

***Watervliet City School District
Watervliet, New York***

BOARD OF EDUCATION

REGULAR MEETING

DATE: April 8, 2025

TYPE OF MEETING: Regular Meeting

MEETING OPENED: 6:02 p.m.

WHERE: Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: President, Mary Beth Whited
Vice President, Brian White
Heather Soroka
Victoria Donnelly
Kyle Daniels

SUPERINTENDENT: Dr. Donald Stevens Jr.

STUDENT COUNCIL REP: Owen Zawistowski

The meeting opened at 6:02 p.m., with President Whited officiating.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS/COMMENTS

2025 – 2026 Budget Presentation

**Dr. Donald Stevens Jr.
& Keith Heid**

Note: The proposed 2025 – 2026 budget will be adopted at the April 23, 2025 meeting.

A. SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Dr. Stevens shared the following:

- On tonight’s agenda, we have six individuals earning tenure based on the recommendation of their building principals and the superintendent, and on the hard work they have put in. Working at Watervliet is a privilege and is not something we take lightly. We only hire the best and we appreciate all the staff that are here and committed to bettering the future of Watervliet students. Thank you and congratulations to all and to Mr. Cowie, who is up for tenure and is here tonight. It is well-deserved.
- Earlier this morning, Mrs. Webster and I were at the Capital for a press event for the Office of Children and Family Services. They focused a lot on the family community opportunity centers. We hired Mrs. McKee through that grant. She works very closely with our district families and students, providing support for external things such as health care, transportation, medical appointments, school supplies, and other concrete needs. It was great to attend their ceremony today and get a little bit of recognition for the district for all the hard work we are putting in to fostering a positive family environment and community for all of our residents.
- 3-8 testing started today. There was a little mishap with New York State and there was a pause in the online testing system for about an hour or two, so we did not continue with our seventh grade cohort. If you have any seventh graders, they are going to continue tomorrow and Thursday. We were able to get fourth grade tested today for round one and we will continue with them tomorrow.
- Welcome to five new employees listed on the agenda or on the addendum. We have five Green Island employees who are part of the tuitioning plan that are going to be joining our faculty in September - some of them slightly earlier. Mr. Ford is going to start July 1 in his position as an athletic director and PE teacher. In addition, the science teacher may be starting sooner, as she may be interested in teaching summer school.
- At your place setting is information from Capital Region BOCES. This is their proposed budget and some of the highlights for their upcoming school year. When we meet on April 23, the focus of that meeting will be to approve the BOCES budget and to elect four board members, with Mrs. Soroka being one of them.
- The BOCES annual dinner is tomorrow night. If anyone is joining I will see you there.
- Happy Spring break. We have a couple more days and we get a nice cold week of April to celebrate.

B. STUDENT COUNCIL REPORT

Owen Zawistowski shared the following:

- We will be holding our Spring Voter Registration Drive during the week that we return from Spring Break. To accomplish this, we work in a partnership with the League of Women Voters. We look forward to having our students who are already 18, registered and those not 18 yet, pre-registered.
- The Debate Club, which is part of the Student Council, held a debate yesterday. We are looking forward to our next one, in early May, on the topic of the death penalty.
- We would like to thank Mr. Tim Hughes and Mrs. Christine Chartrand, from City Hall, for reaching out to begin planning Youth Day 2025. As of right now, we are looking at having Youth day on Thursday, May 29. We will update you with more details at next month's Board of Education meeting.

C. COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee

There was nothing new to report.

Policy Committee

First Reading of Revised Policies:

Title IX and Sex Discrimination

Student Use of Computerized Information Resources (Acceptable Use Policy)

Board of Education: Qualifications, Numbers and Terms of Office

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mrs. Soroka noted that Beetlejuice, Jr. was “phenomenal.” The costumes, sets, props, sound, lights, everything – all of it was incredible. She added that we had the artwork of 50 students in grades 3-8 on display in the art show at the Empire State Plaza. The artwork was just beautiful. These events are a testament to our staff and our student dedication. It is a reminder to all of us how essential the arts are.

Mrs. Whited stated that International Night was fantastic. The food was great. Over 500 people attended, we had entertainment, there were 80 plus volunteers, and 60 students presented their projects. Food Service did a great job keeping on top of everything all night. It was a great night. Everyone did a great job and I'm sure Mrs. DeMento is breathing a sigh of relief.

ITEMS REQUIRING BOARD ACTION

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Colin Eletto**, in the area of **Physical Education**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Angela Aubrey**, in the area of **Math**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Caitlyn Santiago**, in the area of **Art**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Thomas Hayes**, in the area of **Physical Education**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Gina DeCianni**, in the area of **ENL**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Heather Soroka, seconded by Kyle Daniels and unanimously accepted, the Board awarded the status of **tenure** to **Andrew Cowie**, in the area of **Music**, effective **September 1, 2025**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board accepted the **resignation** of **Nicole Zumpano** from the position of **Art Teacher** at the **Watervliet Jr. -Sr. High School**, effective April 10, 2025, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board accepted the **resignation** of **Dakota Hewitt** from the position of **School Nurse** at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, effective March 28, 2025, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board accepted the **resignation** of **Madelyn Degler** from the position of **School Counselor** at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, effective May 1, 2025, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **emergency transfer** of **Laura Deming** from the position of **Part-Time Cafeteria Worker** to the position of **Full-Time Cafeteria Worker** at the Watervliet Elementary School, effective March 10, 2025.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **appointment** of **Brian Ford** to the position of **Physical Education Teacher**, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, beginning July 1, 2025. This position will serve as a Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) as Athletic Director (0.8 FTE) and Physical Education Teacher (0.2 FTE). Due to the start of tuitioning high school students from the Green Island Union Free School District, Brian Ford is recommended for **immediate tenure** in the area of **Physical Education**, at a **Step 23** salary plus verified master's degree and credit hours, as per contract. Brian Ford will retain his sick leave accrual of approximately 163.5 days (to be updated on June 30, 2025). Brian Ford holds a Physical Education permanent certification, (certificate #208913081).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **appointment** of **Peter Mason** to the position of **Special Education Teacher (7-12)**, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, beginning September 1, 2025. Due to the start of tuitioning high school students from the Green Island Union Free School District, Peter Mason is recommended for **immediate tenure** in the area of **Special Education**, at a **Step 17** salary plus verified master's degree and credit hours, as per contract. Peter Mason will retain his sick leave accrual of approximately 15.75 days (to be updated on June 30, 2025). Peter Mason holds a Students With Disabilities professional certification, (certificate #543205111).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **appointment** of **Haylie Marquardt** to the position of **Biology Teacher (7-12)**, in the tenure area of Science, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, beginning September 1, 2025, at a **Step 11** salary, plus verified master's degree and credit hours, as per contract. Due to the start of tuitioning high school students from the Green Island Union Free School District, Haylie Marquardt's current probationary period shall continue and expire September 1, 2026, contingent upon achievement of effective or highly effective APPR ratings necessary to receive tenure throughout his/her probationary period, consistent with the requirements of Education Law Sections 2509, 3012-c, and/or 3012-d. Haylie Marquardt will retain his/her sick leave accrual of approximately 0 days (to be updated on June 30, 2025). Haylie Marquardt holds a general science 7-12 certification, (certificate #1863647241).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **appointment** of **Sean Ohnsman** to the position of **Social Studies Teacher (7-12)**, in the tenure area of Social Studies, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, beginning September 1, 2025, at a **Step 5** salary, plus verified master's degree and credit hours, as per contract. Due to the start of tuitioning high school students from the Green Island Union Free School District, Sean Ohnsman's current probationary period shall continue and expire September 1, 2028, contingent upon achievement of effective or highly effective APPR ratings necessary to receive tenure throughout his/her probationary period, consistent with the requirements of Education Law Sections 2509, 3012-c, and/or 3012-d. Sean Ohnsman will retain his/her sick leave accrual of approximately 12 days (to be updated on June 30, 2025). Sean Ohnsman holds a Social Studies 7-12 certification, (certificate #1783517241).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **appointment** of **Julia Pecha** to the position of **0.4 FTE Art Teacher**, in the tenure area of Art, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, beginning September 1, 2025, at a **Step 8** salary (prorated to 0.4 FTE), plus verified master's degree and credit hours, as per contract. Due to the start of tuitioning high school students from the Green Island Union Free School District, Julia Pecha's current probationary period shall continue and expire September 1, 2027, contingent upon achievement of effective or highly effective APPR ratings necessary to receive tenure throughout his/her probationary period, consistent with the requirements of Education Law Sections 2509, 3012-c, and/or 3012-d. Julia Pecha will retain his/her sick leave accrual of approximately 5.8 days (to be updated on June 30, 2025). Julia Pecha holds a Visual Arts K-12 certification, (certificate #1789106241).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **emergency probationary appointment** of **Meggin Peterson** to the position of **Full-Time Bus Driver** for the Watervliet City School District, effective **April 7, 2025**, at a rate of **\$27.00 per hour**, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **emergency probationary appointment** of **Christine Buckley** to the position of **Library Aide**, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, for a one-year probationary period beginning March 17, 2025, at a Step 1 Teacher Aide salary, plus Associate or Bachelor degree stipends, as per contract.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **revised** appointment of **Nick Grolley** from the position of **Modified Baseball Coach** to the position of **Junior Varsity Baseball Coach** for the spring season of the **2024 – 2025** school year, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the following **revised emergency teaching overages**, effective as of the dates outlined below, at the **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School**, as outlined in the attached, as recommended by the Superintendent:

- York Bush (move from +.1 to +.2 FTE), effective January 27 – **April 11, 2025**
- Matt Kellish (+.2 FTE), effective January 27 – **April 11, 2025**
- Scott Emerson (+.1 FTE), effective January 27 – **April 11, 2025**
- Jackie Bishop (+.2 FTE), effective January 21, 2025 – **April 11, 2025**
- Luke McLaughlin (+.2 FTE), effective January 21 – **April 11, 2025**
- Ashley Redding Coverage period 3 and period 4B (*at class coverage rate*), effective January 21 – **April 11, 2025**

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the appointment of the following **Coaches** for the **2024– 2025** school year, pending fingerprint clearance and fulfillment of NYSED coaching requirements, at a rate as per contract, as recommended by the Superintendent:

WATERVLIET JUNIOR-SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Coaching Spring:

Modified Baseball: Brian Ford

Modified Softball: Beth Jones

Volunteer Modified Softball: John Jones

Volunteer Varsity Assistant Baseball: York Bush

Girls Outdoor Track & Field: Lena Bond & Isaac Langer (*50% split stipend*)

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Substitute Registry** submitted by **BOCES**, as recommended by the Superintendent (packet #13).

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board **accepted** the **Internal Claims Auditor Report** for the month of **March 2025**, submitted by Michaelaileen Backus, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the following **Treasurer Reports** for the month of **February 2025**, submitted by Keith Heid, Business Manager, as recommended by the Superintendent:

Schedule of Warrants & Payrolls

Revenue Status Report

Cash & Investments

Appropriation Status Report

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved placing the **5-year Bus Lease Proposition** on the ballot of the **May 20, 2025 Annual Budget Vote**, allowing for the purchase of one (1) bus at the total purchase price of **\$146,629.53** or the annual lease price pending bud results for each of five years, submitted by Keith Heid, Business Manager, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Cooperative Bidding Health-Safety-Risk management Good and Services resolution** for the **2024-25** school year, submitted by Keith Heid, Business Manager, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Agreement with Advanced Therapy, P.T., O.T., S.L.P., Psychologist, Registered Professional Nurse (RN), P.L.L.C.**, for therapy services provided to designated students effective March 11, 2025 – June 30, 2025, as outlined in the attached, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the appointment of **Bernadette Boardman, Danielle Jones** and **Roni O'Brien** as **Election Registrars** for the Watervliet City School District, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board designated **Watervliet Jr. – Sr. High School** as the **Registration location** on April 8 and May 6, 2025 between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m., as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the appointment of **Judy Ethier** as **District Election Supervisor** on May 20, 2025 at a pay rate of \$300.00 per assignment, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the appointment of the following **Election Inspectors** to work May 20, 2025, for the **School District Election and Budget vote**, at the rate of \$125.00 per diem, as recommended by the Superintendent:

Watervliet Elementary School: *Maria Razzano, Deborah Edwards*

Elks Club: *Virginia Battige, Judith Fitzpatrick, Patricia Adams*

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board **deleted** the following **policy**, as recommended by the Superintendent:

- Implementing Title IX

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Board of Education Minutes** for the meeting held **March 11, 2025**, submitted by Bernadette L. Boardman, Clerk of the Board, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Committee on Special Education's** recommendations for the meetings held **February 27, March 3, March 5, March 7, March 11, March 12, March 13, March 18, and March 20, 2025**, submitted by Molly McGrath, Veronica Wilson, Rebecca Haws, and Danielle Tetrault, CSE Chairs, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the **Committee on Pre-School Special Education's** recommendations for the

meetings held **February 12, February 26, and March 11, 2025**, submitted by Molly McGrath, CPSE Chair, as recommended by the Superintendent.

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly, seconded by Brian White and unanimously accepted, the Board approved the following **revised** paid holidays for **Full-Time, 12-Month Administrators (WAA) and Full-Time, 12-Month Management Confidential Staff and associated agreements** of the Watervliet City School District, effective July 1, 2025, as recommended by the Superintendent:

- Independence Day (7/4)
- Labor Day (9/1)
- Columbus Day (10/13)
- Veterans Day (11/11)
- Wednesday before Thanksgiving (11/26)
- Thanksgiving Day (11/27)
- Friday after Thanksgiving (11/28)
- Christmas Break (12/22, 12/23, 12/24, 12/25)
- December Break (12/31)
- New Year's Day (1/1)
- Martin Luther King Day (1/19)
- President's Day (2/16)
- February Break (Lunar New Year) (2/17)
- April Break (Good Friday Observed) **(4/6)**
- Memorial Day (5/25)
- Juneteenth (6/19)

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Victoria Donnelly seconded by Heather Soroka and unanimously accepted, the Board adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Bernadette L. Boardman
Clerk of the Board

NOTE: All district appointments are subject to fingerprint clearance by the NYS Education Department and verification of Permanent or Pending Certification by NYS.