

# HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 18, 2023

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: 7:03 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 December 18, 2023 at the Hopatcong Board of Education, Board meeting room in the Administration Building.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present	Scott Francis	Present	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Present	Philip DiStefano
Present	Joseph Falconi	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Present	Jayna Gulan
Present	Jennifer Johnson	Present	Jackie Turkington	Present	Jennifer Polowchena

Board Attorney: Kerri Wright

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 Choose Item. seconded by Choose Item

-----	Scott Francis	-----	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	-----	Philip DiStefano
-----	Joseph Falconi	-----	Jayson Cittrich	-----	Jayna Gulan
-----	Jennifer Johnson	-----	Jackie Turkington	-----	Jennifer Polowchena

5. **RECONVENE**

**Motion to Reconvene**

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by Falconi-Schubert

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Yes	Scott Francis	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Joseph Falconi	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	Jennifer Johnson	Yes	Jackie Turkington	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. November 27, 2023 - Executive Session
- b. November 27, 2023 - Public Meeting

#### **Motion to approve 6a-6b:**

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano seconded by Falconi

Yes	Scott Francis	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Joseph Falconi	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	Jennifer Johnson	Yes	Jackie Turkington	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

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

- a. Superintendent's Report – **Mr. Arthur DiBenedetto, Interim Superintendent of Schools**
  1. Review of Agenda
- b. HIB - A second reading and approval of the Superintendent's HIB Report for November 27, 2023 as presented to the Board at the November meeting on November 27, 2023. Approval of the Superintendent's HIB report for December 2023 for first reading and review as presented to the Board at the December meeting on December 18, 2023.
- c. Review and approval of the 2022-2023 HIB Self Assessment Reports for Durban Avenue, Tulsa Trail, Hopatcong Middle School and Hopatcong High School.
- d. The following students were chosen as Hopatcong High School's Students-of-the-Month for their outstanding performance in October, 2023.  
Grade 8 – Allyson Castaneda  
  
Grade 9 – Yousef Hayek  
  
Grade 10 - William Bender - Honorable Mention - Violet Fenske and Chrisnelly Flores  
Grade 11 – Kevin Kruczek - Honorable Mention - Madison Caban Sarah Lafferty, Jack Luciani, Gianna Sperduto  
Grade 12 – Alejandro Rivas - Honorable Mention Jacob Simbron

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The following students were chosen as Hopatcong High School's Scholar Athletes of the Month for their outstanding performance in September, 2023.

ATHLETICS - Jaysin Burgos, Senior, Football

ATHLETICS - Madison Caban, Junior, Cheerleading

**Motion to approve 7a – 7d:**

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

Yes	Scott Francis	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Joseph Falconi	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	Jennifer Johnson	Yes	Jackie Turkington	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

8. **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES**

Nicole Falconi-Shubert – HS PTO – Beginning plans for the Tricky Tray 3/23/2024 and planning on sharing proceeds with Project Graduation and grades 8-12.

Jennifer Polowchena – planning Aspen Ice event and Harlem Wizards.

9. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION**

None

10. **FINANCE**

Approval of the following Finance items, 10a. – 10i., 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, November 27, 2023 through December 18, 2023 be approved in the following amounts:

General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$1,084,010.17

Cafeteria account - \$

b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of November, 2023.

c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary's Report for the month of November, 2023.

d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of November, 2023.

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 December 18, 2023, 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 December 18, 2023,

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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 **Mrs. Susan Dykstra** be appointed as Treasurer of School Monies January 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024.
- h. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the donation of \$260 (check# 2607) by Mrs. Jean Kearns to be used to offset lunch balances owed by students.
- i. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the acceptance of \$100 donation by Ms. Paula Callaghan of AlphaBEST to offset lunch balances owed by students.

### 11. PERSONNEL

Approval of the following personnel items, **11a – 11**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval of **Brittany Adams** to intern with Ms. Kester at the Middle School from January 8, 2024 - April 17, 2024, 3 days per week for a total of 90 hours over 15 weeks.
- b. Approval of the employment of **Ryan Smith** as a Full Time Custodian with a prorated salary of \$44,855 minus \$400 for not having a black seal, which represents Step 1 of the 2023-2024 Custodian Guide, per contract effective January 2, 2024 pending background check.
- c. Approval of the employment of **Thomas Brady** as a Part Time Custodian with a prorated salary of \$28,034 minus \$400 for not having a black seal which represents Step 1 of the 2023-2024 Custodian Guide, per contract effective January 2, 2024 pending background check.
- d. Approval of the employment of **Lindsay Karros** as Part-Time Art Teacher, .4 FTE, at the Hopatcong Middle School effective January 2, 2024 at a prorated annual salary of \$29,042 which represents Level MA/Step 1 of the 2023 - 2024 HEA Salary Guide.
- e. Approval of fifteen additional hours of summer employment at \$35 per hour for **Peter Oesen** for athletic director activities. These hours were verbally approved by the superintendent but did not make the agenda for formal board approval. Mr. Oeson utilized the hours on the promise of approval in August.
- f. Approval of **Employee #80283** to take an unpaid leave of absence from December 7, 2023 through December 22, 2023 with an anticipated return date of January 2, 2024.

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- g. Approval of the following **Coach/Advisor Positions** for the 2023 - 2024 school year:

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Class	Level	Salary
Edric Debos	Appoint	Yearbook Club	A	4	\$4,363

- h. 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

***\*The maximum rate of reimbursement per credit for the 23-24 school year is \$444.44.***

- i. Approval of the following substitutes for the Hopatcong School District:  
1. Lindsay Karros, Substitute Teacher

## 12. **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

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

## 13. **POLICY & REGULATIONS**

Approval of item 13a, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement and Operations Committees of the Board:

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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**

### 14. STUDENTS AND SERVICES

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

- a. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 14937 for 10 hours per week beginning November 7, 2023. Instruction will be provided by CCBH at a rate of \$95.00 per hour.
- b. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 15059. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the rate of \$40.00 per hour effective 11/30/23 until approximately 1/10/24.
- c. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 12425 for 10 hours per week beginning November 24, 2023. Instruction will be provided by Learnwell at a rate of \$48.25 per hour.
- d. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13760. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 12/1/23 until approximately 3/1/24.
- e. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 14244. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour beginning 12/5/23 until approximately 12/15/23.
- f. Approval for educational instruction services for student no. 15413 for up to 10 hours per week beginning 12/1/23 for the anticipated duration of approximately 30-60 days. Instruction will be provided by Silvergate Prep at a rate of \$45.00 per hour.
- g. The parents of the following students have requested to allow the students to participate in the Interdistrict Public School Choice Program for September 2024, if accepted into their program:

#### **Student Number/ Current Grade/ Choice Destination**

13446 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13376 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

14366 4 Byram Township School District

13381 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

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15438 1 Byram Township School District

13187 9 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13384 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

14882\* 2 \*Byram Township School District (Byram Lakes)

413058 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13715 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13522 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13391 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

15671\* K \*Mine Hill Township School District (Canfield Avenue School) or Morris Plains

14936 7 Byram Township School District

15453 1 Byram Township School District

15477 PK4 Byram Township School District

14425 5 Byram Township School District or Netcong School District or Byram Township

15093 1 Byram Township School District

15094 1 Byram Township School District

13439 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

15427 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13590 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13903 6 Roxbury Township School District (Eisenhower Middle School)

13419 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

15046 7 Netcong School District or Roxbury Township School District or Byram  
Township School District

13947 7 Netcong School District or Roxbury Township School District or Byram

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13449 8 Lenape Valley Regional High School

13899 5 Byram Township School District

14751 7 Roxbury Township School District

14083 5 Byram Township School District

15257 7 Byram Township School District

15516 K Byram Township School District

15758 PK4 Netcong School District

\*Student began attending noted choice destination for the 2023-2024 School Year due to a seat becoming available.

15. **RESOLUTIONS**

16. **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 November 28, 2023 through December 18, 2023 in the amount of \$22,037.79 for Regular bills.

b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of enrollment** for Michelle Ketch in the Rutgers Transportation Supervisors Courses for the Spring Semester as follows:

*ST-7005-SP-2, Emergency Management, \$390.00*

c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of enrollment** for Danielle Iadarola in the Rutgers Transportation Supervisors Courses for the Spring Semester as follows:

*ST-7005-SP-2, Emergency Management, \$390.00*

d. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of travel** to attend the Annual NJ Pupil Transportation Conference and Exhibit Show in Atlantic City, NJ, March 20-22, 2023. The conference costs are in compliance with the



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state travel reimbursement guidelines/state waiver. Total cost of conference registration, lodging and mileage not to exceed \$2,951.52 for the following staff: Janine Byrnes, Kathy Schwab, Chris Verdi and Lori Harrison.

**e.**

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.

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 November 1, 2023 Bid #2023-24-05** 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 November 1, 2023 Bid #2023-24-05** 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 November 1, 2023 Bid #2023-24-05** 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 Contracts** for the 2023 - 2024 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

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## ADDENDUM

1. Approval of the resignation of Melissa Kelly, Paraprofessional, due to personal reasons, effective December 14, 2023.
2. Approval of Employee #81578 for 12 weeks of unpaid FMLA leave beginning March 25, 2024 through June 18, 2024.
3. Approval of the following substitutes for the Hopatcong School District:
  - A. Dylan Silva (pending substitute certification)
  - B. Mark Gudelski (pending substitute certification)
4. Approval of the acceptance of a donation of \$2000 (check #979) from Mrs. Theresa Williams and a cash donation of \$140 from Mrs. Williams and friends to offset lunch balances owed by students.
5. Approval of Mallory Strallow as a paraprofessional substitute, pending acceptance of paperwork and criminal history background check.

## 17. BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. DiBenedetto thanked Tammy Miller for taking care of the district while he was sick.

Mrs. Turkington – Wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a welcome to the new board members.

Mrs. Polowchena – Happy Holidays. Will miss Scott and Jackie. Our town needs more people willing to volunteer.

Ms. Gulan – Happy Holidays. Welcomes new board members.

Mrs. Falconi-Shubert – Merry Christmas and wishes Scott and Jackie well.

Mrs. Johnson – This is her last meeting before starting on the town council. She is looking forward to good relations between the town and the school district. Good bye to Scott and Jackie and good luck to the new board members.

Mr. DiStefano – Encouraged the school representatives to apply for scholarships. Happy Holidays and welcome to the new board members.

Mr. Falconi – Jackie, Scott and Jen, you will be missed. Thinks they have all done a terrific job. Welcome new board members. Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays.

Mr. Francis – He has been on the board for 6 years and 4 Superintendents and it has been an interesting ride. It has been a fascinating experience which taught him a lot but he is ready for retirement. New board members bring new energy. Wishes everyone the best holidays ever.

Approval of items 10 – Addendum:

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

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Yes	Joseph Falconi	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	Jennifer Johnson	Yes	Jackie Turkington	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

\*Mr. DiStefano votes "Yes" on all but item # 16 on which he votes "Present."

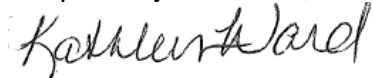
### 18. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion to adjourn:**

(ACTION) Motion by DiStefano. seconded by Falconi

All in favor Yes Time: 7:23pm

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen Ward, Board Secretary Pro Tem