

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, Aug. 20, 2020, at 6 p.m.
Location:
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MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:02 p.m. (B. Chutter)

Introductions. In attendance:

-Board members: Tim Maxham, Bentley Vaughan, Bob Chutter, Erin Morse, Nathaniel Kouns

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

-Audience: Michael Wright (LCATV), Fred Duplessis (Sullivan & Powers), Jon McKay

2. Adjustment of Agenda

-B. Chutter moved the audit presentation to the beginning of the meeting

-B. Chutter added an update on new hires

-B. Chutter added to Other Business a tuition request

-T. Maxham requested a second reading of policy Code B8 Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students.

3. Audit Presentation

Fred Duplessis of Sullivan & Powers offered a presentation of the FY18 and FY19 audits. At the end of June 2019, the audit showed South Hero had a slight surplus in all funds. He said the GISU is responding to the auditors' findings and recommendations. T. Maxham asked a question regarding revenues expected for state aid for transportation. R. Gess said the district did not receive state aid for transportation in FY2018 and FY2019. He said he can follow up with the state to inquire why. T. Maxham asked about the school lunch fund and the reported surplus. F. Duplessis said the district had a surplus in FY2018, and it spent more than it received in FY2019, so between the two years, it balanced out. B. Chutter noted that the audit shows the financials but also reflects on the financial processes. He asked if F. Duplessis was comfortable the books are accurate and asked if there was any indication of wrongdoing. F. Duplessis noted there was a lot of cleanup in the books for 2018 and 2019, and R. Gess and his staff were carrying that out. He noted the findings in FY2019 were significantly improved over FY2018. T. Maxham gave credit to M. Clark and R. Gess for their work to clean up the district's financial processes. F. Duplessis left the meeting at the end of the discussion.

4. Public Comments

None.

5. Consent Agenda (Action)

- A. Approve minutes from July 16, 2020. T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 16, 2020, meeting. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote (B. Chutter-yes, E. Morse-yes, N. Kouns-yes, T. Maxham-yes; B. Vaughan- abstain)
- B. Approve minutes from July 30, 2020. T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes of the July 30, 2020, meeting. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote. (B. Chutter-yes, E. Morse-yes, N. Kouns-yes, T. Maxham-yes; B. Vaughan- abstain)

6. M. Clark shared an update on new hires. Emma Tudhope and Anne Tracy have been hired as paraprofessionals. Hilarie Mitchell has been hired as a part-time custodian. The school has one more hire to make for a behavior interventionist and has a candidate for the job.

7. Reports

- A. Financial (R. Gess) (Action): R. Gess said FY20 is wrapping up. He noted S. McKelvie has been spending to prepare for the opening of school, and the Covid-related expenditures likely will be reimbursed. The district is still waiting on the process to apply for reimbursement for Covid expenditures. The recommended plan is to apply to use the Corona virus relief funds first. R. Gess said he is waiting for the Agency of Education guidance for application. The district has started the financial transition to the state's new chart of accounts program. R. Gess noted he has concerns about the food service budget with a hybrid school model. A high percentage of students pay for meals in South Hero (almost \$15,000 in FY20). R. Gess noted that with students out of the building 3 days a week, parents may not want to pay for take-home meals for those days. He said that potential loss of revenue may require adjustments in the food service budget. S. McKelvie added that chef Ariana Middlemiss had also raised this concern. B. Chutter asked if the board could receive revenue reports in addition to budget-to-actuals. R. Gess suggested he provide that information quarterly. T. Maxham concurred and noted he was surprised in the audit to learn the state wasn't reimbursing for transportation.

T. Maxham made a motion that the board received and reviewed the budget-to-actuals report for the end of FY20 dated Aug. 17, 2020, and numbered 13447. B. Vaughan seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote. T. Maxham moved that the board received and reviewed the budget-to-actuals report for FY21 dated Aug. 17, 2020, numbered 13448. E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

- B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): M. Clark shared an update on the first day of GISU Inservice for teachers on Aug. 20. He shared the schedule for professional development. He noted teachers are focusing on education for remote teaching and continuing the

grade-band curriculum work. He said the GISU Reopening Plan is now available; however, the Agency of Education recently released more than 60 pages of new guidance that the district is currently reviewing. The district will continue its plan to open with a hybrid model. B. Chutter asked if the revisions to the AOE's guidance substantially change the plans for reopening. M. Clark said they do not.

- C. Principal's (S. McKelvie). S. McKelvie said her report is primarily focused on reopening. Today (Aug. 20) was the first day back for staff and provided a boost of energy. Friday, Aug. 21, is Folsom's first inservice day, and it will be remote. She shared that the new burner arrived for installation, but unfortunately the company measured incorrectly, and the burner did not fit in the space. They are going to rebuild it and redeliver in about a month at no additional cost.

Regarding the Parent Child Center, S. McKelvie said she has been meeting with Katie Brown from the center, and with the state, and they were informed that the gym would be approved for child care. She has left it for the Parent Child Center to determine what type of programming they would like to offer in the space (for students working remotely or for students after school. The cohorts will not be mixed. There also is a new child care center opening with 12-15 spots. It is possible the families who wanted assistance have had their needs met, and the school will not be hosting a child care program after all.

Renovations this summer have been impacted by Covid requirements. The original plan to increase space for a classroom changed, and the space was repurposed for a special educator's use so students in different cohorts can be separated. Additionally, the health office did not meet the requirements for Covid. The school needed a health office with a window and an isolation room. The nurse's office has been moved to Helen Bishop's classroom, and she is moving across the hall to the nurse's space. Steve Berard is building a small room for isolation where a parent can pick up an ill child.

Finally, S. McKelvie noted in June the school was worried it would lose enrolled students due to the concern about Covid. Current enrollment numbers are up. The details from McKelvie's report:

- Enrollment is up to 139 (was 135 in June).
- Parents were surveyed to choose hybrid or full remote models if they wished to continue to have their children be supported by Folsom. The breakdown:
 - 125 Hybrid
 - 14 Full Remote (5 Elem/9 MS)
- Out of the 14 Full Remote Students:
 - 7 were from returning Folsom families
 - 3 are South Hero residents who have been in private schools
 - 2 are GI residents who were previously home-schooled
 - 1 has moved to SH from Alburgh
- 3 families have chosen home schooling, a total of 4 kids (not counted in enrollment)

- Including the two students from Grand Isle who are choosing full remote, we have 4 additional students tuitioning from there for a total of 6 GI students.

B. Vaughan said the numbers for enrollment are good, and B. Chutter agreed.

Board Business

8. Approval of Bills for Payment. B. Vaughan made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #5811 totaling \$18,481.58 (FY19/20). T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote. B. Vaughan made a motion to pay the bills in Batch #5812 totaling \$69,478.19 (FY20/21). E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

R. Gess left the meeting.

9. School Opening Update (S. McKelvie & M. Clark)(Discussion)

M. Clark provided an overview of school re-opening. The district is opening in a hybrid model (ABCAB). The district is allowing families to move between hybrid and fully remote. He noted the school will have protocols for entering and exiting the building and other movement that may require contact tracing. Face masks are required in the building by adults and children. S. McKelvie and the district has developed specific procedures for meeting the state's guidelines for Covid safety. The district is opening in hybrid mode so it can check its procedures and ensure systems are working well for adults and children to learn in a safe and healthy environment. S. McKelvie noted that many of the guidelines from the state will impact the way teaching and learning happens, and it will take a while for children to get into the routine. She said she did not want to diminish the impact the state health requirements will have on what teachers are able to do and accomplish. She shared that every teacher would want the doors to be wide open, and all the students to be back in school She said the school is still waiting on the arrival of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies because of shipping delays. The school has enough supplies to start the school year. She noted the survey of family needs indicated only one family had a concern about internet access, and the school has enough digital devices for all learners. The Folsom inservice will focus on the new procedures as well as how to support the students with the changes, including separation anxiety, mask wearing challenges and worries about the virus.

B. Chutter asked whether some Covid changes were guidelines or requirements from the state. He also asked for an update on the school's HVAC system. M. Clark addressed the response to the state's document "A Strong and Healthy Start." He said the district is trying to follow all the recommendations. He also noted that no one knows for certain what is necessary vs. not, and the document of guidelines continues to evolve as new information is available. He also said that he believes everyone is trying their best, and no one has experience opening a school in a pandemic. S. McKelvie added that the district administrators want to err on the side of caution. Additionally, she noted conflicting information about the social distancing of 3 feet v. 6 feet separation. S. McKelvie updated the board on the HVAC system. The school has a pretty powerful air exchange system that is running well. It pulls fresh air from the outside and expels air in the room. Folsom is better off than some schools, she said. Nearly every room in the building has the ability to open a window. If a child will be in a room without a window, there will

be an air purifier. She has purchased fans for every room. B. Vaughan affirmed the system is big, effective and has filters that can be replaced.

T. Maxham said he believes the school should stick with 6 feet for social distancing. He asked about temperature checks. M. Clark said the initial state guidance was that temperatures needed to be taken at the point of first contact. The state's guidance has changed: The questions regarding health and exposure are recommended, not required, and the temperature check is only required upon entrance to the building. M. Clark said the district is still trying to conduct temperature checks on the bus, but there are challenges finding bus monitors. S. McKelvie says one paraprofessional is willing to work an extra hour to do that job. She still needs someone for the second bus. S. McKelvie said she does not expect large numbers on the bus, and the students must be distanced on the bus with windows open.

T. Maxham asked about the students who are in the hybrid model and what they are expected to do at home on the remote day. M. Clark said they will not be required to be on their computers for synchronous learning all day. There will be opportunities but not requirements. The students who are fully remote learning will be expected to join their cohort for some synchronous learning. However, those students will not be expected to be in front of a computer 7 hours a day. S. McKelvie added that the expectations will be different depending upon the student's grade. There will be work expectations for hybrid learners at home, but it won't all be on the computer. T. Maxham said he gives the staff a lot of credit for all their efforts. B. Vaughan expressed appreciation for the administration's hard work. B. Chutter said M. Clark's continual outreach to the community is helpful.

10. Hybrid Policy (M. Clark) (Discussion)

M. Clark said the board has two versions of a policy to review for hybrid schooling: GISU Hybrid Instructional Model during Covid-19 and a model policy from the Vermont School Boards Association. He noted tonight's meeting is a first read for the policy. He shared that Alburch has approved the GISU Hybrid Instructional Model during Covid-19 policy. B. Vaughan said he would like to go with the same one for consistency. B. Vaughan made a motion that the board move forward the GISU Hybrid Instructional Model during Covid-19 policy to a second reading. E. Morse seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote, 4-0 (B. Chutter-yes, E. Morse-yes, B. Vaughan-yes, T. Maxham-yes.)

11. Other

B. Chutter said the board has received a request from Mr. and Mrs. Hester for the district to pay tuition to Rice Memorial High School. M. Clark said the district has communicated to the family that this is contradictory to the Vermont Constitution. He shared advice from lawyer Pietro Lynn that the district not pay tuition to a religious school. B. Chutter moved the board follow the advice of legal counsel and support the superintendent's denial of Jim and Darlene Hester's tuition reimbursement request for Rice Memorial High School. B. Vaughan seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.

Closure

12. Setting the next agenda

- Assessment presentation schedule
- Update on state reimbursement for transportation
- Second readings of the GISU Hybrid Instructional Model during Covid-19 and the Code B8 Electronic Communications Between Employees and Students

E. Morse asked about next Tuesday's GISU Board meeting. She asked for clarification on who is attending the meeting for Folsom, and who is going to chair the board. T. Maxham and B. Vaughan represent Folsom on the GISU Board, and B. Vaughan will take over managing the board as vice chair.

B. Chutter offered thanks to S. McKelvie, M. Clark and Folsom staff for their work this summer and in the coming weeks.

13. Adjourn

The board adjourned at 7:59 PM on a voice vote. B. Vaughan made a motion to adjourn. N. Kouns seconded the motion. Approved unanimously on a voice vote.