

# South Hero School Board

Meeting Thursday, Sept. 21, 2017, at Folsom Education & Community Center

## ~~DRAFT~~ MINUTES

Call to order at 6:05 p.m.

In attendance:

-Board members: David Cain, Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, Bentley Vaughn

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, principal; Rob Gess, GISU business manager; Helen Bishop, Julie Pidgeon

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Isolde Frank, Alex Frank, Bill Banas, Kari Banas, Parker Banas, Cynthia O'Hara, Katie O'Hara, Chad Pidgeon, Evan Pidgeon.

### Adjustment of Agenda

The board will go into executive session to discuss contract negotiations with the solar vendor.

### Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the Aug. 11, 2017, meeting were approved on a voice vote.

- T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes. M. Henderson seconded the motion.

The minutes of the Sept. 7, 2017, meeting were approved as corrected on a voice vote.

- T. Maxham made a motion to approve the corrected minutes. B. Vaughn seconded the motion.
- The corrections were to page 3, 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph: The Alburgh vote will be on Nov. 7. And on the last page, the board meeting date should be Sept. 21.

### Public Comments

There were no public comments

### Board Discussion

#### 1) Student Presentation on Field Trip to Eagle Camp

Katie O'Hara, Alex Frank, Evan Pidgeon and Parker Banas presented on the 5-8<sup>th</sup> grade camping/community service trip in South Hero. The students shared what they did on the trip, including learning school expectations and participating in community service with the South Hero Land Trust. The board expressed appreciation to Alison Perry and family for donating use of Eagle Camp.

#### 2) Update on Health Care Recapture

Business manager Rob Gess updated the board on his research into the amount the state will charge South Hero to "recapture" money from health care savings. He reported he checked on data provided to the state about health care use for the district. This data was part of the assumptions that were used in Act 85 to calculate the potential savings for FY 2018. (*Note bene: A Vermont Department of Education*

news release states: "Act 85 finds that all supervisory unions and public school districts should be able to achieve savings. It directs the Agency of Education (AOE) to calculate the projected amount of savings for each supervisory union or district in accordance with a formula and to deduct those amounts from the education payments made in the second half of FY2018 and in FY2019 as follows: • 65% of the amount in FY2018 • 35% of the amount in FY2019." Source:

<http://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-school-finance-summary-healthcare-recapture-savings.pdf>)

D. Cain asked if it had looked to Gess when he reviewed the data that South Hero would end up with more anticipated health care savings than other towns in the GISU.

R. Gess said the results did seem surprising but he could not compare South Hero's data to the other schools. He said something in FY17 may have skewed South Hero's health care data. He acknowledged the state's assumptions of health care use may not match the reality in South Hero.

The board and Gess continued discussion of how the health care potential savings was calculated by the state.

M. Henderson asked if the board had no buffer in the budget for the changeover to a new insurance plan and the Act 85 health care recapture. D. Cain said buffer is not the correct word. The GISU's *previous business manager had told him the amount budgeted for South Hero for health care was based on the old health insurance plans, and the assumption is that there will be savings when employees enroll in the new health care plans.*

It was noted that open enrollment for the new health insurance plans is between Oct. 15-Nov. 15. All employees will be switched to new health care plans starting Jan. 1, 2018.

D. Cain asked R. Gess to provide data on what South Hero's accrues in health care spending. Gess said he could provide that data after open enrollment.

T. Maxham noted that as he understands it, Act 85 was a last-minute legislative action to bill districts in Vermont \$13.5 million. He expressed that the state billed towns without knowing the actual costs and savings. He suggested the board schedule a future meeting with South Hero's representatives to Montpelier on this topic.

### 3) Policy Code D7: Volunteers and Work Study Students Policy

The board read and reviewed Policy Code D7. R. Gess communicated the superintendent's message that volunteers in the schools should be fingerprinted and have a background check.

S. McKelvie read from 2014 Supervisory Union policy book which contains the South Hero policy manual. She noted there is more detail in this version with an administrative section that has more information on administrative procedures. That policy was last reviewed in 2006 according to dates on actual policy itself, McKelvie said. The board discussed the process for updating the policy if needed.

D. Cain suggested putting the policy on the agenda for next meeting to continue the review. S. McKelvie will forward the local policy to the superintendent to make sure he is aware there are differences.

The board discussed with S. McKelvie how volunteers are working in the school.

S. McKelvie noted there is a process for fingerprinting and a background check. There is not an interview phase with principal, and she would like to talk about that. She noted that depending upon the type of volunteer, the process and supervision was somewhat different. For example, the United Way provides a volunteer grandparent. The district and the United Way screen these volunteers, and the United Way oversees it. Coaches are screened by the district and directly supervised by the athletic director.

M. Henderson asked about volunteers for Hay Day, an upcoming arts festival. S. McKelvie replied that typically any volunteer who is working with kids should have a background check. In some cases, if the volunteer is a one-time speaker or is not going to be alone with kids because the teacher is there then a full criminal background might not be needed. She noted there is some common sense discretion.

M. Henderson noted it should not be an egregious process for volunteers for Hay Day to be screened.

S. McKelvie replied that events like Hay Day need planning so people have time to prepare.

The Ski Trip was brought up and the board discussed the different way volunteers are handled for the K-4 portion, which is run through town recreation, and the 5-8 portion, which is run through the school. S. McKelvie noted that the K-4 trip is taking place during school hours and that it would be the best protection for students if the chaperones underwent a background check. J. Pidgeon noted that the 5-8 trip only involves chaperones who have had a background check.

T. Maxham asked if S. McKelvie is notified when a speaker is invited into the classroom. She said she wasn't sure of past practice but would like to tighten it up and build it into administrative procedures that require staff to notify her of visitors. D. Cain noted that she should have the final say on chaperones.

D. Cain asked about volunteer drivers. S. McKelvie noted that many districts require parents to provide written permission for another adult to drive their child during school hours and the driver must provide proof of insurance. J. Pidgeon noted that Folsom has forms for both of those requirements.

D. Cain asked S. McKelvie to follow up on volunteer participation in Hay Day and the Ski trips.

#### 4) High School Enrollment

R. Gess handed out enrollment data from the superintendent. South Burlington High School is the most popular choice. Gess will be taking over from Beth Hemingway in tracking high school enrollment and signing invoices. J. Pidgeon mentioned there were some small changes in the enrollment numbers for 2017-18 and noted it's hard to track that data because families sometimes do not decide on a high school until after school ends in the spring. The board asked R. Gess to check the numbers.

#### 5) Finalize Climate Survey

The superintendent and principal redacted personal information out of the climate survey that was conducted in spring 2017. The board finalized the survey results. The board thanked S. McKelvie for leaving in the redacted marks so the community could see what was redacted. M. Henderson asked how the results would be published. D. Cain said it would be posted on the website. S. McKelvie said she could include a link to it in a newsletter. D. Cain wants the survey to be clearly labeled as referring to events and information from the past school year, not the current school year.

## 6) Update on Solar Contract

B. Vaughn said South Hero is trying to sign an amended contract with AllEarth Renewables, but the other party is not ready to sign. He said he would update the board on the contract negotiations in executive session. The superintendent and B. Vaughn have been handling the negotiations with a lawyer.

## 7) Review Educational Quality Standards

S. McKelvie presented information on the Educational Quality Standards (EQS) for Vermont based on the board's request for that information at its retreat. She provided a data table on EQS, the full explanation of EQS and the K-4 and middle school schedules.

She noted the district participated last year in a pilot evaluation of its progress toward meeting EQS. She reviewed the chart and suggested members take time to review the information and ask questions at their next meeting. She noted the EQS does not require a set number of instructional minutes per subject, but the Supervisory Union recommends a minutes requirements for literacy and math as "best practice." There are no other minutes requirements. PE used to have one but now the state requirement is 2 times a week.

She noted the content that is required. Health stands out as a relatively new requirement with a particular requirement for the licensure of the teacher. It must be a highly qualified teacher licensed in health or a classroom teacher. If a PE teacher, the nurse, or the guidance counselor teaches the curriculum, then the classroom teacher has to be present. She noted that many young PE teachers are getting dual-licensed, but the health licensure requires a slate of additional classes. She said it's not unusual in Vermont for schools not to have a dedicated teacher to health instruction and Folsom has components of health taught through guidance. She noted the district does not have a comprehensive health curriculum. She noted also that the schedules present challenges in meeting the district's minutes requirements. She noted that the school also provides instruction in content (foreign language, music, the arts, personal learning plans) that is not part of EQS

S. McKelvie said the three areas the school is held accountable at a state level are English Language Arts, Math and Science.

The board discussed the reasoning for a minutes requirements for some subjects but not others (science). S. McKelvie did not know the answer but noted there is national research behind the SU requirement for a set amount of time for literacy and math instruction. She said that in society today, so much emphasis is placed on children's ability to read, write and compute. The other areas in our culture as a country currently don't receive as much emphasis. She noted that the board had not asked about curriculum and resources and she would be happy to provide that information.

M. Henderson said she would be interested in knowing more about the curriculum.

T. Maxham noted the 75-90 minutes a day is based on a 5-day week but that students often are not in school because of district inservices or holidays.

YET  
^

S. McKelvie shared the district's focus on preparing students for jobs that don't exist for a world that we can't imagine. What are the skills that they need to do these jobs of the future? In local towns, people get to make some choices about what they want for their kids. She said there is an argument to be made that kids need a balance by having engagement in the arts and in their health. What do we as a community want? We don't necessarily want a 7-year-old sitting at a desk all day.

D. Cain asked about curriculum for these subjects, and S. McKelvie said the EQS doesn't require specific resources. It requires a comprehensive curriculum (a scope and sequence). The district needs to have identified learning outcomes in grades K-8 with assessments and expected outcomes. She noted she could provide a summary of what is being worked on. South Hero has resources but they are not all necessarily aligned with the Common Core. She noted it might be interesting to have a parent night on that topic.

D. Cain will put this topic on an agenda for future discussion.

M. Henderson noted that she was excited by the Personalized Learning Plans for grades 5-8. She liked seeing the technology tools embedded. S. McKelvie noted it's a state requirement. She requested a future board presentation on PLPs.

Kari Banas noted kids are well prepared for high school.

#### Board Action

1) Approval of Bills for Payment.

B. Vaughn moved and M. Henderson seconded the board pay its bills. Approved on a voice vote.

2) Sub Grant Agreement

R. Gess requested the board sign a sub-grant agreement with the Supervisory Union with regards to how grant money is handled from the state and federal government. Grant money is given to the Supervisory Union and the Supervisory Union dispenses it to districts. There is not a formal agreement for grant money to be handled this way. He is requesting the board to sign document as recommended in the audit. It would impact future receipt of grant money to fund local programs if not approved.

T. Maxham moved, and M. Henderson seconded a motion to sign the sub-grant agreement. Approved on a voice vote. The board signed the agreement.

3) *Appoint Supervisory Union Policy Committee Member*

The job involves reviewing and updating policies at the Supervisory Union level. R. Gess said the superintendent wants a regular process to review policies on a timely basis and make sure they are up to date.

The board appointed RJ Sweeney to the committee.

#### Board Correspondence / Sharing

D. Cain read notes from students Ava Jensen, Kane Couture, and Trevor Reagan thanking the board for approving the camping / community service trip. T. Maxham thanked the faculty and the Perry family for providing Eagle Camp. The value of community service was noted.

Follow-Up / Old Business

None.

Executive Session

T. Maxham moved and B. Vaughn seconded a motion to go into executive session at 7:50 p.m. to discuss contract negotiations with AllEarth Renewables. Approved on a voice vote.

Adjourn

The board adjourned at 8:10 p.m. D. Cain moved and T. Maxham seconded. Approved on a voice vote. The next board meeting is Oct. 5, 6 p.m., at Folsom Education and Community Center.

