

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 16, 2020, at 6 p.m.
Location: Join with Google Meet
meet.google.com/jcn-guaz-snh
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(US) +1 513-666-7379 PIN: 476 044 895#

MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:02 p.m. (B. Chutter)

Introductions. In attendance:

- Board members: Tim Maxham, Bob Chutter, Erin Morse, Nathaniel Kouns
- Staff: Susan McKelvie, Michael Clark, Rob Gess, Julie Pidgeon
- Audience: Michael Wright (LCATV)

2. Adjustment of Agenda

- Add a discussion of custodial services
- B. Chutter will share the Parent-Child Center update

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

- A. Approve minutes from June 18, 2020. T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 18, 2020, meeting. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

5. Reports

- A. Financial (R. Gess) (Action): R. Gess reported the GISU is working to close the books on the fiscal year budget. The district is tracking Covid-19 expenses. Federal money is available for reimbursement. The process to request reimbursement for Covid-related expenses through the Elementary and Secondary School Relief Fund was just announced. Additionally, R. Gess reported that through the end of June, South Hero has delivered nearly 6,000 meals. The Agency of Education is reviewing the summer food program next week, and R. Gess and Ariana Middlemiss are providing the requested data for review of the program. This is the first time Folsom has had a summer food program. Regarding the tax rate, R. Gess said a preliminary tax rate file was shared by the Agency of Education, and the actual rate will be very close to the rate on the

warning. R. Gess shared that Sullivan & Powers, the auditors, are working on the draft audit document, and they will be ready to present to the board at the August meeting. B. Chutter asked if the Covid expenses are for materials or personnel. R. Gess noted that the federal reimbursement is for materials, not payroll. However, another program might provide payroll reimbursement for Covid-related expenses. M. Clark asked if custodial support would be eligible for reimbursement. R. Gess said he would check, but there is an opportunity for reimbursement if the job description is specific to the need to clean and sanitize to prevent Covid. T. Maxham asked about \$35,000 in the budget that was a deficit and how it related to Covid expenses. R. Gess said the Covid expenses will be reimbursed, but not until 2021. T. Maxham also asked about reimbursement for food expenses due to Covid. R. Gess said those reimbursements lag about 8 weeks behind. He thinks food service will be close to break-even once the federal funding comes through. The board discussed the accounting of the food service program. E. Morse asked when the board would receive updates on how the budget is affected by Covid expenditures. R. Gess replied that the next budget-to-actuals report would show initial purchases. The budgeted amounts cannot be changed; however, the board can choose to approve fewer expenditures in response to Covid. B. Chutter clarified that the budget represents expenses, but the board would like to know more about revenue. R. Gess said he has received no information from the state. M. Clark noted that the school does not have to spend a budgeted amount just because it is budgeted. It was also noted that because of the quickly changing nature of the Covid pandemic, the school may not know its enrollment until the start of school. The superintendent and principal are looking for off-setting costs to address unbudgeted expenses.

T. Maxham made a motion that the board received and reviewed the financial report of July 8, 2020. E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved unanimously.

T. Maxham said that South Hero paid more than \$3 million to the state as part of its obligation to the State Education Fund. He noted that it is almost as much as the budget. B. Chutter said the payment does not cover payments that are returned to individuals due to income sensitivity.

- B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): GISU Opening update. The guidance from the state requires students be spaced 6-feet apart in Stage 2 of reopening. As a result, South Hero will not be able to fit all its students in the building at the same time. The district is looking at a hybrid model for reopening, with some students attending on one day, and the rest on a different day. The district is looking at an ABCAB schedule. When students are not meeting on an A day or a B day, they will be receiving their education remotely. The C days would be for call-backs and remote instruction. The superintendent noted the district considered other models but ultimately settled on this model as providing the greatest opportunity for safety and education. The superintendent sent a letter July 16 to parents communicating this information. There is a community forum on Wednesday, July 22, at 6 p.m., to share details for the reopening of school. The state has provided guidance for teaching in a hybrid model. B. Chutter asked for clarification on whether

students would be learning 5 days a week. The superintendent confirmed students who were not in the building would be online learning. N. Kouns asked if there was a contingency plan in the event the school has to return to remote learning (Stage 1). M. Clark said the hybrid model provides the opportunity for teachers to prepare students for remote learning. N. Kouns asked if local school nurses can test for Covid on-site. M. Clark said no, there has not been discussion of that at the state level; however, he noted the schools will be required to screen for Covid daily. S. McKelvie said the state's reopening plan does not yet provide protocols if a case of Covid is found in the building. T. Maxham asked if all schools in the GISU will be in a hybrid model. M. Clark confirmed it would be districtwide.

- C. Principal's (S. McKelvie): Update on school opening. S. McKelvie noted she has been working at the district level on the health and safety for reopening the school buildings. She shared her frustration at the limitations Covid has placed on the kindergarten transition, but she will be working with Tara Couture on a way to welcome kindergarteners. S. McKelvie shared that about 10 families are accessing lunches this summer, which are fewer than the spring. She noted the school had looked into partnering with Food for Thought for food pickup, but ultimately decided it would be easier to have lunch and breakfast pickups at the school for families. She has donated the MREs from the National Guard to Food for Thought. She also shared the challenges of meeting the state's guidelines for reopening, which involve more than just a hybrid schedule. For example, UA teachers will need to go to students' classrooms to teach; PE cannot be held in the gym; and lunch cannot be served in the cafeteria. She noted it will be a challenge for the teaching staff. She hopes to notify parents soon which cohort (A or B) their student will be in so they can start making plans for child care. She said the school will be looking for feedback from parents about school reopening.

Regarding custodial services, the school has one full-time custodian during the school year with a summer assistant. She noted that Folsom is well below what is recommended for staffing custodial service based on the square footage and bathrooms in the building. She said the Covid expectations for cleaning significantly add to custodial demands, including mid-day cleaning of the bathrooms and significant cleaning at night. She proposes the board add a 0.5 custodial position to support that cleaning. She noted that the school will not have a fall sports program due to Covid restrictions, and she said it is reasonable to expect winter sports would also be affected. The savings from not hiring an Athletic Director, coaches and referees could support the extra custodial cost. She also expects some savings from the cancellation of after-school clubs and potentially field trips and busing for field trips. She noted that if the state moves to Level 3, then the school may be able to return to some of these activities.

She also said that in the hybrid model, there will be students at home who would usually access food at school. Her intention is that students will pick-up the food they need for the days they are not in school. She noted that the district does not know whether the

school will be extending free food service to students who do not qualify for free-and-reduced lunch.

B. Chutter asked for the cost for a 0.5 custodian. R. Gess said he can figure out an amount and provide that figure to the board. M. Clark suggested the amount would be \$20,000 to \$25,000. S. McKelvie said ideally some of that cost would be reimbursable from Covid. M. Clark noted that the superintendent is responsible for hiring non-teaching staff and technically the board does not have to approve the hiring, though he would like the board's support. T. Maxham made a motion to hire a half-time custodian to meet the needs of the school due to Covid. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Board Business

6. Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Chutter made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #5767 totaling \$32,989.79 and in Batch 5766 totaling \$55,488.23. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

7. Audit Presentation by Sullivan & Powers. The auditors will be presenting to the board at its August meeting.

8. Update on Parent-Child Center (B. Chutter). B. Chutter shared discussions with the Parent-Child Center on use of space at Folsom School for its after-school program. The Covid pandemic has presented an unexpected opportunity for the Center to use the gym because the gym cannot be used for food service or classes. The committee met with the Parent-Child Center last night to present this option. S. McKelvie has also been working with the Parent-Child Center on other space options should the school close again due to Covid. B. Chutter said there is a tentative agreement for a \$500 a month payment for the use of space when school is in session. Negotiations are ongoing for the fee for building use when school is not in session.

9. Set Retreat Agenda. (B. Chutter). The board retreat will be in Julie Pidgeon's classroom, which will provide social distancing. Superintendent Clark suggested the retreat be held on July 30. The board discussed times for the retreat. The board settled on a retreat from 2-5 p.m. July 30 at Folsom School. B. Chutter said that he will send out the VSBA Board Assessment for members to read and complete before the meeting. He suggested the agenda include setting goals for board member education, board recruitment, and developing a work plan for the board. E. Morse asked if the board could receive data on report cards. B. Chutter said that data could be reported at a future meeting. B. Chutter also asked if S. McKelvie could share the timeline for reporting data. S. McKelvie noted that report card information is shared in the fall. B. Chutter said he hopes the retreat will focus on the big picture. N. Kouns said he would be interested in hearing about concerns from teaching staff during this unusual time. He also would like communication from staff. J. Pidgeon said it is sometimes challenging for staff to be asked for direct feedback from board members, and M. Clark noted the board can request through the principal to hear from teachers about specific topics.

10. Model policy - electronic communications. (M. Clark). Code B8 Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students. B. Chutter noted that the board was provided the model policy for its first reading. He asked if board members had any questions. M. Clark said the CIUUSD board raised a concern about the policy not covering communication beyond the grades the GISU operates. He has shared that concern with VSBIT and is exploring options. T. Maxham noted a grammatical error in II C. M. Clark said he will communicate with the Agency of Education about the concerns; however, he noted all districts are being asked to adopt this policy.

11. Other

None.

Closure

12. Setting the next agenda

-Aug. 20, 2020: Sullivan & Powers presentation: B. Chutter asked the district to send out the audit reports before the meeting so members can review them again.

-School opening update

13. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:35 p.m. on a unanimous voice vote. N. Kouns made a motion to adjourn. T. Maxham seconded the motion.

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