

# Grand Isle Supervisory Union

## CIUUSD Regular Meeting

School Board Regular Meeting

Tuesday, May 5, 2020

### Minutes

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**Board Present:** Michael Inners, Amy Thompson, Chet Bromley, Nathan Robinson (joined 6:48 p.m.)

**Admin Present:** Michael Clark, Rob Gess, Amanda Ellison, Lauren Thomas

**Public Present:** Megan DeVinny, Sarah Peacock, Tracy Pearson, Barb Larvey, Michael Wright, Alyssa Dosztan, Jeri Frank, Annie Brabazon, Jeanette Whiting (joined 7:16 p.m.), Dawn Slayton (joined 7:20 p.m.), Dorothy Sacca (joined 7:21 p.m.), Kate Merola (joined 7:31 p.m.)

#### Call to Order

1. Call to Order - Michael Inners called the meeting to order at 6:47 p.m.
2. Citizens and/or Staff to be Heard - none
3. Adjust the agenda - Principal reports to be given prior to Superintendent report; Isle La Motte updates as first item of board business. (reordering)
4. Consent Agenda
  - a. Approve the minutes from 4/7/2020 - Chet Bromley motions to accept the minutes as presented, no discussion, no objection, minutes approved.
5. Informational
  - a. Resignation of Kelsey Buchanan - Michael Clark shared that Kelsey has served as the art teacher in the three buildings for 2 years is moving and has tendered her resignation. Administration expressed appreciation for all of Kelsey's hard work and dedication to the students, she has done a fabulous job.
6. Reports
  - a. Principal
    - i. Building updates related to COVID 19 and Continuity of Learning - Amanda and Lauren have shared a combined principals' report that can be found in the packet. Many of the vacancies are across the CIUUSD - stress hiring at a CIUUSD level, not a "building level" and maximizing schedules to maximize budgets. Working with families to ensure access to technology across the district. If a family is struggling with access, ensuring they are provided equitable learning opportunities. Meal delivery continues and we continue to follow the governor's orders. Report addresses successes and challenges - teachers are doing great work and communicating well with each other and families. Regular operations, such as school choice, are still taking place.
    - ii. Hiring process - Principals updated that district has jobs posted. Many applicants were within the pool and got ahead of ourselves and did some interviews. 53 external candidates; 3 which were internal. 7 interviews took place with 7 members of staff on the committee. This was for the elementary position, looking to fill with the best candidate before planning on grade configurations.
      1. Board expressed concern about offering contracts due to the ed fund and potential clawbacks.
      2. Administration clarified that these are positions that will need to be filled due to staffing needs. These were two positions that had long term subs this past school

year. There are 3 open positions within the Grand Isle Building right now, some of which may be filled with current CIUUSD teachers.

3. Administration recommends Katie Young for a 1 FTE elementary position. Chet Bromley motions to approve, no further discussion, all in favor, motion passes.
  4. Discussion took place around hiring and the possible effects of budget deficit in the Ed fund. Board expressed concern about offering further contracts and allowing administration to continue the hiring processes and filling vacancies. Board asked about repercussions for not filling vacancies. Administration clarified that even vacancies that are being rified would need to have been reported to the union per the agreement and the deadline has passed. Board expressed budget concerns, and asked that the administration continue the hiring process to seek candidates, but are wary to approve contracts.
    - a. Art, French, and Library/media are currently posted - Administration asked if there is there a board member who would like to attend? Amy Thompson volunteered to be on the hiring committee.
    - b. Discussion took place around the ed standards for VT and if necessary for reduction occurred, if this is a possible place to create budget cuts.
- b. Superintendent's
- i. Updates on Continuity of Learning Plan and COVID 19 operations
  - ii. Updates from the state regarding guidance during COVID 19
    1. Comprehensive written report provided, happy to answer questions. Regular communication through email and all provided in packet.
    2. Recognition of teachers for Teacher Appreciation week.
    3. Brief submitted to the US Dept of Ed (prepared with Lynn, Lynn, & Blackman - waiting for attorney guidance on getting this information to the board).
      - a. Board expressed interest in seeing information and asked about the freedom of information act and the fact that it is a public document.
  - c. Financial - Rob Gess shared the budget to actuals provided in packets - nothing has changed in guidance. No expected shortfalls in revenue and running a budget surplus. Some benefits of schools not being in building there are less discretionary spending. Update on audits: accounting firms deemed non-essential. Audit firm has found some workarounds and have been chipping away. Due dates for audits have been pushed back to June. Tracking COVID expenses separately in anticipation of reimbursement. Food service claims have been put through with the help of the Abbey Group.

### **Board Business.**

7. Isle La Motte building & staffing updates - define grade levels - Michael Clark shared the memo drafted by Amanda Ellison outlining what is happening within the Isle La Motte building community and the effects of school choice. Amanda Ellison clarified that after the budget was passed, many families expressed interest in school choice. Amanda gave information around the processes that occurred with school choice this year, including a deadline extension due to COVID 19. Some families expressed they are not interested in staying if they are the oldest or the only student. With the current enrollment, there are five students with grades ranging from first to fourth grade.
- a. Board asked about the practicality of a 1-4 classroom configuration. Administration expressed the difficulties and challenges, but are willing to make work what the board establishes at this evening's meeting.
  - b. Board asked about the cost of educating 4 students. What would the staffing needs be and the financial implications.

- i. Cost of meal delivery was discussed
- ii. Custodial staff would be necessary given the COVID 19 situation. As well as having at least two adults in the building at all times during school hours for student safety.
- iii. Michael Inners expressed concern about making a decision prior to having a discussion with the community.
  - 1. Sarah Peacock expressed that the board needs to make the decision as they have the power, there is no Isle La Motte Board anymore.
- iv. Board asked about the financial implications and wanting actual data.
  - 1. Sarah Peacock expressed how the town has communicated by electing to be a part of the CIUUSD and the number of students now enrolled in the school. She emphasized that enrollment numbers show that families are making the motions necessary to utilize the building in another way.
  - 2. Barb Larvey expressed that families have expressed that they do want to stay.
  - 3. Chet asked about leveling out class sizes and how this would affect that. Is there a way to utilize all three buildings instead of closing the school?
- c. Michael Inners motions that Isle La Motte building offer grades 1-3 in the 2020-2021 school year. Roll vote: Chet Bromley - yes, Amy Thompson - no, Nathan Robinson - no, Michael Inners - yes. No decision at this time.
  - i. Board needs a 5th board member to vote. Nathan Robinson motions to hold a special meeting May 19 in alliance with the current governor directive with the Isle La Motte community, all in favor, motion passes.

8. Approval of bills for payment - Michael Inners moves to approve and authorize himself to sign the warrant for \$540,793.15, no objection, motion passes.

9. Communication procedure clarification - Michael Clark clarified the requested board communication practice. Currently, the board asked that as things come up, it be communicated to all board members. Previous practice was that communication would be to the board chair who would then disseminate accordingly. Recently, during an all-board communication, the board hit reply all and the board was dangerously close to breaking open meeting law. Chet Bromley suggested returning to having the board chair be the only one to communicate with all or appropriate board members. Michael Inners clarified that board members cannot reply all to any communications. Nathan Robinson expressed that he does not want to change the communication plan.

10. Board's role in leave requests - Michael Clark clarified under state statute the Superintendent is charged with general supervision of schools. Board's role is not to interact in daily operations, this is inclusive of Family Medical Leave. The board's role is in determining policy and budgeting according to statute. Under the Master Agreements, the board has a role in determining leave only if it is for longer term unpaid leave as defined in master agreements or if the Superintendent denies use of the sick bank, then one board member sits on the review committee.

- a. Board expressed concern around coverage in the fall associated with a particular employee leave. Michael Clark clarified that to follow the law, hiring a long term sub would be necessary.
- b. Michael Clark clarified the legal obligation and the established procedure for FMLA requests.
  - i. Michael clarified that legal council was sought prior to approval of certain requests.
    - 1. Nathan Robinson requested evidence that this conversation took place. Michael shared that the evidence is in the invoices approved by the board. Nathan requested notes related to the meeting.
    - 2. Nathan expressed that the board was not asked to be on the hiring committee for the long term sub position prior to March. Michael clarified that the board was asked and Amy Thompson had represented the board in initial meetings.

- c. Discussion took place around board roles and micromanagement of the Superintendent administration, and daily operations.
  - i. Board expressed concern around leave being taken and hesitation to grant leave for certain employees.
  - ii. Michael Clark clarified that the approval of the leave followed the established process and federal law. Administration cannot break the law, even if requested to by the board.

11. Support Staff Contracts - Michael Clark clarified for the board that support staff contracts are due out May 22 under the current contract. Michael Clark has talked to Joe Guernsey, and the association is willing to discuss side letters to allow contracts to go out at a later time and reopen negotiations. Nonunion contract adjustments would need to be set at a board level. Michael Clark shared, if the board is interested, he will have a conversation with the union about establishing a meeting to discuss a side letter. If an agreement cannot be reached during this meeting, the administration will send out an individual contract identical to this year's.

12. Negotiations updates - Michael Inners motions to enter the executive session, all in favor, board enters executive session at 9:49 p.m. Board (Nathan Robinson, Michael Inners, Amy Thompson) exits executive session at 10:32 p.m., no action taken.

13. Other - Michael Clark clarified that the search for the board member to participate in the long term sub hiring committee took place during the January 7, 2020 meeting and is reflected in the approved minutes.

#### **Closure**

14. Setting the next agenda - Special meeting will take place on May 19th, during the regular meeting: fall forecast; Michael Clark clarified that the AOE has indicated guidance will still be coming out in July and August. Michael will share survey results around the continuity of learning plan. Michael asked that the board clarify and define at a high level what the goals are for the district, this will help the administration move toward the goals. Nathan asked for qualitative data to help make these decisions. Michael outlined Appendix I in the continuity learning plan and how this will help with proficiency grading. Michael further clarified the roles of the board and its need to have a summer retreat to define the goals, and many of what is being requested around grading is defined in Act 77 and with guidance from the state and executive orders. Nathan Robinson asked for the operating cost for the Isle La Motte building be prepared for the special meeting.

15. Adjourn - Nathan Robinson motions to adjourn, no objection, meeting adjourns at 10:57 p.m.