

Hancock School Committee Meeting Minutes
August 6th, 2024

Present: Jim Rodda, Elisa Kryskow, Alex Kastrinakis, Kayt Turner, Bruce Weiner

Also Present: Rebecca Phillips (Superintendent/SPED Director)

Absent: Jay Merselis (Principal)

1. Call to Order - Kayt called the meeting to order at 6:10pm
2. Public Concerns: None
3. Correspondence:
 1. Elisa (secretary) had correspondence with Linda re: previous meetings minutes. Minutes were timestamped within 10 day limit and resent (twice).
4. Review/Approval of Minutes:
 1. Jim motioned to approve 5/1/24 and 6/4/24 minutes. 2nd- Alex. All in favor.
5. Principal's Report:
 1. Accolades and Happenings
 1. Summer program was successful with high numbers of attendance. Great combination of academic, socio/emotional activities, plus a field trip to the Via Aquarium in Schenectady.
 2. Building updates:
 1. John has finished waxing the floors
 2. 12x22 shed on order, town will do site work (and related costs).
 1. Is a building permit required?
 3. Projected Enrollment
 1. 48 total: 36 are from Hancock, 12 are school choice. Two Pre-K students are from outside of Hancock, but are allowed to complete their program.
 4. Upcoming Events:
 1. School starts 8/28 with staff and teachers here on 8/26.
 2. Labor Day, no school 9/2, Voting on 9/3; no students in the building
6. Superintendent's Report:
 1. Home Run Bill Update
 1. Education Committee sent the Home Run Bill to "study." They feel like they need more time to look at the implications and that they haven't heard much from DESE. One of the potential questions is: are they considering the fact that this is the first of many of these bills that will be coming through and should they address it in mass rather than individually? The Bill is not dead in the water; these can take more than one legislative session. We will refile the bill at the beginning of the session with another hearing and full process again. As of now, Warwick District seems to be the only other district that will follow our footsteps. Dr. Phillips's guidance is to maintain our prior vote to pause the allowance of school choice children at this time.
 2. Staffing for FY 25
 1. Diane Arduini (SLP), will be working 2 days per week on site.
 2. Hillary Bashara, nurse. She worked here for a short time about a decade ago and is excited to be back!
 3. Amanda Lahey will be doing half time RTI para, and fill the other half of her house with food transportation, and art teacher!
 4. We are sharing paras and billing of their services with Richmond
 5. Waiting to hear back about a job offer for a 1:1 para
 1. Will be billed out of school choice but reimbursed by student's home district.
 6. Discussion among committee members about Para salary correction due to not being able to hire staff as our payment schedule is substantially lower than any other district in Berkshire County.

7. PE teacher has accepted Tech Teaching position as well, resulting in her in the building 3 days per week.
8. Significant challenges filling the Special Ed position, but may have found someone as of today. This person is not Special Ed certified, but we have done due diligence and we will ask this person to apply for licensure immediately.
3. Non-Op status: we have been approved by DESE to not have a K-12 school
4. Pre-school New Ashford:
 1. Discussion about the availability of programming at Hancock for New Ashford Pre-K students that have required Early Intervention needs.
5. Chapter 70 grants and funds:
 1. Don't know exact incoming amounts for REAP or Rural Aid yet, however others grants and funding amounts have stayed the same and/or very close to our budgeted amounts.
 2. Using the end of COVID money for purchase of the paid program of the math curriculum we already have. The paid version includes in-person PD assistance.
6. Open Meeting Law Certification
 1. Committee members signed certification document.
7. Other
 1. Lawn mowing contract is at every 10 days; Rebecca will ask Town if we can use 10 days as an average so as to have the lawn mowed more frequently in times of high growth and less frequently as the summer ends.
7. SPED Director Report
 1. SpEd teacher and RTI para hiring update as mentioned above in "Staffing"
 2. There will be no service delivery from 2-230pm for built in consultation time between Special Ed and teachers.
 3. Numbers: students on IEPs: 12 students (25% of student body)
 4. Student Handbook will be reviewed at September meeting
 5. We now have a separate Employee Handbook
8. Financial Report - Reviewed
9. New Business: None
10. Alex motioned to adjourn 7:35, Elisa - 2nd, all in favor.