

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District

School Board Regular Meeting

Thursday, May 21, 2020, at 6 p.m.

Location: Folsom Education & Community Center

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MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:04 p.m. (B. Chutter)

In attendance:

-Board members: Tim Maxham, Bentley Vaughan, Bob Chutter, Erin Morse, Nathaniel Kouns

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, Michael Clark, Rob Gess, Julie Pidgeon

-Audience: Buddy Meilleur (LCATV), Meg Foster, Dan Foster

2. Adjustment of Agenda

-B. Chutter added an update on the Parent-Child Center negotiations status under Other Business

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. Approve minutes from March 19, 2020, and April 16, 2020. N. Kouns made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2020, and April 16, 2020, meetings. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

5. Reports

A. Financial (R. Gess) (Action): R. Gess reported the budget will have an approximately \$35,000 surplus. He noted that purchase orders have decreased during the closure, but he anticipates there will be some purchase orders before the end of the fiscal year. Regarding school lunches, more than 2,300 lunches have been served to the community. All the claims for reimbursement have been processed. R. Gess said there is discussion about providing lunches during the summer recess. The logistics are going to be complex, and there may be funding challenges. The district is waiting for information from the federal government and state Agency of Education.

Audit update; There is no news to report. The auditors are still working remotely as they have not been deemed an essential business yet. The audits are not due until the end of June.

The end of year checklist has been distributed for final purchases for necessary items. The classroom inventories are optional this year given the current health considerations; however, the district will track technology. The district will defer FY21 purchasing until after July 1 so it has a better idea of state funding. In addition, the district is converting to a new Chart of Accounts and needs time to make the conversion.

E. Morse asked if the district is using buses to deliver food. R. Gess said the district is using buses to deliver food until the end of the school year, when the bus contract ends. If a decision is made to use buses to deliver food during the summer, the district will need to contract with Mountain Transit and determine funding. E. Morse asked if Mountain Transit has other vehicles to deliver. R. Gess said it does not.

B. Chutter asked about the grand total amount remaining of \$107,596.68 in the financial report and why it differed from R. Gess's number. R. Gess said he is waiting for information from the Agency of Education and has some anticipated expenditures that still need to be reconciled. He is providing a best-guess estimate of what will be remaining.

R. Gess will speak with the South Hero Town Clerk Janet Yates about processing a check for the Robinson Scholarship once the board makes its decision.

B. Vaughan made a motion that the board received and reviewed the financial report of May 12, 2020. E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

- B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): The superintendent addressed the changing news on the State Education Fund. Currently the projection is that the Education Fund has a \$4 million deficit for FY20. The projection for FY21 is a \$160 million deficit.

The superintendent praised the faculty and principal at Folsom School. They are working hard. He noted that the return to school after April break and the nice weather has made school more challenging. The superintendent has been attending meetings with peers to discuss what the next school year might look like. The Agency of Education has not yet offered formal guidelines for summer programs, but the superintendent anticipates it will be very challenging to run a program. He will be in communication with the community about this. He noted staff is now back to work at the GISU office in split schedules, and remote work is going well.

B. Vaughan asked how preschools are providing services. Superintendent Clark said he can speak about the North Hero and Alburgh preschools. Teachers are connecting with families each week through the telephone and Google Classroom. It is similar to what is

happening in other classes, just at a different educational level. He said the situation is not ideal. S. McKelvie noted the GISU employs a special educator and speech and language pathologist who work with preschool-age children. She praised SLP Saunie Williams for her effort to train parents how to deliver speech services. Teachers are working with parents to support the children. She agreed with the superintendent that remote learning is suboptimal for this age group.

- C. Principal (S. McKelvie): S. McKelvie noted that today Folsom's 7th and 8th graders would have been in Quebec City on their trip, and so many rites of passage have been interrupted by the pandemic.

Regarding food services, she gave full credit to the cooks who are preparing meals, and paraprofessionals who are delivering meals. She said their efforts are making a difference for families who are struggling. They are wondering whether South Hero will qualify for funding or support to deliver food this summer. South Hero typically does not qualify for federal support for a summer lunch program. The Food for Thought program runs a food support program to provide fresh food in the summer. S. McKelvie is talking with Kaight Althoff of that program to see if the school can partner with Food for Thought.

With the arrival of Memorial Day Weekend, she said Folsom is headed into the final days of school. The final day of school is June 11. She noted that typically direct instruction slows down this time of year, and in this environment teachers are going to begin to scale down expectations for kids and offer a different variety of activities. Teachers will end the year with parent-student-teacher conferences. The Middle School will hold goal presentations in conjunction with conferences.

8th Grade Graduation: S. McKelvie said it is difficult to accept that Folsom cannot hold a live, in person graduation this year. The 5-8 Team has surveyed students and has made the decision to replicate graduation with a video online that will happen on graduation day, June 9, and it will end with families coming to Folsom to receive their diplomas and awards and a car parade through town. She noted that many of the kids have been at Folsom since kindergarten, and this is a significant rite of passage. The graduation ceremony will meet the guidelines of social distancing. J. Pidgeon asked the board if a member would like to videorecord themselves presenting the Donald B. Robinson Award and if the board would like to be present for the diploma ceremony at 7 p.m. June 9.

S. McKelvie shared that regarding tuitioned students, Folsom has one confirmed new student from Grand Isle who will be entering as a 7th grader next year. The school anticipates 2 returning students from CIUUSD. There may be 2 additional students from CIUUSD.

Board Business

6. Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Vaughan made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #5717 totaling \$129,376.83. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

7. Support Staff contracts (M. Clark) (Action): South Hero support staff is a non-union staff, and there are not necessarily negotiations to set salaries, the superintendent shared. It is time to send out contracts. The CIUUSD contracts are being distributed now, and the Alburgh contracts will be sent June 15. The CIUUSD settled for approximately 3% in new money. B. Chutter asked where South Hero sits in terms of competitiveness. M. Clark said Folsom is generally in line with the CIUUSD contract. B. Vaughan moved the board offer a 3% increase in support staff contracts. E. Morse seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously on a voice vote. M. Clark said the district would distribute those contracts next week.

R. Gess left the meeting.

8. Tuition Waiver Requests: B. Chutter said M. Clark would share some general information. M. Clark said that with a tuition waiver, there is no agreement with the sending town. In agreeing to waive tuition for a student, the board is accepting that the hometowns will not send tuition payment for those students. The student does count as part of Folsom's ADM or total student count. M. Clark noted the district has offered waivers for employees of the South Hero School District. He said the board needs to be aware that once it accepts the student, it is taking responsibility for the student, including IEP or 504 educational costs. He said the board has accepted tuition waivers under specific conditions each time. For example, when the Board accepted the Couture request, it was under the specific condition that the parent was an employee of Folsom School. M. Clark encouraged the board to be clear about the specific conditions for waiving the tuition in any motion. B. Vaughan noted that some special education costs are run through the GISU. But M. Clark said Folsom is billed for special education costs that are anticipated to occur at Folsom. B. Vaughan said there is a precedent set. B. Chutter noted that for the Coutures, the district has already accepted a tuition waiver for an employee of the district.

- A. Couture Tuition Waiver request (M. Clark) (Action): B. Chutter moved that the board grant the Couture tuition waiver request based on Tara Couture's employment in the district. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Discussion: T. Maxham asked if it involved one or two students. It was clarified it involved two students. The board voted unanimously to approve the motion on a voice vote.
- B. Mills Tuition Waiver request (M. Clark) (Action): B. Chutter moved the board grant the Mills tuition waiver request based on Renee Mills' employment in the district. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Discussion: S. McKelvie said it would be helpful for the board to

have a policy regarding tuition waivers. B. Chutter disagreed and said that the board does have a policy that it accepts only tuition-paying students, so it must deal with waiver requests on an individual basis. B. Chutter noted he voted against a tuition-waiver request from the Mills family earlier for this reason and because of the liability. E. Morse asked for clarification about the initial motion and whether it included consideration of class size. J. Pidgeon read the motion from the Feb. 20, 2020, meeting. E. Morse said she is not comfortable with making judgments on individuals. The board discussed the need to have more clarity in policy on tuition waivers. M. Clark noted that because the board has accepted the Couture tuition waiver in the past, if any other teacher requested a waiver, the board could be accused of discrimination if it refused. N. Kouns said the board needs to consider the continuity of experience for the children who have been previously enrolled. B. Chutter amended his motion to include the class size as follows: B. Chutter moved that the board grant the Mills tuition waiver request based on Renee Mills' employment in the district and because the school has space available in that student's entering class. T. Maxham seconded the amended motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

- C. Foster Tuition Waiver request (M. Clark) (Action): M. Clark shared that one of the parents is an employee of CIUUSD, and one is an employee of GISU. The family is asking for enrollment in kindergarten. The class enrollment is projected at 13 children. B. Vaughan said it is difficult once the door is opened. B. Chutter said the board needs to be more clear on policy and procedure so the board is not continually asked to make these individual decisions. T. Maxham asked for parliamentary clarification on whether the board is allowed to discuss before a motion is on the floor. M. Clark said that he believes small board rules allow for the discussion. T. Maxham moved the board grant a waiver request for the Fosters based on a parent's employment in the GISU and space available in the student's entering class. There was no second. However, M. Clark clarified that because it is an action item on the agenda, the board must take action. B. Chutter seconded the motion. Discussion: T. Maxham noted that they are not employees of the South Hero District, whereas the other two waivers were for employees. The board voted unanimously to reject the motion on a voice vote.

9. Robinson Scholarship (B. Chutter) (Action) B. Chutter said there were two applicants for the scholarship. He shared details he gathered from Town Clerk Janet Yates: There is \$61,000 in a CD that was renewed for 3 months for 0.3 percent. There is \$5,000 in a checking account. This year the accrued interest was \$851. The scholarship has typically been \$1,000. B. Chutter suggested the board continue that amount even though the interest was not quite that amount. T. Maxham confirmed \$1,000 is the usual amount and that this is the first year the account has been earning interest. B. Chutter moved the board appropriate \$1,000 from the Robinson Scholarship Fund to be awarded to Quinn Pidgeon. T. Maxham seconded the motion. The motion was approved on a voice vote, 4-1 (Chutter-yes, Maxham-yes, Morse-yes, Vaughan-yes, Kouns-abstain).

10. Snow Days (M. Clark) (Action): M. Clark recommended the board not have students make up the snow days. Additionally, he recommended support staff be excused from making up the snow days with pay, and the teaching staff make up the snow days through a GISU professional development inservice day, a local inservice day to be determined by the principal, and a day to be determined by teachers. B. Vaughan moved the board follow the superintendent's recommendations for the snow days. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

13. Other

Parent-Child Center Negotiations update: B. Chutter shared that he and B. Vaughan have been working with Principal McKelvie and Superintendent Clark at the board's direction to negotiate a contract with the Parent-Child Center for building use. On May 4, Chutter and Vaughan met to discuss the issues with McKelvie and Clark. They requested M. Clark contact the Parent-Child Center for a meeting. On May 8, M. Clark sent that request to the executive director of the Parent-Child Center. So far, the board has had no further communication from the Parent-Child Center about using the building for its program in the summer or next school year. Chutter said the board has reached out and is trying to make progress but has not heard back.

E. Morse asked what the status is for them for next year. B. Chutter said currently there is no agreement in place for the Parent-Child Center to use Folsom School this summer or after school next year. E. Morse said it is unfortunate because there is so much uncertainty about next year. B. Chutter concurred and said he hopes someone will contact the board. E. Morse said she believes Maegan Chevrefils is the chair of the board, and she will send B. Chutter contact information.

Closure

14. Setting the next agenda

June 18: B. Chutter suggested the board continue to meet virtually until there is a procedure for getting people in and out of the building safely. The board members concurred and expressed the hope of returning to the building in the future. The superintendent will contact the auditors to request a virtual presentation of the audit for the June 18 meeting.

15. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:37 PM on a unanimous voice vote. B. Vaughan made the motion to adjourn. T. Maxham seconded the motion.