

**WSESU Board Meeting  
Draft Minutes  
January 16, 2019**

**Present:** Elizabeth Burrows, Amy McMullen, Nicole Buck, Jacqui Antonivich, Scott Richardson, Nancy Pedrick, Sarah Stewart Taylor, Angie Ladeau, Karen Woolsey, David Baker

**Not Present:** Sean Whalen, Heidi Remick, Bill Yates, Beth Carter, Kris Garnjost

Meeting called to order at 6:17 PM

**Minutes:** November 5

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Elizabeth Burrows moved; seconded by Nicole Buck; motion passed with two abstentions

**Changes/Additions:** Adding Meeting with Legislators

**Public Comments:** None

**Discussion Items:**

Budget: To see how individual districts are feeling.

Merger benefitted West Windsor.

Hartland: Budget is up. Tax rate rate up 11 cents with using the surplus. Budget increase was out of our control. Only change was food service, assessment, and tuition.

Windsor: Mount Ascutney School District, Windsor portion and Windsor taxes up about 20 cents and West Windsor went down about 39 cents.

Weathersfield; budget up about 4.21 cents. Using part of the surplus and largest increase was switch over to food program. Select board and school board will meet and usually done before budget passed. This is more of a collaboration and better explanation of budgets. Last two years vote was very close and this year Sean wrote a letter that should be helpful. Sent out postcards last year and this year are trying to talk to people about budget.

Dave Baker mentioned it was a straight budget in all towns. With tax increases and increased services need to be careful explaining and be appreciative but not apologetic. Keep a good climate and to serve all students is labor intensive. Powerpoint will explain why gone up. The CLA affects the tax rate.

**Policies:**

Nicole Buck mentioned members were asked to review policies and most were done. Nicole stated that she and Elizabeth Burrows had hoped to discard a lot of them but people were hesitant. Many people felt should be revised and/or look at the policy from Vermont School Boards Association (VSBA). Dave Baker mentioned if feel policy is better as a procedure get rid

of it. Would like all districts to rescind all policies and go with SU policies so all match. The urgency is Windsor/West Windsor policies sunset as of July 1. If some say revise will table those and make sure have all VSBA required policies. After July 1 can then revisit those that need to be revised. Nicole would like all policies back by Monday, January 28. Dave Baker mentioned before July 1 will have common verbiage on how to rescind policies and motion to put forth policies as stated in the WSESU Policy Book. All boards would do this.

#### Appointments:

Anne Callahan - Title 1 Interventionist

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to appoint Anne Callahan. Elizabeth Burrows moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick. Elizabeth Burrows asked if full time or .4 for this year. Angie Ladeau mentioned just added two days per week. Motion passed.

#### Resignation - Katarina Thomas

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the resignation. Sarah Stewart Taylor moved; seconded by Nicole Buck; motion passed.

#### Meeting with Legislators:

Amy McMullen mentioned Zach Ralph and John Bartholomew asked to meet with the board chairs of Windsor, West Windsor, and Hartland. Amy McMullen mentioned she was unable to meet but Elizabeth Burrows and Nicole Buck met with them. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned they talked about wishes and concerns. One issue was the state board of education redrawing boundaries. Both were in favor of drawing back some of that power from the state board. We brought up the idea of urging the education committee to make budget penalties to only discretionary spending and not increases. We urged them to standardize the use of terms; ADM vs. Equalized Pupil; Staff/Student ratio vs. teacher ratio. The wish was that anyone who comes in contact with a child have bias training. They were very receptive to this. Zach Ralph and John Bartholomew asked for ideas to reduce education budget. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she told them to stop transferring things from general fund to education fund without transferring money to go with it. Nicole Buck mentioned they were supportive of the work we were doing. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she was impressed with how informed Zach Ralph was. John Bartholomew was aware of the changes in the special education formula. Dave Baker asked if they had any initiatives they were interested in. Elizabeth mentioned both Zack Ralph and John Bartholomew were interested in inherent bias training. Nancy Pedrick asked if they talked about the idea from the state board of going to four SU's and one superintendent. Elizabeth mentioned they did discuss that but not interested. Scott Richardson mentioned before the election Zach Ralph had a meeting with residents and spoke about the designation of schools and there was interest with the people who attended. Dave Baker mentioned it is good to stay in contact with your legislators.

#### School Board Recognition Month:

Amy McMullen mentioned board members should have received a thank you card with a gift certificate to Darn Tough Socks. Montpelier developed a resolution that January is National School Board Month.

Scott Richardson asked about something in the minutes. As there was no quorum in December do we have an SU budget. Dave Baker mentioned all budgets were approved and cannot go back to it. Sarah Stewart Taylor mentioned we could go back and look at it but was nothing to cut there. Amy McMullen mentioned the board did not exercise that right. Scott Richardson feels this is not a good way of approving a budget. Scott thanked the administration for everything they did on the budget. Amy McMullen mentioned the budget was approved but could have possibly changed but there was no quorum in December. Nicole Buck feels almost need to have that caveat with the SU budget in future years so can come back if need be. The discretionary spending was Technology. Scott Richardson feels it was clear districts were not keeping up with what the technology team wanted to see. Sarah Stewart Taylor mentioned, as a board, we make that decision. Sarah Stewart Taylor feels we might need a new process for discretionary spending in the SU budget. Sarah feels should look at the SU budget, then local budgets, then back to the SU to approve. Nicole Buck mentioned part of it was the state not giving us the numbers we needed until January. Scott Richardson mentioned we need to remember that this has happened before. We are having a hard time with budgets and they could look at us and say why didn't you merge. Amy McMullen mentioned individual budgets, town spending, only thing that could change and if everyone wants a voice on your budget is having a single budget. Sarah Stewart Taylor feels do not have that, but moving closer to putting more things under assessments, we need to discuss that and do not want to give up as move more towards a unified budget and may need to change procedure.

Dave Baker mentioned the administrative team and business office taking small steps to bring all maintenance to the SU. There is good will around the table and as much as can, from budget standpoint, can move more around efficiencies as a single district. There are still a lot of inefficiencies. Hartland/Weathersfield have come together around food service. Mount Ascutney Board needs to decide how to do food service. There should be an agreement that need to do more together. Where towns not come together is unified high school. There was some advantage to this. Scott Richardson mentioned we do not have a unified contract either.

Dave Baker mentioned we can look at the budget timeline next year. Nancy Pedrick mentioned discretionary funding would be technology and maintenance. We should have the heads of these departments come in and say what the bare minimum would be. This way would have a broader picture. Dave Baker mentioned the board decides priorities. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned priorities should come up at the annual retreat. Dave Baker mentioned we have centralized a lot of the curriculum. Angie Ladeau mentioned talked about different buildings doing different things and we are getting there as an administrative team and being mindful of what building as an SU but want to honor individual schools doing individual things. Dave Baker mentioned we want to honor the uniqueness but want to honor equality around the SU. There is talk in all buildings about how to accelerate the math program. We discussed the possibility of having an advanced algebra class for next year. Angie Ladeau mentioned we have to look to see if that covers programs from 8th grade. Dave Baker mentioned some music programs are weaker than others. It is hard to provide opportunities for kids as numbers drop. Scott Richardson feels sometimes the leap is sugared down for all things that get people's attention. We are not talking about the importance of government. Dave Baker mentioned we have talked about this every year and principals say some need to repeat a grade and something not working and now there is no way to place a student at another school. We have no way of

doing that and is disappointing. Sarah Stewart Taylor feels we need to create that agreement. Dave Baker mentioned would need to agree that the money does not follow the pupil.

Around SU:

West Windsor: Started winter sports program last week. This year all kids of any level being offered ski lessons. Can do sledding, skating, and snowshoeing if do not want to ski. This program is on Thursday's. New after school program, Venture Program, for kids that need to stay after school with wonderful programs. Most of the programs are out doors and well received. You have to pay to be able to participate. This is run by a person from Ascutney Outdoors. This is the first collaborative step with Ascutney Outdoors. On Sunday's are having ski racing lessons for all ages. Skating rink is holding up nice.

Hartland: Started winter activities and going good. Everybody participates and is a whole range of activities. Activities going on in the school -- knitting program, dungeons and dragons. Suicide Six on Tuesday afternoons for skiing. They can also do skating or a program at Aristree. Families pay for the activity but there is scholarship money. Bus to the activities outside of the school is free. Will be doing a play, Adams Family, at the end of March. There are new colors in the hallways.

Windsor: Winter activities have started and skiing at Whaleback on Thursday afternoons. On January 24 there is a proficiency based learning parent night. The high school science fair was on January 10. We have a good showing at the state science fair. Capstones, senior project, is going on now. Bowling team doing well.

Weathersfield: Revitalization of drama program and built budget up for that. Kids wanted a drama program and they were writing and producing own play. Will also start a writer's guild from grade 4 up. We started a book drive as budget was dwindled down and trying to find creative ways to get books in. If people have books they can drop them off at the school. We want to get kids excited about reading. Rich the Drummer was at Weathersfield for three years. Holiday program was different and received a lot of positive feedback.

**Agenda:** March  
Policies  
Student Agreement  
Solar Presentation

**Adjournment:**

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Nicole Buck moved; seconded by Sarah Stewart Taylor; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary