

South Hero School Board

Meeting Thursday, Oct. 5, 2017 at Folsom Education & Community Center

~~SECRET~~ MINUTES

Call to order at 6:04 p.m.

In attendance:

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

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

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Jessica McAllister

Adjustment of Agenda

-An executive session was added to discuss a personnel matter and a contract.

-Jessica McAllister, representing the South Hero Volunteer Fire Department, requests time to speak to the board to seek its permission to use the parking lot for Trunk or Treat.

Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the Sept. 21, 2017, meeting were approved as corrected on a voice vote.

- Tim Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Bentley Vaughn seconded the motion.
- Melanie Henderson requested an adjustment to the minutes to add the word "yet" to a sentence that now should read: "S. McKelvie shared the district's focus on preparing students for jobs that don't exist yet for a world that we can't imagine."

Superintendent Don Van Nostrand's Report

-Nancy Gardner of GISU and Kacie Aubin of North Hero will be representing the GISU at UVM in a ceremony honoring excellent teachers.

-Oct. 19 is a GISU Inservice on the theme of the future-ready student.

-An overview of Smarter Balanced results was provided to the board.

-The GISU is beginning a discussion of topics related to racial justice with parents to determine future steps.

-Superintendent goals: The GISU identified financial and communication goals for the superintendent.

David Cain asked about takeaways from the SBAC data. D. Van Nostrand said the administrative team will take the SBAC data and consider it along with all other data to determine instructional steps.

Susan McKelvie noted that the school can analyze each student's score and look at individual strengths and weaknesses within Common Core standards. The school can look at data longitudinally and compare it with other measures of data.

T. Maxham said he did not receive D. Van Nostrand's report. It was not in the packet but in a separate email. T. Maxham also asked about the next steps for the policies the board is reviewing. D. Van Nostrand noted that as the policies are put on the website, the date of review will be added. There was discussion of the process to revise and update policies.

Principal Susan McKelvie's Report

Fall assessments are finished and the staff is discussing next steps. Official enrollment as of Oct. 1 is 133 students. There was a lot of movement of students in and out in September.

Conny Thoma, library media specialist, was successful in getting a grant for a 3-D printer for the maker space. Small Chromebooks and I-Pads were ordered for younger students to replace obsolete machines. The after-school bus has started Wednesday-Thursday. Several clubs have started.

Public Comments

There was no public comment.

Board Discussion

1) Review of Budget to Actuals: The revenue report for FY18 indicates budgeted amounts that are yet to be received. M. Henderson asked if South Hero was on track with its budget. D. Van Nostrand said it was too early to tell.

-D. Van Nostrand reminded the board about the health care recapture required by the state that was not anticipated during last year's budget season. D. Cain noted that the health insurance number looks good.

-D. Cain asked about high school tuition. D. Van Nostrand did not have an anticipated amount.

-B. Vaughn asked about the budget for electricity.

-D. Cain asked that Rob Gess, business manager, speak with the board about instructional salaries, health care and high school tuition costs because they are the big-ticket items.

-M. Henderson asked why certain instructional salaries were over budget. D. Van Nostrand and M. Henderson discussed that the teachers' contract was ratified last year after the budget was created and that may be the issue.

-D. Cain asked about substitutes. He noted the school has spent one-third of the substitute budget for the year. S. McKelvie said the budget was used to cover fall assessments and some sickness in addition to an open position. D. Van Nostrand pointed out that the line item was underbudgeted based on last year's spending.

-M. Henderson asked if the payment to the former principal was taken out of the principal line already. T. Maxham said the board discussed earlier adding that information as a footnote in the budget.

-T. Maxham requested the board use a page number and code in future reference to line items. T. Maxham also would like to know the amount the budget is over for high school tuition, noting that the previous business manager had said South Hero would be in this situation. He said he would like to

know exactly what the expenses are for this year, as well as the accurate negotiated salaries and health insurance costs, to make sure the new budget is formed with all the data.

2) FY19 Budget Guidance

D. Van Nostrand said the GISU is starting to put draft budgets together and is working on the GISU budget. He asked the board for guidance on that. D. Van Nostrand noted an article in *Vermont Digger* as well as a letter from Secretary Holcombe that said if towns in Vermont do not raise their budgets at all, they will still pay 8 cents more on the dollar for school spending in the next fiscal year's budgets due to a variety of issues.

D. Cain shared how South Hero has budgeted in the past. The principal has worked with Central Office with a list of priorities to shape the budget. The board has looked at the impact on cost and responded. D. Van Nostrand said that if the board has guidance for the Central Office on total allowable spending or programming or other topics, for example, then the GISU can work on a draft budget that incorporates that feedback. RJ Sweeney asked when he needs the information and D. Van Nostrand responded that he would like general guidance at the meeting.

M. Henderson noted she would like to see additional programming budgeted for Folsom to meet the Educational Quality Standards. The deadline to submit the Act 46 proposal is Dec. 26 with Oct. 1 being the earliest opportunity to submit a proposal for an alternate structure. The board discussed it.

D. Cain said the board would like to keep the increase in spending per equalized pupil similar to the same percentage as last year. RJ Sweeney indicated he would like it to be less. M. Henderson concurred it should be a conservative budget.

D. Van Nostrand noted the GISU will respond to the board's guidelines and is working collaboratively with S. McKelvie to develop the budget.

M. Henderson noted that spending went up by 4 percent in last year's budget. She also said that over the past six years, spending has increased by \$3,000 per student Pre-K through 12th grade. She expressed a concern about continual increases. D. Cain and B. Vaughn noted that the town voted to preserve a K-8 school, and the board needs to make sure it is funded.

There was discussion about the future of the small schools grant. It can be applied for on an annual basis and towns can receive it based on criteria including geographic isolation. The metrics for determining geographic isolation is still developing.

D. Cain asked board members to individually email D. Van Nostrand with feedback on the budget as they review FY18.

S. McKelvie noted questions about the revenue from the building's use as a community space. T. Maxham reviewed the history of how the payment from the ^{town} library was determined. It was noted the library is in the process of raising money to build its own building. The ^{town} library rent is revenue and offsets expenses. She said it's important to continue to discuss the priorities for the school so they can be reflected in the budget and to have an understanding of what is driving the costs and not assume it's only staffing. She suggested it would be helpful to have a list of anticipated building expenses. T. Maxham noted that much of the budget is out of the board's control.

town share of the community space

3) Review Volunteer Policy

D. Van Nostrand said the policy provided by the GISU at the last meeting was accurate, and the policy S. McKelvie mentioned had been replaced by the policy the board reviewed at its last meeting. D. Van Nostrand provided a procedure on a criminal record check for the policy. He noted the need to balance the involvement of volunteers with the safety of children. There was discussion about whether an approved volunteer who has successfully completed the background / criminal record check should be allowed to work with a student 1:1.

S. McKelvie noted the fingerprinting and screening process takes time. In her previous district, there were different levels of screening depending upon the type of volunteer job, and one level did not involve fingerprinting. That level involved a check of state sex offender registry and criminal background. Field trip chaperones were not required to be fingerprinted, but volunteers in the classroom were required to undergo a fully fingerprinted criminal background check. D. Van Nostrand noted that in his previous district, no one was allowed to volunteer without a fingerprinted screening. S. McKelvie said she has been told past practice at Folsom was to allow people to volunteer if their background check was in process. D. Van Nostrand indicated he would not support that.

Jessica McAllister said the cost is \$40 and the 3-week period was optimistic. Her background check took 3 months. She was allowed to chaperone a field trip to Hackett's while it was in process. D. Van Nostrand noted his concern that someone might not pass the screening.

RJ Sweeney said he would lean toward more caution but the school should present this requirement to the community earlier (spring/summer). D. Van Nostrand clarified that a volunteer is someone who is invited and asked to supervise students. D. Cain noted the policy is not clear in some places about the time volunteers would spend with students. D. Van Nostrand said that the school's policy is the most restrictive type. If a person is called a volunteer, then the person must be fingerprinted. His role as superintendent is to maximum protection for students and minimize risk to the district.

The board noted it would like D. Van Nostrand's opinion on the background check / volunteer policy for the K-4 ski program. S. McKelvie has requested that the coordinator for that program use only background-checked chaperones. The board asked D. Van Nostrand to update procedures.

4) Trunk or Treat: Jessica McAllister spoke on behalf of the South Hero Volunteer Fire Department. The Fire Department requested permission to use the parking lot next to the school for Trunk or Treat. The bigger lot will be used for cars to park. The school parking lot will be blocked off to traffic during the event. The board verbally approved the use of the school parking lot for Trunk of Treat on Oct. 31.

5) Act 46 Work Plan

M. Henderson reports that she is 90% finished with the report to the state using the data she has available. She is still looking for some data from the Agency of Education. M. Henderson would like to talk about professional development for teachers. D. Van Nostrand noted there is GISU-level and local inservice days for professional development in addition to professional development in the master agreement. S. McKelvie will provide that information to M. Henderson. D. Van Nostrand will contact Barbara Burrington to see if she will review the report, and if so, what the charge will be. M. Henderson noted payment would require board action.

D. Cain offered feedback, complimenting M. Henderson for a well done, fair and balanced report. He suggested that she put more emphasis on the positive aspects of the school. D. Van Nostrand concurred: The objective is to convince the State Education Board to allow South Hero to keep its structure. He said the important point is to emphasize how South Hero will collaborate with others to meet its needs.

D. Van Nostrand will email Donna Russo-Savage at AOE to inquire about the process to submit the alternative structure proposal. He will ask whether she will provide feedback on a draft, and if she will the board should send the draft to Barbara Burrington and Russo-Savage as soon as it is done.

6) Superintendent Goals

In September, the SU Board brainstormed goals for the superintendent to focus on at the SU level. It came up with 6 items in financial and communication categories. The SU Board wants feedback from local boards on whether there are other goals the superintendent should additionally focus on.

D. Cain suggested one goal be providing support on the alternative governance structure report and process. He asked D. Van Nostrand to guide them, keep them informed, and maximize the chances for success. He also requested support in continuing to try to get the small schools grant.

7) Discussion of Folsom Curriculum

The board continued its discussion of the information S. McKelvie presented at its last meeting. There were questions about *World of Difference*, and its purpose, and what students do who are not taking band or chorus. J. Pidgeon explained the purpose of *World of Difference* as emphasizing tolerance education and developing peer leaders, and students not taking band work on personal learning plans and study skills. S. McKelvie will forward the updated K-4 schedule to the board.

D Cain asked for information on how other schools handle chorus and band. He was surprised to see days in which there are a full music class and a full band class. He also is interested to know how class time in PE compares to other schools. J. Pidgeon noted that requirements on instructional minutes influences the number of blocks available for specials and that a comparison to other schools would not be apples to apples. Susan noted that the way to compare it would be on EQS, which is required of all Vermont schools. D. Cain said the board would like to address the gap in health curriculum.

Susan noted the school is required to submit a continuous improvement plan in the spring. The school has been working under a Swift grant to improve student performance the past three years, and as such, has not been required to have a continuous improvement plan. The Swift grant is now ending, and the school is required to do a CIP. Part of the plan will include the school leadership team looking at growth and how to continue to improve instruction. It will include a review of Folsom's instruction and curriculum. The team is in the stages of being formed. There is a connection to the budget because the planning process looks at staffing, schedules and how to improve access for kids. The leadership team will have recommendations about what the staff believes the school needs to work on to build success with kids. The team will also have a parent on it and hopefully a paraprofessional. The team will be looking at how to engage the community in the discussion to inform the decisions.

Board Action

1) Approval of Bills for payment. The bills were approved for payment on a voice vote. B. Vaughn made a motion. T. Maxham seconded the motion

2) Hire Individual Paraeducator Kathy Buermann. S. McKelvie told the board this is not a new position; This is a position that was not filled to replace someone who left last year. B. Vaughn mad a motion to hire Kathy Buermann as a paraeducator. T. Maxham seconded the motion. It passed on a voice vote.

3) Approval of Sullivan Powers & Co. , P.C., certified public accountants, Scope of Audit Services.

T. Maxham inquired about the cost of \$14,000. It is included in the budget under the SU Assessment. T. Maxham said he hopes the board will spend time on this audit when it comes back to review recommendations. B. Vaughn noted it's a legal requirement to have an audit annually.

M. Henderson moved the board accept proposal from Sullivan, Powers & Co, RJ Sweeney seconded it. The motion passed on a voice vote.

Board Correspondence / Sharing

None

Follow-Up / Old Business

None

Executive Session

The board went into executive session at 8:15 p.m. D. Cain made the motion to go into executive session to discuss a contract and a personnel matter. RJ Sweeney seconded. Approved on a voice vote.

The board came out of executive session at 9:10 p.m.

A. D. Cain moved that the board instruct the Supervisory Union to pay Cambridge Solar in accordance with the amended contract. RJ seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

B. D. Cain moved to pay Ariana Middlemiss 11 paid leave days and then to grant her enough unpaid leave days to get her to Oct. 30. RJ Sweeney seconded the motion. It passed on a voice vote.

Adjourn

RJ Sweeney made a motion to adjourn at 9:20 p.m. T. Maxham seconded it. Approved on a voice vote.








