

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)
MEETING MINUTES
MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL LIBRARY
May 6, 2019
6:30 PM

Present: Board members: Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Board Clerk, Meaghan Conly (Swanton), Don Collins (Swanton), Eric Beaugard (Franklin), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Steve Scott (Highgate)

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager. School Administrators: Dan Palmer, Pat Hartnett, Dena St. Amour. Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary. Channel 15/16 cameraperson. Community Members: David Roddy

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Agenda Amendments- None

Correspondence and Public Comments

Chris Shepard stated that in response to the correspondence received that they believe that the issue is more specific to Franklin School District and Highgate School District because they are involved in the lawsuit.

Don Collins stated that he would like to talk about executive session under other business.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Eric Beaugard moved, seconded by Steve Scott to approve the May 1st board minutes. Meaghan Conly requested a revision changing from Eric to Meaghan asking the question regarding no one running from a town and filling a vacant board seat. The board approved the revised board minutes on a 5-0 vote.

Old Business

MVSD merged budget for possible adoption

Eric Beaugard stated that his question pertains to the Franklin Local Budget. Is the budget amount that was approved at the recent Franklin School Meeting the same in this merged budget? Lora explained that the shared costs will look different. It looks like Sheldon will not be part of the district next year and will need to remove Sheldon's shared costs out. In the merged budget, all the costs for each of the schools and the shared services allocations are pooled together

with the other districts. Eric stated that if there is a question that if the funds are for Franklin School, then Franklin should receive this allocation. Julie Regimbal explained that if there is no merger, then Franklin School District Budget as voted will go through. If there is a merger, than the expenses will be commingled with the other schools. The general funds are not earmarked for specific schools. Lora continued to explain that if an unexpected expense occurred in one school and they had unspent funds, they would move funds from one line item to another to cover the expense much like what we would do now. Meghan asked what about reserved funds? Lora responded that any reserved funds that have been identified for a specific purpose will continue to be set aside for that. Don Collins asked about revenue/carryover funds. Lora responded that revenue/carryover funds will be used to offset the total expenses and used to reduce taxes. Lora does not advise that the school boards spend all their carryover because it will impact next year's taxes. Eric expressed his concern over what is budgeted for VSBA and what benefit do we get from them and should we go a different way? Don Collins stated that the VSBA would be happy to come up here to present. They have been a legislative force for example lead in the water where they have worked hard for funding. They help with Superintendent searches and with negotiations, making sure employees have reasonable insurance costs. Eric felt that they are getting better representation from the newly formed Vermont Alliance School Board. He feels like that the Executive Director took sides with Act 46 and the delay. He said many other school districts are leaving the VSBA. Eric would like the board to consider other options and not go with the VSBA. Meghan asked what are we going to lose? Is it really the history of the organization or is it because of Act 46? Don added that they also provide training for board chairs. Don said he was at the meeting last month and did not find evidence of many school districts leaving them. Don thought that this was a good discussion but cautioned about making a hasty decision. Chris Shepard pointed out that having been involved with negotiations, that the VSBA provided information to the school boards during that time.

Motion

Don Collins moved, seconded by Meghan Conly to approve the budget totaling \$37,001,935. Meghan asked what will be presented to the community. Lora said there are ways that we can inform the voters. Julie stated that there many different way to give information to the public. We can break down the salaries and benefits letting voters know how many teachers there will be in each school, we have added a math coach at MVU through grant funding. We can use graphs and charts to show the breakdown of the expenses. Lora explained that the motion must be stated as we have it in Article 3 in the Warning.

Motion: Don Collins restated the motion to approve: shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District approve the School Directors to expend

\$37,001,935 which is the amount the School Directors have determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,158 per equalized pupil. The motion seconded by Meghan Conly. The board approved the budget on a 4-1 vote.

Warning approval

The board reviewed the warning that was handed out to them. Julie proposed having an informational meeting on June 4th which falls in the ten day window needed. What does the board think? In addition to the informational meeting, she proposed having a recorded budget information meeting through Channel 15. Chris commented that they have had a hard time finding the recorded meetings in the Highgate link on the website. Pierrette stated that they will ensure that the presentation is visible on the website and Julie will put it on Facebook. The board decided to have one informational meeting on June 4th at MVU at 7pm. The board asked if someone could be in charge of the website once the district has been merged. Julie stated that they are looking at having the tech department come together and have a point person primarily be responsible for the website which should help to keep it current and well organized.

Motion: Meghan Conly moved, seconded by Steve Scott to approve the Articles as follows:

WARNING ANNUAL MEETING MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The legal voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District, consisting of the Towns of Franklin, Highgate and Swanton, are hereby notified and warned to meet to transact the following business by Australian ballot in their respective polling places hereinafter named for each of the above referenced towns on June 11th, 2019 at the polling places and times hereinafter listed.

- ARTICLE I To elect from the legal voters of said District the following officers:
- A. A MVSD School Director for a term of three (3) years from Franklin;
 - B. A MVSD School Director for a term of three (3) years from Highgate;
 - C. A MVSD School Director for a term of three (3) years from Swanton.
- ARTICLE II Shall the voters authorize the Board of School Directors to make available school facilities and equipment for specified public purposes if those purposes appear to be in the best interest of the residents of the District, due consideration being given to efficient, economical and appropriate use of the facilities and equipment?
- ARTICLE III Shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District approve the School Directors to expend \$37,001,935 which is the amount the School Directors have determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,158 per equalized pupil.
- ARTICLE IV Shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District authorize the Board of Directors of the said School District to borrow money to pay the current expenditures in anticipation of taxes and to sign notes for that purpose?
- ARTICLE V Shall the voters of the Missisquoi Valley School District transact and other business legally authorized to be transacted; considered appropriate and necessary when met?

The board voted 5-0 to approve the articles on the Warning.

New Business:

VSBA Code of Ethics

Julie explained that it is a good thing to have board members sign a code of ethics. We think of our role as a board working together. Do we want to do a board retreat? The VSBA does board retreats and they send out board materials to boards. Chris wanted to wait until the full board was together before approving the code of ethics. Julie stated that she respected all of the board members and how they respected one another even when they disagree. This will help discuss on how you want to do business. Chris thought if we waited until after June 11th election, will do more organizing and all the board members will have taken the oath.

Food Service Contract

Highgate was recently informed that that their lunch service fixed price contract was losing money and will need to bid out the food service contract this year. Although Swanton and MVU's contracts are not due until next year, the State of Vermont recommends that we pool the food service contracts for Highgate, Swanton, and MVU now. By combining the three schools together, we could attract other vendors. Lora said the school district is required to have more than one bid but typically do not get that. Food Service requires a lot of oversight and it would be easier to manage if there was one contract. Devin asked about looking into an in house program. Lora responded that in house programs are becoming less and less viable. It is challenging for in house programs to keep up with the nutrition requirements as well. Meghan asked why Franklin is not part of the food service contract. Lora responded that Franklin has a very successful in house program. Their health insurance benefit is subsidized but otherwise it is hugely successful. Don asked if she could wait for the Swanton Board to meet. Lora responded that the timeline is very stringent and will need to get started quickly due to the deadlines that must be met. She believes that we can attract a better rate. The lunch service contract is not a local decision, it is the MVSD's decision because the contract is out of the Supervisory Union office. Chris asked if it is more expensive by rebidding Swanton and MVU prematurely? Lora replied that our hot lunch price is low and some of the lowest in the State. Devin expressed concern that we have different programs to make sure that we don't make them all the same just for the sake of making it the same. He doesn't want to see us make a race to the bottom. We should let it stand on their own merit. Eric said we should look at what makes our school different and reap the rewards of each differentiation. Meghan trusts the other board members and feels we don't have to whitewash everything. Devin said we should not be afraid to ask the question. Lora went on to explain that if we manage one contract it would be one administrative function and easier to manage.

Motion: *Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Steve Scott to allow the business office to pursue one hot lunch service contract for Highgate, Swanton and MVU. The board approved 5-0 vote.*

Required Policies

Julie Regimbal explained that she created a google team drive for the first reading of policies, however, it did not work because school board members need to be on the domain email. We will be giving the school board new email addresses with the MVSDVT.org within the new domain. Everything shared in the google doc will be confidential and protected. The new website will have the policies on the website. Some of the policies on the Franklin Northwest website are outdated or have unnecessary procedures. The policies that are being reviewed are almost identical to the Vermont School Board's Association policies that have been vetted. Julie can go through each policy. The models under consideration are mandated policies that we need to have in place by July 1st. The majority of them are straightforward and boiler plate. The next set of policies will be recommended policies and the fiscal policy will probably fall under them. Julie wants to work with the administrative team to adapt the recommended policies as needed. Julie went through the code and the name of each policy as follows for first reading of the policies:

Board:

A 1 Board Member Conflict of Interest

Employees:

B1 Substitute Teachers

B2 Volunteers and Work Study Students

B3 Alcohol and Drug-free Workplace

B4 Drugs and Alcohol Testing: Transportation Employees

B5 Employee Harassment

B6 Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
Compliance

B7 Tobacco Prohibition

Students:

C1 Student Records

C2 Student Drugs and Alcohol

C3 Transportation

C4 Limited English Proficiency Students

C5 Firearms

C6 Home Study Students

C7 Student Attendance

C8 Pupil Privacy

C9 Nutrition and Wellness

C10 Prevention of Harassment, Hazing and Bullying

C11 Student Freedom of Expression in School Sponsored
Media

Instruction:

- D1 Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements
- D3 Responsible computer, Internet and Network Use
- D4 Title One Comparability
- D5 Animal Dissection
- D6 Class Size

School-Community Relations

- E1 Title One Parental Involvement Compacts

Non-instructional Operations:

- F1 Travel Reimbursement

Julie reported that there is very little change from mandated policies, they are cross referenced with current statutes and wrote by the attorneys at VSBA. She stated that you send your questions/comments to her prior to the next meeting about the policies. She will bring them to the administration team to review and work on procedures as needed. Julie would like to have the second reading and adoption at the next meeting. Don Collins said to go ahead and warn them for June 4th. He would like the newly elected board members to receive the policies and be aware of them. We may wait until June 18th but to go ahead and warn them for adoption on June 4th. Julie said that we would provide a copy of the policies to the candidates.

Other Business

Superintendent's Report

Legislative Update

Julie reported that the Way and Means are looking at providing funding sources for the lead and water bill. The H39 conference committee was disbanded. The Senate took the delay bill and put it in the delayed special education Act 173 bill. Eric requested that the legislative report be forwarded to the board members.

Administration Input at Board Meetings

Julie thanked the administration for coming to the meeting tonight. She would like to have the administration become part of the board meetings. She would like to strike a balance. There is two meetings a month and she thought that the administration could present at the school where the meeting is being held so when in Swanton, Dena and Justina could present. Steve Scott said he had no problem hearing from them. Chris stated that he would like to hear from them but would like to have them present more often than every 4 months. Don suggested to let the principals figure it out themselves if they would like to be on the agenda allowing them thirty minutes to speak and they could determine the time limits. Meaghan enjoyed seeing all of the administrators last week and has the same concerns as Chris about every four months and likes the idea about setting an amount of time for them to present. Julie will talk through some ideas with the administrators and perhaps they can submit a written report and have a spot on the agenda. They would like to see some of the students from the school hosting do a short presentation. Don thought we could hear from the principals from MVU

when it was held at MVU and at the next meeting when it was not at MVU, two of the other principals could present. Don would like to have a table for the administration engaging. Julie would like this to be our board meeting. She thought that the board could do tours of the school at the board meetings so that the board members could see the schools from other towns.

VSBA Training on May 15th

Julie reported that next Wednesday, May 15th, there is a board chair training one day workshop in Lake Morey. She wanted to know if there were any board members interested in attending. Chris Shepard stated that he would attend so Julie will register Chris for the workshop.

Other

Don Collins stated that as a new board they will be dealing with lots of issues not familiar to all of us. He wanted to wait until there was a new board about to discuss and provide information on the why to enter executive sessions. He felt that we all need a good review but should wait until June 18th, when the full board will meet.

Next Meeting Date

The board decided to meet on June 4th at 6:00pm at MVU. June 11th will be the budget and board members voting date. The next meeting will take place on June 18th will all the board members.

Anticipated Executive Session None

Adjournment

Eric Beauregard moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to adjourn at 8:20pm.
The board approved 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary