

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE SOUTH HERO SCHOOL BOARD

June 22, 2017

Meeting called to order at 6:07 p.m.

Board members in attendance: Tim Maxham, David Cain, RJ Sweeney, Bentley Vaughn, Melanie Henderson

GISU representative: Beth Hemingway

Public: Julie Pidgeon, Sandy Gregg, Peter Gregg, and Helen Bishop. Jim Jones videographer for LCATV.

Discussion as follows:

- 1) David Cain initiated discussion of the Board secretary position. The position was not widely advertised, though the board requested the principal do so at the last meeting. Public comment encouraged the board to delay a decision and advertise more widely than School Spring, which listed the position as of Thursday, June 22. Board will pay Julie Pidgeon to take notes for this meeting only.
- 2) The agenda was adjusted to move the executive session up to the beginning of the meeting per request of Beth Hemingway.
- 3) Approval of minutes: T. Maxham moved; RJ Sweeney seconded approval of May 18, 2017, minutes; approved. RJ Sweeney moved, T. Maxham seconded approval of June 1, 2017, minutes; approved.
- 4) Public comment period. Public in attendance declined comment at this point.
- 5) Board went into executive session from 6:15-6:34 p.m. to discuss a student issue.
- 6) Beth Hemingway updated on hiring process. Contracts for middle school para educator, PE teacher, and classroom teacher are available. The school is still hiring a communication specialist, a paraeducator for a student coming from EEE, and a Home School Coordinator. The contract for the principal was not initially available, but B. Hemingway later provided the contract to the board. B. Hemingway left the meeting at 6:40 p.m.
- 7) GISU staffing update: M. Henderson shared an email from Andy Julow on GISU staffing. New superintendent Donald S. Van Nostrand and outgoing superintendent Barbara Burrington are working together on the transition. D. Van Nostrand has been participating in hiring in the supervisory union and in South Hero's principal position. He wants to schedule a SU board meeting soon. Lynn Carpenter, business manager, had her last day Tuesday. In the interim, Marilyn Fredericks will be filling the position. She has previously worked in this position in other districts. Ellen Norris has been working long hours to keep business office going. Linda Norris'

position will be filled soon. The network administrator candidate pool is strong and the hiring process is ongoing.

- 8) Act 46 update: M. Henderson provided an update on Act 49 as it relates to Act 46. The following general findings of Vermont schools are listed in Act 49, and South Hero needs to explore whether these findings are true at Folsom as part of its Act 46 reporting. Statewide trends or issues related to Act 46:
- a. Student population is declining.
 - b. School staff is not declining proportionately.
 - c. Number of students with emotional needs is increasing.
 - d. Number of free and reduced lunch takers is increasing.
 - e. Achievement gap: A correlation between economic circumstances and academic achievement. The board hopes to have achievement gap data from standardized testing to see if Folsom has an issue.
 - f. High graduation rates from high school but fewer going on to college.
 - g. Education Quality Standards: Folsom needs to evaluate its programs in relation to these. Schools with fewer than 300 students shall employ a library media specialist on a pro rata basis. Schools with fewer than 300 students shall employ guidance/home school coordinator/SAPs/ESL and school based clinicians on pro rata basis. Folsom currently employs these positions full time. The board needs to explore how it can address Education Quality Standards for these positions while meeting the school's needs.
 - h. Involving community in school (via informing about minutes, etc)
 - i. Fiscal responsibility: What is the town's track record in passing budgets

M. Henderson plans to provide the state with a history of South Hero's Act 46 exploration. Then, she plans to highlight what is happening with Alburgh and Georgia. Georgia is moving forward with its partners to form a unit. She will highlight that SH has done due diligence on alliances with neighbors. Georgia is partnering with its current towns; Alburgh will be partnering with GI-NH-ILM district in the new 3-1 partnership approved by the state. That leaves South Hero geographically isolated by M. Henderson's reading of state policy.

S. Gregg asked which neighbors the town specifically spoke with.

M. Henderson noted that in providing documentation to the state for an Alternate Governance Structure (AGS), she plans to write the report as follows: The town spoke with closest neighbors (GI, NH, ILM, Georgia). Georgia and Alburgh are our closest K-8 neighbors. 2011 document outlines the distance considered too far to travel. It's more than 10 miles and more than 15 minutes, which creates "geographic isolation." The distance was school-to-school in the geographic isolation document from state from 2011.

S. Gregg asked, what was the rationale for Legislature coming up with Act 46 and Act 49? Was it to get rid of school choice?

M. Henderson replied that the law states it wasn't to close small schools, but that is debatable.

S. Gregg clarified she was asking about getting rid of school choice.

M. Henderson said she thought it was more about small schools rather than choice. Rather than the state saying you have to close your small school, she thinks it's the state putting towns in a position of having to close small schools.

P. Gregg asked what the state is going to do if towns don't comply with Act 46. Would they force a merger with a neighbor, such as Milton?

M. Henderson: We don't know. They're hoping that everyone will have complied with Act 46 by 2018. They have not indicated what they will do if you don't comply.

- 9) Support Staff health care benefits. B. Vaughn said the school district has a longtime support staff employee who has been offered certain benefits including 100 percent coverage of health care premium. Under the new health insurance, the board understands that it must offer the same health insurance to all support staff and thus this individual will have to pay part of health care. B. Vaughn would like the board to consider compensating this employee to make up for the loss of the compensation through health insurance. The board discussed with public input the impact of this decision. D. Cain asked if there were more people for whom this situation applied. B. Vaughn thought not. P. Gregg raised concerns about setting up a situation in which the board would run into compliance situations with future hires, as well as setting a precedent it may not want to follow with future employees. J Pidgeon asked for clarification about whether the non-unionized situation of the support staff at Folsom was taken into consideration. In the past, these employees have had individual contracts that could differ. D. Cain said the board's understanding was that the law required all support staff to receive the same insurance offer. The board delegated B. Vaughn to investigate further whom this change impacts.
- 10) Board Retreat: The board reviewed a draft agenda for its retreat from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Aug. 11, 2017. The retreat will be held at Weeks Hill Road, Stowe, D. Cain's grandparents' farmhouse. He will provide a specific address at a future date. Invitees include the board members, the new principal and the new superintendent. D. Cain shared the draft agenda with Harry Frank from School Boards Association. D. Cain reviewed the draft agenda.
- a. RJ Sweeney asked if date had been given to principal and superintendent. David will email them.
 - b. Agenda includes: reviewing board vision statement, presenting and discussing data, discussion of student needs and prioritization, discussion of resources to meet needs, discussion of community engagement, review policies, set a work plan for the year.
 - c. RJ Sweeney expressed concern about getting through the agenda. He would like to prioritize the draft agenda. D. Cain said H. Frank also gave that feedback.
 - d. H. Frank (via D. Cain) suggested board use a calendar during retreat and map out goals on the calendar as they are set
 - e. Data needed for the meeting: climate survey, achievement data, demographic/home sales data, school comparisons, school offerings/staffing, discipline data. Possible questionnaire of staff – D. Cain wondered about querying staff about its perception of greatest student needs. M. Henderson suggested an email query to staff.
 - i. Climate survey (Jay Nichols conducting. Report due June 30)
 - ii. Questionnaire to staff (D. Cain will email)
 - iii. Achievement data from curriculum director Megan Grube (M. Henderson)

- iv. Demographic / Home Sales – births are in town report. J. Pidgeon suggested checking preschools. Beth Hemingway will provide preschool data. Sue McNayr may be able to provide kindergarten registrations. (D. Cain will follow up on demographics). On growth, D. Cain wants to know how many homes are being built? Who is moving in? S. Gregg suggested contacting a real estate agent such as Mike Bishop (RJ Sweeney will contact).
- v. School comparisons: budgets of schools similar in size to Folsom. M. Henderson has been looking at Montgomery. She feels like some figures show lack of compliance with Education Quality Standards (for example, guidance instruction budgeted as \$2,600). P. Gregg pointed out the person may have other positions in the town that provide the rest of the salary/job. D. Cain is interested in facilities costs. For example, guidance instruction budgeted as \$2,600. Montgomery is a good town for comparison; similar size to South Hero and good educational quality. D. Cain requested she also look at what educational programs are offered and how many hours students spend in certain classes. M. Henderson noted that principal Leonard Badeau provided detail on how many hours students have different subjects at Folsom. Helen Bishop pointed out her current contract is 60% literacy and 40% French and some data might not be fully reflected in 1 FTE position.
- vi. School discipline data: D. Cain wasn't sure what was available. H. Bishop said the data is called SWIS. D. Cain noted the new principal would need to provide it.
- f. D. Cain noted that H. Frank suggested a goal for the day. D. Cain suggested a vision statement, a list of priorities for administrators, and a work plan. He also wants to add creation of a method to evaluate the outcome of the Board retreat.
- g. Discussion of the proposed agenda: M. Henderson asked if the policies were available. D. Cain said they would need to be collected. M. Henderson pointed out there are some policies that are GISU. RJ Sweeney would like to understand the lines of communication and how processes are handled with staff, student and parent issues, so board is clear and can communicate back to community. RJ Sweeney said he feels in the past there was confusion about whom parents should go to with concerns. P. Gregg commented that it's in the current policy. RJ Sweeney said he thinks it's time to revisit that and to communicate. There was mutual agreement that the board needs to understand this policy. D. Cain feels the policy discussion is a lower priority. RJ Sweeney noted he sees two topics: climate and Act 46-related issues. D. Cain wants not to be bogged down in Act 46. RJ Sweeney reiterated that the climate survey and achievement gap data are important. B. Vaughn would like to find new efficiencies to save money in the future; he acknowledged that this topic might not be appropriate for the retreat. D. Cain asked B. Vaughn if he could speak with Steve Berard about future facility needs (immediate, 5 years, 10 years out). RJ Sweeney pointed out that the content of the climate survey will help guide the agenda. M. Henderson said community engagement is important but could be discussed at a board meeting. T. Maxham said results of the climate survey will drive the board in one direction or another. T. Maxham also said it's important to work on policy, and that the board is in a stage of being educated. The school employees

working here need to know the policy and live by it, and the board needs to drive the school in the right direction.

- 11) Solar Panels: B. Vaughn reported on his research. In the past, South Hero signed a power purchase agreement with a solar farm in Cambridge. B. Vaughn came across a bill for fixed rate that appeared to be high. He discovered the school was being sold too many kilowatt hours per month than needed and could receive a credit. Barbara Burrington and the lawyer who reviewed the contract met with B. Vaughn and acknowledged a mistake was made. Via teleconference, B. Vaughn negotiated that Folsom would buy 80% of its current usage from the solar farm, which allows the school to make future savings. He is working on having the solar farm pay the lawyer's fees. The school is not paying future bills until it catches up on paying for the power we are using.

Another update related to solar. S. Berard took B. Vaughn up to look at solar panels on the roof. The system was not functioning. They were able to get it up and running. B. Vaughn will be keeping track of readings on the solar panels on the roof and calculating how much they have paid Folsom since they were installed. He is working with DC Energy to get the monitor by the door back in operation so the school can see the solar savings. Tim mentioned that the original purpose of the panels was educational.

12) Contracts:

The board reviewed the contract for the new principal, Susan McKelvie. The terms of the contract include: \$94,200 salary, which D. Cain noted was higher than anticipated but the board is not providing health insurance. Other benefits are standard, including 125 retirement plan, life insurance, 20 vacation days, 15 sick days, professional dues, \$2,500 for professional development per year, some mileage reimbursement. One year contract.

The board signed two teacher contracts: Andrew Riegler, Daniele Racioppi,

The board reviewed a paraprofessional contract for Therese King

-RJ Sweeney moved, T. Maxham seconded signing a contract for Susan McKelvie to be principal. Approved.

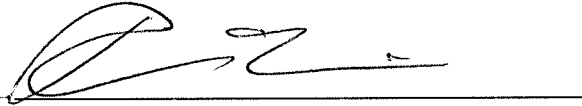
-RJ Sweeney moved, T. Maxham seconded signing a contract for Therese King for a middle school paraeducator position. Approved.

-The board will delay hiring a board secretary until the position is advertised more widely.

- 13) Bills: B. Vaughn moved, RJ Sweeney seconded paying bills. Approved. T. Maxham asked about getting an update on where the school was in terms of actuals vs. budget. He wondered about making agreements to delay some bill payments to the next fiscal year. D. Cain noted there is administrative turnover at Central Office. T. Maxham will call Central Office on Monday to see where South Hero spending stands. M. Henderson asked what happens if the school district runs a deficit. D. Cain said the deficit is carried over. Some discussion of whether B. Vaughn should have the solar farm cut a check for overpayment now, but said it would not be enough to cover the deficit. T. Maxham wondered if the school should pay for the climate survey in the next fiscal year. D. Cain agreed the board should try to pay it in the next fiscal year if possible.

14) Future meetings. The board's next meeting is 6 p.m. July 6 at Folsom School. The other summer meetings will be July 20, Aug. 3, and Aug. 11 (Board retreat). The board will not meet on Aug. 17. D. Cain noted he would not be in attendance at the July 20 meeting.

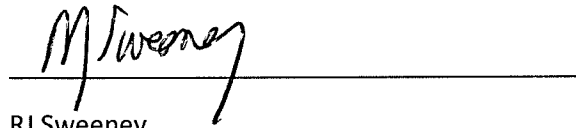
B. Vaughn moved, RJ Sweeney seconded to adjourn. Adjournment at 7:57 p.m.



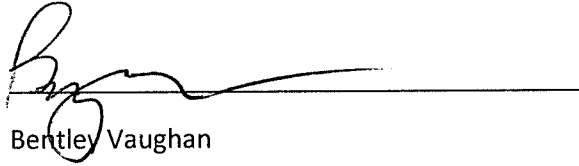
David Cain



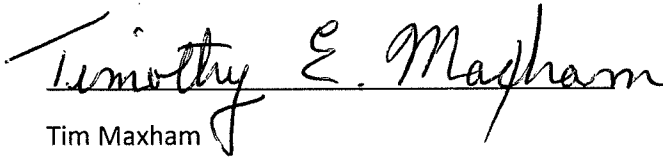
Melanie Henderson



RJ Sweeney



Bentley Vaughan



Tim Maxham