

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, Jan. 2, 2020, at 6 p.m.
Location: Folsom Education & Community Center

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:03 p.m.

Introductions. In attendance:

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

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, Michael Clark, Julie Pidgeon

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Regan Henry

2. Adjustment of Agenda

M. Clark will present the financial report instead of Rob Gess.

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. Approve minutes from Dec. 19, 2019. T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes of the Dec. 19, 2019, meeting as corrected to include Tom Nolan's full statement to the board and to clarify in section 9 that there are 2 two-year seats and 2 three-year seats up for re-election. E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

5. Reports

A. Financial (M. Clark) (Action): M. Clark said the financial report did not vary much from the last meeting. He noted that he had emailed a draft of the FY18 audit to the board, and he would present the details at a future meeting.

T. Maxham shared his questions on the audit:

-Debt service: T. Maxham said it has been posted twice. He asked when the postings were made. He said there was a deficit of \$60,000, and if the debt service had not been posted twice in FY18, it would change that figure. He would like more information. M. Clark said he would clarify when journal entries happened and would have answers at the next meeting.

T. Maxham asked for clarification about expenses. M. Henderson said she would like education in how to read the audit report. M. Clark said the auditor will walk the board through the audit when they present the report.

T. Maxham moved that the budget-to-actuals report for Dec. 18, 2019, had been received and reviewed. B. Chutter seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): M. Clark reported that all of the boards have received drafts of the FY18 audits. School is back in session.

Board Business

6. Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Vaughan made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #5596 totaling \$155,486.61. B. Chutter seconded the motion. Approved a voice vote.

7. FY21 Budget (M. Clark) (Discussion, possible Action): M. Clark reported an equalized pupil number from the Agency of Education from Dec. 20 of 199.15 equalized pupils. M. Clark said he believed the AOE is short on its count. He said the count of the GISU and the AOE are within 8 students; when the equalization formula is taken into account, it is about 3 equalized pupils. That discrepancy affects the tax rate by 1-2 cents. T. Maxham asked if the equalized pupil count included preschool, and M. Clark said yes. It was clarified that home-schooled students do not count in the equalized pupil number. M. Clark said he called the AOE about the discrepancy and is waiting for a reply.

The common level of appraisal (CLA) has increased to 98.63% from 97.43% last year. That effectively lowered the tax rate by \$.02 cents. Currently the homestead tax rate would be \$1.6962, up by \$.0527 cents or 3.21% from FY20 based on the proposed budget. M. Clark noted the proposed budget itself has a 1.2% increase.

B. Chutter expressed surprise that the CLA number was not higher given the reappraisal. The superintendent shared the letter. M. Henderson asked how likely it was that the equalized pupil number might change before the budget needs to be finalized. The board discussed the timing of receiving information from the state. M. Henderson expressed appreciation to the superintendent for trying to reconcile the equalized pupil numbers.

M. Clark asked the board if it was ready to warn the budget as is if the equalized pupil number remains unchanged, or would the board want to make cuts. M. Clark said S. McKelvie requested two additions that total \$1900; one being an increase for a computer replacement for the principal and the other involving a contract that would require executive session for discussion. M. Clark asked the board about those changes, noting the board is voting on the budget in its entirety. B. Vaughan shared he was not concerned about those changes.

B. Chutter asked if the board needed to add more funding for the library for books. S. McKelvie said she is comfortable with the current increase budgeted. She said the school will explore grants. B. Vaughan said he thinks electricity is budgeted low, which may be due to past credits. M. Henderson said the burner estimate is \$18,000, and the board budgeted \$20,000. B. Vaughan said installation will add cost, and S. McKelvie said the estimate was a year old. M. Clark said from the administration's standpoint, he is comfortable with the budget. B. Vaughan concurred. It was clarified that the buffer for high school tuition was 3 students. M. Clark confirmed that he will bring a warning for the current draft of the budget to the next meeting. M. Clark noted the board received legal advice for the wording for the capital improvement fund. He confirmed the board would like to use the updated language for the warning for the capital improvement fund. M. Henderson said that even though the board set up the capital improvement fund, the fund does not receive any budget surplus until an audit is completed.

Thus, the board needs to continue to budget for capital needs in the event the need arises before funding is available. E. Morse asked for an updated estimate for the burner. S. McKelvie said she would get one. B. Chutter asked the board to consider dropping the high school student tuition buffer from 3 to 2 students based on this year's count. B. Vaughan and T. Maxham said they are comfortable either way. M. Clark and M. Henderson said that change would result in a budget that is an approximately 0.8% increase from the FY20 budget. The board decided to leave the buffer at 3 students.

8. Draft letter for report (M. Henderson) (Discussion, possible Action): The board reviewed a draft of a letter for the town report on the budget. The board discussed the \$40,000 overage in instructional salaries, and the superintendent said the increase is the result of successful contract negotiations that brought the salary schedule more in line and competitive to regional districts. The superintendent noted the GISU has been paying significantly less than other districts. He said the successful negotiations were beneficial for the children because it will result in GISU retaining teachers. The board requested more details for the town on the burner purchase. The board discussed clarifying that the retirement incentive resulted in salary savings. M. Henderson said she would make revisions to the letter and submit it for the town report.

The board discussed informing townspeople about openings on the school board. B. Chutter suggested linking the information to a Vermont School Boards Association video.

9. E-911 update (M. Clark) (Action): M. Clark shared that GISU submitted an application for South Hero to be E-911 compliant by replacing its phone system with a voice-over internet system (VOIP), and the district will receive a \$35,068 grant to help cover half the cost. He said the phone service cost would be less than South Hero currently pays. The phone service installation would take place this year, which will be over-budget. B. Chutter asked that Dave Brisson provide information about how the system works to the board.

B. Chutter made a motion that GISU move forward with the voice-over internet E-911 compliance solution. B. Vaughan seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

10. Other

None.

Closure

11. Setting the next agenda

Jan. 16: Finalize the FY21 budget, including warning. Principal report. Preliminary review of presentation for Town Meeting.

12. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:32 PM on a voice vote. B. Vaughan made a motion to adjourn, and B. Chutter seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.
