

**Hague School Advisory Committee (SAC) Meeting
Thursday, 07 November 2024, 10:00AM
Town of Hague Community Center and Zoom**

Present: Josh Patchett, Jack Bast, Linda Fusco, Beth Barton-Navitsky, and Peter Carney and Sandy Smith on Zoom

Absent: Amanda Peterson, Kathe Allen, Sally Thurston, Susan DeLarm-Sandman

Meeting opened at 10:02 am

Pledge of Allegiance

Moment of respect for Rolly Allen

Approved Minutes of 10/03/2024 SAC Meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Jack provided an update on SAC-related events since 10/03/2024 meeting:
 - 10/08 Hague Town Board Meeting
Resolution # 96 requesting Ti CSD to stream meetings passed and was forwarded to the Board of Education (BoE)
Urged another Hague representative to the BoE to step up now for the 2025 election
 - 10/17 School BoE Meeting – Josh announces Resolution # 96
 - 11/04 Hague Town Board Budget Meeting – SAC 2025 budget request of \$125K was reduced to \$75K (this is still a \$50K increase from the \$25K 2024 budget)
 - 11/01 Hague Chronicle article – article was published

2. Linda reported on her contacts with two local School Districts:
 - 10/16 visit to Lake George Village CSD. She was well received by the Elementary School Principal Jim Conway and other staff members. Linda got a good sense of their education function, finding it to be an excellent model. Her complete report is available.
 - A phone conversation with Mathew Boucher, Putnam CSD Superintendent and Principal, revealed that Putnam has no curriculum plan and their state-reported scores date far back before Common Core was instituted. Linda plans a followup visit to Putnam.

3. BoE streaming followup was discussed. Josh noted that he was quite uncomfortable repeatedly bringing it up at BoE meetings when there are a number of students present; e.g., in the 10/17 BoE Meeting. However, the Committee considers that we have to relentlessly pursue this issue, especially in light of the past BoE lack of responsiveness. Jack noted that, until the Town receives a documented BoE response to Resolution # 96 dated 10/08/2024 and our letter dated 10/16/2024, he intends to send the BoE a monthly reminder to them (with Josh concurrence). We must not accept their ignoring our request.

It would be helpful if we could get some Ti citizens also requesting streaming. We might also consider streaming the BoE meetings ourselves, i.e., taking our own equipment there.

4. PILOT agreement status was discussed. Resolution # 91 dated 09/10/2024 was transmitted to Ticonderoga and the BoE on 09/13/2024. The BoE response on 09/19 in the meeting with Josh and Jack that the Town of Hague would be given the same notice as any taxpayer – i.e., via legal public notice - is considered not sufficient. Also, Mr. Mark Wright's reply by the Town of Ticonderoga dated 09/16/2024 is completely unresponsive to Hague's request, seemingly denying any control over PILOT agreements.

In separate attorney-approved letters on 10/16/2024 to Mr. Wright and to the BoE, Supervisor Patchett expressed his dissatisfaction, and that Hague continues to seek their commitment to fully cooperate and collaborate with the Town of Hague in such PILOT matters. No response to our two 10/16/2024 PILOT letters has been received to date. Jack noted that, until the Town receives a documented BoE response to Resolution # 96 dated 10/08/2024 and our letter dated 10/16/2024, he intends to send the BoE a monthly reminder to them (with Josh concurrence). We must not accept their ignoring our request.

In the meantime, Peter has researched in depth the various PILOT agreements entered into by Ti and the BoE. Peter has extensive personal business experience in and is a highly qualified expert in the field of PILOT agreements. He has compiled his results in a draft White Paper. The preliminary results indicate highly unfavorable terms and conditions for the citizens of Ticonderoga ... and for the school-tax-paying citizens of Hague.

Inasmuch as the Taxpayers of the Town of Hague are directly and uniquely affected by any PILOT agreements entered by the TCSD. A prerequisite of a fair and equitable school tax for the taxpayers of Hague must be to have a seat at the table for all future PILOT agreements. And the BoE decision to not fairly include the Full Market Value of the energy projects with PILOTs in the School Tax Levy apportionment must be reversed for the next tax year. A plan to accomplish this objective, and the use of the White Paper, must be developed by SAC.

5. Education emphasis with our school was discussed. One area must be to get more Hague-sympathetic members on the BoE. There will be three openings again in May 2025.

It was also agreed the Committee needs to better know the opinions of the Hague residents with children currently attending Ti CSD. Beth will attempt to get the names of these families.

6. The next BoE meeting will be on November 19 at 6:00 pm. Jack will be out of town and unable to attend. Josh and Sandy will plan to try to attend.
7. It was noted that the current term of the Town's Assessor ends this year. Although assessments play a key role in the determination of school taxes, SAC will not get directly involved in the next appointment of the Assessor.
8. Linda will contact Roger P. Catania, our 4th Judicial District Regent, for the purpose of establishing a relationship, getting advice on our inequitable school tax situation and insights on TCSD' educational standing.

The next SAC meeting will be held Thursday, December 12th at 10:00 am. (Note, this departure from the usual first Thursday of the month is due to the fact that Linda and Beth will be attending the RSANY Winter Conference at that time.)

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 11:25 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Jack Bast