

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

March 18, 2024

6:00 pm. Open the Meeting and enter Executive Session in the Administration Building: Room 21

Public Portion will begin at 7:00 p.m in the Board Meeting Room

2 Windsor Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ 07843

CALL TO ORDER

Time: 7:00 pm

1. **FLAG SALUTE**

2. **OPENING 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 at 7:00 p.m following the Executive Session (in room 21) which starts at 6:00 p.m. on March 18, 2024 at the Hopatcong Board of Education, Board meeting room in the Administration Building.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present	Joseph Falconi	Present	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Present	Philip DiStefano
Present	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Present	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Present	Jennifer Polowchena

4. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

A motion will be made that the Hopatcong Board of Education will enter Executive Session in room 21 to discuss personnel and attorney/client privilege, which are exempt from public participation pursuant to New Jersey Public Law 1975, Chapter 231, Open Public Meetings Act. Any discussions held by the Board which need not remain confidential will be made public when appropriate. Minutes of the Executive Session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists. The Board will reconvene in public session at 7:00 p.m. following the executive session.

Motion to enter executive session:

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi-Schubert . seconded by Polowchena

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

5. **RECONVENE**

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Motion to Reconvene

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by Polowchena

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

6. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

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

- a. February 26, 2024 - Regular Meeting
- b. February 26, 2024 - Executive Session

Motion to approve 6a-6b:

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Abstain	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

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

- a. Superintendent's Report – **Mr. Jeffery Hallenbeck, Acting Superintendent of Schools**
 1. Calendar Update - Schools Closed April 8, 2024, extra snow day to utilize that was built into the school calendar.
- b. Whereas there have been no HIBs reported for the months of February or March 2024, at this time, acceptance of the report at the March 18, 2024 board meeting to indicate no findings.
- c. **Student Representatives**, Lana Cocal - Thomas Galvez Perea

Motion to approve 7a – 7c:

((ACTION) Motion by Gulan. Seconded by Falconi

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Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

8. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. The following students were chosen as **Hopatcong High School's Students of the Month** for their outstanding performance in February, 2024.
 Grade 8 – Joseph Seck
 Grade 9 – Radwa Bashandy
 Grade 10 – Chrisnelly Flores
 Grade 11- Joseph Mazzei
 Grade 12 – Lucy Barahona
 Honorable Mention: Glyn Davies & Christina Fajerman
- b. The following students were chosen as **Hopatcong High School's Scholar Athlete of the Month** for their outstanding performance in February of 2024:
Competition Cheer: Emily Sokiryansky, Senior
- c. Congratulations to Michelle Iannuzzi who has won the **Sussex County School Counselor of the Year.**
- d. Congratulations to the following students who have received the **Seal of Biliteracy.**

First Name	Last Name	Language
Danilo	Lalo	Filipino
Jorwally	Santana	Spanish
Joanny	Pelaez	Spanish
Kaitlyn	Sanchez	Spanish
Jean Franco	Murillo Ruiz	Spanish
Gabriel	Morat	Spanish
Dennis	Portillo-Velasque	Spanish
Thomas	Galvez	Spanish
Brandon	Panchana,	Spanish
Kyanna	Trujillo	Spanish
Dea	Garcia	Spanish
Lucy	Barahona	Spanish

9. **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES**

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION**

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11. FINANCE

Approval of the following Finance items, **11a – 11k** as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Operations Committee of the Board:

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that bills for the General Fund and Special Revenues (Grants) account, February 26, 2024 through, March 18, 2024 be approved in the following amounts:
General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$1,342,831.17
Cafeteria account - \$ 540.92
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of February, 2024.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary's Report for the month of February, 2024.
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of February, 2024.
- e. Motion to approve the certification by the Board Secretary that the Account Balance Report, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:17-9, as of March 18, 2024, no line item account has encumbrances and expenditures, which in total exceed the line item appropriation in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(a).
- f. Motion to certify, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(c), as of March 18, 2024, after review of the Board Secretary's and Treasurer's Monthly Financial Reports and upon consultation with the appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over-expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23-2.11(b), and sufficient funds are available to meet the district's financial obligations for the remainder of the fiscal year.
- g. It is recommended by the Superintendent for the Chief School Administrator to approve and authorize all travel related expenses for employees and Board members in accordance with Board Policy No. 6423, up to a maximum of \$75,000 for the 2024/2025 school year.
- h. It is recommended by the Superintendent and the Operations Committee that the Board approve the purchase of a 2023 Ford F250 (\$63,304) and a 2023 F-450 (\$84,304) from Nielsen Ford under NJ State Contracts #23 - Fleet-34922 and Contract #23 - Fleet - 34923. The purchases are funded through a direct stabilization aid award from the NJDOE.
- i. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board rescind the approval of outside contractor, **Debra Gaudio** as Speech Therapist from 3/18/24 until 6/18/24 at \$400 per day, three to five days per week due to personal obligations.
- j. It is recommended by the Superintendent and the Operations Committee that the board accept the following donations:

DONOR	RECIPIENT	CHECK#	AMOUNT
Lake Hopatcong Elks Club #782	Special Services Department	7345	\$1,000

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Gerald Salomone	Dale Salomone Memorial Scholarship	8733	\$200
Joseph Memoli	Kristina Threlkeld Memorial Scholarship	7565	\$250

- k. Approval of the following resolution for submission of the tentative 2024/2025 school budget to the Sussex County Superintendent:

“WHEREAS, the Superintendent has presented to the Finance Committee and other members of the Hopatcong Board of Education, a recommended 2024/2025 School District Budget in the total amount of \$ \$37,620,036,00 as follows; and

WHEREAS, the Board approves a Local Tax Levy of \$ 27,164,030 ;

WHEREAS, the local tax levy will increase by a total of 4.0% composed of a 2% increase of \$522,360 and a 2% enrollment growth cap exception in the amount of \$523,664 for a total local tax levy increase of \$1,046,024; and

WHEREAS, the Board approves a Maintenance Reserve withdrawal in the amount of \$80,099. The district intends to utilize these funds for required maintenance at all school facilities as included in the 2024-25 School Budget;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Hopatcong School District preliminary 2024/2025 budget for submission to the Sussex County Superintendent’s Office is approved as follows on the Meeting Agenda of March 18, 2024.”

General Fund		
Fund 10	Charter School Tuition	\$500,000
Fund 10-606	Interest Maintenance Reserve	\$200
Fund 11	General Operating Fund	\$33,708,826
Fund 12	Debt Services Assessment	\$1,114
	Capital Reserve Interest	\$500

Special Revenue Fund

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Fund 20	Federal/State Grants	\$3,409,396
	Debt Service	\$0
Total Budget		\$37,620,036

12. **PERSONNEL**

Approval of the following personnel items, **12a – 12h**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval of the employment of **Gihani Perera** as a Paraprofessional at the Middle School effective April 8, 2024 at a rate of \$16.13 per hour, should toileting be . This rate is based on Step 1-2 of the 2023 - 2024 HEA Paraprofessional Salary Guide.
- b. Approval of **Heather DelBagno** as an additional chaperone for the Academic Bowl for \$50 total.
- c. Approval **Employee #81253** to take 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA/NJFLA effective retroactively to 3/1/24 with a return date of May 28, 2024.
- d. Approval of **Martina Villani** and **Alexa McLean** to run the 2024 ESL Summer School at a rate of \$40/hour up to 100 hours total. (Title III funding)
- e. Approval of the following **Coach/Advisors** for the 2023-2024 school year:

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Class	Level	Salary
Kerri Batche	Appoint	Spring Play Director	B	4	\$3,287
Megan Nardone	Appoint	Spring Drama Club Advisor	D	3	\$1,458
Megan Nardone	Appoint	Play Costume Makeup - Spring	D	4	\$1,782
Nicole Rizzo Deluca	Appoint	HS Spring Play Choreographer	D	4	\$1,782
Al Cerulo	Appoint	Spring Music Director	D	4	\$1,782
Al Cerulo	Appoint	Music Advisor/ Tri-M	B	4	*\$5,034 *Prorated effective 2/23/24 through 6/30/24

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Mark Certo	Appoint	Coordinator of Student Discipline	-	-	*\$10,000 *Prorated effective 2/23/24 through 6/30/24
Jason O'Brien	Appoint	Softball Volunteer (NJSIAA paraprofessional / aid)	-	-	-

f. Approval to rescind the stipends for the remainder of the 2023-2024 school year from **Employee #81107**.

g. Approval of the following **Fall Coach/Advisor** for the 2024-2025 school year:

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Class	Level	Salary
Kevin Finley	Appoint	Asst. Football Coach	B	1	\$3,187
Michael Strack	Appoint	Asst. Football Coach	B	1	\$3,187
Wilson Cusano	Appoint	Head Boys Soccer Coach	A	4	\$7,712
Eric Fajerman	Appoint	Asst. Boys Soccer Coach	B	4	\$5,034
Craig Vallaro	Appoint	Head Girls Soccer Coach	A	4	\$7,712
Dave Campagna	Appoint	Asst. Girls Soccer Coach	B	4	\$5,034

h. Approval of the following substitutes for the Hopatcong School District:

1. Isabel Yarosz, substitute teacher.

13. TRAVEL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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 reimbursement listed in this resolution are in compliance with the state travel reimbursement guidelines as established by the Department of Treasury and Board of Education policy in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23B-1.1. seq

Approval of the following staff to attend Professional Development/Conference*

Name	Title	Cost	Date
William Kubick	Basics of Surge Protection/Generator power	\$139	2/24/24

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Greg Smyth	NAETI Services	\$300	3/27/24
Michelle Iannuzzi Melissa Stein	New Jersey School Counselor Association Spring Conference	\$35+mileage	4/19/24

**Cost will be reimbursed upon completion of attendance and all documentation has been provided.*

14. POLICY & REGULATIONS

Approval of item 14a, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement and Operations Committees of the Board:

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/Regulation #	Title
P 1140	Educational Equity Policies/Affirmative Action (M) (Revised)
P 1523	Comprehensive Equity Plan (M) (Revised)
P 1530	Equal Employment Opportunities (M) (Revised)
R 1530	Equal Employment Opportunity Complaint Procedure (M) (Revised)
P 1550	Equal Employment/Anti-Discrimination Practices (M) (Revised)
R 2200	Curriculum Content (M) (Revised)
P 2260	Equity in School and Classroom Practices (M) (Revised)
R 2260	Equity in School and Classroom Practices Complaint Procedure (M) (Revised)
P 2411	Guidance Counseling (M) (Revised)
P 5750	Equitable Educational Opportunity (M) (Revised)
P 5755	Equity in Educational Programs and Services (M) (Abolished)
P & R 2423	Bilingual Education (M) (Revised)
P & R 2431.4 (Revised)	Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries (M)

15. STUDENTS AND SERVICES

Approval of the following items, 15a-15g as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 15413 for up to 10 hours per week beginning 2/22/24 for the anticipated duration of approximately 30 days. Instruction will be provided by Learnwell at a rate of \$48.25 per hour.
- b. Approval for five hours of educational instruction services per week for student no. 413032 beginning 2/25/24 until 2/29/24. Instruction will be provided by Saint Clare's Hospital at a rate of \$55.00 per hour.
- c. Approval for up to 10 hours per week of educational instruction services for student no. 12753 beginning 2/27/24 until further notice. Instruction will be provided by New Hope I.B.H.C. at a rate of \$600.00 per month.
- d. Approval for up to 10 hours per week of educational instruction services for student no. 15413 beginning 3/1/24 for the anticipated duration of approximately

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- 30 days. Instruction will be provided by Silvergate Prep at a rate of \$45.00 per hour.
- e. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week beginning 3/7/24 until the end of the school year for student no. 13243. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour.
 - f. Approval for the extension of 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13516. Instruction will be provided by Roxbury certificated staff at the rate of \$38.00 per hour and Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 3/8/24 until approximately 5/7/24.
 - g. Approval of the following field trip requests:

SCHOOL	DATE	TRIP
High School	3/14/24	Quest - Paterson Great Falls
High School	4/17/24	Quest - High Point State Park
High School	6/3/24	Quest - Pequest
Durban Ave	5/8/24	Ort Farms
Middle School	5/29/24	Liberty Science Center
Middle School	5/30/24	Hopatcong State Park

16. RESOLUTIONS

Approval of the following resolutions as per the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the settlement agreement regarding OAL Docket No. EDS 2024-36744.
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve The AlphaBest Summer Camp which will run from 7am to 6pm from July 1 to August 16, 2024 at the Middle School.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve Dawn Valle Campo as an Independent Contractor to implement speech language, IEPs and serve as Speech Therapist 3 days a week beginning March 11, 2024 through the remainder of the school year at rate of \$400 a day
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Hopatcong Board of Education approve the [2024-2025 School Calendar](#).
- e. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the Uniform Memorandum of Agreement between Education and Law Enforcement Officials. (Revised 2023)

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- f. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the submission of the 2024-2025 Preschool Education Aid (PEA) budget to the NJDOE, Division of Early Childhood Services, in the amount of \$2,468,400. The budget includes \$2,162,670 in 24-25 grant aid, \$305,730 in prior year grant carryover funds, and a \$92,376 contribution from the district general budget as required by the NJDOE.
- g. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the resignation of Board Member Alex McLean effective March 13, 2024.

17. SUSSEX COUNTY REGIONAL COOPERATIVE

- a. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of bills** for the Sussex County Regional Cooperative Operating account for February 27, 2024 through March 18, 2024 in the amount of \$40,875.45 for Regular bills and \$4,986,381.06 for Bus Contractors.
- b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **purchase of Two (2) 2025 Thomas 24 Passenger School Buses, Model #051MS** from HA DeHart, at a cost of \$107,729.26 each per HCESC Bid HCESC-VEH-22-10.
- c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of Janine Byrnes to attend the NJ Association of School Business Officials 2024 Annual Conference** June 4-7, 2024 in Atlantic City New Jersey at a cost of \$985.00 for registration fee, lodging, mileage and incidentals.
- d. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of the following member district** for the 2023-2024 school year: Berkeley Heights
- e. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of the following member district** for the 2024-2025 school year: Berkeley Heights
- f.
 - 1. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Special Education School Year Routes** for the 2023-2024 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 School Year Routes** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor companies for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

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3. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Athletic/Class/Field Trips** for the 2023-2024 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 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A
5. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **route contract addendums for the 2023 -2024 School Year** as listed on Exhibit A.
6. The Superintendent and the Director of **Transportation recommend the acceptance of bids submitted from the February 7, 2024, Bid #2023-24-06** for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
7. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award of bids submitted from the February 7, 2024, Bid #2023-24-06** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company for the 2023-2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
8. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **rejection of bids submitted from the February 7, 2024, Bid #2023-24-06** due to non-compliance or termination of the routes as listed on Exhibit A.
9. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of Parent route Contract** for the 2023 - 2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

Motion to approve 11a –1 7f:

(ACTION)Motion by Polowchena. seconded byDiStefano

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	*Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Alexander McLean	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

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* Abstain item 15f

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn:

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano. seconded by Polowchena

All in favor Yes Time: 7:22 PM

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Hallenbeck, Board Secretary