


**New Milford Board of Education
Special Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2020
Via Zoom Virtual Meeting**

Present:	Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. Pete Helmus Mr. Brian McCauley Mrs. Tammy McInerney Mrs. Eileen P. Monaghan Mrs. Cynthia Nabozny Mrs. Olga I. Rella
Absent:	Mr. Joseph Failla

Also Present:	Ms. Alisha DiCorpo, Interim Superintendent Mr. Anthony Giovannone, Director of Operations and Fiscal Services Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services Mr. Kevin Munrett, Director of Facilities Mr. Brandon Rush, Director of Technology
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1.	Call to Order Mrs. Faulenbach started the special meeting workshop of the New Milford Board of Education at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom.	Call to Order
2.	Presentation A. 2021-22 Budget Topics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital Update 2. ODP Placements/Excess Cost <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. DiCorpo said tonight’s workshop will focus on the 2021-22 budget topics of technology and facilities capital, as well as Out of District Placements (ODP) and Excess Cost. • Mr. Rush said with recent COVID related purchases, students are nearly 1:1 with Chromebook usage; the majority of staff have been using personal devices. Technology integration specialists have been added to help bridge the gap between instruction and technology. • Mr. Rush presented the five year technology capital plan which he called a fluid document due to rapid changes in the development of 	Presentation A. 2021-22 Budget Topics <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital Update 2. ODP Placements/Excess Cost <div style="text-align: center;">  RECEIVED TOWN CLERK 2020 DEC 17 A 10:19 NEW MILFORD, CT </div>

	<p>technology. It includes upgrades to wireless access points, a new firewall with cloud based technology, servers, staff Chromebooks and laptops. Chromebook refreshes are broken down by school. Mr. Rush said they have begun exploring the potential of a financed equipment model.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor Bass said the Town is looking to move to cloud based technology too and he suggested a partnership for cost savings. He also liked the lease idea and suggested that also be explored collaboratively.• Mrs. McInerney asked if all Chromebook purchases had been distributed. Mr. Rush said the last orders should be distributed by mid-January.• Mr. Munrett said the five year Facilities capital plan has historically been funded via the Capital Reserve Account. The use of this fund for operating expenses is not sustainable year after year and this leads to deferred maintenance and reprioritizing of projects. The Plan has begun to evolve because larger projects such as roofs are now being done in conjunction with the Town Municipal Building Committee. The need remains for day to day equipment and repairs.• Mr. Munrett said the projects highlighted in yellow on the Plan could be bondable or eligible for the NV5 audit; they total \$3.3 million. Central Office relocation also offers a \$1.09 offset to capital projects.• Mayor Bass thanked the team for their involvement with the NV5 projects which will improve infrastructure at no cost. He said it is great working together on the large projects such as the high school roof.• Mrs. Olson said while her presentation focuses on numbers, it is important to remember that those numbers represent students and families. She discussed the reasons for out of district placements: the district has exhausted all options of supports, services, and specialized instruction and the student is not making	
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	<p>appropriate progress academically and/or behaviorally; the parents have unilaterally placed their child in an out-of-district school; the parents request an out-of-district placement and file for a mediation/due process; or a family moves into New Milford and the student is already placed in a ODP therapeutic school. She said legally the district is obligated to honor that placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mr. McCauley asked if the district had budgeted enough for ODP new students this year. Mrs. Olson said no because there has been unprecedented move-ins this year.• Mrs. Olson shared a chart which compares New Milford's ODP numbers to other similar DRG towns and to the state average. The state average is 5.2; New Milford averages 3.6 which had been fairly steady. She said several factors help us keep students in district. These include a wide continuum of services, strong emphasis on inclusion and staff training, the ESS program, IPP clinicians, BCBA practitioners and a full time substance abuse counselor. The October 1 snapshot shows 35 ODP currently. Mrs. Olson is recommending eight placeholders for next year's budget to mitigate risks of unknowns.• Mr. Helmus asked if the Mayor had any ideas how we could include placeholders in budget funding. Mayor Bass said they are collaborating on retrofitting the MAXX and there should be cost avoidance there. Mrs. Olson said that will be factored in January budget projections. She said the district has always included placeholders; the number is what varies. She said there were several reductions made during last year's budget deliberations and as a result the budget is much lower this year than in previous years.• Mrs. Faulenbach said it is known that these are very volatile numbers. Placements can change at any moment throughout the year. Right now, we are seeing a combination of reductions to funding and increasing numbers.	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mrs. McInerney noted that one cut to placeholders was made internally before the Board even saw the proposed budget. She thinks it is important to see those cuts each year as part of the process.• Mr. Helmus noted that the Town provided funds for uniforms and suggested that money might have had more value for this purpose.• Mayor Bass said the Town does what it can to help with costs and he reiterated that he would like to see what savings the MAXX retrofit will bring,• Mrs. Rella asked about the DCF ODP and whether their sending nexus is billed. Mrs. Olson said this has not been done in the past but that districts are starting to do this now.• Mrs. Faulenbach said she would be interested in seeing what the offset would be if that billing took place.• Mrs. Monaghan asked if the cut to the ESS program was creating more ODPs. Mrs. Olson said it is too early to see the impact, especially with the COVID remote environment.• Mrs. Olson said she has never had to request a transfer of funds for this area and is hoping not to do so this year.• Mrs. Olson gave an explanation of excess cost and how that revenue works. She praised her office staff for their diligence in pursuing 33 grants per individual student.• Mr. Giovannone said for budgeting purposes they anticipate using a 62% reimbursement percent, which is somewhat conservative.• Mrs. Faulenbach noted that this varies from year to year as well and is based on best guess projections. There have been years when we have done well in this area and other years where we have not. She said there are lots of factors and moving pieces. It is an area that is closely monitored.	
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3.	Adjourn There was no formal motion made to adjourn. The meeting ended at 6:07 p.m.	Adjourn The meeting ended at 6:07 p.m.
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Respectfully submitted:



Wendy Faulenbach
Secretary
New Milford Board of Education