

**SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART
BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR SESSION MEETING
November 7, 2024**

The Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart met in regular session on November 7, 2024, in the Board Room at Hobart High School, 2211 East Tenth Street, Hobart, Indiana.

ROLL CALL: President Terry Butler asked Board Members to log in. The following Board Members and Administrators were present or absent as noted:

Board Members Present:

Terry D. Butler
Rikki A. Guthrie
Sandra J. Hillan
Frank Porras
Donald H. Rogers
Stuart B. Schultz
Isis Fleming, HHS student representative

Board Members Absent:

Karen J. Robbins
Kayla Davis, HHS student representative

Administrators Present:

Peggy Buffington
Christopher N. King
William J. Longer
Jonathan Mock

Administrators Absent:

Bob Glover
Tim Krieg

EXECUTIVE SESSION: President Butler indicated that the Board did not meet in executive session prior to the regular session meeting.

CALL TO ORDER: Terry Butler, President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: President Butler led everyone present in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

AUDIENCE: The following were present in the audience:

Bill SeDoris, Hobart Moose Lodge
Bradley Keehn, Joan Martin and Hobart Middle School parent and newly elected Board member
David Kostbade, newly elected Board member
Representatives of the cast of *Little Shop of Horrors* and their sponsor, Cathy Nelson, and Diane Perigo, vocal coach for the play

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Stuart Schultz moved and Frank Porras seconded that the Board approve the regular session minutes of October 16, 2024. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

FINANCIAL REPORTS: President Butler indicated there were no financial reports for the Board's consideration.

COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS: President Terry Butler asked for comments on the listed agenda items. There were none.

PERSONNEL: Jonathan Mock, Director of Human Resources and Compliance, indicated the Personnel Report and Personnel Report Addendum were included in the electronic meeting information for the Board's consideration.

Mr. Mock recommended approval and requested Board action.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board approve the Personnel Reports as presented. Rikki Guthrie seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

The approved personnel items are as follows:

2024-2025 Returning Contracts for Extracurricular Services –

80 returning teacher contracts

Resignations/Additions:

Matthew Atherton added HMS girls cross country

Michael Black resigned assistant track

Jon Brumley resigned math department chair (grades 11 and 12)

Vanessa Chandler resigned sophomore class sponsor and added junior class sponsor

Sydney Curatolo added 7th grade sponsor

Leo Guzman resigned 9th grade football

Amanda Hensley added Guidance Facilitator position
Amy Hill resigned 7th grade sponsor
Michael James resigned 9th grade boys basketball
Katrina Lucas resigned assistant varsity softball and added 11 & 12 grade math department chair
Stephen Markos added 8th grade wrestling
Colin May resigned 7th grade boys basketball A and B
Steven Moss resigned varsity softball
Cathy Nelson added Dramatics Specialist
Heidi Polizotto added German club sponsor
Andrew Rapata added 8th grade football
Katie Rinas added HMS girls gymnastics and Academic Spell Bowl-HS
Ellie Welsch added 5th grade Veterans grade level contact
Ryan Williams resigned HMS girls cross country

Contracts for Extracurricular Services (Club Duties) –

Joan Martin School, August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025: Nicole Leonard, Yoga –2nd and 4th grade, \$324.00
Veterans Elementary @ Mundell, August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025: Sherry Finnerty, Brickie Leaders, \$648.00; and Hayley Johnson, Drama, \$1,215.00
Hobart Middle School, August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025: Jennifer Young, Brickieworks Magazine, \$540.00
Hobart High School/August 14, 2024/June 4, 2025: Alice Hunt-Lounges, Brickie Cove Book Club, \$972.00; Alice Hunt-Lounges, HHS Writers, \$729.00; and Madeline (Bartsch) Sullivan, Slam Poetry, \$999.00

Homebound Teaching Contracts –

October 9/December 20, 2024: Carol Fonner, ELA and math, two hours per week, \$54.62 per hour
November 25/December 20, 2024: Julia Snoreck, English, economics, PE, and PLTW, two hours per week, \$40.15 per hour

Contracts for Extracurricular Services –

Early Learning Center @ George Earle, August 30, 2024/August 15, 2025: Ashley Monger, System Facilitator Kdg – 50%, \$907.50
Veterans Elementary @ Mundell, October 25, 2024/August 15, 2025: Brandi Bezvin, Grade Level Contact-VE3, \$1,082.00; and Kristen Smith, Grade Level Contact-VE2, \$1,082.00

Extracurricular Club Duty Contracts –

Joan Martin School/2024-2025 School Year: Elizabeth Heim, Fiber Arts, \$810.00; Elizabeth Heim, Run, Brickie, Run, \$810.00; Elizabeth Heim, Set Design, \$1,350.00; Tiffaney Scott, Girls on the Run, \$1,620.00; and April Young, Run, Brickie, Run, \$810.00
Veterans @ Mundell/2024-2025 School Year: Sharon Castellanos, Brainy Brickies, \$351.00; and Nicole Zybak, Brickie Leaders, \$648.00

Requests for Leave of Absence –

Kirsten Cooper, Liberty School/recreational aide, FMLA, intermittent usage beginning October 10, 2024 (up to 60 days)
Rhiannon Leaf, Veterans School/teacher, FMLA, beginning on January 6/May 22, 2025 (up to 60 days) and unpaid medical leave, May 23/June 4, 2025
Emily Palm, Liberty School/teacher, unpaid medical leave, December 21, 2024/June 4, 2025

ECA Salary Adjustments –

Rakim Ali, Hobart High/varsity boys soccer, salary adjustment for placement at Step 6+ for a stipend of \$4,593.00, effective beginning with the 2024-2025 school year
Cade Brumley, Hobart High/varsity boys tennis, salary adjustment for placement at Step 6+ for a stipend of \$4,593.00, effective beginning with the 2024-2025 school year
Madison Price, Hobart High/varsity girls volleyball, salary adjustment for placement at Step 6+ for a stipend of \$5,519.00, effective beginning with the 2024-2025 school year

Resignation –

Charles Johnson, Joan Martin School/Computer Technician, effective November 7, 2024

Transportation Department – Adjustments of position, hours, and/or pay rate –

Brenda Velasco, in addition to her bus aide duties, will now be an activity bus driver, pay rate of \$17.35 per hour, effective August 14, 2024

New Employees –

Service Center/Transportation Department:

Samantha Davis, bus driver trainee, effective October 28, 2024, \$17.35 per hour

Risha McCain, bus driver – part time, effective October 22, 2024, \$21.14 per hour

Early Learning Center @ George Earle:

Erica Haro, aide-student supervisor, part time, effective November 4, 2024, \$12.67 per hour

Hobart Middle School/Food Services:

Shanon Hawkins, dining room attendant, effective November 4, 2024, \$12.67 per hour

Elizabeth Wahl, server/dish room, effective November 4, 2024, \$12.67 per hour

Adjustment to 2024-2025 Teacher Contract –

Jennifer McQuade, Hobart Middle School, increased hours worked to 3.5 per day

ECA Resignation –

Valentine Torres, Hobart High School/9th grade boys basketball, effective November 4, 2024

Extra Duty Contracts –

Hobart High School:

Jay Bailey, assistant boys diving, November 11, 2024/March 1, 2025, \$1,659.00

Alfred DeBusk, JV girls wrestling, October 21, 2024/January 17, 2025, \$3,610.00

Taylor Seils, JV girls basketball, October 21, 2024/March 1, 2025, \$4,059.00

SPECIAL MUSICAL PERFORMANCE: Cathy Nelson, Director of Theatre at Hobart High School, members of the cast of the *Little Shop of Horrors*, and their vocal director, Diane Perigo, were welcomed to the meeting. Mrs. Nelson invited everyone to attend one of their performances that will be held on Friday and Saturday, November 15 and 16, and again the following week on November 22 and 23 at 7:00 pm. She noted there would be a special senior citizen performance on Sunday, November 24, at 3:00 pm. The cast sang “Skid Row (Downtown)”, which is the second song in the musical, as a sample of their production. They were congratulated on the great job with their song and were thanked for coming to the meeting. They were excused from the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT: Donation from the Hobart Moose Lodge: Dr. Peggy Buffington welcomed Bill SeDoris from the Hobart Moose Lodge. She indicated he would be presenting a donation check for the Hobart High School Athletic Department from a recent Bingo Night fundraiser.

Mr. SeDoris presented a check totaling \$4,290.00 from the Bingo fundraiser, which was \$100.00 more than was noted the night of the fundraiser. Mr. SeDoris said they received another \$100.00 since then. He mentioned, because the Board always asks, that they have raised \$102,243.30 since 2018 for the school groups, and he hoped they would reach the \$200,000.00 mark faster than the first \$100,000.00.

Dr. Buffington recommended acceptance of the donation, and Board action was requested.

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board accept the donation from the Hobart Moose Lodge for the Hobart High School Athletic Department. Stuart Schultz seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

In the discussion, the Board and Dr. Buffington expressed their appreciation to the Moose Lodge for their donation and their continued support of the school district. Dr. Buffington noted that a Board member mentioned to her that it would be nice to make the Moose Lodge a banner to display and acknowledge this feat. She asked Mr. SeDoris if they would like one and said the banner could be made in house by Mr. Crouch’s class. Mr. SeDoris said he would have to check with their administrator as to any rules that might apply to a banner and its verbiage. It was noted that Brad Keehn and David Kostbade, newly elected school board members, were in the audience, and they were told of the great support that the Moose Lodge has provided with their bingo fundraisers for school groups and its ancillary groups. Mr. SeDoris indicated that the fundraisers for 2025 had just been approved, and he would be contacting the approved organizations very soon. Terry Butler commented that many of the members of the Moose group have been community supporters and volunteers for years and noted that he had worked with Mr. SeDoris with a couple of local youth groups and community organizations. Dr. Buffington commented that she will always be most appreciative of their assistance with the community playground build at Joan Martin School. Don Rogers commented that the members who work the fundraisers were amazing to work with, and Mr. SeDoris replied that they were a small group and work well together.

In addition, Dr. Buffington indicated that when Lisa SeDoris retired after 38½ years in education, they were not able to recognize her service to the district. She asked Mr. SeDoris to give his wife her “golden apple” in appreciation of her service and “to give her a hug” from her.

RESOLUTION: American Education Week: Dr. Peggy Buffington presented Resolution No. 2024-34 celebrating American Education Week, which is November 18-22, 2024. Resolution No. 2024-34 recognizes education employees and volunteers. President Butler asked audience members and Attorney William Longer if

it would be okay to just read the title of the resolution or whether anyone wanted the whole resolution read aloud. Everyone concurred that just reading the title of the resolution was sufficient.

Secretary Sandra Hillan read the title of Resolution No. 2024-34 aloud, as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-34
American Education Week
Resolution of Recognition

President Terry Butler requested Board action and a roll call vote.

Rikki Guthrie moved and Frank Porras seconded that the Board adopt Resolution No. 2024-34 commemorating American Education Week in recognition of all our education employees and volunteers.

In the discussion, President Butler commented he was sure the staff would be provided with a token of appreciation during this week, and Dr. Buffington indicated the staff would receive a favorite of theirs, Parlor donuts.

Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Absent: Robbins. Nay: No one. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

Resolution No. 2024-34, as presented, displayed on the screens in the Board Room, and adopted, is as follows:

Resolution No. 2024-34
American Education Week
Resolution of Recognition

Whereas, American Education Week has been established for the week of November 18-22, 2024, and

Whereas, public schools provide students with quality public schools and opportunities so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve, and

Whereas, public schools bring together adults and children, educators and volunteers, business leaders, and elected officials in the collective enterprise of helping students achieve, and

Whereas, public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality; and

Whereas, public schools equip young Americans with both practical skills and broader intellectual abilities, schools give them hope for, and access to, a productive future; and

Whereas, all education employees, be they substitute educators, custodians, teachers, bus drivers, administrators, librarians, aides, secretaries, food service employees, or volunteers, work tirelessly to serve our children, and

Whereas, the School City of Hobart wishes to set aside this special time to honor and recognize all our education employees and volunteers.

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that the Board of School Trustees of the School City of Hobart proudly adopts and approves this resolution in recognition of all our education employees and volunteers.

Dated this 7th day of November, 2024.

Board of School Trustees
School City of Hobart

Terry D. Butler, President

Attest:

Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

RATIFICATION: Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Hobart Teachers Association: Superintendent Peggy Buffington highlighted this year's bargaining process and noted that tentative agreement was reached on October 16, 2024, and the Pre-Ratification Public Meeting was held on November 4, 2024. The Hobart Teachers Association (HTA) ratified the agreement on October 30, 2024. She noted that at this meeting, the Board of School Trustees will consider ratification of the tentative agreement with the HTA. The tentative agreement was included with the electronic meeting information, and Dr. Buffington indicated that the tentative agreement had been on the district's website.

Dr. Buffington said it was important to recap the last two years of the collective bargaining. She noted that in previous years a two-year agreement was negotiated, but last year because of the unknowns with ADM, student enrollment, and state funding, only a one-year agreement was negotiated. In addition, it was known that new monies from the state for this school year would be at the most \$250,000.00, and in fact, that projection has since been reduced to be around \$24,000.00. She said this was caused by an enrollment loss of 148 in enrollment last school year and another 51 students this school year. In last year's contract agreement, \$3,000.00 was added to the base salary, and teachers were given the option to take all the monies last year or to split the increase of \$2,000.00 last school year and \$1,000 this school year. They decided to take the total increase last year with a reopener to look at ADM for a possible increase in salary this year, but because of reduced ADM funds and state funding this year, a salary increase was not feasible. Dr. Buffington noted that the only other benefit that could be negotiated was insurance, and she said tentative agreement was reached for the school district to contribute \$11,439.00 of the single premium and \$30,841.00 of the family premium. This was an increase of \$1,439.00 for the single plan and \$3,841.00 for the family plan. She noted that this year the insurance premium increased by 15% and due to an inordinate amount of claims paid during the summer months, the self-insurance fund was almost depleted. They spoke with the HTA about the situation. It was noted by the administration that the district cannot spend more funds than they receive. Dr. Buffington noted the school district's cash balance was healthy, and they were able to cover the increase. However, if something were to happen like that again, the district would not be able to cover those costs. She noted that a plan redesign would have to be discussed with the HTA, and they are aware of that possibility.

Dr. Buffington commented it was very difficult for school districts to budget and plan not knowing what their enrollment will be from year to year. Our enrollment used to be around 4,000 students, and it was 3,936 this year. She mentioned a solution would be to open enrollment, which the district has not done and has avoided doing so. She just wanted to consider it for a designated number of slots at the lower level grades. By doing this the enrollment could be increased to 4,000 students and that would generate more revenue for the school district. She mentioned that if the district's enrollment had been 4,000 this year, it would have generated more revenue of approximately \$462,000.00. She then indicated that with an enrollment of 4,100, anticipated revenue would increase to around \$1,196,000.00; and with an enrollment of 4,200, revenue to be generated was around \$1,900,000.00. Dr. Buffington noted that something has to be done to generate more revenue. She mentioned that in addition to school choice opportunities for families, birth rates have also been declining. She said that kindergarten enrollment was lower the past couple of years than it was in previous years, and this year there are only 238 kindergartners. Dr. Buffington mentioned that the same thing was happening in other school districts in the area.

Dr. Buffington asked the Board to approve the tentative agreement with the Hobart Teachers Association.

President Butler asked if there were any questions from the public. There were none.

President Terry Butler requested Board action and a roll call vote.

Sandra Hillan moved that the Board adopt the tentative agreement with the Hobart Teachers Association for the period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, and authorizes the Superintendent to proceed with executing necessary actions. Seconded by Rikki Guthrie.

In the discussion, the Board thanked the both negotiation teams for their collaboration and reaching agreement on the collective bargaining agreement. Also, the loss of funding and the enrollment decline were discussed.

Vote on motion: Secretary Sandra Hillan called roll on the vote, as follows: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Absent: Robbins. Nay: Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

RECOMMENDATION: Administrative Contract Extensions: Superintendent Peggy Buffington noted there would not be any salary increases for administrators, and she recommended the approval of one-year contract extensions through June 30, 2026, for the following administrators: Debbie Matthys, Jonathan Mock, Tim Krieg, Lori Anderson, Robert Glover Jr., Brooke Paschen, Matt Whiteman, Danielle Adams, Colleen Newell, Craig Osika, Brandi Krolak, Ty Artherhults, Shaun Zoladz, Mike Black, Nikki Neeley, Courtney Gill, Joshua Reno, Tony Curatolo, Gregory Bialata, Sara Gutierrez, Amy Turley, Brittney Krieg, Kacey Allen, Cristina James, Maggie Kreag, Jennifer Caddick, Christopher King, Russell Mellon, Felix Perry, and Mathew McKee.

In addition, Dr. Buffington recommended a one-year contract extension for Kenneth Cawthon, Coordinator of the Aquatics Center, and Jamie Noel, Coordinator of Student Health Services, and noted they were not members of the Hobart Teachers Association.

Dr. Buffington requested Board action.

Rikki Guthrie moved that the Board approve the administrative contracts, as presented. Stuart Schultz seconded. Vote on motion: Aye – Porras, Rogers, Schultz, Hillan, Guthrie, and Butler. Motion carried 6-0 in favor.

UPDATES/ANNOUNCEMENTS/REPORTS: The Board received the following information:

- ▶ Change in January Meeting Dates – President Butler noted that since the first meeting date in January falls during winter break, and there are five Thursdays in the month, the meeting dates will be January 9 and January 23, 2025, the second and fourth Thursdays.
- ▶ School Information – weekly agendas from all of the schools except Joan Martin, the JROTC Cadet Life and BricksCenter newsletters, and the Early Learning Center's November Activity Calendar.
- ▶ Upcoming Activities/Events – latest list of upcoming activities/events. Dr. Buffington highlighted the following upcoming activities/events, as follows:

November 5 – E-learning Day for students and Election Day

November 11 – Veterans Day Celebrations

Hobart Middle School @ 9:15 am

Veterans School @ 9:30 am

Hobart High School @ 9:30 am, Breakfast served, RSVPs required

Liberty School @ 1:30 pm

Early Learning Center @ 1:30 pm

Joan Martin School @ 1:30 pm

Dr. Buffington commented that all of the schools honor local veterans and mentioned that the high school does a breakfast to honor the veterans who attend there. In addition, she invited anyone who was able to attend the Veterans Ceremony on November 11 at 11:00 am at Veterans Park and said it is “a beautiful ceremony.” She was hoping for good weather but noted it usually was windy and horrible.

November 13 – Hobart Educational Foundation Fundraiser, *Harvest Homecoming* at County Line Orchard, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

Dr. Buffington indicated this was the main fundraiser for the Hobart Educational Foundation and mentioned that the name has been changed and was at a new venue. She was grateful for all of their volunteers and noted that they fund grants for teachers, special projects in the school district, and give annual scholarships.

November 15 and 16 and November 22 and 23 – Hobart High School Theatre Department presents *Little Shop of Horrors*, Hobart High School Theatre, 7:00 pm

November 24 – Senior Citizen Event at Hobart High School Theatre Department, Presents *Little Shop of Horrors*, 3:00 pm, HHS Theatre, RSVP's required

December 8 – Hobart Community Band Winter Concert, Hobart Middle School Auditorium, 3:00 pm

COMMENTS: From the administration, Peggy Buffington congratulated the two new Board members, Bradley Keehn and David Kostbade, and said she was “happy to have you join us,” and they thought they would “enjoy the experience.” She said they were looking at next year’s school calendar so there will not be two ELearning days in close proximity like what happened this year. She mentioned that an area school district held their parent/teacher conferences on Election Day, and this might be a consideration for next school year. She said they were drafting next year’s school calendar and would be presenting it soon for Board. Dr. Buffington commented that the past couple of weeks had gone well. Jon Mock mentioned that the middle school parking lot was packed when he left for the Board meeting so he checked as to why, and he found out it was the sixth-grade band concert and orchestra concert. He was pleased the performing arts were doing well in the district. Dr. Buffington reminded the Board that an orchestra instructor was hired last year due to the increase in the number of students participating in the program. In addition, she noted that the Hobart Educational Foundation assisted in starting the orchestra program.

From the Board, Isis Fleming expressed her appreciation to Dr. Buffington and Mrs. Adams for their assistance in preparing her for a scholarship presentation. Dr. Buffington explained that Isis was selected as Hobart High School’s representative, and if chosen, she would receive a four-year Lilly college scholarship. She was coached for around three weeks before her presentation. The presentation has been held, and everyone is now waiting for the results. Dr. Buffington commented that no matter the outcome, Isis was a very worthy and talented individual who can do anything that she wishes to do. In addition, she was “super proud of her no matter what.” Isis told the Board that she was selected as the president of the Mayor’s Youth Council. Everyone offered their congratulations to her. She was excited to serve and noted that her group presentation would be coming up in January on their project. Frank Porras appreciated the awesome performance of the theatre group. Don Rogers was impressed with the song and quality of the voices of the theater cast. He told the Board that Zander Lankford had accepted an academic scholarship at Valparaiso University, and he will be their kicker for their football team. Stu Schultz extended his congratulations to David Kostbade and Brad Keehn. He wished Isis “good luck” and commented that she was “worthy in our eyes.” Sandi Hillan commented that American Education Week was about believing in public schools and said that “public schools are in danger.” She appreciated that Hobart’s focus was on its students. She told Isis how proud she was of her, and she was sure it would continue to be. Lastly, she extended her congratulations to Frank Porras, Brad Keehn, and David

Kostbade. Dr. Buffington extended her congratulations to Mr. Porras, as well. Mrs. Hill commented they would be great but commented that Terry Butler and Karen Robbins would be missed. Rikki Guthrie congratulated David Kostbade, Brad Keehn, and Frank Porras and told them she was “looking forward to with all of you.” She told Isis she was very proud of her. In addition, she congratulated Cassie Cohen who ran faster this year than when she placed 40th at state competition but placed 93rd this year. She commented that girls were running much faster than a few years ago. She asked Dr. Buffington when her next “Cooking with Dr. Buffington and Friends” would be held, and after looking at her calendar, Dr. Buffington said it would be November 19. Terry Butler offered his congratulations to the new Board members and asked them to be mindful of “doing what’s best for the students.” He said Hobart has been fortunate to have Board members who have had this same mindset for many years. Mr. Butler noted this was not true in all school districts and mentioned the importance of Board members “knowing their lane” and “trusting the administration does their job.” He mentioned that he has had an amazing 24 years.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Board, President Butler adjourned the meeting around 7:55 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: The next regular session meeting is November 21, 2024.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
SCHOOL CITY OF HOBART

By _____
Terry D. Butler, President

ATTEST:

By _____
Sandra J. Hillan, Secretary

Submitted for Approval: November 21, 2024