

Pelham School Board Meeting
Pelham Elementary School
October 16, 2024
6:30 p.m.

School Board Members: Troy Bressette, Chair; Garrett Abare; Rebecca Cummings; and Darlene Greenwood

Superintendent: Chip McGee

Assistant Superintendent: Sarah Marandos

Business Administrator: Deb Mahoney

Absent: David Wilkerson; Mya Belanger and Alexia Nou

Also in Attendance: None

I. Public Session:

A. Call to Order:

6:39 p.m. - Chair Troy Bressette called the meeting to order, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

B. Public Input at 6:40 p.m.:

No came forward.

Public Input closed at 6:41 p.m.

C. Opening Remarks:

a. Superintendent:

Superintendent McGee updated the District's academic progress, noting that the 5th-grade students were working on nonfiction reading assignments, including studying the Constitution, the Articles of Confederation, and the nature of the two-house government.

Dr. McGee complimented the students for their sophisticated work in class and on the sports field. He highlighted how the PMS and PHS field hockey teams played doubleheaders and raised money for a cause. He added that the District's volleyball team was raising money for Boston Children's Hospital that evening. Dr. McGee also commended the District's strong academic achievements, particularly mentioning the AP Statistics class.

III. Presentations:

A. None

IV. Main Issues:

A. Donation of Trees to Pelham Memorial School:

Mr. Bressette shifted the meeting to the main agenda items. The first item discussed was the donation of 11 trees to PMS, valued at **\$1,491.20**, from Gino Baroni, principal of the Trident Group. The trees included eight Zelkova Green trees and three Honey Locust trees. Dr. McGee noted that Boyden's Landscaping had also offered to donate their services, valued at over **\$5,000**, to plant the trees. It was noted that the Board needed to accept the donation, as it exceeded the financial threshold for automatic approval.

Mr. Bressette commented on the Board's appreciation of its longstanding partnership with Gino Baroni, the Trident Group, and Boyden's Landscaping.

The Board discussed the placement of the trees, with some uncertainty regarding their location near a natural gas line by the softball field. Ms. Cummings asked if the trees were going to be dedicated to someone, and Dr. McGee stated that there would be no dedication.

Ms. Greenwood moved to accept the donation as presented. Mr. Abare seconded the motion, which passed (4-0-0).

B. Pelham Police Department Partnership and Response:

The next agenda item involved a partnership with the Pelham Police Department. Chief Perriello provided an overview of the emergency response plans between the Police, Fire Department, and School District. She emphasized the strong collaboration between the Police Department and the School District, noting regular meetings and drills, including lockdown procedures.

Chief Perriello discussed the report regarding an incident from the previous week. She explained that they had received a call from 911, which originated from the FBI. The FBI had received a tip through social media regarding a threat. Although Chief Perriello did not go into specific details about the threat, it was confirmed that the situation involved Pelham High School. The FBI provided specific information, including the identity and location of the student involved. Based on this information, the school was locked down, and law enforcement responded promptly. The student in question was quickly located and removed from the classroom. An investigation is ongoing, and no further details were shared to protect the investigation's integrity.

Chief Perriello emphasized that, in such situations, public expectations can be mixed, especially on social media. While some people demand more information, she clarified that specific details, especially those concerning juveniles, will not be disclosed. Juveniles are protected by laws such as FERPA and the Safe Schools Act, which prohibit releasing specific information. Chief Perriello noted that these protections extend to all students, regardless of their involvement in incidents. Additionally, she highlighted a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the District and law enforcement, outlining when the school must contact law enforcement and when officers should be involved.

The primary focus in these situations is always safety. Chief Perriello stated that there are no "rights" to ensure safety, and law enforcement will take the necessary steps to address any threats. On the day of the incident, the response went smoothly, with clear communication between the school and law enforcement. She and a Lieutenant were stationed outside the school while officers inside PHS acted swiftly to secure the student in question. Chief Perriello also mentioned that they constantly communicated with Dr. McGee throughout the day, underscoring the importance of collaboration between the School District and law enforcement.

Dr. McGee appreciated the high level of collaboration between the School District and law enforcement. He noted that messages are co-authored whenever possible, ensuring consistency in communication without detracting from the work at hand. He acknowledged the importance of acting quickly in such situations while balancing the need to share information and protect sensitive details. Dr. McGee commended the Pelham School District for its prompt responses and efforts to ensure student safety.

Chief Perriello then commended the officers involved, particularly Officer Yates, for their professionalism and quick action during the incident. Ms. Greenwood expressed her gratitude for the efforts of law enforcement and the school district to keep the students safe. Ms. Cummings inquired about the duration of the lockdown, to which Chief Perriello responded that it lasted approximately an hour. However, due to the nature of the situation, it felt longer. She promised to provide a more precise timeline at a later date.

Mr. Bressette, a parent and Board member, commented that he understood the need to know all the details but stressed that details do not always account for transparency.

The discussion concluded with a focus on the strong partnership between the Pelham Police Department and the School District. Both groups reiterated their commitment to student safety and collaboration. The Board thanked Chief Perriello and the Pelham Police Department for their continued dedication to student safety.

The Board also expressed strong confidence in the District Administrators and staff's handling of the current situation and in ensuring the safety of all students.

C. Fiscal Year 2026 Budget:

The Board then moved on to the fiscal year 2026 budget. The Board reviewed the second draft of the warrant article, noting that the total amount recommended by the School Board is **\$44,668,848**. It was mentioned that the default budget calculation was deferred. Business Administrator Deb Mahoney mentioned that the Board would have the default budget at the November 6 meeting.

The Board also discussed the official meeting and election calendar for the annual meeting, scheduled for Wednesday, February 5, 2025. All key dates, including the first day to file for candidacy and the public hearing with the Budget Committee, were highlighted.

**Pelham School District Calendar
2025 Annual Meeting and Election
Official Ballot District (SB2)**

Date	Action	Reference
Friday, January 10, 2025	The deadline for Citizen Petition Bond Articles is more than \$100,000.	RSA 40:13, II-a (b)
Tuesday, January 14, 2025	Deadline to Post Notice of Budget Hearing and Post and Publish Notice of Bond Hearing. Note: At least 7 days prior notice of bond hearing must be published in the newspaper.	RSA 40:13, II-a (a), RSA 33:8-a
Tuesday, January 14, 2025	Deadline for other Citizens' Petition Articles.	RSA 40:13 II-a (b), RSA 197:6
Tuesday, January 14, 2025	Deadline to finalize CBAs.	RSA 32:5-a
Tuesday, January 14, 2025	Supervisor of Checklist Posts Checklist. (This must contain a notice of correction session.)	RSA 671:15, RSA 669:5, RSA 654:26 and 27
Tuesday, January 21, 2025	The deadline is for a public hearing on the School Board's or Budget Committee's proposed budget and a default budget presentation.	RSA 40:13, II-a (c) and 40:13, XI(a)
Tuesday, January 21, 2025	Deadline for School Board Bond Hearing. If possible, the hearing should be within the 15- 60-day window required by RSA 33:8-a (on or after January 10 and on or before January 21, 2025). Also, the notice should be published at least seven days before the hearing and posted on or before January 9, 2025. If the bond hearing is early, publish the notice early.	RSA 40:13, II-a(c) and RSA 33:8-a
Tuesday, January 21, 2025	Supervisor of Checklist Correction Session. (7 days prior notice must be published in a newspaper or be posted in two (2) places, one of which shall be the District website if one exists. RSA 654:27).	RSA 671:15, RSA 669:5, and RSA 654:27
Tuesday, January 22, 2025	First Day of Filing Period for Candidates.	RSA 671:19, RSA 669:19
Tuesday, January 23, 2025	The official Budget Committee (if there is one) must deliver the final budget to the School Board by this date.	RSA 40:13, II-b(c)

Tuesday, January 27, 2025	Post Warrant(s) and Budget for Session I and II (Deliberative and Election Warrants).	RSA 40:13, II-a(d)
Tuesday, January 31, 2025	Last Day of Filing Period for Candidates.	RSA 671:19, RSA 669:19
Wednesday, February 5, 2025	Deliberative Session (Session I)	RSA 40:13 III, IV
Tuesday, February 11, 2025	Supervisors of Checklist re-post Checklist. Must Contain Notice of all Correction Sessions.	RSA 671:15, RSA 669:5 and RSAs 654:26 and 27
Between Tuesday, February 26, and March 4, 2025	Supervisor of Checklist Checklist Correction Session. (7 days prior notice must be published in a newspaper or be posted in two (2) places, one of which shall be the District website if one exists.	RSA 671:15, RSA 669:5, RSA 654:27
Tuesday, March 4, 2025	Deadline for Annual Report with final budget and ballot questions.	RSA 40:13, II and RSA 32:5, VII-a
Tuesday, March 11, 2025	District Voting (Session II) Budget/Bond Voting and Election Absentee Ballots Collected. Residents May Register at the Polls.	RSA 40:13 VIII
Monday, March 31, 2025	Deadline for reports to DRA of meeting results.	RSA 21-J:34, II

Ms. Mahoney clarified the General Fund portion of the budget, totaling **\$42,716,830**. Questions from the Board were addressed, confirming the budget figures.

D. Additional Revenue Anticipated for FY2025:

The Board then moved to a discussion on revenues, where Ms. Mahoney noted that an atypical revenue source from the New Hampshire Municipal Bond Bank had emerged. Refinancing the high school bond resulted in savings of **\$621,488**, which would be used to offset this year's expenses and reduce the tax rate. This revenue was categorized as anticipated, meaning it could not be used for new capital improvements but would help reduce the amount needed to be raised through property taxes.

Ms. Greenwood asked if the additional funds could be used to purchase a boiler for PHS, which is needed. Dr. McGee clarified that the funds are considered '**Anticipated Revenue**,' which means they can only be used to reduce the tax burden for the current year. It is a one-time benefit and will not be available next year. Board members discussed the limitations of using bond funds and the legal requirements surrounding their allocation.

The Board expressed appreciation for the updates and concluded the discussion by confirming that the next steps would involve further review and adjustments to the budget.

The Board discussed the implications of this revenue, with Ms. Mahoney emphasizing that while it represents an anticipated revenue, it cannot be used for capital expenditures, such as purchasing a new boiler for the high school. This is because the funds were previously approved by voters and are intended to offset property taxes rather than finance new projects. Ms. Mahoney reiterated that this revenue will ultimately help lower the tax burden for residents, as it reduces the amount that needs to be raised through taxation.

A question was asked regarding how the anticipated revenue affects the budget. Ms. Mahoney clarified that while the District will receive the funds, they cannot be appropriated for additional spending beyond the budget. The revenue will help in the tax rate-setting process, reducing the tax rate for property owners.

Mr. Bressette asked when the District would have had to be notified for more flexibility. Ms. Mahoney said that if the District had received notice in January 2025, it would have been too late to anticipate the revenue in the fiscal year.

The Board expressed their understanding of the importance of applying this anticipated revenue appropriately to offset the tax rate rather than for new capital improvements. Ms. Mahoney confirmed this discussion was critical, given the nature of the check coming to the District. No further questions were raised, and the Board agreed on the approach to managing this financial development.

Mr. Bressette thanked Ms. Mahoney for the information regarding the additional revenue.

E. Reallocation to Reallocate PHS Coach Stipend:

Dr. McGee mentioned that this is the first time they have requested a reallocation of funds this year. He noted that under the new contract, stipends for extracurricular activities can be reallocated with agreement from the Executive Board and the School Board.

Dr. McGee stated that the Athletic Director recommended reallocating funds due to the absence of a boys' junior varsity soccer team. He noted that the junior varsity players were absorbed into an expanded varsity team, and there was a need to pay an assistant coach who had already been serving voluntarily. This reallocation was a temporary solution for one year and did not imply a long-term change.

Dr. McGee commented that the Teachers' Executive Board had already voted in favor of this change. Dr. McGee mentioned that the varsity team would not have an assistant coach if there were a junior varsity team.

Ms. Greenwood moved to reallocate the stipend from the junior varsity soccer coach to an assistant varsity soccer coach. Mr. Abare seconded the motion, which passed (4-0-0).

V. Policy Review:

The Board reviewed the policy listed below.

a. First Reading:

- i. CFB - Administrator Evaluation

b. Second Reading:

- i. None

VI. Other:

- A. None

VII. Board Member Reports:

- A. Mr. Abare mentioned that he attended the Wellness Committee meeting and noted that it was good to meet the members.

VIII. Consent Agenda:

A. Adoption of Minutes

- a. October 2, 2024 – Draft Public Minutes
- b. October 2, 2024 – Draft Non-Public Minutes

B. Vendor and Payroll Manifests:

- a. 558 \$658,413.23
- b. PAY558P \$11,508.49
- c. BFPMS74 \$4,281.64
- d. AP101624 \$598,868.95

C. Correspondence & Information:

- a. None

D. Enrollment Report:

- a. None

E. Staffing Updates:

a. Leaves:

- i. None

b. Resignations:

- i. None

c. Retirements:

- i. None

d. Nominations:

- i. None

Ms. Greenwood moved to approve the Consent Agenda, minus E1A (public minutes) as specified. Mr. Abare seconded the motion, which passed (4-0-0).

Mr. Abare originally said that he would not second the motion that included the public minutes and noted that a discussion was held after the vote the other day, and the discussion had not been included in the minutes. Mr. Abare said that this discussion should be reflected in the minutes. Chairman Bressette suggested that the Board table the public minutes, and the Board members agreed to table the approval of the public minutes, removing them from the consent agenda.

Ms. Cummings then questioned whether the discussion referenced had occurred after the formal meeting had concluded. Clarification was provided that the discussion occurred immediately following the proposed School Board budget vote and was not an after-meeting gathering. Superintendent McGee reassured the Board and observers that no further Board discussions would take place once the meeting had officially adjourned, addressing any potential concerns about Board transparency.

IX. Future Agenda Planning:

- A. None

X. Future Meetings:

- A. 10/17/2024 – 6:30 p.m. Budget Committee Meeting
- B. 10/24/2024 – 6:30 p.m. Budget Committee Meeting
- C. 10/30/2024 – 6:30 p.m. Budget Committee Meeting
- D. 11/06/2024 – 6:30 p.m. School Board Meeting @ PES Library

XI. Adjournment:

Ms. Greenwood moved to adjourn the School Board Meeting at 7:22 p.m. Mr. Abare seconded the motion, which passed (4-0-0).

Respectfully Submitted,
Matthew Sullivan
School Board Recording Secretary