

# South Hero School Board

Meeting **Thursday, Jan. 18, 2018**, at Folsom Education & Community Center

## DRAFT MINUTES

Call to order at 6:04 p.m.

In attendance:

-Board members: David Cain, Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, RJ Sweeney, Bentley Vaughan

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, Don Van Nostrand, Julie Pidgeon, Helen Bishop, Rob Gess

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Bob Chutter, Linda Burger, Andre Bertmann

### Adjustment of Agenda

The board removed action on the solar contract until its next meeting.

The board moved the principal's contract discussion to come after the rest of board action and noted it would likely lead into executive session.

S. McKelvie requested time for the board to consider a request for the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade overnight trip to Canada.

The board added discussion of litigation facing GISU to before the principal's contract.

### Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the Jan. 11, 2018, meeting were approved on a voice vote. T. Maxham made the motion; M. Henderson seconded.

### Public Comments

Bob Chutter asked if the school meeting schedule could be posted on the town website and the link be valid as the current link goes to a GISU site that is out of date. He said the names of the board members need to be updated. D. Cain said it was a great idea and the board would take care of it.

T. Maxham expressed thanks to Andy Julow for his work on the Act 46 committee, the GISU board and the new Champlain Islands Unified Union School District board. T. Maxham said he learned A. Julow has decided to resign at the end of the month. T. Maxham noted A. Julow is well versed in the issues and he will be missed. D. Cain agreed that A. Julow is an extremely hard worker and will be missed.

M. Henderson congratulated the K-4 and 5-8 students on their excellent performance of the elementary musical on Jan. 17 and recognized Ms. Karlie Kauffeld for her work as their music teacher.

### Board Discussion

#### 1) FY19 Budget Discussion

R. Gess reviewed two changes to the budget. He noted there was a reduction in the assessment for the GISU based on the approval of its budget at its meeting and a reduction in the board salary.

D. Cain asked R. Gess if there was anything more to discuss. R. Gess said the board had fine-tuned the budget at its last meeting.

D. Cain asked if the notes line would be removed when the budget was printed. R. Gess said yes. The numbering will be the same. R. Gess said the budget will be formatted to be the same as previous years to fit into the town report. D. Cain asked about several lines that no longer appear in the budget because the budgeted amounts now appear in the GISU budget. R. Gess recommended that those lines remain in the budget for transparency and history. T. Maxham agreed with R. Gess.

B. Chutter asked for and received a copy of the budget.

R. Sweeney asked about the spending increase. D. Cain said spending was increasing about 4%. Revenue went down because of the surplus in FY16.

D. Cain said he was hoping to push down the tax increase to below 10%, and the GISU budget reduction resulted in that. He wondered what it would take to get the budget to a less than a 13-cent per \$100 of assessed value increase. R. Gess noted it would take \$2,500 in cuts.

T. Maxham said he was willing to give up his payment as a board member if that made a difference, referring to Line 427 Board of Education salaries. D. Cain said he supports a one-year hiatus but did not want to impact the needs of future board members. The board concurred in T. Maxham's suggestion that it eliminate the board salary for one year. Line 427 was revised to be \$0. R. Gess pointed out that would also reduce FICA.

With that reduction, R. Gess reported the following figures for the FY19 budget:

- Tax rate of \$1.6459 per \$100 assessed value

- The change is a 12.86-cent increase

- It represents an 8.477% increase in the tax rate.

B. Chutter expressed support for small class sizes and good teachers in the classroom. He asked about the line item for Home School Coordinator. He wanted to know why that was essential since it was a new position. S. McKelvie said that last year the position was more administrative and that it was revised this year and is no longer administrative. This year, the position provides behavior support for teachers with students in the classroom, and it is also a liaison for families to help connect them with social services. S. McKelvie said it is a useful position to address a range of behaviors in a K-8 school. S. McKelvie said she is ultimately the decision-maker, but the position is a support in the trenches day-to-day with students. RJ Sweeney noted that multiple administrators in the past expressed the challenges of juggling administrative duties while being the person available in the moment when a child needed behavior support. R. Chutter asked if that was due to the changing needs of South Hero's student population. The board acknowledged that yes, that was the case.

L. Burger asked about the qualifications of the person in the role. S. McKelvie said the job description does not require a teaching license or specify experience. In hiring, the school looked for someone with behavior management training and experience. T. Maxham asked if that should be addressed. S. McKelvie said the job description was refined in the hiring process and she cautioned against making the wording too specific because that might limit future hires. B. Chutter suggested calling it a school-to-

home coordinator. It was noted that the title creates confusion. D. Cain asked if there was a large applicant pool for the last hiring. S. McKelvie indicated no.

T. Maxham moved that the board adopt a budget of \$3,853,576 for FY19. RJ Sweeney seconded. The board approved the motion unanimously on a voice vote.

T. Maxham expressed appreciation for all Rob Gess's work on the budget. He also thanked D. Van Nostrand and S. McKelvie, and he noted that all three administrators were new this year, and the contributions from all three had been a tremendous help to the board. D. Cain said the process went well and the administration was prepared.

## 2) Town Report Preparation

The board reviewed the reports that will be submitted for the Town Report. There will be reports from S. McKelvie and D. Van Nostrand, as well as the board. D. Cain shared a draft of his letter to the town on behalf of the board. The board discussed with D. Van Nostrand the legal way to refer to Folsom as a standalone school.

D. Cain shared a second letter, which communicates the particulars about the budget. RJ Sweeney expressed that it would be helpful to point out that the budget increases are primarily due to external forces. The board then reviewed D. Cain's notes on budget changes. There was discussion about how to communicate Folsom's student-to-teacher ratio so it is clear. The board agreed the wording was confusing and they reworded it to express that the school makes efficient use of its teaching staff. They agreed to address that topic in the presentation at town meeting with the data table.

On the information about field trips, the board emphasized its decision to restore funding for field trips that had been reduced to support their educational purpose and reduce the pressure on fund-raising.

The board reviewed and edited its report on the budget to the town.

B. Chutter asked if the school board would be meeting with the town Selectboard to discuss future payment for town use of the school building after the library moves. D. Cain replied that they had already talked with the Selectboard, which indicated that the square footage available to the town was still the same, so the payment would remain the same.

The board took B. Chutter's suggestion to call the position School-Home Coordinator on Line 468.

The board agreed not to write a separate letter on Act 46 but include that information in the board's report to the town and refer townspeople to the report.

T. Maxham asked if a final budget could be made available to be presented to the Selectboard at its meeting on Monday, Jan. 22. R. Gess said he could send out the final budget tomorrow with tax information. The board discussed the final preparation of the town report and getting information to the town clerk's office.

D. Cain noted that Sharon Roy requested petitions by Monday, Jan. 22, for those running for election.

### 3) Town Meeting Preparation

D. Cain said he would like board members to be clear on responsibilities for Town Meeting, which is on March 3, with voting on March 6. T. Maxham shared that there may be a petition to have the town clerk and treasurer appointed by the Selectboard.

S. McKelvie said she would like to make a brief presentation on what is happening at Folsom for future planning and learning. M. Henderson said she was planning to do a presentation updating the town on Act 46. And the board will make its budget presentation; D. Cain said he would prepare that presentation. They discussed coordinating those presentations. T. Maxham asked if a group at the school would like to offer food at Town Meeting. S. McKelvie said she would ask the PTO at its meeting Monday. T. Maxham inquired about baby-sitting. H. Bishop reported that the PTO in the past has paid for a professional to baby-sit.

Feb. 1 and Feb. 15 are the next school board meetings. D. Cain suggested the board have presentations ready by the Feb. 15 meeting.

D. Cain noted that it's important for the board to encourage as many people as possible to vote.

### 4) Overnight Trip Approval

S. McKelvie said that per its policy, the board must give its approval to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to go on an overnight trip to Quebec City, Canada, on May 23-25, 2018. J. Pidgeon and H. Bishop submitted a request. M. Henderson moved the board approve the 7-8 international, overnight trip to Quebec. T. Maxham seconded. Approved. J. Pidgeon said she would report back to the board in June on the trip.

### 5) GISU litigation

D. Cain said a former member of the GISU Board and a former member of the Isle La Motte School Board has filed a lawsuit against the Supervisory Union and all its members, including D. Cain, B. Vaughan, and M. Henderson.

### Board Action

Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Vaughn moved and RJ Sweeney seconded that the bills be paid. Approved.

### Board Correspondence / Sharing

None.

### Follow-Up / Old Business

None.

### Executive Session

D. Cain moved that the board go into executive session to discuss a legal issue and a personnel contract issue. T. Maxham seconded. The board went into executive session at 8 p.m.

The board came out of executive session at 8:25 p.m. D. Cain made a motion to offer S. McKelvie a one-year contract at \$97,000. T. Maxham seconded. Approved.

Adjourn

B. Vaughan moved the board adjourn; T. Maxham seconded. The motion was approved and the board adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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