

**Hague School Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting
Thursday, 07 August 2025, 10:00 AM
Town of Hague Community Center and Zoom**

Present: Beth Barton-Navitsky, Jack Bast, Barbara Booth, Josh Patchett, and John Zamrok in person; Peter Carney, Linda Fusco, Mike Galow and Walt Lender on Zoom.

Absent: Sally Thurston

Meeting opened at 10:01 AM

Pledge of Allegiance

Approved Minutes of 07/10/2025 SAC Meeting

Opening Remarks

Jack noted that August 2025 is the second anniversary of SAC's founding and thanked all Members for their continuing dedication and perseverance. While so far the BoE has been completely unresponsive to our efforts and requests, we've learned a lot. And we're the first task force/committee to take on academic performance as well as financial issues. We've educated the citizens, the parents of school-age children and the school tax-levy taxpayers about issues that warrant attention, and we sincerely believe they affect Hague as well as Ticonderoga in our TCSD partnership.

The Committee agreed unanimously we are obligated to continue the good fight for academic performance improvement and more equitable and fairer school taxes ... and we will!

NY Rural Schools Association (RSA) Summer Conference

Mike shared his findings from the RSA Summer Conference held in Lake Placid July 13-15. His complete report has been provided to the Committee earlier. Mike highlighted several points which were further discussed.

- Ticonderoga CSD is not following general best practices in board governance, and he contrasted their generally negative attitude with the "realistic optimism" displayed by other similarly challenged districts across the State.

- TCSD's high healthcare costs (25-29% of budget) are apparently normal for New York State districts, though much higher than in New Jersey, which does not include retirees.
- The BoE is required to evaluate the Superintendent, but there is not a strict structure for how to do that. We can ask about the structure of their evaluation, but not the results. Self-evaluation by the board is not required. Board members get 12 hours of training on budget and governance. Public comment periods in meetings are not required. Committees are found in boards that practice good governance; TCSD BoE does not have committees.
- Attendees are from all over the state and are also dealing with declining populations, poor kids, inadequate resources, but are optimistic and dedicated, engaging with the issues. Not like Ti.
- Attendees use the State testing data. They are considered indicative and taken seriously.
- Mike reported on his discussion with Donna Wotton, TCSD BoE Member and TCSD RSA Member.

Ticonderoga Assessment Issues

Jack reported that the Hague assessor agrees there are troubling discrepancies with Ti assessments. This is important Since assessments are the basis for the apportionment of the school tax. While it's too late to affect this year's tax rate, SAC intends to start a review of the process for next year, noting that this issue is more significant than the PILOT problem. SAC will meet with David Martucci promptly to develop the plan of action.

Executive Session

The Committee went into Executive Session to discuss potential legal issues.

The next regularly scheduled Ti BoE meeting is on August 19th at 6 PM.

The next SAC meeting will be held Thursday, September 11th, 2025 at 10:00 AM.

Adjournment - 11:42 AM

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Bast