

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

September 23, 2024

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: 7:00 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 September 23, 2024 at the Hopatcong Board of Education, Board meeting room in the Administration Building.

3. **ROLL CALL**

Present	Joseph Falconi	Present	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Present	Philip DiStefano
Present	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Present	Jayna Gulan
Present	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Scott Francis	Present	Jennifer Polowchena

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 Falconi. seconded by Gulan

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Scott Francis	Absent	Jennifer Polowchena

5. **RECONVENE**

Motion to Reconvene

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(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by Polowchena

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Scott Francis	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. August 19, 2024 - Special Meeting
- b. August 26, 2024 - Executive Session
- c. August 26, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Motion to approve 6a-6c:

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Scott Francis	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

7. **SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT AND HIB REPORT**

- a. Superintendent’s Report – **Mr. Jeffery Hallenbeck, Superintendent of Schools** reported that there was 1 confirmed HIB report in August up for 2nd reading tonight; discussed success of the summer instructional programs. Mr. Hallenbeck stressed the importance of consistent attendance for our students; missing 18 days a school year factors out to missing a full year over the course of a child’s 12 plus years of education; parents need to be aware of their responsibilities and should not schedule doctor appointments during the school day or vacations during the school year. Mr. Hallenbeck acknowledged staff for their years of service.

School Liaisons Lilyanne Zinsli and Natalia Gerena reported on a very good start to the school year; Sports team scores and the first game of the season. Contest thru T-Mobile which would supply a \$2mil renovation to our football field if won.

- b. A second reading and approval of the Superintendent’s HIB Report for August 2024 as presented to the Board at the August meeting held on August 26, 2024.

Motion to approve 7a – 7b:

((ACTION) Motion by Chaffee. Seconded by Polowchena

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Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr.	Absent	Scott Francis	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

8. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

a. Congratulations to the following Hopatcong Schools Staff Members on their Years of Service in the District:

First	Last	Service Years
JOHN	CANZONE	30
DAWN	FORBES	30
MELLANY	BARROQUEIRO	25
KATHLEEN	BRENNAN	25
ERIC	FAJERMAN	25
KATHRYN	DUTHALER	25
JOAN	MARSHALL	25
PAUL	MILLER	25
DAYNA	MONRO	25
YVONNE	MORTELLO	25
PETER	OESEN	25
IRENE	PAXOS	25
CONCETTA	SPANO	25
SUZANNE	ANNETTE	20
THOMAS	BAELI	20
JAMIE	GAMBUZZA	20
LEEANNE	JULIANO	20
LINDA	SERRANO-AVILES	20
KIMBERLY	BOUCHER	15

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WALTER	CARLE	15
EDRIC	DEBOS	15
CHRISTINA	EGBERT	15
DONALD	FORST	15
JILL	MORTENSON	15

9. **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES**

Nikki Roman-Gerena reports that the Marching Chiefs will be having a car wash Sunday, September 29 at 11:00am at Lakeside Tire. The HHSPTSO held a Back to School Breakfast for staff; there is a Homecoming Dance scheduled for 10/18 and the Tricky Tray is scheduled for March 22, 2025.

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Mr. Thomas Friel mentioned an ad which he had seen broadcast on TV by the NJEA that invites people into our classrooms and he would like to participate. Mr. Hallenbeck relayed our board policy which does not allow persons other than school staff in the classrooms. Former board member Steve Renaud spoke in support of the 2nd Referendum being put to vote in November and vowed to speak out in the community to help encourage people to vote “Yes.”

It was also mentioned that there will be single issue meetings held in the district on October 9 and October 30 to educate the community on the advantages of voting “Yes” on the referendum.

11. **FINANCE**

Approval of the following Finance items, 11a. – 11h, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools:

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that bills for the General Fund and Special Revenues (Grants) account, August 26, 2024 through September 23, 2024 be approved in the following amounts:
General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$2,678,564.15
Cafeteria account - \$13.95
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer’s Report for the month of August 2024.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary’s Report for the month of August 2024.
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of August 2024.
- 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 September 23, 2024, no line

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- 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 September 23, 2024, 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 the board approve the following:
- 1) Donation from Kristina Threlkeld Scholarship account to Hopatcong Music/Drama, to close scholarship account in the amount of \$50.70 plus any additional accumulated interest.
 - 2) Donation from Bromirski Lange Scholarship Fund to Jaycees Scholarship Fund to close scholarship account in the amount of \$1.92 plus any accumulated interest.
- h. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve writing off the following checks:

Date	Check #	Amount
4/23/2024	84659	\$13.00
4/24/2024	84673	\$196.00

12. PERSONNEL

Approval of the following personnel items, **12a – 12s**, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval to accept the resignation of **Lisa Cann** from her position as a Paraprofessional effective August 28, 2024.
- b. Approval to accept the resignation of **Roshell Hamilton** from her position as a Paraprofessional effective September 27, 2024.
- c. Approval to accept the resignation with regret, for the purpose of retirement, of **Ana Marrazzo** from her position as Secretary to the Principal at Durban Avenue effective January 1, 2025. Ana has worked for the Hopatcong School District for the past 18 years.
- d. Approval of the re-employment of **Deena El Sayed** as a Paraprofessional at Tulsa Trail with an hourly rate of \$16.65 effective September 24, 2024. Deena's hourly rate will follow the support staff guide as previously employed.
- e. Approval of employment of **Stephanie Earl** as a Paraprofessional at the High School at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Should toileting apply an additional \$1.00 an hour will be added to the hourly rate. Start date pending background check clearance.

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- f. Approval of employment of **Janiyah Aiken** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Ave School at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Should toileting apply an additional \$1.00 an hour will be added to the hourly rate. Start date pending background check clearance.
- g. Approval of employment of **David Bell** as a Paraprofessional at the Middle School at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Start date pending background check clearance.
- h. Approval of employment of **Rebecca Hendershot** as a Paraprofessional at the High School at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Start date pending background check clearance.
- i. Approval of employment of **Candy Monsalve** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Ave School at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Should toileting apply an additional \$1.00 an hour will be added to the hourly rate. Start date pending background check clearance.
- j. Approval of employment of **Melissa Esposito** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Ave School effective September 24, 2024, at a rate of \$16.55 an hour. Should toileting apply an additional \$1.00 an hour will be added to the hourly rate.
- k. Approval of Middle School Nurse **Anna Voloshin** to work 5 hours to complete Immunization records at the rate of 1/200 of their salary per day.
- l. Approval of **Employee #81609** to take a 12 week unpaid leave of absence using FMLA/NJFLA starting February 3, 2025 through May 2, 2025 with an anticipated return date of May 5, 2025.
- m. Approval of the following as Athletic Event Staff Members for 2024-2025 athletic events, to be paid at the Board Approved rate of pay per position: Neil Pallotta, Michael Strack
- n. Approval of the following salary guide movements*

Name	Current Degree Status	Degree Change	Effective Date
Anna Voloshin	MA+15	MA+30	September 1, 2024

***Approval of the listed staff members to move up on the HEA guide due to increased education credentials.**

- o. Approval of the following staff member to write curriculum at a rate of \$35/hour for the number of listed hours below which represents the negotiated rate from the HEA Contract (11-000-221-102-01-01)

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Course/Subject	Name	Number of Hours
Math 6, Math 6 ADV	Sonia Scovil	20
Math 7, Math 7 ADV		20
Math Focus 6		8
Math Focus 7		8

- p. Approval of the following Extra Duty/Extra Pay Positions for the 2024-2025 school year as needed:

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Salary
Laura Tykowski	Appoint	8th Grade Advisor *split*	\$606.50
Wendi Braun	Appoint	8th Grade Advisor *split*	\$606.50
McKenzie May Ortiz Wendi Braun Dorothy Cordero	Appoint	HS Detention Monitor	\$28/hour

- q. Approval of the following **Coach/Advisor** Positions for the 2024-2025 school year:

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Class	Level	Salary
Megan Nardone	Appoint	Fall Drama Advisor	D	4	\$1,782
Luis Mendez	Appoint/ Revised level	MS Intramurals	C	2	\$1,818
Kevin Finley	Rescind	Asst. Football Coach	B	1	\$3,187
Torri Burghoffer	Appoint/ Revised level	Asst. Marching Band Director	B	1	\$3,187

- r. 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
Dominic Schiavone	Climate Change: What Science Tells Us	717H	3	\$420
Jaclyn DiBrienza-Cikovic	Problems in Practice: Legal and School Centered Issues	EDLP 6110	3	\$1,359

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	Understanding Group Processes and the Psychology of Organizations	EDLP 6050	3	\$1,359
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****The maximum rate of reimbursement per credit for the 24-25 school year is \$453.***

- s. Approval of the following substitutes:
1. Paula Engber, Substitute Paraprofessional
 2. Kylie Brown, Substitute Teacher
 3. Madison Chaplin, Substitute Teacher
 4. Amanda Lodomirack, Substitute Teacher

13. **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
Michelle Iannuzzi Wendi Braun Melissa Stein James Valentine Stacey Montefusco Melissa Kennedy Jaclyn DiBrienza-Cikovic Lisa Schuffenhauer Daniel Manisa Susan Pallotta Christina Takacs Dawn Hersh Nancy Stephens Stephanie Vitale Wendi Braun	Sussex County School Counselor Association In-Service	\$0	10/14/24
Melissa Kennedy Lisa Schuffenhauer	Sussex County School Counselor Association In-Service	\$0+mileage	9/26/24
Karen Cubberly	Bringing 21st Century Skills to the Classroom ~ New Frontiers in Science and Technology	\$200+mileage	10/15/24
Melissa Kennedy Danielle Manisa Wendi Braun	Prevention Summit - Behavioral Threat	\$0+ mileage	9/24/24

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	Management & Suicide Prevention		
Jeff Hallenbeck	NJSBA Convention	\$446.57 hotel + \$238 meals + \$141.94 mileage	10/21-10/24/24
Michele Culcasi Kathleen Brennan Jennifer Valenti Patricia Coleman	Teaching Strategies GOLD Training	\$126.50+mileage	10/14/24

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

14. POLICY & REGULATIONS

Approval of item 14a, as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and the Student Achievement and Operations Committees of the Board:

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
P 5420	Reporting Pupil Progress (M)

15. STUDENTS AND SERVICES

Approval of the following items, 15a-15d as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for an additional 1 hour of home instruction services per week for student no. 13760 for the first marking period of the 2024-2025 school year (9/5/24-11/12/24). Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour.
- b. Approval for up to 6 hours per week of educational instruction services for student no. 15413 beginning 9/5/24 for the anticipated duration of approximately 30-60 days. Instruction will be provided by Silvergate Prep at a rate of \$45.00 per hour.
- c. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 413062. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour from 9/9/24 until approximately 10/11/24.
- d. Approval of the following field trip requests:

SCHOOL	DATE	TRIP
Middle School	10/17/24	Annual Youth Empowerment Summit

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16. RESOLUTIONS

Approval of the following resolutions as per the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools.

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the ELA and Math Curricula that were revised during the summer of 2024 as submitted.
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the submission of the ARP/ESSER final report.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the submission of the IDEA final report for the FY24.
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the submission of the ESEA final report for the FY24.
- e. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the equitable pay of \$1,500 for Krista Juskus as part of the HOPA contract.
- f. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the Memorandum of Agreement with the Sussex County Community College for the 24-25 school year for the Concurrent Enrollment Program.
- g. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the Board of Education approve the sidebar agreement with the HEA for a modification of job responsibilities in accordance with terms and conditions of the agreement. (HEA sidebar 24-25-2)
- h. WHEREAS, the Hopatcong Board of Education awarded a contract to WTI for Roofing & Envelope Services under Cooperative Purchasing Contract #ESCNJ/AEPA-21D on May 20, 2024 in the amount of \$872,328.33; and

WHEREAS the NJDOE and the School Development Authority approved the District for a Regular Operating District (ROD) grant that covers the cost of the project at a rate of 40% reimbursement (up to \$428,520); and

WHEREAS, the project approval plans included cost estimates for market escalation and project contingencies; therefore

BE IT RESOLVED it that the Hopatcong Board of Education approves the following changes to the contract increasing the total contract award to \$911,646.21:

1. Change order # 1 - Through wall flashing on the High School Gym in the amount of \$18,934.98. Funding for this change order will come from the ROD Grant award and District Capital Reserve Funds
2. Change Order # 2 - Membrane and flashing repairs to the high school roof (Sections A, B and CAFE) in the amount of \$20,382.90. Funding for this change order will come from the ROD Grant award and District Capital Reserve Funds.

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17. 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 August 27, 2024 through September 23, 2024 in the amount of \$377,039.45 for Regular bills and \$3,809,454.31 for Bus Contractors.
- b. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to hire Daniel Borchert** as a full-time Bus Driver for the 2024-2025 school year for 6.5 hours per day at the hourly rate of \$29.70, beginning October 1, 2024.
- c. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to accept the resignation** of Jennifer Marrugo from her position as a Bus Driver effective September 15, 2024.
- d. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval to purchase** one (1) 2025-26 Thomas 54 Passenger Bus from H.A. DeHart at a cost of \$155,813.02 per HCESC VEH-22-10 Bid.
- e. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of Janine Byrnes and Christopher Verdi to attend the NJ School Boards Annual Workshop**, October 21-24, 2024 in Atlantic City, NJ at a total cost of \$800.00 for mileage, tolls, parking and meals.
- f. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the approval to pay **newly hired bus drivers and bus aides**, with a start date of 9/1/24, for 1.5 hours to attend a training workshop on August 27, 2024 at the 2023/24 hourly rates.
- g.
 1. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **acceptance** of student transportation **quotations for Special Education School Year Routes** for the 2024-2025 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 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

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3. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the ***approval of route contract addendums*** for the 2024 Extended School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
4. The Superintendent and the Director of ***Transportation recommend the acceptance of bids submitted from the August 6, 2024 Bid #2024-25-04*** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A
5. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the ***award of bids submitted from the August 6, 2024 Bid #2024-25-04*** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
6. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the ***rejection of bids submitted from the August 6, 2024 Bid #2024-25-04*** due to cost exceeding allowable amount, non-compliance or termination of the routes as listed on Exhibit A.
7. The Superintendent and the Director of ***Transportation recommend the acceptance of bids submitted from the August 14, 2024 Bid #2024-25-02A*** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A
8. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the ***award of bids submitted from the August 14, 2024 Bid #2024-25-02A*** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
9. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the ***acceptance of student transportation quotations for Athletic/Class/Field Trips*** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
10. 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 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

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Motion to approve agenda items 11 – 17:

(ACTION) Motion by Polowchena. seconded by Falconi

Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano ^
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Yes	James Chaffee, Jr. *	Absent	Scott Francis	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

^ Mr. DiStefano votes "Yes" on all except 17, on which he votes "Present"

* Mr. Chaffee "Abstains" on 17b.

18. **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS**

Mr. Chaffee – The Tulsa Trail School Open House was great and well attended.

Dr. Cappello – Was very pleased that there were no open desks at the Tulsa Trail Open House. Also, thanks everyone for attending the Board meeting and Jeff and Nicole for their hard work. Use our District Website to remain up-to-date with the goings on in the district.

Ms. Gulan – Thanks to all who attended the board meeting.

Mrs. Polowchena – Thank you to all who came to meeting. We only deal in facts and we will present those to you so you may make your own educated decision.

Mr. DiStefano – Thanked everyone for coming and our Student Liaisons.

Mrs. Falconi-Shubert – Very happy about the new LinkIt program and our Seal of Biliteracy went from 5-10. Mrs. Falconi-Shubert also added how important it is for parents to teach their children about service.

19. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn:

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi. seconded by Cappello

All in favor: Aye Time: 7:37 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Jeffrey Hallenbeck, Board Secretary