

**Hinsdale School Board Work Session**  
**HMHS Library**  
**March 28, 2023**  
**6:00 PM**

**Board Members Present:** Holly Kennedy, April Anderson, Kaylah Hemlow, and Kendra Gardner

**Board Members Excused:** Jeana Woodbury

**Administration Present:** John Barth, Principal; Joe Boggio, Principal; Kim Caron, Interim Superintendent; Jodie Holmquist, Business Administrator, and Justin Therieau, Director of Technology

**Minutes Recorded by:** Maria Webb, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent

**Call to Order:**

H. Kennedy called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm. H. Kennedy welcomed new board member, K. Gardner, and returning board member, K. Hemlow.

H. Kennedy stated that the purpose of the meeting is to finalize the proposed budget reductions to reduce the 2023-2024 budget to \$437,000.00, per the budget approved at district meeting. H. Kennedy reviewed the meeting agenda. Noted that staffing and salary reductions make up the largest portion of the reductions. H. Kennedy stated that the non-public minutes will be sealed as it is important that the staff are informed regarding staffing or salary reductions before the public is informed. There are positions that we have been unable to fill due to staffing shortages.

H. Kennedy noted that the remaining amount of the reductions would be spread out across all areas and that no single area would receive a large decrease. The remaining amount is approximately \$50k.

Decisions must be made tonight to ensure that we are able to meet the deadline for submitting the MS-27 to the state.

**Citizens' Comments:**

H. Kennedy opened citizen comments for 30 minutes. H. Kennedy shared the policy regarding citizens' comments. Citizens were asked to state their name before making a comment or asking a question.

Ken Howe asked who was excused from the board tonight. J. Woodbury was excused.

Theresa Diorio asked regarding the plans for the School Psychologist and Chemistry positions. Shared the importance of these positions. H. Kennedy noted that we are required to offer Chemistry. K. Caron shared that the School Psychologist position has been open for a few years.

We have contracted with Presence Learning to provide services to students virtually. T. Diorio expressed her belief that the School Psychologist position should oversee the Guidance Department.

Lyndsay Barry asked if the Board had considered an independent committee to provide oversight to the budget preparation process. It was noted that it is the role of the Budget Committee.

Kelly Kruse asked how many students from HMHS attend the WRCC in Brattleboro and the cost per student. J. Barth shared that there are five students attending currently at \$6,000 each. K. Kruse suggested that we reduce the budget by not sending any students to the WRCC going forward.

L. Barry asked how many preschool students we have. J. Boggio noted that we have 33 total. L. Barry asked if we are mandated to provide preschool. J. Boggio noted that we are mandated to provide special education services to preschool students, that include interaction with non-identified peers, so that they do not have to be placed out of town. T. Diorio asked whether parents pay for their students to attend preschool. J. Boggio noted that the revenues are approximately \$12,000 annually. If we did not have a preschool program, 16 students would need to receive services in another district. K. Caron noted that he views the program as critical to education.

T. Diorio asked about the number of board members present tonight and what the procedure is if there is a split vote. H. Kennedy noted that the motion would not pass in that case.

There were no other questions at this time.

### **Non-Public Session:**

**A. Anderson MOVED to go into a nonpublic session according to RSA 91 A:3 II (a) at 6:21 pm. K. Hemlow SECONDED. Roll Call: H. Kennedy – yes, A. Anderson – yes, K. Hemlow – yes, K. Gardner - yes. VOTE: 4-0-0, MOTION PASSED.**

**A. Anderson MOVED to reconvene the public session at 8:06 pm. K. Hemlow SECONDED. Roll Call: H. Kennedy – yes, A. Anderson – yes, K. Hemlow – yes, K. Gardner - yes. VOTE: 4-0-0, MOTION PASSED.**

### **Discussion of Budget Reductions:**

**A. Anderson MOVED to seal the non-public minutes according to RSA 91 A:3 II (a) at 8:09 pm. K. Hemlow SECONDED. Roll Call: H. Kennedy – yes, A. Anderson – yes, K. Hemlow – yes, K. Gardner - yes. VOTE: 4-0-0, MOTION PASSED.**

H. Kennedy shared that the total amount of reductions agreed upon is \$446,745.98. This includes \$437,000.00, per the district meeting vote, plus an additional \$9,745.98.

H. Kennedy noted that the additional amount will not be reported in the MS-27, as it is not information that is contained in the MS-27.

H. Kennedy shared that reductions in certified staff positions will mostly be made due to retirements. The only impact to the sports budget is the elimination of catering for sports banquets.

**Other Business:**

There was no other business.

**Citizens' Comments:**

H. Kennedy asked the citizens attending in person for any comments.

K. Howe asked to confirm the amount of the additional reductions over and above the \$437,000.00. The Board confirmed that the additional amount is \$9,745.98.

T. Diorio asked regarding reductions due to attrition and how difficult it will be to add them back into the budget in the future, if they are needed.

Steve Diorio asked regarding the reductions due to attrition. K. Caron noted that we do not want to discuss dollar amounts or any personally identifiable information until any impacted staff are notified.

Dan Seymour asked regarding students attending school here from other districts and whether they are paying tuition. H. Kennedy shared that there is only one student in this category. K. Caron noted that this topic will be addressed at the next Board meeting. A. Anderson noted that the Tuition Exploratory Committee has just started up again.

K. Howe asked if we are eliminating the funding or the positions altogether. For example, if we had funding in the future, could we add the positions back. J. Holmquist noted that we are not keeping the line items open for the future.

T. Diorio asked regarding tuitioning Winchester students. A. Anderson noted that we expect this will just be for high school students, but it is too early in the process to know how many students we can accommodate.

T. Diorio asked when the new budget will be available for the public. J. Holmquist noted that it will be completed for the MS-22 by April 14, 2023. Stated that this will not be available for the public until after K. Caron is able to speak with any impacted staff.

D. Seymour asked if positions will be eliminated permanently. K. Caron noted that we have the flexibility to work within the budget and put together a great educational program for the students of Hinsdale. We can be creative in determining how we can do things differently and more efficiently. For example, we think we have room to accommodate tuitioned students in the Middle High School.

D. Seymour expressed concern with tuitioning students here. H. Kennedy noted that we will invite two community members to join the Tuition Exploratory Committee.

K. Kruse encouraged the Board and Administration to discuss the status with staff as soon as it is feasible, as this is having an emotional impact on the staff. K. Caron noted that he will have meetings with staff after classes tomorrow.

Mark Sprague noted that the vote to decrease the budget by \$1.1 million was just eight votes short of passing. Expressed that the board needs to keep looking at ways to cut costs.

K. Howe asked regarding the pay discussions for new hires. H. Kennedy noted the contractual obligations per the collective bargaining agreements. K. Hemlow noted that typically our new hires are earning less than those retiring. K. Caron noted that administrative positions tend to be competitive. For example, good Principals can be very selective. K. Caron noted that the it will be difficult to fill the Superintendent position given that this is an 0.6 position (24 hours per week), and not eligible for the NHRS benefits). Noted that this the challenge of a small community. K. Caron expressed that we would like to look at successful small school districts in other areas to find out what their best practices are. K. Caron would like the time to begin that work in Hinsdale.

H. Kennedy noted ongoing recruiting and staffing challenges due to pay rates at HSD.

Ann Diorio stated that the district should not focus on reducing the pay of administrative staff. For example, the IT Director could earn much more outside of this district.

J. Therieau noted that, for example, he has been in the district fifteen years and his salary is much lower than the previous IT Director's salary.

J. Holmquist noted that there are always discussions regarding salary when a new hire comes on board. Cited savings in recent years due to retirements and new hires having less experience.

Dennis Nadeau expressed his view that if the district could do a better job explaining the rationale behind the budget, the voters may better understand the needs of the school district.

M. Sprague noted Para pay is a contractual issue and asked who attends the negotiations. H. Kennedy explained the composition of the negotiation teams and that it is a confidential process. M. Sprague asked if community members can be part of the process. H. Kennedy noted that per labor laws, this is not allowed.

After all the questions were answered, the following motions were made:

**A. Anderson MOVED to approve the total amount of reductions at \$446,745.98. K. Gardner SECONDED. 4-0-0-MOTION PASSED.**

**K. Hemlow MOVED to adjourn the meeting at 8:57 pm. A. Anderson SECONDED. VOTE: 4-0-0, MOTION PASSED.**

I attest that this is a true copy of the minutes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Maria A. Webb

approved on \_\_\_\_\_