

## South Hero School Board

Meeting Thursday, Oct. 19, 2017 at Folsom Education & Community Center

### ~~XXXX~~ MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

In attendance were board members David Cain, Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, and RJ Sweeney. Staff in attendance were Superintendent Don Van Nostrand and Julie Pidgeon. The audience in attendance were Jim Jones (LCATV), Peter Gregg and Sandy Gregg.

#### Adjustment of Agenda

There was no adjustment to the agenda.

#### Approval of the Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Oct. 5, 2017, were approved as amended on a voice vote.

- T. Maxham asked for two changes to the minutes. He made a motion to approve the minutes as amended. RJ Sweeney seconded the motion.
- The minutes were amended to change "contract" to "contact" on p. 4. On p. 3, the language in the minutes was reworded about the town's contribution for the cost of community space

#### Public Comments

Peter Gregg asked the board to consider Rebecca Holcombe's statement in Vermont Digger that was published Oct. 19. It regards school operations and staffing. The title is "Districts must cut teaching support staff." He inquired when the board would be discussing the budget. D. Cain said it likely would begin discussing the budget the third week of November.

#### Board Discussion

- 1) The board set dates for its November meetings. They will be Nov. 16 and Nov. 30 at 6 p.m.
  - 2) Act 46 Report: M. Henderson updated on her work on this report. She made the revisions that were discussed at the previous meeting. D. Cain asked that the report emphasize that South Hero sought to work with the Champlain Islands towns, but Alburgh was chosen. The board feels the town does not have any viable options left other than to seek alternate structure. RJ Sweeney suggested emphasizing this fact in the conclusion and recognized M. Henderson's excellent work on the report. The board discussed paying former superintendent Barbara Burrington to review the report. She will charge \$90/hour. D. Cain asked what insight the board was hoping to get from Burrington's review and also asked about potential conflict of interest since she is consulting with the Champlain Islands district. RJ Sweeney said he does not have that concern. T. Maxham said Burrington has the experience and noted the document needs to emphasize that the town has no other options, and the community supports a Pre-K through 8<sup>th</sup> school with high school choice.
- P. Gregg asked if the state ever gave guidelines for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade programs. Is there any cost involved in bringing the school up to standard? M. Henderson noted that principal Susan McKelvie

reviewed the Educational Quality Standards and found one area in which the school was not in compliance.

D. Van Nostrand offered his opinion that B. Burrington's review would be helpful because she is not making the decision and is knowledgeable. The board discussed what it hopes to get from B. Burrington's review. M. Henderson said she hopes to know if anything is missing. D. Cain wondered about using Mike Deweese, the initial Act 46 consultant to GISU. D. Van Nostrand noted B. Burrington has institutional knowledge. T. Maxham supported sending the draft report to B. Burrington over M. Deweese. Sandy Gregg questioned whether B. Burrington should be considered an independent contractor or other. M. Henderson also said she will read Peacham's report as it was recommended as an excellent report.

Action: M. Henderson moved, T. Maxham seconded that the board pay Barbara Burrington to review the Act 46 alternative governance structure report up to 5 hours at \$90 an hour. Passed on a voice vote.

M. Henderson hopes to have the professional development section completed by early next week and then the board will send the report concurrently to Donna Russo-Savage at the Vermont Department of Education and B. Burrington.

*The board is targeting Dec. 1 as the deadline to submit the report to the state. It aims to have a draft for the public to review by its Nov. 16 meeting.* S. Gregg asked how the board would notify the public and whether it was taking feedback. D. Cain said the board would post the report on the website and announce it in Front Porch Forum and *The Islander*.

### 3) Policy Code C3 – Public Participation at Board Meetings

D. Van Nostrand shared a draft of guidelines for how the board would handle public participation at its meetings. The guidelines were distributed and reviewed. The guidelines outline how the board will handle public participation to ensure equitable participation with varying crowd sizes. T. Maxham expressed he liked having flexibility to handle each situation. RJ Sweeney noted he liked the guidelines and said there needs to be a balance between public comment and time for the board to do its work. He expressed it's important that people be given equal time to speak. D. Cain said he liked the school board suggested responses but thought they were not needed. M. Henderson expressed that it provided information on how the board might respond. She said the guidelines establish the rules, and if the board does get into a contentious topic, then the rules are established and no one perceives the rules have been changed. The board reviewed the suggested minutes for speaking times depending upon number of speakers. D. Cain suggested there should be a cap on the number of speakers in the 13 or more in attendance scenario, which provides 90 seconds for each speaker. S. Gregg suggested the board consider an option of continuing discussion at a future meeting, but D. Cain expressed that the board might have to take action at the meeting. P. Gregg noted that T. Maxham handles crowds well at Town Meeting by encouraging only those who have something new to add to speak. T. Maxham said he would rather listen to everyone and come back for a special meeting than cutting ~~everyone~~ *anyone* off. RJ Sweeney noted the guidelines are important in helping people focus their thoughts.

Next steps: D. Van Nostrand said the board should reflect on the proposal. The board will consider its adoption at the Nov. 16 meeting. J. Pidgeon will post an electronic copy on the school's website.

4) Marketing Folsom: D. Cain started a discussion of how to promote Folsom School to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders in the Islands who will have <sup>school</sup> student choice. D. Van Nostrand spoke about the marketing of private and public schools in his previous district. J. Pidgeon added information about the high school fair and an effort made several years ago to promote the middle school to the Islands Pre-K-6 families. The board discussed what it would cost to provide a bus. D. Cain said he wants to consider offering busing service to individual homes in Grand Isle and to North Hero and Isle La Motte. J. Pidgeon noted there has been interest from residents in Colchester in the past. The board discussed holding evening presentations to families and offering school shadow days. M. Henderson looked up the current tuition for South Hero, which is \$13,627. South Burlington tuition would be \$15,192.

It was noted that the Grand Isle School Board is weighing what is best for their students vs. the costs as they transition to a K-6 school. One possibility is they will tuition 7<sup>th</sup> graders next year. M. Henderson asked when families have to make the decision about where to attend school. D. Van Nostrand noted that typically students hear from schools in the fall and do visits, and registration is typically in January-February. D. Cain said he would love to do a presentation to parents at their schools and here, and offer Folsom visits to those who want to see it. D. Cain likes the idea of creating a brochure. M. Henderson asked if there is any line item in the budget for it. The board did not budget for it. The board discussed designing the brochure itself and potentially reaching out to community members with graphic design skill. D. Van Nostrand suggested a flyer in *The Islander*. S. Gregg suggested food at the open house. J. Pidgeon suggested a video and/or slideshow about the school. The board discussed attending Island towns' board meetings to request time to make a presentation. D. Cain asked D. Van Nostrand to get the cost to print a trifold color brochure. D. Cain asked that S. McKelvie be tasked with creating presentations to parents and be prepared to host school visits. P. Gregg suggested getting copies of brochures that are being sent out now by other schools and viewing videotape of other school's presentations. J. Pidgeon encouraged a professional video and P. Gregg suggested updating the website so there isn't a disconnect. D. Cain noted the board should try to have this material together in January. M. Henderson suggested taking information from the Act 46 report for a flyer. The board discussed whether it would know about busing. J. Pidgeon shared that high schools in the past had offered a bus pending enrollment. T. Maxham noted that the decision to provide a bus would impact the budget. The board is hoping to have more information at a future meeting about Grand Isle's plans for its 7<sup>th</sup> graders. The board would like S. McKelvie to prepare presentations for early January.

#### Board Action

1) Approval of Bills for Payment. T. Maxham moved that the board pay the bills; RJ Sweeney seconded the motion. The motion passed on a voice vote.

#### Board Correspondence / Sharing

None.

#### Follow-Up / Old Business

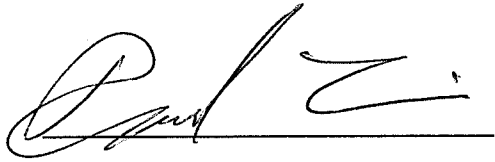
None.

#### Executive Session

At 7:35 p.m. RJ Sweeney made a motion to go into executive session to discuss a contract matter. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

Adjourn

The board came out of executive session and adjourned at 7:53 p.m. D. Cain made a motion to adjourn and T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.



Timothy E. Maxham

Melanie Henderson

RJ Sweeney