance to the program
 - (4) Incorporate local field trip for a culminating event
 - (5) Add 10 minutes of physical activity from 2:20-2:30p
 - (6) Provide supply funding so that we don't have to charge students for some courses
 - (7) Establish a committee - more planning time needed for some courses
 - (8) Allow for summer planning to make an action plan and have course offerings available by September
 - (9) Explore local resources to be part of the program/special guests
 - (10) Ideas for new courses
 - (a) 3D printing



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- (b) CNC Machining
- (c) CO2 racers
- (d) Lego Club
- (e) Drawing club
- (f) Pokemon and other trading cards club
- (g) A Harry Potter-inspired program called "The Wizarding World of Fort Edward"
- (h) Cheer
- (i) Sportsmania
- (j) Volleyball

VII. Reports:

A. Board Committee Reports (9 Board Committees)

1. Budget, Finance and Audit Committee
2. Personnel, Grievance and Negotiations Committee
3. Curriculum and Instruction Committee
4. Policy Review Committee
 - a) Amanda Durkee will send the committee members an email to schedule a committee meeting date
5. Athletic Committee
6. Strategic Planning Committee
7. Health & Safety of Buildings & Grounds
8. Capital Project Committee

B. Treasurer Report (Reports in BOE Packets)

C. Superintendent Report

1. Thanked the Business Office for their effort with the budget and thanked the community for coming out and asking questions at the budget hearing.
2. Thanked Jessica Smatko for all of her work with the Enrichment Program
3. Have been meeting with Dave Cutler and John Boucher from the Village of Fort Edward to work on the traffic pattern. They put up new lighted crosswalk signs, will be taking steps to shrink the bus drop off zone and add an additional drop off zone, will be putting up flexible lane dividers right at the beginning of Case Street to ensure that those in left lane make the turn onto Burgoyne for drop off and that on the right lane utilized the drop off and then keep straight onto Case Street (without being able to cross over and turn left if not in that lane). Richard DeMallie noted that they will be painting the double lines on Case Street to make sure that it is truly indicated as a one way street. He thanked everyone involved.
4. Thanked Administrative Assistants for Administrative Assistant's Day
5. Thank PTO for supporting our Superintendent's Conference Day and Teacher Appreciation Week
6. Thanked teachers for Teacher Appreciation Week
7. Thanked cafeteria workers for National Cafeteria Hero Day



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8. Attended Diversity, Equity and Instruction Conference and is now on the subcommittee for that
9. Received certification in crowd management
10. Superintendent Conference Day = 5/8/23
 - a) 95%+ of employees received training in CPR/AED/First Aid
 - b) Staff participated in Hapara training which allows a teacher to see what a student is working on on their chromebooks to ensure that students are staying on task. It also is a filter that alerts administration when students are researching or communicating inappropriate language or other harmful topics using their chromebooks/school email
 - c) Thanked Christopher Rayder for helping getting the school and our employees a part of Capital EAP
11. Senior Night for Baseball and Softball was 5/5/23 in Hartford
12. NYS Budget was approved = 9.5% increase in state aid; added \$150 million to fund full day Pre-K we will hope to take advantage of
13. Dissolving cheerleading merger with Hudson Falls but may be able to get cheerleaders and a coach together for basketball season, which would mean they would cheer on basketball sidelines
14. FESS Negotiations = hoping wrap that up soon
15. School Resource Officer (SRO)
 - a) Have added in the school budget but has not yet been discussed/approved by board
 - b) Cambridge and Fort Edward are only schools in Washington County without one
 - c) Warrensburg and Salem did not have one this year but have added them to their budget's next year
 - d) Some duties of SRO
 - (1) Door checks
 - (2) Arrival and dismissal supervision
 - (3) Member of School Safety Team
 - (4) Going with school on home visits
 - (5) Special event assistance (i.e. doors will be open to public for voting on 5/16/23 and there is a window from 12p-3p when doors are open and students are still in building; we have called in Washington County Sheriff's Department to be on site during this time frame this year to be on the safe side)
 - (6) Education on law enforcement at the elementary level (sometimes their current interaction with law enforcement is not always positive and an SRO reinforces positive interaction with law enforcement)

D. Building Maintenance Report - Richard DeMallie presented on behalf of Steve Neron

1. Ordered uniform shirts for custodial staff
2. Looking at heaters in the various vestibules
3. Moving forward on damaged garage roof from the tree that fell
4. Has been doing some bus driving to help out



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5. Training staff on cross contamination
6. Has been an asset with the boiler replacement
7. Looking to hire for an open cleaner position
8. Replacing screens in windows
9. Performed many toilet repairs
 - a) Amanda Durkee inquired if this was due to wear or intentional damage. Richard DeMallie explained that automatic flushing mechanism is one that they do not make anymore and that Steve Neron believes that the relays within that mechanism are bad so he is working on ordering replacement relays so that the toilets do not continuously/constantly flush. He did note that a couple of repairs had been due to things that were placed in the toilets and caused a blockage as well.

E. Building Principal Report

1. Prom is happening Saturday, May 13th
2. Testing participation rate for 3-8 assessments = 74% ELA and 72% Math; not as much as we hoped. Looking to educate the community about the benefits of testing and how we use the data to better teach moving forward to hopefully get more to test.
3. Just posted Regents Preparation Schedule online
4. Trip to NYC for Sophomores and Juniors to Holocaust Museum and 9/11 Museum = was a very emotional and moving experience
5. Incentive Trip planned for 6/8/23 to Lake Lauderdale for all students in grades 6-12 who have no referrals and two or less absences since March 15; currently 60 students are on target to go
6. NYSSMA
 - a) 13 students performed this past weekend
 - b) Levels 1-4
 - (1) 6 students received an excellent rating
 - (2) 4 received an outstanding rating
 - c) Levels 5&6
 - (1) 3 students received at least an 89 out of 100
7. Attendance Rates
 - a) Year to date
 - (1) 89.62% attendance
 - (2) Best attendance = 2nd and 12th Grade; 4th and 6th Grade have been added to that at 92%
 - (3) Most room for growth = 9th Grade 80%
 - b) This quarter
 - (1) 90% attendance
 - (2) Best attendance = 2nd Grade 96%, 3rd and 11th 95%
 - (3) Most room for growth = 9th Grade & 10th 80%

F. Pupil Services Report



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1. Joyce Long presented the first ever Pupil Services Newsletter; her plan moving forward would be to do a Fall, Winter and Spring Newsletter to be shared online, with parents, with staff and with the board
2. May is Better Hearing and Speech Month
3. We were indicated on Pre-K evaluations last year but since September we have become a site for evaluators for Pre-K. This means that we can evaluate and treat our own students and it got off the site indicator list
4. We were indicated for parent surveys last year so we had to do them again this year. We are halfway through with annual reviews and have about half of what they want (25 completed out of 45 required). This year, however, instead of mailing them home, we are having parents complete the surveys while they are still inside the school, just after the annual review, and then mailing them for the parents
5. We were indicated as having a disproportionate amount of children who are classified as White sent to programming outside of the district and being classified in special education based on our district's size. Since September, this data has already been improved with 11 less students placed out of district than last year.
 - a) 2021-2022 school year = 26.3% classified students
 - b) When Director of Pupil Services started = 24% classified students
 - c) February = 22% classified students
 - d) Now = 21% classified students
 - e) Amanda Durkee noted that disproportionality non-compliance is happening throughout the state. She stated that those indicators were put into place to try and prevent minorities from being over-classified and over-disciplined. Now districts that are predominantly White are having to spend time, energy and resources to meet the state's requirements, even though that is not the reason that the indicator was originally designed.
6. There is an audit occurring on June 1st to review Special Education data and what we have done well and what we still need to improve upon.
7. State has indicated Focus Intervention Targeted Skills Group; this means that the state will provide the school and staff assistance in appropriately providing interventions and instruction without having to classify students or send them out of district
8. Transition planning for grades 9 through 12
9. Class Dojo and Character Education is going well

G. Student Board Member Report

1. School Resource Officer = polled student body and most students reported that they would feel safer having a school resource officer in the school and that they would want one. Ella Aul noted that she personally thought that this would be a good idea and that it might help increase attendance rates.
2. New cafeteria food = polled student body and consensus is that the cafeteria options and food has definitely gotten better
3. Asked the boys about the new divider installed in the the bathroom between sink and urinal and they are excited and thankful for it



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VIII. Discussion Items:

A. Board Seat Vacancy Discussion

1. Richard DeMallie noted that Christina Durkee is resigning her board seat effective 6/1/23. Since the budget vote and election is next week, the board's current options are to hold a special election (which would cost \$5,000-\$10,000) or appoint someone to her vacant seat (which there is a practice in place for and has occurred a few times in the past).
2. Thomas Roche indicated that the board was at the point where they needed to decide which way they wanted to move forward. Thomas Roche took consensus from the board and all six presented board members indicated that they would want to appoint someone to the vacant seat.
3. Keaysie Ferguson noted that the school's attorney has been consulted on this matter and that Ed. Law states that the appointed person would just serve until the next vote.
4. In the past, the board has publicly advertised the vacancy for people to apply. Additionally, in the past, they had preferred people who have had previous board experience (although it was not required) as they would have already had the board of education trainings and would not need to be taught board meeting/member responsibilities; this would be preferable as the vacancy is only until the next election and that person could potentially not run or not be elected via the next election. This entire process is not a requirement by Ed. Law, however, the board will likely follow their past practice in order to look for applicants.

IX. 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 April 25, 2023.
- B. Approval of Treasurer Reports for April as included in the Board packets.
- C. Approval of Budget Transfers for April as included in the Board packets.
- D. Approval of the Warrants and Claims for April as included in the Board packets.

Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Timothy Clark to approve items A-D. Motion carried 6-0.

X. Action:

- A. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by Taylor Boucher to approve the CSE/CPSE Recommendations, as included in the Board packets. Motion carried 6-0.
- B. Motion made by James Donahue, seconded by John Guglielmo to accept the generous donation of an American flag from the American Legion Post 574. Motion carried 6-0.
- C. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by Taylor Boucher to accept the generous donation of a new POW flag from Lecia Carpenter. Motion carried 6-0.



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D. Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Amanda Durkee to approve the second 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
- #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 6-0.

XI. Personnel:

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.



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- A. Motion made by Timothy Clark, seconded by Amanda Durkee to approve the appointment of Janet Silburn as Piano Accompanist, at a rate of \$500 for six rehearsals and one concert, effective May 8, 2023. James Donahue inquired as to how the rate was determined. Richard DeMallie noted that he requested live music be brought to the school concert, rather than soundtracks, the music teachers then reached to local teachers and churches and Janet was the one who responded; he further noted that this is the rate that Janet gave us for her services. Motion carried 6-0.
- B. Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by Taylor Boucher to approve the appointment of Karina Morey as Substitute Teacher effective May 8, 2023 at a rate per the SASTA Contract of \$92.30 per day. Motion carried 6-0.

XII. Coaching - None

XIII. Second Public Comment Period (if needed)

- A. Keaysie Ferguson noted that the Long Range Financial Plan (aforementioned five-year plan), which had been discussed earlier during the Budget Hearing, was now available to the public on the school's website.

XIV. Executive Session

Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by John Guglielmo to enter into Executive Session at 8:00pm. Motion carried 6-0.

XV. Return to Public Session

Motion made by Taylor Boucher, seconded by Timothy Clark to return to Public Session at 8:44pm. Motion carried 6-0.

XVI. Adjournment

Motion made by Amanda Durkee, seconded by James Donahue to adjourn the meeting at 8:45pm. Motion carried 6-0.