

Grand Isle Supervisory Union  
**South Hero School District**  
School Board Regular Meeting  
**Thursday, May 20, 2021**, at 6 p.m.  
Location: Google Meet  
meet.google.com/jcn-guaz-snh

## **MINUTES**

### **Call to Order**

1. Call to order at 6:03 p.m. (B. Chutter)

Introductions. In attendance:

-Board members: Bentley Vaughan, Bob Chutter, Nathaniel Kouns, Jennifer Lyon-Horne.

Absent: Tim Maxham

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, Michael Clark, Rob Gess, Megan Grube, Julie Pidgeon

-Audience: Buddy Meilleur (LCATV)

2. Adjustment of Agenda

-Consent Agenda: Information from the superintendent on support staff resignations and a leave request

-Other: a discussion of teacher appreciation acknowledgment

3. Public Comments

None.

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

- A. Approve minutes from April 15, 2021. B. Vaughan made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 15, 2021, meeting. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote unanimously.
- B. Superintendent Clark informed the board of three support staff resignations that he had received and accepted. He acknowledged and appreciated the work of Amanda Hamlin, Jennifer Hurst, and Emma Tudhope, who are resigning their positions for the next school year. Principal McKelvie will be working on the hiring process. Chutter thanked them for their service.
- C. Leave Request: Vaughan asked if the leave request could be discussed in executive session. Clark said he did not think the request fell under the rules for executive session. McKelvie said Silas Saxer, the school's behavior support specialist, is asking the board for a one year leave of absence, to hold his job, and for health care benefits. McKelvie said she supports this request, and the school would like to retain him as a long-term

employee. He provides invaluable support to children and families, she said. Chutter moved that the board provide Saxer a one year leave of absence, holding his job for the 2022-23 school year, but not provide the requested health care benefits during the leave of absence. Vaughan seconded the motion. No discussion. The board voted in favor of the motion unanimously.

## 5. Reports

- A. Financial (R. Gess) (Action): Gess shared highlights from his report. He noted that South Hero has received a small schools grant of \$97,000 this year. He also shared the reimbursement request for Covid expenditures has been approved, and South Hero will receive approximately \$51,000. He pointed out where that \$51,000 will cover the Covid expenditures in the budget. He hopes to have all procurements completed by the end of May. Also, the USDA has extended the school lunch program through the summer months. Families who are eligible for the free and reduced lunch benefit can receive a one-time summer payment. Gess appealed to anyone who might have had a change in financial circumstance due to Covid to complete the application for free and reduced lunch to receive the financial assistance. Chutter asked where the small schools grant appeared in the financial report. Gess noted the line item (8), and that it was unbudgeted this year due to earlier information from the state. Chutter asked the administration if they had any information about discussion in Montpelier regarding pension funding and the Education Fund. Gess said the topic did not come up in his meetings with the Agency of Education. Clark said he is aware of the issue, and he will know more later. He said the superintendents have communicated to the Legislature that they do not support anything that will impact already approved budgets.

Chutter made a motion that the board received and reviewed the financial report 14451 of May 12, 2021. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

- B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): Clark shared highlights from his report. He said 97 students elected to participate in Covid surveillance testing. The GISU had 0 positive tests, 95 negative and 2 inconclusive tests that were followed up today. The GISU will provide Covid screening again in June. He also shared that the supervisory union is working with the Vermont Department of Health to hold a Covid vaccination clinic on May 25 at Grand Isle School. The clinic will be open from 3:15-6:15 p.m. People can sign up on the Health Department web page or walk-in. This clinic is an opportunity for families to be vaccinated.
- C. Principal's (S. McKelvie): She referred the board to her written report. She acknowledged Karlie Kauffeld and Anne Tracy for their work producing a theatrical production following Covid guidelines. They have worked with the student actors and filmed their performances. The video production, *Hats Off*, will be released to the public soon. She also expressed appreciation to the town road crew for grading the town parking lot next to the school. Chutter asked about the summer program planning and

what McKelvie and staff are doing to be inclusive. She said the discussion has shifted beyond Folsom to the district and how the district can offer programs across the Islands to all GISU students. McKelvie said Folsom is hosting several programs and offering funding to help families be able to participate. She also the school is creating summer kits for all students. The decisions on summer programming and summer kits were made based on data and parent reporting on their needs. The spending on the kits is covered by Title 1 funding and is about \$100 per student. She also said the administration team is thinking ahead to the next school year and summer. McKelvie said she has been reaching out to parents for about a month, so the news is out there. She also said the kits will be individualized to address student needs. Clark added that the *Islander* will have an article next week about summer programs. He noted that the programs are paid with federal funds, and the district is taking pains to follow federal guidelines for spending. Grube addressed transportation: The amount needed to provide transportation for summer programming would exceed \$15,000, which would require the district to follow Vermont's bidding process. There is not sufficient time to put summer transportation out to bid. Grube said this summer's step toward equity is paying for programs. In the future, the district will look at whether it could provide transportation to make access to programs more equitable.

#### Board Business

6. Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Vaughan made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #10155 totaling \$100,809.08. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote. Gess left the meeting.

7. Opportunity Blueprint Presentation (M. Grube) (Discussion). Each supervisory union is required by the Agency of Education to create a final pandemic response plan, which the GISU is calling Opportunity Blueprint. The plan focuses on these areas: social emotional health and well-being; engagement and truancy; and academics. Chutter asked about literacy data. There was discussion about results in fall 2020 and the growth over the school year as students returned to more in-person learning. The schools engaged in a comprehensive needs assessment, gathering data in all the areas.

The GISU survey found these results:

- Social emotional health: behavior issues were reduced in small cohorts; executive functioning skill instruction is needed; discussion of emotions, apathy, challenges in managing screens, and a lack of physical fitness are other issues. Grube said referrals to outside agencies did not always result in families and students receiving help due to a lack of capacity in outside agencies.

- Re-engagement and Truancy: Significant truancy issues were found, especially on remote days and in middle school students. Truancy was more family related than grade related.

- Academics: Grube shared Folsom data from Lexia showing growth in grammar, comprehension and vocabulary. She also showed data from Dreambox on mathematics skills growth. Chutter asked for a comparison to other schools in the state. Grube said this data is a local assessment and not comparable unless another Vermont school uses the programs and

shares its data; it is nationally normed and referenced, so it is comparable to national standards for these skills. The district also found a decrease in a need for learning plans for students. The district made progress in a move to a common report card. The challenges include gaps between students above grade level and students below grade level. Students on IEPs and members of historically marginalized groups are a concern. The district will need to make sure the Blueprint focuses on the needs of those groups. Outdated technology impacted classroom and remote instruction.

Grube shared these ideas to address the needs raised in the Comprehensive Needs Assessment:

- Improving data and data systems.
- Establishing GISU teams on wellness and truancy
- Additional staff to support students: interventionists, social worker, school counselors/clinician, family engagement coordinator
- Parent/Caregiver programming to support students and families
- Extended school day opportunities (after school, summer), and more central coordination
- Foundational literacy skills programming
- Continue curriculum alignment
- Increase access to programmatic resources for teachers
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: ensure schedule provides students time for supplemental and accelerated instruction and social/emotional opportunities
- Technology and Physical Plant: Replace all Chromebooks, tech standard configuration, replace HVAC systems in all buildings, educational licenses.

The board discussed the presentation. Kouns advocated for the district to put social learning at the center of any plans and not be over-reliant on technology for teaching. Grube left the meeting.

8. Tuition Request: Erica and Benjamin Frost will be moving to South Hero from Colchester. Erica Frost requested the board pay tuition to Colchester School District for their child entering 7th grade. The board discussed the request. Chutter said he was not in favor of taking resources away from the school. Vaughan concurred. Chutter moved that the board deny the tuition request. Kouns seconded the motion. The board approved the motion unanimously on a voice vote.

9. Robinson Scholarship: Five students applied for the scholarship this year. Chutter said all applications were excellent. Chutter moved that the board give the Robinson Scholarship of \$1,000 to Erin Heslop for 2021. Vaughan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously on a voice vote. S. McKelvie will take care of notifying the town and the student.

10. C25 - Admission of Non-residential students (B. Chutter)(first reading): The board reviewed the policy.

11. E21 - Distribution of Non-school sponsored Literature in Schools (B. Chutter)(first reading):  
The board reviewed the policy.

12. D21 - Education Support System (B. Chutter)(first reading): The board reviewed the policy.

13. B20 - Personnel Recruitment, Selection & Background Checks (B. Chutter)(first reading):  
The board reviewed the policy.

14. Other

Chutter asked the board to consider acknowledging and acting upon teacher appreciation. The board is very appreciative of the dedication of the staff this school year. Chutter suggested the board take \$5,000 and divide it among Folsom's 38 employees to show its appreciation for their work this year. Vaughan and Kouns both agreed with that suggestion and expressed a desire to offer a larger amount if possible. Chutter said he came up with that number by looking at the budget, not taking into account revenue. Superintendent Clark said he appreciated the board's incredible gesture and admired the board for considering it. Chutter moved the board allocate \$10,000 to be divided among the school's 38 employees to show its appreciation for their work during the Covid pandemic. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

**Closure**

15. Setting the next agenda

- Add Introductions to the agenda for June 17, 2021
- Operation Blueprint update
- Sullivan & Powers to present the FY20 audit highlights for 10-15 minutes.
- Second reading of policies C25, E21, D21, B20
- Board retreat

16. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 8:03 p.m. on a voice vote. Vaughan made a motion to adjourn. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.