

HOPATCONG BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

December 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 December 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	Absent	Philip DiStefano
Present	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Absent	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Present	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 Polowchena. seconded by Falconi

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

& Arrived 6:15pm

^ Arrived 6:18pm

5. **RECONVENE**

Motion to Reconvene

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by DiStefano

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Yes	Joseph Falconi	Yes	Nicole Falconi-Shubert	Yes	Philip DiStefano
Yes	Natalia Cappello	Absent	Jayson Cittrich	Yes	Jayna Gulan
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Yes	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. November 25, 2024 - Executive Session
- b. November 25, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Motion to approve 6a-6b:

(ACTION) Motion by Falconi seconded by Cappello

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

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

- a. Superintendent’s Report – **Mr. Jeffery Hallenbeck, Superintendent of Schools**
 - 1. Ray Sarinelli - Nisivoccia Audit Presentation – Mr. Sarinelli reported on the 2023/2024 audit. The district received only one audit recommendation.
- b. A second reading and approval of the Superintendent’s HIB Report for November 2024 as presented to the Board at the November meeting on November 25, 2024. Approval of the Superintendent's HIB report for December 2024 for first reading and review as presented to the Board at the December meeting on December 23, 2024.
- c. Student Representatives: **Natalia Gerena-Roman & Lilyanne Zinsli** – Lilyanne was in attendance to report on a great last week of school before the Holiday break with a pep rally and the band having many inductees into NJ Area Band.

Motion to approve 7a – 7c:

((ACTION) Motion by Falconi. 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
Absent	James Chaffee, Jr.	Yes	Scott Francis	Yes	Jennifer Polowchena

8. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS/CORRESPONDENCE**

- a. Congratulations to Layla Gonzalez on receiving the **Sussex County Superintendents Roundtable Award.**
- b. Congratulations to the following students who were chosen as **Hopatcong Middle School's Students-of-the-Month** for their outstanding performance in November 2024.

9. **PARENT/TEACHER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVES** - None

10. **PUBLIC COMMENT – GENERAL DISCUSSION** - None

11. **FINANCE**

- a. It is recommended by the Superintendent that bills for the General Fund and Special Revenues (Grants) account, November 25, 2024, through December 23, 2024 be approved in the following amounts:
 General Fund and Special Revenue (Grants) account - \$1,340,969.80
 Cafeteria account - \$69,239.34
 Fund 30 - \$28,050.00
- b. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Treasurer's Report for the month of November 2024.
- c. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Board Secretary's Report for the month of November 2024.
- d. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve the Transfer Report for the month of November 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 December 23, 2024, 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 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 Mrs. Susan Dykstra be appointed as Treasurer of School Monies January 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.
- h. It is recommended by the Superintendent that the board approve writing off the following checks from the General Fund:

DATE	CHECK NUMBER	AMOUNT
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10/30/2023	85717	\$704.18
12/05/2023	85924	\$504.00

- i. Acceptance of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) and the Auditor’s Management Report (AMR) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Superintendent and as reviewed by the Operations Committee.
- j. Approval of the Corrective Action Plan (Recommendations 2024-01 and 2024-02) in response to the ACFR findings for the period July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024, as recommended by the Superintendent and as reviewed by the Operations Committee.

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12/9/24, 12:35 PM

Corrective Action Plan Hopatcong 23-24.docx - Google Docs

June 30, 2024

Corrective Action Plan (CAP)
 For the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 20XX
 Prepare only when there is a finding(s) in the ACFR or AMR.

Upload to the ACFR Repository with file name: CAP.PDF (within 45 days of Board accepting the Audit)
 Email a copy of the CAP to: CAP@hopatcong.org

School District/Charter/Renaissance School Project: Hopatcong Borough Schools
 County: Sussex
 Contact Person: Jeff Hallenbeck
 Type of Audit: Annual
 Email Address / Telephone Number: hallenbeck@hopatcongschools.org 973-770-3844
 Date of Board Meeting: 12/23/24

A	B	C	D	E	F
*AMR/ACFR Finding #	*Finding (Condition)	*Recommendation	*Method of Implementation	Person Responsible for	Completion Date
2024-001	During our review of the Preschool Education Aid, it was noted that the District's accounting system budget did not agree to the State budget document, however, no over-accruals were reported.	It is suggested the District review the accounting system and ensure the budgeted amounts for Preschool Education Aid agree to the state budget document.	The district will review the PEA Budget from 23-24 as well as carry over funds from previous years to ensure the accounting system has the correct financial numbers.	Business Administrator PEA Program Manager Accounting Staff	January 2025
2024-002	During our review of the District's capital asset appraisal report, it was noted that the original acquisition cost and the year acquired for several items has changed since the last appraisal was done in 2019. Additionally the fixed asset appraisal did not include capital assets acquired during the current year.	It is recommended that the District request the fixed asset appraisal company to report all assets at their original acquisition cost and actual year acquired and provide a recapitulation of the current year activity.	The District will request the fixed asset appraisal company to report all assets at their original acquisition cost and actual year acquired and provide a recapitulation of the activity in the current year.	Business Administrator Accounting Staff Operations Staff	June 2025

Page 1 of 2

* Reference AMR/ACFR for columns A, B & C. Please use same wording from AMR/ACFR.
 * Method of Implementation (column D). Please describe the plan that ensures the finding(s) will not recur.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/15YmXepQOR3QsE6c96XUUVV9gSDmfj0/edit>

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REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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12/19/24, 12:35 PM

Corrective Action Plan Hopatcong 23-24.docx - Google Docs

June 30, 2024

Corrective Action Plan (CAP)

For the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 20XX

Prepare only when there is a finding(s) in the ACFR or AMR.

Upload to the ACFR Repository with file name: CAP.PDF (within 45 days of Board accepting the Audit)

Email a copy of the CAP to: CAP@gsnj.gov

School District/Charter/Renaissance School Project: Hopatcong Borough Schools

County: Sussex



Contact Person: Jeff Hallenbeck

Type of Audit: Annual

Email Address / Telephone Number: jhallenbeck@hopatcongschools.org 973-770-8844

Date of Board Meeting: 12/23/24

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Chief School Administrator:		Date:	12/23/24
Board Secretary/ School Business Administrator:		Date:	12/23/24

* Reference AMR/ACFR for columns A, B & C. Please use same wording from AMR/ACFR.
* Method of Implementation (column D). Please describe the plan that ensures the finding(s) will not recur.

Page 2 of 2

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12. PERSONNEL

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

- a. Approval to accept the resignation, with regret, of **Linda Minervini** for the purpose of retirement effective June 30, 2025. Linda has worked for the Hopatcong School District for the past 24 years.
- b. Approval to terminate **Employee #81198** effective December 5, 2024.
- c. Approval of employment of **Jessica Stillwell** as a Paraprofessional at Durban Ave 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 clearance.
- d. Approval of employment of **Gloria Vasquez** as a Full Time Custodian effective January 2, 2025 at a prorated salary of \$45,365, which represents step 1 of the 2024-2025 HEA custodian guide.
- e. Approval of **Employee #81721** to take a leave of absence using 15 earned sick days starting March 17, 2025 followed by a 12 week unpaid FMLA/NJFLA leave beginning April 4, 2025 and ending September 12, 2025. After the FMLA/NJFLA leave the employee will then take an unpaid leave of absence starting September 15, 2025 through October 10, 2025 with an anticipated return to work date of October 13, 2025.
- f. Approval of **Michelle Zammito** to complete General Education Preschool Registration for the 2024-2025 school year at a rate of \$28/hour as needed. (PEA Funds)
- g. Approval of **David Bell** to work as Middle School Detention Monitor at a rate of \$28/hour as needed.
- h. Approval of **Neil Pallotta** and **Laura Tykowski** as High School Portfolio Instructors at a rate of \$35/hour as needed.
- i. Approval of **Craig Vallaro, Barbara Parichuck, Wendi Braun, and Christine Kalemba** as subs for CRAAM at a rate of \$40/hour when needed.
- j. Approval of the following staff mentoring partnership in accordance with the provisions and requirements of the Hopatcong District Mentoring Program:

New Staff Member	Mentor
Noelle D'Amato	Christine Kalemba

- k. Approval of the following staff members who are recommended to receive tenure.

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Name	Effective Date
Jennifer Valenti	12/07/2024
Amanda McCarthy	2/22/2025

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

Name	Nature of Action	Position	Class	Level	Salary
Carla Malatesta Alexa McLean	Appoint* <i>revised salary amount</i>	Cultural Fusion Club	C	3	\$1,166
Christine Kalemba Heather DelBagno	Appoint* <i>revised salary amount</i>	NJHS	C	4	\$1,429
Al Cerulo	Appoint* <i>revised salary amount</i>	Music Advisor Tri-M	B D	4 4	\$3,287 \$1,782

m. 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
Chris Bove	Curriculum Development and Evaluation	GED 651	3	\$1,359.00

****The maximum rate of reimbursement per credit for the 24-25 school year is \$453.***

13. Approval of the following items, 13a-13b as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools and Student Achievement Committee of the Board:

- a. Approval for 5 hours of home instruction services per week for student no. 13883 beginning 12/9/24. Instruction will be provided by Hopatcong certificated staff at the Board approved rate of \$40.00 per hour.
- b. Approval of the request by the Parents/Guardians of the following students to allow them to participate in the Inter-district Public School Choice Program for September 2025, if accepted into their program:

Student Number	Current School	Current Grade	Choice Destination
13899	Hopatcong Middle School	6	Eisenhower Middle School (Roxbury Township School District)
15384	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
13992	Hopatcong High School	9	Lenape Valley Regional High School

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13624	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
14660	Hopatcong High School	10	Lenape Valley Regional High School
14134	Hopatcong Middle School	6	Eisenhower Middle School (Roxbury Township School District), Byram Township School District
13959	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
15453	Tulsa Trail Elementary School	2	Byram Township School District
15477	Durban Avenue Elementary School	K	Byram Township School District
13634	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
15046	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
14549	Hopatcong High School	10	Lenape Valley Regional High School
13957	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
13853	Hopatcong Middle School	7	Byram Township School District, Netcong School District, Roxbury Township School District
14561	Tulsa Trail Elementary School	3	Byram Township School District
13613	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
13670	Hopatcong High School	8	Lenape Valley Regional High School
15755	Preschool – First Impressions	Pre-K	Byram Township School District
14456	Hopatcong Middle School	6	Byram Township School District
13398	Hopatcong High School	9	Morris Hills Regional School District
13208	Hopatcong High School	10	Lenape Valley Regional High School

14. **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 agreement between Hopatcong Borough School District and Seton Hall University to provide cooperative learning opportunities for postsecondary students.

15. **SUSSEX COUNTY REGIONAL COOPERATIVE**

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- a. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **approval of bills** for the Sussex County Regional Cooperative Operating account for November 26, 2024 through December 23, 2024 in the amount of \$150,825.25 for Regular bills and \$10,374,387.53 for Contractor bills.
- b. 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 26-28, 2025. The conference costs are in compliance with the state travel reimbursement guidelines/state waiver. Total cost of conference registration, lodging and mileage not to exceed \$2,549.64 for the following staff: Janine Byrnes, Lori Harrison and Chris Verdi.
- c. 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-7003-SP25-1, Codes, Statutes and Regulations, \$483.00
- d.
 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.
 3. The Superintendent and the Director of **Transportation recommend the acceptance of bids submitted from the November 12, 2024 Bid #2024-25-05** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
 4. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award of bids submitted from the November 12, 2024 Bid #2024-25-05** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
 5. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **rejection of bids submitted from the November 12, 2024 Bid #2023-24-05** due to non-compliance or termination of the routes as listed on Exhibit A.
 6. The Superintendent and the Director of **Transportation recommend the acceptance of bids submitted from the November 13, 2024 Bid #2024-25-06** for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.
 7. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **award of bids submitted from the November 13, 2024 Bid #2024-25-06** to the lowest, responsible and responsive bus contractor company for the 2024-2025 School Year as listed on Exhibit A.

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8. The Superintendent and the Director of Transportation recommend the **rejection of bids submitted from the November 13, 2024 Bid #2023-24-06** due to non-compliance or termination of the routes 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

(ACTION) Motion to approve items 11 – 15 by DiStefano. seconded by Falconi

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

* Dr. Cappello abstains 13b

16. **BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER COMMENTS**

Scott Francis - Great improvement on our audit where we had 22 recommendations in the past and now we have one! During his 7 years on the board, Mr. Francis stated that he witnessed tremendous improvement in the district and we have now a great group of truly invested board members. He noted that he has been through 4 Superintendents in his 7 years and has not seen anyone who has the command of this district as Jeff Hallenbeck does.

Nicole Falconi-Shubert – The Board has many goals this year including the reduction of chronic absenteeism.

17. **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion to adjourn:

(ACTION) Motion by Francis. seconded by DiStefano

All in favor: Aye Time: 7:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,



Jeff Hallenbeck, Board Secretary