

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, Nov. 21, 2019, at 6 p.m.
Location: Folsom Education & Community Center

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:02 p.m.

Introductions. In attendance:

-Board members: Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, Bob Chutter, Erin Morse

-Staff: Michael Clark, Rob Gess, Julie Pidgeon

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Andy Chevrefils, Maegan Chevrefils, Laura Graves

2. Adjustment of Agenda

-Add discussion of water testing under item #10

3. Public Comments

None. Maegan Chevrefils said she would like to speak about the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. Approve minutes from Nov. 7, 2019.

B. Chutter made a motion to approve the minutes of the Nov. 7, 2019, meeting. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

5. Reports

None.

Board Business

6. FY21 Budget (R. Gess) (Discussion): Gess reviewed the first draft of the FY21 budget. He shared that he met with principal Susan McKelvie to review the line items. Wages, benefits and tuition make up about 70% of the budget, which is unchanged. GISU has received guidance from VEHI to expect a 13% increase in health care benefits. This amount is dependent on statewide negotiations. Sometime between Dec. 15-20, Gess expects a decision on statewide health insurance. The budget also includes assumptions about salary as contracts will be negotiated this year. Gess said the library space renovation will be in year 2 of the three-year plan.

Gess reported some changes in how special education costs for students at private schools are budgeted per the state. Since the GISU submitted its service plan, these changes were made at the state level. The

GISU received permission to reflect the private school special education costs in its special education budget.

Tuition: This year, there are 63 tuitioned students; 23 of those students will be graduating. There are 10 eighth-graders moving to high school. Gess said he has calculated 40 returning students, plus 10 graduating students, plus 8 additional possible students. He calculated a 3% increase in tuition. He said health care costs are driving an anticipated 3% to 5% increase in tuition across the state.

The board discussed the budgeting of a retirement incentive. Chutter asked about a 13% increase in the salary line item. Gess said that figure represents anticipated increases and staff step increases. Chutter asked for the over-budgeted amount for 2020. Gess said he recalls \$43,000, which partially explains the increase in the line item for FY21.

Gess said he anticipates the Health Reimbursement Account will be fully spent in the future due to the changes in statewide health insurance.

Gess noted this draft of the FY21 budget projects a 3.4% increase. Clark said the FY21 total is drafted at \$3,990,000, but GISU is waiting for data from the state, including the equalized pupil count, that impacts the budget.

Morse asked about the food service budget. Gess said it is a separate budget and not part of the General Fund budget. Morse asked about the budgeted amount for physical education and the various specials teachers. Gess said the principals generally ask for feedback from teachers. Pidgeon confirmed McKelvie did ask staff for feedback for the budget. Morse asked about instructional sports. Gess said the item covered transportation to away games.

Maxham asked Henderson if the board would be reviewing the budget by line item as it had in the past. There was discussion of how the food service fund transfer was accounted for in the budget.

Maxham asked about the final FY18 audit from Sullivan and Powers. Clark shared that he is in frequent contact with the auditors.

Morse asked about the line item for the district nurse. Gess clarified that line item 294 is the health assistant, not the district nurse. It was updated.

The board discussed the timing of the line-by-line budget review. Clark encouraged the board to take the initial draft home to review and return to the first meeting in December for the line item review.

Chutter asked about a \$57,000 increase in the GISU assessment. Gess said it is primarily due to the \$320,000 in disallowed costs due to an Agency of Education audit. Gess explained that when the AOE audited the FY18 audit results, it disallowed some costs that were charged to grants because of documentation requirements. Because those expenses could not be charged to a federal grant, that amount had to be absorbed at the GISU (local) level. That amount has been budgeted for FY21 at the GISU level, and South Hero will be responsible for its portion of the cost in the GISU assessment. Clark clarified that the disallowed cost was primarily not special education.

Regarding tuition, Clark clarified that the tuition charged has to be within 3% of the cost to educate students in the receiving school's budget. Chutter noted South Hero cannot control the budgets in other towns, so if a budget goes up 10%, South Hero may see a 10% increase in tuition to that school.

7. Review of board's draft mission statement (M. Henderson) (Discussion)

Henderson said the board has drafted a mission statement. She read the statement. She noted the board tried to add more information about the board's role as a liaison to the community.

The statement is as follows:

The South Hero School Board will provide an environment where all Folsom students receive an education that prepares them for any future they choose. We will make efficient use of South Hero's financial investment in our school. We will engage the community with regular communication and academic information, and encourage the community to share their talents with the school.

Maxham said the next step is to publicize it to the community and get feedback. Henderson said typically the board publishes it at Town Meeting. Clark asked if the board would like the mission statement to be distributed to the public in a Google survey to provide a method for feedback. The board discussed publicizing the statement on Front Porch Forum and through the school's newsletter. Henderson said she can set up a Google survey. Clark said the district can provide that help. The board discussed ways of communicating.

8. December meeting schedule (M. Henderson) (Discussion, possible Action)

The board's next meetings will be Dec. 5 and Dec. 19, 2019. The board did not change its regular schedule.

9. Parent Child Center Communication re: Space (M. Clark) (Discussion)

Clark referred the board to a letter from the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center. He noted principal McKelvie had discussed with the board earlier the school's need for the space being used by the CIPCC and had notified the CIPCC in the spring that it needed the space. Clark said the original invitation three years ago was for the CIPCC to use Folsom temporarily. Clark said both he and McKelvie have met with the CIPCC. The school has offered to host a mobile classroom. Clark said he has walked through the building to look at the space options. He noted one of the classrooms in that wing of the building is smaller than usual. The building also has some issues with storage that have been brought to the school's attention by the fire marshal.

Clark said the CIPCC is asking the board to review the decision. Clark said the policy related to building use makes it clear that it is at the principal's and superintendent's level of authority. Chutter asked about the ages of the 13-19 children affected, and it was clarified they are of school-age. Chutter asked about the option of using the library. Clark said the challenge is the center must follow certain licensing requirements from the state. J. Pidgeon shared that the staff is not unwelcoming to the children being at school after-school, but the staff's understanding is that the classroom must be vacated before the school day ends, which is untenable to the teaching day. Morse asked for clarification on how the space would be used. Clark said the wall would be moved, making the classrooms larger. It would also create a sensory space for IEP needs and storage. There is a possibility of moving grade clusters closer together.

Maxham and Clark noted the board would not make a decision at the meeting. Clark said the board must decide whether to add this to the agenda of its next meeting. Henderson said the policy is clear the building use is first and foremost for the use of the education of students, and it is the principal's job to

choose how the space is used. She noted it would be a big change to adjust the policy. Chutter said the policy is clear, and the community has the right to ask for an adjustment to the policy.

Chutter said when his children were at Folsom the building held more students. He wonders why the school cannot find a space for the after-school students. However, if the principal says no space can be found, then he supports that decision. Chutter noted it is also a PR issue. Morse said it's a community issue. The school is a big part of the community. Everybody needs to work together to be part of the solution. Chutter said he would like to learn more about the restrictions on space use related to the licensing requirements of the CIPCC. He said this situation is not ideal.

Henderson asked Clark to learn whether there could be some shared space, such as the library. Chutter said he would like to see the school's response in writing about what space options have been offered. Clark then summarized what the board would like at its next meeting:

- a written summary of information about the school's investigation into the space needs and options offered.

- an assessment of sharing space in the library

- more detail on how CIPCC's licensing requirements impact space needs

Henderson said the board will look at the details in writing and review the information. The board will determine after that review whether to invite the CIPCC to the board to discuss the issue. Henderson says the board feels the human side of the issue and noted her children attended the center. She also said she does not want to force a teacher to share classroom space.

A. Chevrefils asked for an opportunity to speak. He said the CIPCC is an important part of the Folsom and South Hero community. He said having a good after-school care program is important. He believes there is an opportunity to find common ground. M. Chevrefils said they are concerned parents. She said she loves both communities and is hopeful they can work together to solve the problem. She is worried about losing the after-school care.

10. Other

Water testing: Act 66 requires all schools to be tested by December 2020. All taps used for drinking and cooking must be tested. All of the schools in GISU did a tap inventory this past summer. The school's scheduled date for testing those taps was different from the Champlain Islands Parent Child Center. The Parent Child Center tested 2 taps at Folsom School this past summer, the one in their room and the one in the water fountain outside their room. They submitted the samples to the Department of Health. They received the sample results eight days ago. CIPCC is required to send out the results within 10 days of receiving the results. They informed their 18 families before testing, but they did not inform Clark or McKelvie. They informed McKelvie that the results were 4 parts per billion for one tap, and 8 parts per billion for another. The two taps tested did not meet the current Vermont standard; although, the results are at the threshold level. The school took the two taps off-line immediately and shut them off at the valve. Clark said that due to the CIPCC results, he persuaded the Department of Health to agree to test Folsom out of schedule. The testing kits are being sent to Folsom this week, and the taps will be tested the first week of December. Clark's discussed the communication he will send to the Folsom community on Monday.

Chutter asked if there was anything the board needed to do in the interim while the water is being tested, including shutting off all drinking water. Clark said he has not received that indication from the Department of Health. Clark said he will call the department with that direct question.

Chutter expressed appreciation to Clark for quickly dealing with the issue.

Closure

11. Setting the next agenda

Dec. 5: Budget discussion. Tuition-students report. Written report on CIPCC space needs.

Dec. 21: Henderson asked for S. McKelvie’s data reports to be scheduled for the Dec. 21 meeting, including the end-of-trimester report card data and Comprehensive Needs Assessment. Gess asked to move the food service data report to January.

Henderson announced that her term is ending in 2020, and she does not intend to run for re-election.

12. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:52 PM on a voice vote. Chutter made the motion to adjourn. Morse seconded the motion

