

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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: 7:04 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 January 27, 2025 at the Hopatcong Board of Education, Board meeting room in the Administration Building.

3. **ROLL CALL**

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

* Arrived 6:42pm

^ Arrived 6:53pm

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 Chaffee. seconded by Polowchena

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

5. **RECONVENE**

Motion to Reconvene

(ACTION) Motion by Polowchena. seconded by DiStefano

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

-----		Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	-----		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. December 23, 2024 - Executive Session
- b. December 23, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Motion to approve 6a-6b:

(ACTION) Motion by Cappello. seconded by Polowchena

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

7. **APPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER TO FILL VACANCY**

- a. After considering four candidates to fill the position vacated by Mr. Scott Francis the Board of Education wishes to appoint Kevin Daviau, to fill his seat through December 31, 2025.

Motion to approve 7a:

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano. seconded by Cappello

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

- b. After considering four candidates to fill the position vacated by Mr. Joseph Falconi the Board of Education wishes to appoint Veronica Schram, to fill his seat through December 31, 2025.

Motion to approve 7b:

(ACTION) Motion by Chaffee. seconded by Polowchena

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

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

8. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT AND HIB REPORT

- a. Superintendent’s Report – **Mr. Jeffery Hallenbeck, Superintendent of Schools**
- b. Approval of the budget development calendar. – Started to discuss budget outline. Told to expect to anticipate cuts in Federal funding; a 25% reduction in Title I funding; at least a 10% cut in Title II, Title III and Title IV funding; may also experience a 10% - 15% State Aid cut; February 27 is the Governor’s budget address; on March 17 we will present draft budget; April 21 committee meetings will focus on programs and staff; NJ state healthcare premiums went up 22%.
- c. A second reading and approval of the Superintendent’s HIB Report for December 2024 as presented to the Board at the December meeting on December 23, 2024. Approval of the Superintendent’s HIB report for January 2025 for first reading and review as presented to the Board at the January meeting on January 27, 2025.
- d. Student Representatives: **Natalia Gerena-Roman & Lilyanne Zinsli** – Bowling team beat South Hunterdon and Lenape Valley in HWS Bowling Championships; Boys Basketball is 9-5; Senior Anthony Norelli, Basketball, broke the 1000-point mark; Esports team is 5-2; Jonathan Franco recognized as the 2024-2025 Super Football Conference man of the year; High School musical is coming up – “Lightning Thief” by Percy Jackson – 5/1 – 5/4. Winter Concert was last Thursday and it was a great success

Motion to approve 8a –8d:

(ACTION) Motion by Polowchena. seconded by Cappello

-----		Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Cittrich ABSTAIN 8C	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	-----		Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE

- a. Congratulations to the following students who were chosen as High School's Scholar Athlete of the Season- Fall:
 Boys Soccer- Kevin Kruczek, Senior
 Girls Soccer- Maia Poweska, Senior
 Girls Tennis- Megan Hinczynski, Senior
 Esports- Miles Arn, Junior
 Cross Country- Sean Attas, Senior
 Marching Band- Megan Hinczynski, Senior and Katie Colgan, Junior
 Cheerleading- Reilly Edwards, Senior
- b. Congratulations to the **Hopatcong High School Students** who successfully auditioned and were accepted into the following **prestigious local band organizations:**
 North Jersey School Music Association Region 1 Band:

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

Natalie Leybov

North Jersey Area Band:

Dominick Amella

Natalia Gerena-Roman

Natalie Leybov

Sofia Leybov

Ashlynn Loven

Sussex County Band:

Dominick Amella

Megan Hinczynski

Natalia Gerena-Roman

Natalie Leybov

Sofia Leybov

Ashlynn Loven

Emily O'Hern

Jaylynn Ortiz

- c. Congratulations to the following students who were chosen as **Hopatcong Middle School's Students-of-the-Month** for their outstanding performance in November & December 2024:

November -

Grade 4 - Jason Finland

Grade 5 - Jordan Bleibdrey

Grade 6 - Santiago Freiria

Grade 7 - Kennedy Raimondo

December -

Grade 4 - Anthony Bocchino

Grade 5 - Logan Derendal

Grade 6 - Alyssa Stickle

Grade 7 - John O'Brien

10. **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES** - Nikki Roman Gerena reports that the Boys Basketball team is on fire and the games are fun to watch. The Marching Band is going to a Devils game in March and the Tricky Tray for HSPTSO is on March 22 and is a great fundraiser especially since the schools are under a buying freeze.

11. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION** - NONE

12. **FINANCE**

Approval of the following Finance items, 12a. – 12g, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that bills for the General Fund and Special Revenues (Grants) account, December 23, 2024, through January 27, 2025 be approved in the following amounts:

General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$1,304,800.97

Cafeteria account - \$53,379.25

Fund 30 - \$147,298.50

b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of December 2024.

c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary's Report for the month of December 2024.

d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of December 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 January 27, 2025, 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 January 27, 2025, 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 that the board accept the anonymous donation of check number 1249 for a total of \$4,000.00 to be applied to outstanding lunch account balances of graduating seniors and others.

Motion to approve 12a – 12g:

(ACTION) Motion by Chaffee. seconded by Polowchena

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

13. **PERSONNEL**

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

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

- a. Approval to accept the resignation of **Rebecca Hendershot** from her position as a paraprofessional effective January 15, 2025.
- b. Approval of **Heather Loven** as High School Spanish Temporary Assistance Position, for the purpose of lesson planning and grading at a rate of \$35 per hour for 1-2 hours per week/per class period as needed.
- c. Approval of **Jennifer Valenti** to work as Child Study Team extra/duty work, no more than 20 hours per week, per the HEA sidebar-01 agreement, effective March 17, 2024 through the end of the 2024-2025 school year, and then effective September 1, 2025 through October 10, 2025 for the 2025-2026 school year.
- d. Approval of **Jason O'Brien** to work athletic events for the 2024-2025 school year as needed.
- e. Approval of **Employee #80097** to take a paid leave of absence using earned sick leave effective January 8, 2025 for approximately 3-6 weeks or until medically cleared by a doctor.
- f. Approval of **Elizabeth Riveros Lopez** as a student teacher at Tulsa Trail through her school Liberty University.
- g. Approval of the following staff to take and receive tuition reimbursements*, as per contract, upon successful completion of the course and submission of paperwork

Course Approval /Reimbursement Approval

Name	Course Title	Course Number	Credits	Cost
Vincent Marinoni	Math Activities: Primary Grades	900	3	\$445
George Segale	Effective Leadership	510	3	1359
George Segale	Curriculum & Instruction	635	3	1359

****The maximum rate of reimbursement per credit for the 24-25 school year is \$453.***

- h. Approval of the following substitutes:

Dell Ferrante, Substitute Paraprofessional

Motion to approve 13a-13h:

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano. seconded by Cappello

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

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

14. **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
Ken Olsen Hank Fattorusso	Employment Horizons, Cedar Knolls- Transition Students	\$0	1/22/25
Kristine Kester	Social Executive Functioning Strategies	\$100+mileage	5/20/25

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

Motion to approve 14:

(ACTION) Motion by Polowchena. seconded by Gulan

-----		Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Yes	Jayson Citrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	-----		Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

15. **POLICY & REGULATIONS**

Approval of item 15a 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 5512	Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying (M) (Revised)
P 5533	Student Smoking (M) (Revised)
R 5533	Student Smoking (Revised)
P & R 7441	Electronic Surveillance In School Buildings and On School Grounds (M) (Revised)
P & R 9320	Cooperation with Law Enforcement Agencies (M) (Revised)
P 2365	Acceptable Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) (New)
P 5111	Eligibility of Resident/Nonresident Students (M) (Revised)
P 5460	High School Graduation (M) (Revised)
P 5516	Use of Electronic Communication Devices (Revised)

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

- R 5516 Use of Electronic Communication Devices (New)
- P 5701 Academic Integrity (Revised)
- P 5710 Student Grievance (Revised)
- P 8500 Food Services (M) (Revised)
- P 9163 Spectator Code of Conduct for Interscholastic Events (M) (New)

16. STUDENTS AND SERVICES

Approval of the following items, 16a-16d as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 12753. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 1/13/25 until approximately 3/1/25.
- b. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 413028. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 1/2/25 until approximately 2/10/25.
- c. Approval for the following High School Students to receive option II credits for the 2024-2025 school year following completion of work:

Student ID #	# of Option II Credits
16263	10

- d. Approval of the following field trip requests:

SCHOOL	TRIP
High School	Cheerleading Nationals
High School	Quest - Campaw Snowtubing
High School	Pocono Valley Resort
High School	Prom
High School	Universal Technical Institute
High School	Pequest Fish Hatchery
High School	Student Council - Jefferson HS
Middle School	Hopatcong State Park

17. 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 of the MOA between the Hopatcong board of Education and MHA/NJ4S to provide mental health support services.
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve Dawn Valle Campo as an Independent Contractor to implement speech/language services as indicated in student IEPs. She will serve as a Speech/Language

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

Specialist 3 days a week beginning the week of January 27, 2025 through the remainder of the school year at a rate of \$400 a day.

- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the submission of the amendments to the FY 25 ESEA grant as follows:

Title I – acceptance of \$13,950 in carryover funding for the purpose of purchasing additional supplemental instructional materials for eligible students.

Title III – acceptance of \$ 7,509.00 in carryover funding for the purpose of purchasing additional instructional materials for eligible MLL students.

18. 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 December 24, 2024 through January 27, 2025 in the amount of \$237,268.85for Regular bills and \$11,172.52 for Contractor bills.
- b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of the following new member district** for the 2024-2025 school year: **Ringwood**
- c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to dispose of the following vehicle**. Bid will be hosted by GovDeals, Inc. and awarded to the highest bidder. **2018 Dodge Caravan, VIN #2C4RDGBG6JR181319**
- d.
 1. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Special Education School Year Routes** for the 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
 3. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of route contract addendums** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
 4. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Athletic/Class/Field Trips** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

January 27, 2025

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

5. 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 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

Motion to approve 16 – 18:

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano. seconded by Polowchena

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

19. **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Chaffee – Wishes all the students “good luck” on midterms. Saw the anonymous donation to help students with meal account balance debt and wanted to personally thank the donors for the generous contribution.

Mr. DiStefano – Thanked all the Board member candidates and encouraged those that were not appointed to submit their applications by July to run in the election in November.

20. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn:

(ACTION) Motion by Gulan. seconded by Chaffee

All in favor: Yes Time: 7:29pm

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Hallenbeck, Board Secretary