

**New Milford Board of Education
 Special Meeting Minutes
 June 21, 2018
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

Present:	Mr. David A. Lawson, Chairperson Mrs. Angela C. Chastain Mr. Bill Dahl Mr. Joseph Failla Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan Mr. J.T. Schemm	RECEIVED TOWN CLERK 2018 JUN 25 P 12:07
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NEW MILFORD, CT

Also Present:	Mr. Joshua Smith, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Ms. Ellamae Baldelli, Director of Human Resources Ms. Roberta Pratt, Director of Technology Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services Mr. Kevin Munrett, Facilities Director Mrs. Kathy Sanders, Accounting Manager Mr. Greg Shugrue, Principal, New Milford High School Mrs. Anne Bilko, Principal, Sarah Noble Intermediate School
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1.	<p>Call to Order</p> <p>A. Pledge of Allegiance</p> <p>The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence immediately followed the call to order.</p>	<p>Call to Order</p> <p>A. Pledge of Allegiance</p>
2.	<p>Public Comment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Megan Byrd, a New Milford resident, thanked administration and the Board for all their hard work on the budget over the last half year. She referenced a copy of comments from her Facebook group that was sent to the Board. She was glad to see that many of the cuts reflected parent input. She said parents in general fully support the addition of Pay to Play. She said the plans to increase revenue are also helpful. All the hits will hurt but she is optimistic that children will not notice them directly. 	<p>Public Comment</p>

<p>3.</p> <p>A.</p>	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>Adjustments to the 2018-19 Board of Education Adopted Budget</p> <p>Mr. Dahl moved to amend the 2018-19 Board of Education Adopted Budget from \$64,278,670 to \$63,010,586, as proposed by the Superintendent of Schools on Item 3A, "Proposed Adjustments to the 2018-2019 Budget", dated June 20, 2018.</p> <p>Motion seconded by Mrs. Monaghan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Dahl said he thought administration had done a great job with the recommendations, working together to lessen the impact on programs.• Mr. Failla said he thought the addition of Pay to Play is just wrong. Public schools should be encouraging exercise and good nutrition, including playing sports. He said we are charging students to be well. He asked why athletes are being singled out and said band, clubs etc. should also be charged. With the increase in parking fees too we are balancing the budget on the backs of our children. He said he thinks that the increased parking fee will result in fewer students using that option and will encourage them not to park at the high school, but to perhaps park illegally elsewhere or carpool when they shouldn't. For families of seniors, expenses will be through the roof. He believes we should look to other areas for cuts.• Mrs. Chastain concurs with Mr. Failla. She could support a flat fee of \$150 for Pay to Play only. As it is presented, with the increase in parking and only paying for one AP test, her personal bill for her senior will be about \$810. While she can handle that, many families can't. She feels the cuts are too heavy on the high school level, and should be spread out more evenly K-12 for fairness.• Mrs. Faulenbach asked about the reduction of the library clerk and where that is. Mr. Smith said they are looking to capitalize on a current	<p>Discussion and Possible Action</p> <p>Adjustments to the 2018-19 Board of Education Adopted Budget</p> <p>Motion made to amend the 2018-19 Board of Education Adopted Budget from \$64,278,670 to \$63,010,586, as proposed by the Superintendent of Schools on Item 3A, "Proposed Adjustments to the 2018-2019 Budget", dated June 20, 2018.</p>
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opening at SMS and will redistribute resources at the elementary level in all probability.

- Mrs. Faulenbach asked to clarify that the Pay to Play was \$125 per season. Mr. Smith said that is correct. He said they surveyed other districts and this is in line with what they are doing.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said previous versions of the list that Mr. Smith had shared with the Board did not include Pay to Play. She asked what had changed. Mr. Smith said the topic had been brought up at Board meetings and several times by the community. The community also was clear that given a choice, they would choose Pay to Play over eliminating freshman sports, or certain teams. Mr. Smith said he had hoped to be able to take a \$150,000 reduction to the insurance line, but found out this week that the reduction would only be \$60,000. At that point, Pay to Play became more palatable. Parents have been clear that they would prefer to keep opportunities and pay a fee.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said all cuts are distasteful. She asked how the fee for parking was calculated. Mr. Smith said they are trying to climb out of a \$1.2 million hole. At \$150, the parking spaces sell out quickly and there is a waiting list. Buses are provided for all students at taxpayer expense and still there is a high demand for spaces. They think that \$225 is manageable in that light.
- Mrs. Faulenbach asked if the positions referenced for cut are open positions. Mr. Smith said all ten positions have been open or are open now due to retirements. They will be doing without or reallocating. The exception is the Kindergarten teacher at HPS. This is due to enrollment being well below projected. The budgeted enrollment was 141; they are at 101 currently.
- Mr. McCauley agrees that sports are very important at the high school level, but said that hard decisions are needed. He said he was glad not to see a lot of cuts to academics. While he doesn't support the concept of Pay to Play, he understands the necessity of finding places to cut. He said the paraeducator reduction bothers

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	<p>him as well, as they are so low paid and so valuable. Hard cuts are everywhere.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. Smith said there would be scholarship assistance for athletes in need. He said there are seven para openings currently and they are very difficult to fill. They may remain open regardless. He said the district also has a difficult time finding para subs; typically there is a 50% fill rate. He said they are having conversations about changing the structure of how they give support since they are not available.• Mrs. Chastain asked how many student parking spaces are available at the high school and whether or not they are all filled. Mr. Shugrue said there are 147 and there is currently a waiting list.• Mr. Schemm said he thinks it is important to look back at the process since January. The Board needs to be cognizant of the three votes and the will of the votes to reduce. He said the community has been very involved and very vocal regarding input. He said the administration has been crafting a pathway. He looks at the charge of providing a “free, appropriate public education” in light of what we “need to have”, “really need to have”, or “would be nice to have”. He said we need to protect what we “need to have” and keep the “nice to have” when we can. He said he appreciates the documents provided that make it clear to see how we got to where we are. Regarding Pay to Play he was glad to see that we are not pitting sports against each other. At least this way, all offerings stay. He sees parking as a “nice to have”; the same with paying for AP tests. The high school is targeted more but it is the largest cost center too.• Mrs. Chastain said the high school has bigger classes enrollment-wise so that makes it more expensive.• Mrs. McInerney said she would like to thank all involved: administration, BOE members and the community. There have been many venues at which input was offered and she thinks the adjustments recommended reflect	
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that administration listened. She said she appreciated that very little on the list limited opportunities to children. She wanted to clarify that the summer school reduction is for the Bridges program. Mr. Smith said that is correct. Due to the shortened summer, there were fewer sign ups than projected.

- Mrs. McInerney asked what would be done if kindergarten enrollment increased. Mr. Smith said Ms. DiCorpo worked to move the enrollment process up and publicize it to help reduce any big last minute enrollment. Even with some tick up, there is basically one teacher “waiting” at this time for 20 students to enroll.
- Mrs. McInerney asked about the cut to Excel. Mr. Smith said it was enrollment driven.
- Mrs. McInerney asked about the \$150,000 cut to school based supplies. Mr. Smith said there was a breakdown provided in the Board packet. It represents 10% of the total requested of each school’s controllable accounts. The high school is the biggest number but this includes additional requested Chromebook carts. The building principals went through their budget books line by line as a group to determine these cuts.

Mrs. Chastain moved to amend the 2018-19 BOE Adopted budget by decreasing it by \$110,000 for the purpose of eliminating one administrator position, seconded by Mr. Failla.

- Mrs. Chastain said she thinks SNIS is administrator heavy. They have 815 students and 3.4 administrators, for 239 students per administrator. The high school has 1370 students and 4 administrators for a ratio of 342.5 students per administrator which is disproportionate. While she knows social/emotional issues need to be addressed, she thinks support can be provided in other ways. That way other cuts that impact families can be reduced.
- Mrs. Faulenbach agreed. She said reductions should be across the board. SNIS has had

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declining enrollment and we have reduced teachers as a result, but not administrators. She would support this instead of Pay to Play.

- Mr. Dahl said he will not support this and he thinks we actually need more administrators. Responsibilities continue to increase with time. There are demands regarding school safety and security, issues with curriculum development, and evaluation demands. They all affect the educational process.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said all bargaining units but administrators have been addressed with these reductions. The community has raised concerns with their numbers. She said the administrator workload is less with dropping enrollment and fewer teachers.
- Mr. Schemm asked about the numbers for special education students, since that is a big part of the administrators' charge. Mrs. Olson said the special education numbers are constant and not declining, which is a nationwide trend. Mr. Schemm said in light of that he views this as a "need to have" and will not support this amendment.
- Mr. Failla said the Board is not making hard decisions and asked if the administrators are a protected class while all others are taking hits. He said cuts should be made across the board. If we are charging athletes, we should charge for other activities.
- Mrs. Chastain said she disagrees with Mr. Schemm and thinks this is a want not a need. She said she thinks the Board copped out in January by not making hard decisions then and are now basically billing high school parents.
- Mr. Lawson wanted to clarify that the first AP test would still be funded since they want all students to have the opportunity of a college experience during their high school career.
- Mr. Smith said regarding Pay to Play, the district cannot charge fees for activities for which credit is given, like band and chorus for example. He said the high school has a full time special education director and department chairs to help with the administrative load there.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she thinks they need to

start thinking outside the box, reducing an administrator and shifting responsibilities to other staff.

- Mr. Smith said those conversations are beginning but they may be cost neutral so do not factor in at this time. It could also require contractual shifts. The list was separated from restructuring to keep the processes discrete.
- Mrs. McInerney said all these decisions are hard but that you can't weigh emotional well-being of students at the lower levels equally; it will only get worse if not handled at a young age.
- Mr. Dahl asked to move the question. There was agreement by a two thirds majority.

The motion failed 3-6.

Aye: Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain, Mr. Failla

No: Mr. Dahl, Mrs. Monaghan, Mr. McCauley, Mrs. McInerney, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Schemm

Mrs. Faulenbach moved to amend the 2018-19 BOE Adopted budget by decreasing it by \$35,000 for the purpose of eliminating the K-2 social emotional professional services, seconded by Mr. Failla.

- Mrs. Faulenbach said this started in August 2017 with a job description and transfer request. She said tough decisions need to be made and she thinks this is one of them.
- Mr. McCauley asked for clarification. Mr. Smith said a review showed social/emotional issues not being adequately addressed at the K-2 level on a systemic level. There was no one in house to provide programs so the district used an outside consultant.
- Mr. Lawson said with so much school violence today and bullying issues, he feels the earlier support can be provided the better. He said they owe it to the community to address emotional anxiety and he will not support this amendment.
- Mr. McCauley said in some ways it comes down to dollars and cents. If even one student cannot manage, the district could spend \$50,000 to \$150,000 on outplacement. Student anxiety is increasing; he sees it every day in his

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<p>work with special education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs. Faulenbach said while she is sympathetic to the issues raised, this was an addition made, and there are other support people in place. She is not comfortable just accepting a list handed to the Board, because she thinks that negates Board responsibility. She says the Board is not doing its job and that other suggestions should be made for common ground.• Mr. Schemm said he has said before that the Board's job is to make sure the schools are run well, not to run the schools; we pay people to do that. Our youngest students are supported by this position. The Committee on Learning heard a presentation on this topic and the district is building capacity going forward with this. He said that teaching and learning can't take place without it. He also said he thought the Board needed to be careful to look at positions, not specific people.• Mrs. Chastain said she is not targeting an individual but she does not think administrators are the best persons to deal with social/emotional needs; it should be social workers and psychologists instead.• Mrs. Faulenbach concurred that the amendment is not targeted to a person. <p>The motion failed 3-6. Aye: Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain, Mr. Failla No: Mr. Dahl, Mrs. Monaghan, Mr. McCauley, Mrs. McInerney, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Schemm</p> <p>Mrs. Chastain moved to amend the 2018-19 BOE Adopted budget by decreasing it by \$110,000 for the purpose of reducing 2 academic coaching positions, seconded by Mrs. Faulenbach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs. Chastain said these positions are empty right now. She said she thinks this is a resource only and the high school is getting hit too hard; we need to spread out the pain.• Mr. Failla said these positions came about the last time he was on the Board and he never understood the benefit. Teachers don't see the benefit fully either. He is okay with leaving the	<p>The motion failed 3-6.</p> <p>Motion made to amend the 2018-19 BOE Adopted Budget by decreasing it by \$110,000 for the purpose of reducing 2 academic coaching positions.</p>
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positions empty because he doesn't think this is a "need to have".

- Mr. Lawson said the coaches perform many functions, one of which is to give another set of eyes on implementing cognitive learning at all levels. They offer new perspectives to teachers who are busy with the day to day and other strategies to students.
- Mr. Smith said when coaches were implemented in 2011 New Milford ranked 18 or 20 in a DRG of 22. Since then we have had new math programs, common core, K-8, science standards at the high school and new literacy programs. The district has good teachers but it is hard to teach day to day and look ahead and do professional learning for oneself. The district has one curriculum specialist. The coaches are on the front line of change in the district for teacher and student growth.
- Ms. DiCorpo said coaches are especially valuable as a second set of eyes for the students in the middle.
- Mrs. Chastain asked how many coaches there are and if there is a schedule for coaches to go into every classroom. Ms. DiCorpo said there are 6 coaches and they are covering every grade level. She said there are very few teachers not touched now but that they are also working towards a coaching cycle as a result of the ReVision work being done.
- Mr. Schemm said as background, the coaches were added as part of a federal stimulus package which included full day kindergarten. They are part of the job we do now to support teachers, many of whom are young in New Milford, to make connections for instructional capacity. He heard from a teacher today about how important coaches are. He said if Mrs. Chastain was looking for \$110,000 to take away Pay to Play he would not support as constituents have made it clear they are okay with it.
- Mrs. Chastain said the \$110,000 was the \$55,000 placeholder used for 2 staff members. She has no issue with Pay to Play in general,

just wants the cost reduced.

- Mr. Failla said he has made his feelings about Pay to Play very clear.

The motion failed 4-5.

Aye: Mr. McCauley, Mrs. Faulenbach,

Mrs. Chastain, Mr. Failla

No: Mr. Dahl, Mrs. Monaghan, Mrs. McInerney,

Mr. Lawson, Mr. Schemm

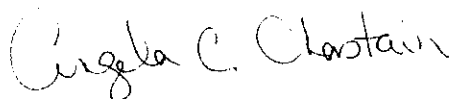
- Mrs. Monaghan asked if she could speak to the original motion. She said she was so impressed by the list of recommended adjustments that administration collaborated on because it has minimal impact on students educationally. She said she does not like Pay to Play but that it is an excellent way to hit an extremely high reduction number.
- Mrs. Chastain said she is frustrated because the district is basically handing 1300 high school parents a \$500 bill.
- Mrs. Faulenbach said she was also frustrated by the budget process and that the Board should have had more discussion back in January. She disagrees that it doesn't affect students; it does. She said she was also disappointed that they didn't look at all bargaining units. She is very disappointed that she is only seeing dollar amounts attached to the list now and that there have been so few amendments. She said the Board is not doing its due diligence.
- Mr. Failla said Pay to Play, parking and AP total \$153,000. The amendments would have provided \$255,000 and provided additional money to play with. He is disappointed that the Board is accepting it as is. They have not made hard choices.
- Mr. Lawson said \$1.2 million is quite a challenge, and all cuts are painful, but he is very pleased with the community input over a series of meetings. Board members also had several weeks to forward thoughts ahead of time.
- Mr. Schemm said referendum vote percentage last year was 9%. This year it was close to 20%

The motion failed 4-5.

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	<p>and the public was more involved. He is hopeful that the legacy of this season will be to keep the involvement going forward. Perhaps the reduction will help motivate that.</p> <p>The main motion passed 6-3. Aye: Mr. Dahl, Mrs. Monaghan, Mr. McCauley, Mrs. McInerney, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Schemm No: Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain, Mr. Failla</p>	<p>The main motion passed 6-3.</p>
4.	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Mr. Dahl moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m., seconded by Mrs. Monaghan and passed unanimously.</p>	<p>Adjourn</p> <p>Motion made and passed unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.</p>

Respectfully submitted:



Angela C. Chastain
 Secretary
 New Milford Board of Education