

JOHNSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL  
Monday, December 11, 2023  
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
Minutes

Board Members Present: Rachel DeGroat  
Melissa Freebern  
Chris Jay  
Erwin Morris  
Tom Ordway  
Sarah Williams

Board Members Absent: Tara Sears

**Call to Order:** Rachel DeGroat opened the meeting at 6:04 with the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Approval of Minutes:** Sarah Williams made a **MOTION** to approve the minutes of the December 11, 2023, Board of Education Meeting, seconded by Melissa Freebern and carried.

**CSE/CPSE/504** Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to accept the CSE/CPSE/504 Reports seconded by Chris Jay and carried.

**Presentation:** **Youth & Government:** Matt Wells presented as the Advisor of the Youth and Government Club. He spoke of the activities of the students participated in and how the program can be different for all students involved. He stated that this year, we have twenty students involved in the program.

**CASDA:** Jerry Steele and Mike Piccirillo from CASDA presented updated information on the status of the merger. Tom Ordway asked the members of CASDA if they went out and asked community members in stores. CASDA said they did not. They stated that the members of the Feasibility Study Group are the community's voice, and if people have questions, they should contact a group member. Mike Markwica spoke and informed the Board that there is an area on each District's website for community members to write in their questions. Each week, both Superintendents meet to review and answer

all questions asked. He then informed the Board that an AR code would be available in the community after the holidays for people to gain easier access to the Merger website.

Tom Ordway stated he wants boxes set up at Stewarts and Sullivan Store. Mike Markwica said he would look into that idea.

**Motion:**

Sarah Williams made a **MOTION** to accept the Board of Education's 2024 Advocacy Priorities, seconded by Melissa Freebern and carried.

Mike Markwica explained that thirty-one Districts put together priorities they would like the State of New York to address.

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to appoint Kate Bennett as the Girl's 5/6 Elementary Coach, as per the JCSTA contract for the 2023-2024 school year, seconded by Sarah Williams and carried.

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to appoint Allison Gonyo as the Boy's 5/6 Elementary Coach as per the JCSTA contract for the 2023-2024 school year, seconded by Sarah Williams and carried.

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to appoint Amanda May as the Boy's 5/6 Elementary Volunteer Coach for the 2023-2024 school year, seconded by Sarah Williams and carried.

Erwin Morris asked if Amanda May was only a volunteer coach for the boys' team. Mike Markwica stated she was.

**Discussion:**

**New York Early Mail Voter Act:** Mike Markwica explained that Governor Houchal put into law that registered voters may now vote early for school board budgets. They are by mail request only.

**Tax Certiorari:** Mike Markwica explained that Elderwood Nursing home has asked for a tax deduction - taxed on the price they paid for the property, not its assessment value. The Town of Johnsbury wants to challenge their request and would like the school district to support the Town's fight by paying half the court costs if the challenge goes that far. Melissa Freebern stated that the Finance Committee recommends that the District does not accept Elderwood's proposal.

Mike Markwica stated the Board needs to decide if we agree with the Town's settlement, or we fight on our own.

Melissa Freebern stated more information is needed before the District can make a knowledgeable decision.

Rachel DeGroat stated that the Board needs to gather more information and talk to our District's attorney. She then stated Mike would gather more information and present an update at the next Board meeting.

**Committee Reports:**

**School Community Relations/ Climate:** A discussion on ParentSquare.

**Policy and Plans:** The committee decided to pay up to \$400 to students for registration fees. A draft will be submitted to the Board for review.

**Workplace Violence and Prevention:** This policy is mandated, and the deadline is January 2024. Mike Markwica stated he had given the policy to the board for review, and he would like to form a committee.

Tom Ordway stated we should approve the lawyer's draft.

**Motion:**

Tom Ordway made a **MOTION** to approve the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy, seconded by Chris Jay and carried.

**Update Reports:**

Mike Markwica reported that there will be a half-staff day on January 26, 2024 (True North). Staff will have a choice on meeting with similar core teachers or training in AI.

Heather Flanagan updated the Board of the success of the Wellness Day event that took place. The Natural Helpers are hoping to make this a yearly event.

Heather Flanagan informed the Board that due to an illness, the Elementary Concert scheduled for the next night will be moved to the following Tuesday, December 19th.

Heather Flanagan presented a handout of the grades from the first quarter for review.

**Other Business:**

Tom Ordway thanked all the coaches, players, and parents who were involved with the fall sports season.

Sarah Williams stated that she thought the school looked great with the window decorations that Heather Olesheski put up

**Visitor's Comments:**

David Pede spoke;

He thanked the teachers who were present.

He asked why there were Hat Day fund-raisers if hats were banned from school.

He asked if Board members were allowed to go to the CASDA meetings.

He also asked if the Board was presented a plan for the merger from the Feasibility Study Group and the community votes for that Can the new board change the plan once they are in office?

(Mike Markwica asked Mr. Pede to write his questions down and the two superintendents will answer them and post it on the website)

Mr. Pede then asked if sports students could be permanently added to the late bus sheets like the students who are in the after-school program are. He went on to say that an active Google Sheet would be more effective.

Mr. Pede then asked why Nordic skis were not permitted on the morning school buses if musical instruments were.

**Adjournment:**

Sarah Williams made a **MOTION** to adjourn at 7:15 pm, seconded by Erwin Morris and carried.