



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, FEB. 26 BUDGET WORK SESSION:

• **2019-20 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT** — Student enrollment and financial expenditures were the focus of the School Board's second work session on the 2019-20 budget. At this time, based on enrollment projections and class size guidelines, there would be the same total number of grade sections next year at Armor, Charlotte Avenue and Union Pleasant Elementary Schools, while Boston Valley would decrease by one section. It's also projected that Middle School enrollment will decrease slightly by six students, as will High School enrollment, by about 67 students, next year. Assistant Superintendent Colleen Kaney emphasized that student registration is constantly monitored into August, when decisions on class sections are made. In presenting the expenditure side of the budget, Assistant Superintendent Barbara Sporyz covered "big ticket" items contributing to the projected increase in next year's spending plan, including salaries, health care, retirement system costs and building project debt service. The proposed rollover budget is \$73,373,455, an increase of \$3.25 million from the current year. Balancing estimated revenue against expenditures, there is a \$718,000 gap still to be closed. Details will continue to be refined in the coming weeks based on the adopted state budget and updated financial information, Mrs. Sporyz said. The next budget work session will cover staffing recommendations and the final revenue outlook.

• **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Charlotte Avenue Elementary LMC & Tuesday, March 26 (budget work session) at 6 p.m. at the Administration Building

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Feb. 27, 2019



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, FEB. 12 BUDGET WORK SESSION & MEETING:

- **2019-20 BUDGET DEVELOPMENT** — At the School Board's first work session on the 2019-20 budget, Assistant Superintendent Barbara Sporyz reviewed past finances and tax facts, including the history of fund balances and reserves. There was discussion about the "2% tax cap" and its implication on the tax levy. While there will be a rate increase affecting the district's contribution to employee health insurance, a rate decrease is projected for its contribution to the state retirement systems. Mrs. Sporyz estimated total budget revenue at \$72.6 million. Topics for the next budget work session on Feb. 26 will be enrollments, expenditures, and the "gap" between revenue and expenditures.
- **PLEDGE LEADERS** — Armor Elementary students Joseph Barile, Willow Lewis, Kayla Fitzgerald, Addison Kirchberger, Alex Weber and Nathan Knisely led the Pledge of Allegiance to start the meeting. They were selected for this honor for their leadership attitude and school pride.
- **ARMOR VOLUNTEER RECOGNIZED** — Volunteer Joyce Nowadly was recognized for her 12 years of service at Armor Elementary. She assists at the school daily and was praised for her willingness to help wherever and whenever needed.
- **ARMOR'S SCHOOL BUILDING PLAN** — As it marks its 50th anniversary, Armor Elementary is celebrating the past and embracing the future. As such, rich traditions are meeting modern learning, said Principal Leslie Bennett. Based on feedback from a staff survey, the school's educational priorities include growth mindset, having students take ownership of their learning and Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM). Drawing from the district's Strategic Plan, the school is committed to assuring that use of time benefits student learning and promotes teacher collaboration, as well as focusing professional learning to support students in developing as modern learners. Staff learning teams have been established and staff members have set personal learning goals. Mrs. Bennett discussed ways in which modern learning is occurring daily in classrooms and how students are expressing "caring" by collaborating on projects. Third graders Danica Oroszi and Brooke Reese demonstrated a pollination model coded for movement, while second graders Avery Naum, Liliana Shubert and Griffin Terranova, who are among the Armor STEM Buddies, were on hand to talk about blankets that students made for the homeless.
- **FARM TO SCHOOL** — The district's Farm to School initiative has gained momentum since a team attended the three-day Northeast Farm to School Institute retreat last summer, created an action plan and received a \$5,000 grant for this year's projects. The initiative has resulted in more professional learning for the food service staff and an emphasis on using local food products in school meals, said Food Service Director Anne Rich. Taste testings and Harvest of the Month promotions are helping to introduce students to the many healthy food choices available in the school cafeterias, she said. Volunteer Tricia Miller has been a driving force in the activities. Last month, for a second year, the district was recognized with a Partnership Award at the New York State School Nutrition Association conference for its school-community connections.
- **VIDEO ON MODERN LEARNING SPACES** — The third in a series of promotional videos produced in-house to "tell the Hamburg Central story" made its debut. The newest video highlights the modern learning spaces that were created in the recently completed capital project, focusing on the LMCs at the High School and Middle School, and Middle School Family & Consumer Sciences rooms. The video will be shared with the community through social media.
- **HTA CONTRACT** — The board unanimously approved a five-year contract with the district's largest bargaining unit, the 340-member Hamburg Teachers' Association. Superintendent Michael Cornell and Board President Thomas Flynn commended the collaborative spirit that resulted in the agreement. The contract, effective Sept. 1, 2018 through Aug. 31, 2023, provides annual salary increases averaging nearly 2% over the life of the agreement.

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ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, DEC. 11 MEETING:

- **STUDENT PLEDGE LEADERS** — Hamburg Middle School eighth graders Macey Blum, Parker "Elton" Endress, Natalie Evans and Matigan Fitzgerald led the Pledge of Allegiance to start the meeting.
- **MIDDLE SCHOOL LEARNING PLAN** — Middle School Principal Jennifer Barker showed a video and spoke on how staff members are "learning together" this school year through collaboration and professional development, the building's priorities based on the District Strategic Plan. The school has established learning teams to bring together colleagues who might not normally interact, engaged in learning walks to see and share instructional practices from other classrooms and sponsored team building activities. The rollout of Chromebooks continues, with grades 7 & 8 teachers to receive devices and instruction prior to the distribution to students. On the Dec. 14th half-day, staff members will participate in an area of professional learning of interest to them.
- **DISTRICTWIDE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** — The district is delivering high quality professional learning experiences to staff members this school year by giving them a voice in what they learn, using internal expertise, encouraging inquiry and risk-taking, making mandated training relevant and modeling modern learning. These were the key points from Assistant Superintendent Colleen Kaney as a lead-in to a presentation showing how the commitment to professional learning from the District Strategic Plan is being implemented. Kaitlin Sylvester, Coordinator of Curriculum & Instruction, reported that about 450 employees participated in professional development on-site on the October Superintendent Conference Day. There were 40 morning learning sessions with 30 facilitators, followed by afternoon collaborative work. Learning facilitator Beth Bittar expanded on her role of working with teachers to better meet the instructional needs of special education students. Middle School math teacher Andrea Tretter and special education teacher Rhonda Mills said the new instructional strategies they have learned and put into practice in the classroom are having a dramatic impact on students, who have become more reflective, engaged and collaborative.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Superintendent Michael Cornell commended the training on restorative justice held last week in separate sessions for school personnel and then nearly 60 High School and Middle School DASA student Ambassadors. The student session was in preparation for the Ambassador visits to elementary schools in the spring to promote the district's "Culture of Kindness."
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirement of Marilyn Rozler, senior clerk typist at Armor Elementary School, effective Dec. 31, with 19 years of service. The following appointments were approved: Lisa Crowe, senior clerk typist, Pupil Services, Administration Building, effective Dec. 26; Nancy Herdic, senior clerk typist, Armor Elementary; Nikki McCrohan, cafeteria monitor (part-time), Middle School.
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** — Andrea Nikischer spoke about school day start times for secondary students.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 6:30 p.m. in the Union Pleasant Elementary Adult Learning Center & Tuesday, Jan. 29 (budget work session) at 6 p.m. at the Administration Building

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Dec. 12, 2018



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, NOV. 13 MEETING:

- **KUDOS FROM PTSA** — Board member David Yoviene was recognized by the NYS PTA and Hamburg Central PTSA for his longstanding partnership and support of the organization. Presenting the Advocate in Action award, HC PTSA President Dana Lamb praised Mr. Yoviene for his work toward education policies and laws benefitting children and for his involvement in the organization's activities.
- **SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS THANKED** — Artwork created by students at each of the schools was featured as School Board members were honored for statewide School Board Recognition Week 2018. Principals and art teachers accompanied the contributing students as their art techniques were explained and their talents commended. The featured artists were: Raelynn Cory, Gia Massucci, Armor Elementary; Thomas Zawada, Ryan Yager, Boston Valley Elementary; Heather Wall, Christina Dixon, Charlotte Avenue Elementary; Viera Sentman, Garrett Herman, Union Pleasant Elementary; Samantha Engel, Lily Darling, Middle School; Sydney Gartley, Dakota Reynolds, Madelyn Kruszka, High School. Each board member selected a copy of one of the artworks; the remaining pieces will be displayed in the Administration Building conference room. Superintendent Michael Cornell thanked board members for their efforts on behalf of children in what is sometimes a difficult job.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Mr. Cornell discussed results of a Prevention Needs Assessment Survey administered last year to Hamburg's 8th, 10th and 12th graders. The survey measured student behaviors and attitudes, as well as risk and protective factors, as they relate to substance use. The results were recently interpreted and presented to school administrators by representatives of WNY United Against Drug & Alcohol Abuse. In general, the survey found that Hamburg students engage in less alcohol and drug use than the national norm. It also pointed to a need for more recognition of students for pro-social involvement.
- **MENTAL HEALTH GUEST SPEAKER** — Approval was given to an agreement that will bring speaker Kevin Hines, a suicide survivor, to Hamburg for presentations to students, staff and the community in March. This is part of the district's ongoing efforts to raise awareness of mental health issues.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirements of Judith Shaughnessy, special education teacher, SS. Peter & Paul, effective Jan. 1, 2019, with 21 years of service and Barbara Wagner, registered professional school nurse, High School, effective June 30, 2019, with 27 years of service. The following appointments were approved: Jessica Evans, physical education/health teacher, Middle School; Susan Nagele, cleaner part-time, Union Pleasant Elementary; Tina Ellis, senior account clerk, Accounting Office, Administration Building; Marlena Stefaniak, cafeteria monitor part-time, Armor Elementary.
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** — Candy Ditkowski, HC PTSA Vice President, commended the district for being in the forefront in matters concerning school safety and pledged the organization's continued support on the issue.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesday, Dec. 11 in the Middle School LMC & Tuesday, Jan. 8 in the Union Pleasant Elementary Adult Learning Center, both at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Nov. 14, 2018



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, OCT. 9 MEETING:

- **STUDENT PLEDGE LEADER** — High School senior Ethan Pohlman led the Pledge of Allegiance to start the meeting. He is the board's student representative and President of Student Government.
- **HAROLD JOHNSON ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS** — The five action research projects funded through the first Harold Johnson Innovation in Education Grants provided quality professional learning opportunities for the recipient Hamburg teachers in collaboration with SUNY Fredonia faculty members and interns, and engaging learning experiences for students. Mr. Johnson was praised by Superintendent Michael Cornell in recognition of his contribution and vision for this partnership, and presented with a photo book highlighting how those projects translated into the classroom. Union Pleasant Elementary teacher Mindy Wolf, one of the grant recipients, was on-hand with her former students Tommy Herbert and Andy Seyerle to demonstrate how they used coding to program Sphero, app controlled robot balls.
- **HIGH SCHOOL LEARNING PLAN** — The High School's commitments and strategies for educating modern learners was the focus of a presentation by Principal Michael Gallagher and Assistant Principals John Crangle and Michael Tylock. Mr. Gallagher spoke about the influence of technology and digital prowess of today's "Generation Z" learners, and how instruction is evolving to provide them with deeper learning and understanding. The school's learning plan centers on two commitments: assuring that instructional programs promote the skills of creative and critical thinking, productive collaboration and effective communication; and using instructional technology to leverage greater learning opportunities. Teacher learning teams are also collaborating as part of this process.
- **EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT** — Sara Dayton of external auditor Lumsden & McCormick said a "clean opinion" was issued after an examination of district financial statements for July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018. This indicates that the financial statements were fairly presented in accordance with general accounting standards. Additionally, the management letter indicated no "material weaknesses" in the district's internal controls.
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Superintendent Michael Cornell noted that Michele Darstein, Community Relations Coordinator, won an Award of Honor in the Excellence in Writing category in the New York School Public Relations Association's 39th annual communications contest. This was in recognition of an article on the Middle School's Bulldog Café that was published in the Focus district newsletter in Jan/Feb 2018. Of 511 entries judged by communications professionals around the country, slightly over one-third received awards of either Excellence, Honor or Merit.
- **CONTRACT APPROVAL** — The board unanimously approved a new three-year contract with the 19-member bargaining unit that represents registered professional school nurses, certified occupational therapy assistants, computer aides and microcomputer repair technicians. The pact, in effect from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2021, provides wage increases of 2.5% annually.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirement Rodney Roll, head custodian at the Middle School, effective Dec. 29, with 39 years of service. The following appointments were approved: Trena Moorar, Interim Assistant Principal, Middle School; Brandon Brown, maintenance mechanic; Patricia Orton, cafeteria monitor (part-time), Charlotte Avenue Elementary; Danelle Sterner, cafeteria monitor (part-time), Boston Valley Elementary. The board also approved creation of the new Civil Service position of senior clerk typist in the Office of Instruction, to which Lindsay Lessard was subsequently appointed.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesdays, Nov. 13 in the Armor Elementary cafeteria & Dec. 11 in the Boston Valley Elementary cafeteria, both at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Oct. 10, 2018



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, SEPT. 11 MEETING:

- **MOMENT OF SILENCE** — A moment of silence was observed in remembrance of the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001.
- **PTSA AWARD FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL** — A New York State PTSA School of Excellence Award for 2018-20 was presented to Middle School Principal Jennifer Barker and Assistant Principal Amanda Bolin by Candy Ditkowski, Hamburg Central PTSA Vice President. The award recognizes their commitment to building an inclusive and welcoming school community. The selection is based on six standards, Mrs. Ditkowski said: welcoming all families into the school community, communicating effectively, supporting student success, speaking up for every child, sharing power and collaborating with community. Hamburg is one of five districts in Western New York to receive the honor. Superintendent Michael Cornell commended the PTSA and Middle School leadership for the achievement. Charlotte Avenue Elementary is also a past winner of the designation (2016-18).
- **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT** — Mr. Cornell reported that the school year is off to a “great start” from a learning perspective, thanks to the efforts of educators. He also noted that the district’s mental health first aid training of all staff received front page coverage last week in “On Board,” the statewide newspaper of the New York State School Boards Association. The initiative will also be featured in a WBFO Facebook live segment.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirements of Paula Litwin, computer aide, Boston Valley Elementary, retroactive to Aug. 17, with 26 years of service and Mary Valtin, principal clerk typist, Administration Building, effective Sept. 1, 2019, with 10 years of service. The following appointments were approved: Donna Appolson, teacher aide, Union Pleasant Elementary; Angela Cartechine, teacher aide, Boston Valley Elementary; Catherine Czora, clerk typist (part-time), Administration Building; Pamela Geiger, teacher aide, Charlotte Avenue Elementary; Emily Hawes, teacher aide, Middle School; Patricia Hover, teacher aide, High School; Theresa Lysek, teacher aide, Middle School; Jennifer McKeone, business teacher, High School; Kari Ratka, art teacher (part-time), Charlotte Avenue Elementary; Jennifer Ricey, computer aide, Charlotte Avenue Elementary; Tara Rivas, teacher aide, Boston Valley Elementary; Emily Walker, teacher aide, Boston Valley Elementary.
- **PUBLIC COMMENT** — Chris Sloma requested that a crossing guard be stationed at Main and Buffalo for the safety of student walkers.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesday, Oct. 9 in the High School LMC & Tuesday, Nov. 13 in the Armor Elementary cafeteria, both at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Sept. 12, 2018



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S MONDAY, AUG. 13 MEETING:

- **MOMENT OF SILENCE** — A moment of silence was observed in honor of the late Conor J. Long, a 2017 Hamburg High School graduate and student leader who lost his life in a recent hiking accident. Mr. Long also was a past student representative on the School Board.
- **PROGRESS OF CAPITAL PROJECT** — Good progress is being made on summer construction projects across the district, as detailed by Tim Mertzluft of Gordon W. Jones Associates Architects and Jim Templeton of Turner Construction, project clerk. Work being accomplished through the Capital Improvements Project approved by voters in 2016 ranges from repairs to keep Hamburg's buildings structurally sound, to renovating outdated spaces into modern learning environments. A photo presentation documented the construction progress on such areas as the High School, Middle School and Armor Elementary Library Media Centers, Middle School Family and Consumer Sciences classrooms, and Union Pleasant Elementary parking lot and entryway.
- **REVISED 2018-19 CALENDAR** — The 2018-19 school calendar was adjusted so that June 17 will be the last day of classes for Hamburg Middle School students, followed by local/Regents exams June 18-25.
- **TAX LEVY 2018-19** — The 2018-19 tax levy of \$36,711,029 was approved, establishing tax rates as follows: Hamburg, \$36.85 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, an increase of \$1.48; Eden, \$31.23, increase of \$2.04; Boston, \$21.68, increase of 54 cents; Orchard Park, \$36.49, increase of \$1.12.
- **BOARD AND SUPERINTENDENT GOALS** — Goals for the School Board and Superintendent for 2018-19 reflect priorities in the district's Strategic Action Plan. As students make their learning more visible, the Superintendent will work to assure that each school's evidence of that learning is having an impact on inspiring and empowering students to become creative and critical thinkers, productive collaborators and effective communicators. As its goal, the School Board will receive quarterly updates on another focus of the Strategic Plan — supporting educators through more high quality professional learning experiences.
- **KUDOS** — Superintendent Michael Cornell noted that Hamburg Central was recently ranked 27th in school safety out of more than 430 upstate New York school districts by Niche.com, a school and neighborhood analysis website. Hamburg was also recently recognized as a 2018 District of Distinction by *District Administration* magazine for providing mental health first aid training to all its employees.
- **BUS CONTRACT EXTENDED** — The board approved a three-year extension to the transportation contract with Fisher Bus Service through 2020-2021.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirements of Rose Cruver, teacher aide at the Middle School, retroactive to July 28, with 16 years of service and Daniel Kaszubowski Jr., maintenance mechanic, effective Sept. 1, with 24 years of service. Susan Wilson was appointed as Assistant Principal at Union Pleasant Elementary School, effective Aug. 14. Also appointed were: Stephanie Mayer, special education teacher, Union Pleasant Elementary; Jill Pula, school social worker (part-time), Union Pleasant Elementary; Beth Thurston, school monitor cafeteria (part-time), Middle School; Josie White, clerk typist (part-time), Community Relations Office, Administration Building; Rhonda Willcox, food service helper, High School.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesday, Sept. 11 at the Administration Building & Tuesday, Oct. 9 in the High School LMC, both at 6:30 p.m.

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
Aug. 16, 2018



Board Briefings

ITEMS FROM THE SCHOOL BOARD'S TUESDAY, JULY 10 MEETING:

- **ELECTION OF BOARD OFFICERS** — The board unanimously re-elected Thomas Flynn as its President and Cam Hall as Vice President. Board members Robbin List and Michael McGarry, who were re-elected in May, took the oath of office to begin new three-year terms.
- **BOARD'S STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE** — Hamburg High School senior Ethan Pohlman was welcomed as the non-voting student representative on the School Board for 2018-19. Ethan also serves as President of Student Government.
- **DISTRICT OF DISTINCTION** — Superintendent Michael Cornell announced that Hamburg was one of 45 school districts nationwide named as a 2018 District of Distinction by District Administration magazine for providing mental health first aid training to all its employees. The designation honors school districts that are leading the way with new ideas that solve challenges. By this September, the district will have provided mental health first aid instruction to all 650 staff members, as well as bus drivers, through a two-year grant from the Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation. Mr. Cornell praised Colleen Kaney, Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Curriculum & Instruction, and the in-house team that's providing the training.
- **2018-19 SCHOOL BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE** — The schedule for 2018-19 School Board meetings was set as follows: Aug. 14, Sept. 11, Oct. 9, Nov. 13, Dec. 11, Jan. 8 & 29 (budget work session), Feb. 12 & 26 (budget work session), March 12 & 26 (budget work session), April 9 & 16 (budget work session), May 14 (regular meeting & budget hearing), June 11. Regular meetings will start at 6:30 p.m.; budget work sessions/hearing at 6 p.m. The school budget vote/board election will be on May 21.
- **APPOINTMENTS & DESIGNATIONS** — Appointments and designations for the 2018-19 school year include: Kathleen Selby, district treasurer; Debra Magee, deputy district treasurer; Barbara Sporyz, district clerk/records access officer; Mary Valtin, district claims auditor; Dr. Gerald Lauria, school physician; Hodgson Russ, bond/legal counsel; Webster Szanyi, legal counsel; Munistat Services Inc., financial advisor; Lumsden & McCormick, external auditor; Bahgat & Laurito-Bahgat, internal auditor; Manufacturers & Traders Trust Co. and JP Morgan Chase Bank, depositories; Catherine Rybczynski, tax collector for the district for the Towns of Hamburg, Orchard Park, Boston and Eden; Hamburg Sun and Orchard Park Bee, official newspapers of the district.
- **SUPERINTENDENT CONTRACT EXTENSION** — The board unanimously approved a one-year extension to the employment contract of Superintendent Michael Cornell to June 30, 2023.
- **PERSONNEL** — The board accepted the retirement of Kenneth Wells, motor vehicle operator, with 38 years of service, effective Sept. 27. Approval was given to the following appointments, effective Sept. 1: Kurt Ebsary, music teacher, Union Pleasant Elementary/districtwide; Jessica Evans, physical education & health teacher (part-time), Middle School; Theresa Glowacki, special education teacher, Boston Valley Elementary; Kelli Grabowski, science teacher, Middle School/High School; April Hand-Smith, art teacher Union Pleasant Elementary; Amy Jarka, teacher aide, High School; Andrew Pacifico, teacher, Union Pleasant Elementary; Kathryn Sherry, teacher, Armor Elementary.
- **FUTURE MEETINGS** — Tuesdays, Aug. 14 & Sept. 11 at 6:30 p.m. at the Administration Building

Michael Cornell, Superintendent
July 11, 2018