

Bath School Board Meeting @ Bath Village School
April 13, 2026

Board Members Present: Sara Lang, Matt Smith, Cori Elliot

Administration Present: SAU 23 Superintendent Dolores Fox, Principal Megan Jones, Business Administrator Kathryn Ducharme

Staff Present: Jessica Fiore, Caiti Fullerton, Dawn Nelson

Public Present: Nathan Brown, Brandie Dennis, Heather Engle

1. **Call Meeting to Order:** Dolores called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm to entertain nominations for the position of Chair (Reorganization of the Board).
2. **Reorganization of the Board:** Motion by Sara, second by Cori to nominate Matt as the Chair. All were in favor. Matt then took over as Chair.
Motion by Matt, second by Cori to nominate Sara as Vice Chair. All were in favor.
Motion by Matt, second by Sara to nominate Cori as Secretary. All were in favor.
3. **Sign Manifest:** Done
4. **Agenda Review/Adjustments:** Sara added Agenda item #12.5.
5. **Approval of Minutes of FEBRUARY 9, 2026:** Motion by Sara, second by Matt to approve the minutes. Two voted in favor, Cori abstained as she was not a Board member in February.
6. **Public Input:** Heather Engle asked whether the Board would pay tuition for a student to attend vocational classes at St. Johnsbury as they offer programming that Riverbend does not. Board needs to discuss after obtaining more information about additional costs, transportation, timing and scheduling to fit into WHS, and how to prepare the student. Dolores suggested developing parameters to make future decisions.

Heather (as a parent) expressed concern about the difficult educational and social experience her child has had in the combined 5th and 6th grade classroom that has 20 students. Sara recognized this is the first year of doing this and understands the challenge. Current legislative bills, if they become law, will impact setting the maximum/minimum class size for any school. Board discussed this issue in agenda item #12.5 – see more detail about student surveys.
7. **Administrator Reports: All Submitted**

James Marshall - Technology Director: No questions from the Board.

Steve Emerson, Facilities Maintenance Manager: Steve has been getting estimates to improve the parking areas by using stay mat; to cover by the dumpster the cost would be \$1,100 and to do all the areas (catch basin, etc.) cost would be \$19,390.

Bid requests for the preschool bathroom installation are in the local papers, no interest yet. Bathroom would be located in the old 2nd grade room.

Kerri Reilly, SPED Director: No questions from the Board.

Megan Jones, Principal: The new Administrative Assistant Amy Tromboni hired in February is fitting in very well in the BVS community. The outside picnic table needs to be replaced. Staff is continuing to improve literacy instruction by investigating reading programs that align with the science of reading and will choose 2 programs to pilot in the 26-27 school year.

The Missoula Children's Theater production of "Beauty Lou and the Country Beast" went well. It is impressive what the students do with a week of preparation.

The Wellness Committee is planning the Wellness Week (week of 5/4) and the 4th Annual Run/Walkathon for Saturday, May 2. Many donations from sponsors have been received and the money raised will be spent to support wellness activities and equipment for the school.

A shadow day for Landaff students and parents is scheduled for April 29th. This will allow them to meet potential classmates and to experience a class and lunch @ BVS.

Sara extended congratulations to Karen Bellidoro for her nomination for NH Teacher of the Year, 2027. She is 1 of 50 applicants. Well done and good luck!

Kathryn Ducharme, Business Administrator: Kathryn discussed the financial summary for BVS as of April 2, 2026, with total revenues and expenditures highlighted. This is a projection and subject to change, including the fund balance figures.

Revenues; (tuition) over budget \$16,000 (includes one Landaff student).
Expenditures; salaries/benefits under budget by \$230,000 (3 less teachers), tuition under budget by \$44,000 (2% discount from Haverhill tuition bill over \$400,000), Special Education under budget by \$18,000, Building Operations Grounds, and Equipment over budget by \$20,000 (the fire panel was encumbered for the current year and moved from next year's budget of \$30,000), Transportation (Special Education) over budget by \$51,000 (based on student needs).

Kathryn offered to spend time with Cori to explain the budget process.

Dolores Fox, Superintendent:
State of NH Legislative updates.

- HB1815 has been signed into law, redefining the state of NH's responsibility to support an adequate education. It will come into effect next school year.

Three major points include:

- Reserves the right to define an "adequate education" as a matter for the legislature (no longer a court matter)

- Changes state obligation from an opportunity for “an adequate education” to an obligation to fund the “academic program”
- Reduces the state’s obligation to fund education to a shared responsibility between local and state funding
- SB101 Open Enrollment changes to the bill, legislature still working on it:
 - Funding would be from the state education fund and the sending school district would not receive adequacy aid for participating students; no limit to student’s exiting
 - Start date July 1, 2027
 - Limits transfers to 2x a year
 - Bus transportation can be used if the parents can transport student to the nearest bus stop and if there is room
 - Possible impacts: Pits district vs district (creates winners and losers), does not address Special Education costs (sending district is responsible for), makes budget planning difficult
 - An application process will need to be developed to assess incoming students for acceptance or not into our school program
- HB1300, currently not yet voted in, would require towns to vote in general elections on a school tax rate cap every 2 years, 3/5 majority needed to adopt or annul.
- Governor Ayotte signed into law a bill that rolls back the recording limitations in the Parents Bill of Rights law. Schools may now record students participating in public events and for assessment purposes. No other changes.

Federal Updates: Due to changes in the NH demographics from the 2024 education census, NH will lose 20% of the Title I funds; the impact on FY27 budget is uncertain.

Sara expressed concern over the cumulative impact to the schools if all of these pass.

Town Updates: Board discussed a letter sent from the Select Board suggesting that the School Board print its own report separate from the Town report to streamline the process and get the information to the public in a timely manner. Sara had questions as to the “why” and noted that the Board members could attend a Select Board meeting at their invitation to discuss. The SAU office will help research costs and possible design. The Haverhill District published their own report this year and had more room to share more varied information.

8. **SY2026-27 Calendar – 2nd Look/Adoption:** Motion by Matt, second by Sara to approve the SY 2026-27 Calendar as written. All were in favor.
9. **Food Service: FY27 Contract; F/S Participation; Report on Free Meals for NOV/DEC:** Kathryn reported that offering free meals from November 3 to December 19, 2025, did result in more participation in the lunch program by the students, from 50% in the previous year to 68-71% during this offer.

Kathryn reported that the company, Abbey Group, that provides our Food Service contract has been purchased by a bigger company, Whitsons, who has also purchased the only other competitor. This will result in increased prices for next year. We currently charge \$1.70 for breakfast and \$2.40 for lunch.

Motion by Matt, second by Sara to increase the cost of breakfast and lunch by \$.10 for the next school year. All were in favor. Motion by Matt, second by Sara to approve the Food Service budget at \$35,987. All were in favor.

Discussion ensued about various ways to make sure the students get enough food; no child goes hungry.

10. **Polices:**

- Review: DFA-R (Investment Policy): Motion by Matt, second by Sara to re-adopt Policy DFA-R as amended. All were in favor.
- Review all of Section D: Motion by Matt, second by Sara to approve re-adoption of all of Section D as amended. All were in favor.

11. **Tuition for FY27 & Landaff:**

- “Tuition Agreement Haverhill Cooperative and Bath School Districts” was discussed. Tuition amounts and Article 7 were updated, more changes and clarification are needed before the Board signs.
- “Tuition Agreement Bath and Landaff School Districts” was discussed. Landaff Blue School has closed. Their School Board has capped tuition at \$18,000 for next year and has committed to paying tuition for Landaff pre-school students for the next 2 years.
 - Current tuition agreement with Bath covers Landaff students in grades 4-6 for \$16,800 with 5% increase for following year; new tuition agreement needs to expand to cover K-6.
 - Motion by Matt, second by Sara to amend the current tuition agreement with Landaff to cover K-6 grade students. All were in favor.
 - Board will monitor our tuition rate and how it impacts Landaff’s tuition cap.
 - Tuition Agreement for other students to attend BVS was discussed. Motion by Matt, second by Sara to increase the tuition rate at Bath Village School to \$18,816 for FY27. All were in favor.

12. **PreSchool Update:** Bathroom update – see Steve Emerson report.

Dolores and Megan discussed draft ideas about how to administer the PreSchool program.

- PreSchool and K classrooms will be combined
- Must be 4 by a certain date to register
- Acceptance will be based on **space available** with priority for
 - Resident of Bath students with identified need for preschool
 - Resident of Bath students
 - Tuition agreement students (Landaff)
 - Non-resident students

- Cap in student numbers will be determined based on Special Needs, **K students will be counted first**. Board suggested a cap of 12 for K and PreK.
- 1/2 day (morning) program with an extended day (afternoon) offered on a fee basis
 - Bath students can attend the morning session at no cost, will pay fee for the afternoon
 - Non-resident students not covered by a tuition agreement will pay a fee for morning and afternoon sessions
 - Fees billed monthly, will not be billed for emergency closures, but will be billed for students absences; families may appeal to the Superintendent for absence due to extreme circumstances or hardship
 - Fee will be set annually by the School Board
 - Motion by Matt, second by Sara to set the preschool fee at \$20 for the morning session and \$15 for the afternoon session. All were in favor.
- Families interested in PreSchool placement by the fall school year will apply by May 1st of the preceding school year. Megan noted there is interest.
- Megan offered to send out a notice: NOTE: The BVS PreSchool RoundUp May 1, 2026 notice appeared on the 4/14/26 BVS FB page.

12.5. **Surveys to Solicit Feedback from Students for SY2025-26:** In view of the challenges and changes of this school year, Sara suggested getting feedback from students in the combined classrooms (3rd/4th and 5th/6th) to see how the year went. She also wants feedback from the current Middle School students tuitioned to Haverhill and Lisbon about their academic and social opportunities that they had that were not available at BVS, etc. Megan will develop a survey building on the questions that the Task Force worked with. Survey will be anonymous.

13. **Resignations, New Hires, and Open Positions:** Tabled to be considered after the Non-Public Session.

14. **Public Input:** Jesse asked about the date of the last day of school. Motion by Matt, second by Sara to designate June 12th as the last day of school; 1/2 day for students, full day for staff. All were in favor.

15. **Next Meeting Dates: MAY 18, 2026, @ 6:00 pm**

16. **Non-Public Session per RSA 91.A:3 (as needed):** Motion by Matt, second by Sara to enter into Non-Public Session at 7:47 pm. All were in favor.

Motion by Matt, second by Sara to come out of Non-Public Session at 8:11 pm. All were in favor.

Announced the appointment of Sam French as special education teacher for BVS starting 2026-27 school year.

And announced the reelection of employees for the 2026-27 as amended (with S. French as a teacher).

17. **Adjournment:** Motion by Sara, second by Matt to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm.
All were in favor.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Tumosa, Secretary, Bath School Board