

**New Milford Board of Education  
 Special Meeting Minutes  
 June 18, 2014  
 Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center**

<b>Present:</b>	Mrs. Daniele Shook, Chairperson Mrs. Angela C. Chastain Mr. Robert Coppola Mrs. Wendy Faulenbach Mr. David A. Lawson Mr. Dave Littlefield Mr. David R. Shaffer Mr. John W. Spatola Mrs. Theresa Volinski Mayor Patricia Murphy, ex officio
-----------------	---

<b>Also Present:</b>	Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent of Schools Mr. Joshua Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Schools Ms. Ellamae Baldelli, Director of Human Resources Mr. Jay Hubelbank, Director of Fiscal Services and Operations - Elect Ms. Roberta Pratt, Director of Technology Mrs. Laura Olson, Director of Pupil Personnel and Special Services Mr. John Calhoun, Facilities Manager Dr. Len Tomasello, Principal, Sarah Noble Intermediate School
----------------------	---

RECEIVED  
 TOWN CLERK  
 2014 JUN 23 A 9:49

NEW MILFORD, CT  


<b>1.</b>	<b>Call to Order</b> <b>A. Pledge of Allegiance</b> The special meeting of the New Milford Board of Education was called to order at 7:00 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance immediately followed the call to order.	<b>Call to Order</b> <b>Pledge of Allegiance</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Discussion and Possible Action</b> <b>A. Resume discussion from May 27, 2014 Special Board meeting regarding the possible closing of a school due to declining enrollment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mr. Spatola asked if recess would be continued for sixth graders and Dr. Paddyfote said it is not part of the plan at this point.</li> <li>• Mr. Spatola asked if there would be training of staff on bullying and a way to engage students to make sure any bullying is addressed immediately. Dr. Paddyfote said she hoped bullying is addressed at the schools now and would expect that the issue would be addressed</li> </ul>	<b>Discussion and Possible Action</b> <b>A. Resume discussion from May 27, 2014 Special Board meeting regarding the possible closing of a school due to declining enrollment</b>

at Schaghticoke later.

- Mr. Spatola said there was some mention of older students knocking school books out of younger students' hands and felt that was bullying. Dr. Paddyfote said that was an example that Dana Ford gave after interviewing her grandchildren who go to a different school district.
- Mr. Spatola said he remembered that in 1973 when Schaghticoke was being voted on to be built and in 1982 when Northville was being voted on there was some discussion of expansion capability at Northville and Hill & Plain properties. Dr. Paddyfote and Mr. Calhoun said they could not find any record of that information.
- Mr. Spatola said if this plan passes that he would ask the administration to draft a strategic plan to identify early warnings and disciplinary problems; to conduct quarterly surveys regarding any behavioral issues and academic performance; to engage all Schaghticoke community members and to present that information to the Board in a timely fashion so that the Board can respond as necessary.

**Mr. Littlefield moved to close John Pettibone School at the conclusion of the 2014-2015 school year, effective June 30, 2015 and to redistrict based on scenario B of the School Facility and Utilization Plan and furthermore to assign appropriate subcommittees to review and recommend the disposition of the John Pettibone School property at a future date to be determined, seconded by Mrs. Faulenbach.**

- Mr. Littlefield said the decision to move forward is a difficult one but the Board has looked at a lot of data. He noted nothing in life is certain in this world but based on what is known right now with a downward trend in the town's population and not seeing any increase soon, this move was necessary.

- Mr. Coppola welcomed back the public who he recognized were not allowed to speak tonight. He said he disagreed with Mr. Littlefield on the need to close the school. He said a few years ago when he was on the Town Council they were told they had to buy the adjacent land because the building was at capacity. He said no one expected the economy to flip but New Milford could go the other way and grow. He said Danbury is the fastest growing community in the state and there could be the next wave of immigrants moving to New Milford because it is affordable. He said there has been discussion that if John Pettibone is closed, there will be a savings of \$23 million but the cost to build Sandy Hook is \$50 million and they own the land. He noted as a child, his family moved out to the suburbs. He said there are 38 new rentals approved at the Barton House and 15 more apartments somewhere else approved. He asked if this plan went into effect would the specials such as art and music have adequate space and time.
- Dr. Paddyfote answered that the timing issue is separate from the school restructuring and is being reviewed now. She said the specials of art, music and PE were never being encroached on with this plan.
- Mr. Coppola pressed Dr. Paddyfote on the time for the specials and Dr. Paddyfote said she cannot guarantee the timing won't change but again that is an educational issue to allow for more literacy and math instruction.
- Mr. Coppola said he asked Mrs. Ford about the advantage of moving the sixth grade to Schaghticoke and Dr. Paddyfote said the original idea of having sixth grade at Sarah Noble was to have another year of elementary school; she said the current sixth grade does not operate that way. She said the sixth grade physically operates as it did at Schaghticoke.
- Mr. Coppola said the parents need to hear how this plan will impact them and Dr. Paddyfote

Special Meeting Minutes

June 18, 2014

Sarah Noble Intermediate School Library Media Center

	<p>said that is part of the planning that has to happen in the year before the school closes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mr. Coppola said he liked neighborhood schools and thought it would be wrong to close John Pettibone.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson said the vast majority of the time the talk has been about dollars and not academics or the children. He said John Pettibone is not just bricks and mortar it is a community school. He noted if we fail in the younger grades, we can't play catch-up. He said the Board has the opportunity and obligation to make this community meet its potential and not saddle a future generation with the burden of building a new school in 10, 20 or even 30 years.</li><li>• Mayor Murphy said she has heard the words "all of a sudden" when talking about this vote. She said the Board has not done things all of a sudden. She noted that she looked at classroom usage even eight years ago but nobody wanted to talk about it back then. She said the Board then hired an outside entity to look to see if we are using our assets to the best potential. She said she has been watching the budgets year after year and has seen the people struggling. She noted it costs a lot to maintain a facility. She said she would rather put money to students and noted it is cheaper to add classrooms than to build new facilities. Mayor Murphy noted this is why the Committee voted to recommend this option. She asked for the administrators to perhaps discuss their rationale around making this recommendation.</li><li>• Mr. Coppola and Mr. Lawson said they did not recall a vote having taken place.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach, a member of the Committee, along with Mr. Shaffer from the current Board, said the consensus of the Committee was to recommend scenario B which was the closing of the school and redistricting. She said this decision was a process that began in October of 2012 when the Board sent letters to community</li></ul>	
--	---	--

members who volunteered to serve that included educators, town leaders and parents. She read the charge of the Committee noting that the enrollment was decreasing and to look at the academic programs and impacts on the children. She said the recommendation came out of the Committee almost one year ago.

- Mr. Coppola said the report talked about “widgets” and Mrs. Faulenbach said there were numerous conversations of educational benefits of the realignment. She said it was not solely about numbers.
- Mr. Coppola said he had not heard from any Committee members about the educational rationale.
- Mr. Shaffer said he lives in Gaylordsville and noted when the first plan came out of the Committee and the consultants suggested the northern part of the district could just go to Northville, he let them know there was a river that impeded that plan and he wondered how many other such oversights were part of this report. He said he is concerned with the transportation from Gaylordsville because when he drove into town this morning for a car repair it took him 35 minutes to get to Big Y. He said the Board should be happy that parents of the younger children in schools are happy with what is happening in the schools. He also said he has not heard any support from teachers saying close the school.
- Dr. Paddyfote, in response to the Mayor’s query, said the Committee looked at five scenarios and determined B was optimal given the population decline. She said the first year would be tight at Schaghticoke but then it would open up after that.
- Mr. Smith said the charge was the efficiency of the use of the buildings. He said the Committee looked at the way the town was constructed and how to make the use of space efficient but did not discuss how to fix an instructional situation.

- Mr. Lawson remarked on the efficiency discussion noting that he had two bedrooms open in his house so maybe he should sell it. He said he is concerned with the transportation issue which increases the ride time but also costs up to \$250,000 more. He was concerned that a child from Gaylordsville would be on a bus two hours a day which he felt was unacceptable. He also felt that more bullying could occur on the bus since there was more time on it and only one adult who is also the driver.
- Mr. Littlefield said by closing John Pettibone there would be no loss of teachers. He said he would rather see the money used for the building to go towards more educational resources including a talented and gifted program.
- Mr. Lawson asked for a point of clarification regarding the loss of teachers and Dr. Paddyfote said there was potential for positions to be cut including one administrator, one nurse, the LMC, and a few classroom teachers.
- Mr. Lawson said there will be job losses of at least 10 positions and possibly music and art and Dr. Paddyfote said there was a reduction of a K-3 art position this year due to decreased enrollment.
- Mr. Spatola said he had spoken to every Board member except Mr. Shaffer and noted there was tension and emotion around this decision. He said when he went to college he had a professor tell him that if you lose a child by fifth grade you have lost them for the remainder of their school life. He said he could only speak about what is happening at John Pettibone because his daughter goes there and he noted that he had to go to a family funeral this past weekend and he took his daughter telling her she might miss her last day of school. As it worked out, he was able to get back in town at 12:30 for the last day and his daughter asked to go to school because she

	<p>loved it so much. He said John Pettibone is a family and he would not support closing it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mrs. Shook said she had no children at John Pettibone but did have a daughter at Northville and had a son at Hill &amp; Plain and felt the same kind of family feel there.</li><li>• Mayor Murphy asked how many positions are lost each year due to attrition or moving and Ms. Baldelli said it varies but on average it could be eight to ten to twelve for any reason.</li><li>• Mr. Coppola said he wanted to thank every member of the Committee who served to make this recommendation. He felt they did their job very well but noted there is an emotional part that the school is a family.</li><li>• Mrs. Faulenbach thanked Mr. Coppola for thanking the members of the Committee. She said she looked at the numbers and the dollars but it was not all about that. She said she has been on the Board for 13 years and saw that in 2015 the utilization rates for the schools would be 70%, 64%, 57%, 82% and 54% but it is not all about those numbers. She said she would rather see resources infused back into the system to hold onto or create programs.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson noted that the Committee did not comment on moving the Administration Office to any of the schools and certainly not John Pettibone. He said keeping Pettibone open is like an insurance policy. He said the population back in 1973 was 10,000 and now it is 28,000.</li><li>• Mayor Murphy said the number is 27,147.</li><li>• Mr. Lawson noted the increase since 1973 is about 180%. He said he has been around numbers for years, giving students grades, and noted students are not numbers. He said the first years are developmental learning to walk, to speak, and the alphabet and are very crucial.</li><li>• Mrs. Volinski asked on the proposed floor plans if the nurse at Hill &amp; Plain would be back in the old office and Dr. Paddyfote said the nurse would be in the space currently being used which is the original nurse's office.</li></ul>	
--	--	--

- Mrs. Volinski asked if classrooms would be taken from Special Ed classes and Dr. Paddyfote said currently some of the classes are in full sized classrooms but the student load does not merit that.
- Mr. Lawson noted that the legislature is currently discussing universal pre-K which might be coming down as a mandate in the future and wondered where those kids would go.
- Mrs. Chastain said there is no perfect solution and this decision is very difficult. She said she has talked to parents as she is in the schools all the time. She said she ran for the Board to do what is best for all of New Milford and all of its students. She said closing Pettibone will allow the Board to add programming including K-5 foreign language and maybe shop back to Schaghticoke.

**Mr. Lawson moved to amend the motion to review this matter in one year from now, seconded by Mr. Coppola.**

- Mr. Lawson said there was no consensus on this Board and a review period would allow new numbers to come from the Superintendent in October.
- Mr. Coppola noted he taught in Ridgefield when they closed Barlow Mountain and Branchville. He said they have reopened both. He said Brookfield is looking at the same scenario and is waiting. He said he is convinced as Danbury grows New Milford will see an effect from that.
- Mrs. Faulenbach asked for a clarification of Mr. Lawson's motion as to whether that meant to close the school in two years. Mr. Lawson said the motion was to revisit in one year and it was left up to the individual Board member how to interpret that.

**The amendment failed 3-6.**

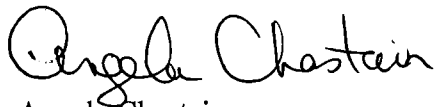


	<p><b>Aye: Mr. Shaffer, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Coppola  No: Mrs. Shook, Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain,  Mr. Littlefield, Mrs. Volinski, Mr. Spatola</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mrs. Shook said this has been a tough process and she did not make this decision lightly. She said she would not be bullied into this decision and she has spoken with Board members openly about her concerns. She said she teaches in a K-8 school which is great and she did not see an issue with third grade moving to Sarah Noble or sixth grade moving to Schaghticoke. She said in Sherman the grades are segregated. She said she has taught fourth through eighth grade for 15 years and sees no negative impacts of moving these kids. She said she would like to see the available savings go towards more programming so she would support the motion.</li> <li>• Mr. Coppola said he has served on the Town Council and did not trust that the savings would come to the Board.</li> </ul> <p><b>The motion passed 5-4.  Aye: Mrs. Shook, Mrs. Faulenbach, Mrs. Chastain,  Mr. Littlefield, Mrs. Volinski  No: Mr. Shaffer, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Coppola,  Mr. Spatola</b></p> <p>Mr. Coppola left the meeting at 8:17 p.m.</p>	
<p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>A.</b></p> <p><b>B.</b></p>	<p><b>Executive Session (Anticipated)</b></p> <p><b>Discussion of pending CHRO claims involving claims of discrimination and/or harassment.</b></p> <p><b>Review of written opinion letter from the Board’s legal counsel regarding the Board’s bus transportation agreement. The Board may take action on this matter when it returns to open session.</b></p>	<p><b>Executive Session (Anticipated)</b></p> <p><b>A. Discussion of pending CHRO claims involving claims of discrimination and/or harassment.</b></p> <p><b>B. Review of written opinion letter from the Board’s legal counsel regarding the Board’s bus transportation agreement. The Board may take action on this matter when it returns to open</b></p>

	<p><b>Mr. Spatola moved to enter into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m. to discuss pending CHRO claims of discrimination and/or harassment and to review a written opinion from the Board’s legal counsel regarding the Board’s bus transportation agreement and to invite into the session Attorney Michael McKeon, Board Counsel, and Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent of Schools, seconded by Mr. Lawson and passed unanimously.</b></p> <p>Mr. Coppola rejoined the meeting for the Executive Session.</p> <p>Mr. Lawson left the Executive Session and meeting at 8:59 p.m.</p> <p>Mr. Spatola left the Executive Session and meeting at 9:06 p.m.</p> <p>The Board returned to public session at 9:10 p.m.</p> <p><b>Mr. Coppola moved that the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools, the Board’s legal counsel, and any other district personnel the Superintendent deems appropriate to discuss with the Board’s transportation provider in accordance with Board Policies 3300(c) and 3541.23 possible terms and conditions regarding either a revised or a new transportation contract, with the understanding that any such revised or new contract will not be deemed final or binding until the Board has approved it by a formal vote, seconded by Mrs. Faulenbach and passed unanimously.</b></p>	<p><b>session.</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously to enter into Executive Session at 8:18 p.m. to discuss pending CHRO claims of discrimination and/or harassment and to review a written opinion from the Board’s legal counsel regarding the Board’s bus transportation agreement and to invite into the session Attorney Michael McKeon, Board Counsel, and Dr. JeanAnn Paddyfote, Superintendent of Schools.</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed unanimously that the Board authorize the Superintendent of Schools, the Board’s legal counsel, and any other district personnel the Superintendent deems appropriate to discuss with the Board’s transportation provider in accordance with Board Policies 3300(c) and 3541.23 possible terms and conditions regarding either a revised or a new transportation contract, with the understanding that any such revised or new contract will not be deemed final or binding until the Board has approved it by a formal vote.</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p> <p><b>Mrs. Faulenbach moved to adjourn the meeting at</b></p>	<p><b>Adjourn</b></p> <p><b>Motion made and passed</b></p>

	<b>9:12 p.m., seconded by Mr. Littlefield and passed unanimously.</b>	<b>unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.</b>
--	---	--

Respectfully submitted:



Angela Chastain  
Secretary  
New Milford Board of Education