

**HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION  
REGULAR MEETING/ PRELIMINARY BUDGET APPROVAL - MINUTES**

**March 18, 2019**

**5:30 p.m.** (Administration Building Room 41 - Open the meeting and enter Executive Session)

**7:00 p.m.** (Board Meeting room - Public Session)

A Regular/Preliminary Budget Approval Meeting of the Board of Education of the Hopatcong Borough School District was held on March 18, 2019 in the Hopatcong High School cafeteria, 2A Windsor Avenue, Hopatcong, New Jersey.

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7:02 p.m.

**2. FLAG SALUTE**

**3. NEW JERSEY OPEN PUBLIC MEETING ACT STATEMENT**

Mr. Fasano, Board President, read the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act Statement: In accordance with Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975, this public body, the Hopatcong Board of Education hereby announces that The New Jersey Herald and the Daily Record have been notified by email that this Board of Education Regular meeting will take place in the Hopatcong Board of Education Meeting Room, 2 Windsor Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ, at 7:00 p.m. on March 18, 2019. Meeting was subsequently moved to High School cafeteria due to expected turnout.

**4. MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. Anthony Fasano, President  
Mr. Alex McLean, Vice President  
Mr. Warren Gallagher  
Ms. Erin Jacobus  
Ms. Michele Perrotti  
Mrs. Candice Smith  
Ms. Carol Trumport

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Scott Francis, Dr. Sarah Schindelar

**Also Present:** Mr. Art DiBenedetto, Superintendent, Ms. Carolyn B. Joseph, Business Administrator/ Board Secretary, Mr. David Disler, Esq.

**5. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

The Hopatcong Board of Education entered Executive Session prior to the opening of the public meeting.

**6. RECONVENE**

A motion to return to Public Session was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Ms. Jacobus. The motion carried with all in favor Time: 7:04 p.m.

**7. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Approval of the minutes of the following meetings, as reported by the Board Secretary and reviewed by the Board President and members of the Board:

- a. February 25, 2019 - Executive Session
- b. February 25, 2019 - Regular meeting

**Motion to approve Minutes 7a – 7b was made by Mr. McLean, seconded by Mrs. Smith:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	ABSTAIN
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumport	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Motion to approve Minutes 7a – 7b passed.**

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**8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. The following students were chosen as **Hopatcong High School's Students of the Month** for their outstanding performance in March 2019:

<p><b>Rachel Baez, Senior</b>  <b>Sofia Mantila, Junior</b>  <b>Nicholas Milan, Junior</b>  <b>Mark Vogt, Sophomore</b></p>	<p><b>Scholastics(Creative Writing)</b>  <b>Scholastics (Social Studies)</b>  <b>Scholastics (Social Studies)</b>  <b>Specialty Area (Child Development)</b></p>
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- b. The following students were chosen as **Hopatcong High School Scholar Athletes of the Month** for their outstanding performance in March 2019:

<p><b>Michael Mastroeni, Freshman</b>  <b>Amanda Ladamirak, Sophomore</b></p>	<p><b>Athletics (Wrestling)</b>  <b>Athletics (Competition Cheerleading)</b></p>
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Motion to accept Acknowledgments 8a – 8b was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Ms. Perrotti.

**All board members voted in favor.**

**9. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT AND HIB REPORT**

- a. Superintendent's Report – **Mr. Art DiBenedetto, Superintendent of Schools** presented the 19-20 School Budget handout and reviewed with the 9 members of public in attendance. Tax levy is same as last year; no teaching cuts; potential cut of two custodial positions; possible support reductions in kindergarten. Our comparative costs are not healthy – we are constantly paying among most money per pupil compared to similar districts. Hope to spend assets on high school initiatives – we need to improve our programs to become competitive. The BOE was very specific on how they wanted budget. Facing a 9% increase in health insurance since last year. Mr. Gallagher adds that there will be a power point presentation of budget on the website. Ms. Nicole Shubert upset about the budget; we need to improve the HS. Asked about going back to former report card format – Mr. D. replied that the district would be doing so.
- b. A second reading and approval of the Superintendent's HIB Report for February, 2019 as presented to the Board at the February meeting on February 25, 2019. Approval of the HIB report for March, 2019 for first reading and review.

**Motion was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Mr. Gallagher to approve items 9a – 9b:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Motion to approve items 9a – 9b passed.**

**10. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

- a. Student Achievement – Community Relations, Curriculum, Personnel and Special Education: **Chairperson - Candice Smith** – Met on 3/4/2019; Meeting revolved around budget; Special meeting held on 3/11/2019 for further budget review. Superintendent provided a ton of information.
- b. Operations – Finance, Facilities, Security and Transportation: **Chairperson - Alex McLean** – Budget, Budget, Budget.
- c. Negotiations - Chairperson - Sarah Schindelar (absent) – **President, Anthony Fasano** reports that not too much has happened; discussing dates and times to meet.

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- d. Parent/Teacher Organization Representatives – Nicole Schubert, HEPTO – DA had Dan Guttman, author visit and a “Don’t Press Send Assembly.” HMX and TT had Puppet assemblies; Book Fair coming up – BOGO on 3/28/19; Tricky Tray on 3/29/19 – presale tickets can be purchased from Wendy Sutton at Dunkin Donuts.

**Mrs. Smith made a motion to accept 10a – 10d, seconded by Mr. McLean:  
All board members voted in favor.**

**11. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Public asked if negotiations are ongoing without mediator since scheduling has been difficult. Member of the HEA replied that they were willing to meet, but the board was not. Staff member inquired if there had been any progress in investigating the implementation of preschool within the district. Mr. D. replied that he has met with West Side childcare and is scheduled to meet with Norwescap to discuss. It is not something the district can do without an outlay of money not available at present. A resolution based on 18d 36b-21 may help district restrict number of students opting to attend choice schools was mentioned by same staff member. Another member of the public mentioned that kindergarten son was having a difficult time at HMX and they were considering sending him to another school but after the move to the MS, there has been significant improvement and they have decided to stay in district.

**12. FINANCE**

Approval of the following finance items, 12a - 12g, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Operations Committee of the Board:

**a. 2019/2020 Preliminary Budget Submission**

**Approval of the following resolution for submission of the tentative 2019/2020 school budget to the County Superintendent:**

**“WHEREAS, the Superintendent has presented to the Finance Committee and other members of the Hopatcong Board of Education, a recommended 2019/2020 School District Budget in the total amount of \$36,366,866, as follows; and**

**WHEREAS, the Board approves a Local Tax Levy of \$24,147,386;**

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Hopatcong school District preliminary 2019/2020 budget for submission to the County Office is approved as follows on the Meeting Agenda of March 18, 2019.”**

	<u>Budget</u>
<u>General Fund</u>	
Fund 10 – Charter School Tuition.....	\$ 256,547
Fund 11 – General Operating Fund.....	\$ 36,108,705
Fund 12 – Debt Services Assessment.....	\$ 1,614
	\$ 36,366,866
<u>Special Revenue Fund</u>	
Fund 20 – Federal/State Grants.....	\$ 708,192
<u>Debt Service -</u> .....	\$ 0
<u>Total Budget</u>	\$ 37,075,058

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- b. Approval of bills for the General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account, February 25, 2019 through March 18, 2019 in the following amounts:
  - General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$527,048.61
  - Cafeteria account - \$ 62,493.53
- c. Approval of the Transfer Report for the month of January 2019.
- d. Approval of the Board Secretary's Report for the month of January 2019.
- e. Approval of the Treasurer's Report for the month of January 2019.
- f. Approval of the acceptance of the donation of seven file cabinets valued at \$150 each for a total of \$1,050.00 from Mr. Mike Brannigan.
- g. Approval of the following revised Corrective Action Plan (tabled at regular meeting 2/25/2019) in response to the Fiscal Audit findings for the period July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018 as recommended by the Superintendent and as reviewed by the Finance Committee:

**PLEASE SEE FOLLOWING PAGES**

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**Motion to approve Finance 12a - 12g was made by Mr. McLean, seconded by Mrs. Smith:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	No 12a Yes 12b -g	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Finance 12a – 12g was approved.**

**13. PERSONNEL**

Approval of the following personnel items, **13a - 13d**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval of **Gail Sanderson** for a medical leave of absence from her position as an Art Teacher, effective March 4, 2019 until approximately April 5, 2019, or until medically cleared by her physician.
- b. Approval of **Tracey Grochulski** for a medical leave of absence from her position as a paraprofessional, effective February 18, 2019 until approximately March 20, 2019, or until medically cleared by her physician.
- c. Approval of the following as Homework Club Monitors at the Hopatcong Middle School at the hourly rate of \$28.00, effective March 1, 2019: **Yanet Guevara** and **Nancy Marinaro**.
- d. Approval of **substitute teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians and van drivers**.

**Motion was made by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Ms. Jacobus to approve Personnel 13a – 13d:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	ABSTAIN	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Personnel items 13a – 13d were approved.**

**14. STUDENTS & SERVICES**

Approval of the following items, **14a - 14e**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 13205 for up to 10 hours per week beginning February 25, 2019. Instruction will be provided by Professional Education Services, Inc. at rate of \$35.00 per hour.
- b. Approval for an out of district placement for a student who moved into our district who attends Regional Day School-Newark, NJ student No. 14301. The effective date is December 6, 2018. The tuition cost is \$33,867.54.
- c. Approval for an out of district placement at Windsor Learning Center for student No. 13794. The tuition for the 2018/2019 school year is approximately \$23,870.00.
- d. Approval to continue an out of district placement at Northern Hills Academy for student No. 11837. The effective date is February 19, 2019. The tuition for the remainder of the 2018/2019 school year is approximately \$24,633.36 and his personal aide is \$11,700.48.
- e. Approval of field trip requests, as required by the New Jersey Department of Education.

**Motion to approve Students and Services, 14a – 14e was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Mr. McLean:**

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Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Students and Services items 14a – 14e were approved.**

**15. CURRICULUM**

Approval of the following items, **NONE** as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

**16. TRAVEL**

Resolved, that the Hopatcong Board of Education approve travel costs as related in this resolution, which are educationally necessary and fiscally prudent and are related to and within the scope of the employee's current responsibilities and promotes the delivery of instruction or furthers the efficient operation of the school district. The reimbursements listed in this resolution are in compliance with the state travel reimbursement guidelines as established by the Department of the Treasury and Board of Education policy in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1. seq.

**Motion to approve Travel in the amount of \$403.54 was made by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mr. McLean:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Item 16, Travel, was approved.**

**17. POLICIES & REGULATIONS**

- a. Approval of modifications and additions to the policies and regulations of the Hopatcong Board of Education in accordance with statutory and regulatory changes for approval, as revised, for FIRST READING:

POLICY  
NONE

TITLE

- b. Approval of modifications and additions to the policies and regulations of the Hopatcong Board of Education in accordance with statutory and regulatory changes for approval, as revised, for SECOND READING:

POLICY  
P 2422

TITLE  
*Health and Physical Education (New/Revised)*

P 2425

Abolished in March/Replaced with P 2422

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**POLICY**  
P 2431.13

**TITLE**  
*Practice and Pre-Season Heat-Acclimation for School Sponsored Athletics and Extra-Curricular Activities (Recommended, New)*

P 4219

*Commercial Driver's License Controlled Substance and Alcohol Testing (M) (Revised)*

P 5111

*Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M)(Revised)*

P 5330.04

*Administering an Opioid Antidote (M) (Revised)*

P 5337

*Service Animals (Recommended, New)*

P 5756

*Transgender Students (M) (Revised)*

P 7440

*School District Security (M) (Revised)*

**REGULATION**  
R 5330.04

**TITLE**  
*Administering an Opioid Antidote (M) (New)*

R 7440

*School District Security (M) (Revised)*

**Motion to approve Policies and Regulations item 17a was made by Ms. Jacobus and seconded by Ms. Perrotti: Mr. McLean inquired whether training is being provided for the administration of an opioid antidote. Superintendent DiBenedetto affirms that he has met with nurses and there will be training provided.**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Policy and Regulation item 17b was approved.**

**18. CALENDAR**

- a. Approval of the revised 180 day school calendar for the 2018/19 school year due to weather related closings.
- b. Approval of the 180 day school calendar for the 2019/20 school year.
- c. Approval for the 1st grade to make up two missed days due to Hudson Maxim closing on January 25, 2019 and January 28, 2019. The make-up days are April 25, 2019 and April 26, 2019. Students will follow an early-dismissal schedule for both days.

**Motion to approve Calendar was made by Ms. Jacobus and seconded by Ms. Perrotti:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Calendar items 18a – 18c were approved.**

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**19. SUSSEX COUNTY REGIONAL COOPERATIVE**

Approval of the following items, **19a - 19g8**, at the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Operations Committee of the Board:

- a. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of bills** for the Sussex County Regional Cooperative Operating account for February 26, 2019 through March 18, 2019, in the amount of \$3,546,521.44 for Bus Contractors and \$20,165.52 for Regular bills.
- b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of one (1) new member** school district, Township of Union Public Schools.
- c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to change the daily hours** for Annalesa Modafferi, Bus Driver, from 6 hours per day to 7.5 hours per day effective March 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019.
- d. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to change the daily hours** for Jamie Jones, Bus Driver, from 7.5 hours per day to 8 hours per day effective April 1, 2019 through June 30, 2019.
- e. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to hire** Carol Mesrobian as a **substitute clerk** at a rate of \$22.32 per hour effective February 27, 2019.
- f. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the approval to **award the one (1) bid** submitted on February 19, 2019 to Byram Bus Inc. for various school vehicle servicing & repairs.
- g.
  - 1. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Special Education Routes for the 2018-19 School Year** as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 2. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award** of student transportation **quotations for Special Education Routes for the 2018-19 School Year** as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 3. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation contracts for **quoted Athletic/Class/Field Trips** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor companies for the **2018-19 School Year** as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 4. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award** of student transportation contracts for **quoted Athletic/Class/Field Trips** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor companies for the **2018-19 School Year** as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 5. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance of contract addendums for the 2018-19 School Year Routes** as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 6. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **Bids submitted on February 25, 2019** for the 2018-19 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 7. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award** of student transportation contracts to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company **Bidders for the February 25, 2019 bid for Routes** for the 2018-19 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
  - 8. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **rejection of student transportation bids** for non-compliance issues or route terminations **submitted for the February 25, 2019 bid** for Routes for the 2018-19 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

**Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve 19a – 19g8 which was seconded by Ms. Trumpore:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	Yes	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumpore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Sussex County Regional Cooperative items 19a – 19g8 passed.**



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**ADDENDUM INTRODUCED FOR APPROVAL:**

- a. **REVISION – Personnel b.** – Approval of Tracey Grochulski for a medical leave of absence from her position as a paraprofessional, effective February 18, 2019 until approximately April 5, 2019, or until medically cleared by her physician.
- b. Approval for an out of district placement for a student who moved into our district who attends Kennedy Elementary School, Roxbury, NJ, Student No. 14314. The effective date is February 14, 2019. The tuition cost is \$13,455.72.
- c. **WHEREAS**, the Hopatcong School District has a need for a new special program, and;

**WHEREAS**, the district had posted the position for a BD class (Behavioral Disorders);

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the board of education approve the creation of a BD class at Tulsa Trail effective May 1, 2019.

**Mrs. Smith made a motion to approve Addendum a - c which was seconded by Ms. Jacobus:**

Scott Francis	ABSENT	Warren Gallagher	Yes	Erin Jacobus	Yes
Alex McLean	ABSTAIN	Michele Perrotti	Yes	Sarah Schindelar	ABSENT
Candice Smith	Yes	Carol Trumppore	Yes	Anthony Fasano	Yes

**Addendum a – c were approved.**

**20. BOARD OF EDUCATION - MEMBER COMMENTS**

- Michele Perrotti – Thank you for coming; Disappointed that more people did not come to the meeting. Does not agree with budget but appreciates all the work that went into it. Come to the single issue meeting; the board needs to know what you want.
- Erin Jacobus – Thank you for coming out. Also shares in the disappointment that the seats in the cafeteria were not filled. Perhaps this is due to the parent/teacher conferences also being held tonight. The state is not going to give us the same amount of aid we have received in the past and we can't just push that cost onto the taxpayer. Excited about new courses being offered at the HS. Is content with this budget and appreciates the amount of work that went into it. To Ms. Shubert's point – Creativity and change take time. Looking forward to the future with Mr. DiBenedetto in our district.
- Warren Gallagher – Thank you all for coming and also surprised room isn't packed. Thank you to Carolyn and Art for their hard work with the budget. He did accept the recommendation of the Superintendent for the final budget. Is very happy with the mental health initiative taking shape in the district and particularly the "Don't Press Send" assembly given to the DA students coordinated by Mrs. Hensz and Mrs. Kennedy. Thanks to HEPTO for all that they do.
- Candice Smith – Tricky Tray will be 3/29/19 which is a huge fundraiser and she hopes everyone can make it. The HS musical which will include MS students, "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown" will be presented April 4 -7. Thanks for all the hard work done on the budget.
- Alexander McLean – Thank you to all who came tonight, particularly those that spoke and listened. Not one of the nine members of the board was entirely happy when they left the room after budget review and discussion but we came together. Our district was #6 in highest cuts in state funding in over 700 districts. We need to make changes to free up money for additional improvements in the HS to prevent students from leaving. Thank you to Art for his concise and clear presentation of the budget and for his patience with the board. Thank you all.

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- Carol Trumppore – Wasn't easy to get where we are tonight, but we have a Superintendent who took the lead and is someone we can trust. Feels we are moving in the right direction for the first time during her time on the board. Thank you all for being here.
- Anthony Fasano – A lot has been said here tonight. Thank you to Carolyn, the Operations committee and the board. It has been a difficult process. We are going to invest in this district and continue improving our programs without teacher cuts. Go Chiefs!

**21. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Smith, seconded by Ms. Trumppore.**

**All in favor**

**Time: 8:25 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



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Carolyn B. Joseph, Business Administrator/Board Secretary