

**Mount Ascutney Board Meeting
Approved Minutes
November 14, 2019**

Present: Elizabeth Burrows, Bill Yates, Kris Garnjost, Nancy Pedrick, Amy McMullen, Amanda Yates, Craig Locarno, Jenifer Aldrich, Tiffany Riley, David Baker

Not Present: Beth Carter

Meeting called to order at 7:17 PM by Elizabeth Burrows

Additions/Corrections: Resignation from Jana McLoughlin; Switch A and B

Public Participation: None

Announcements and Celebratory Comments from Board Members: Elizabeth Burrows mentioned Jenifer Aldrich will be out for two weeks and is a plan in place. Kris Garnjost mentioned Mid-Summer Night's Dream is December 4-6. Bill Yates mentioned kicked off negotiations with paras and teachers and went fairly well. Other dates are scheduled.

Discussion Items:

Food Service:

Dave Baker mentioned at crossroads. Mount Ascutney School District in last year of contract with Fresh Pics, a subsidiary of Cafe Services, and have done the lunch program for a long time. This year serving lunches here at Albert Bridge. Craig Locarno is running the self-operation food service for Weathersfield and Hartland. Craig has been with the SU since May. Hartland and Weathersfield are very pleased with the program. Do not save money with self-operation as pay own staff and benefits. If want quality, you pay for it. It will have budgetary impact and, if decide to stay with contracting company, have to go out to bid. The Agency of Education has to approve the bid document and go through bids. If self-operation do not need to bid. Craig is an SU employee as serving both districts and, if you go that way, will serve all three. The reason why has to be a separate conversation is food service is a separate fund and not part of the general fund. The way did it for preliminary budget was using equalized pupil format. Dave Baker mentioned each individual district assessed outside of SU assessment as handles costs related to general fund. Elizabeth Burrows asked once contracted is covering whole SU? Dave Baker mentioned yes and Craig would report to the SU Board. Encourage you to take a strong look at this as would increase quality.

Craig Locarno mentioned as background he was a chef/manager for 10 years and food service director for five. Has been an employee of food service companies and first opportunity in self opt and much nicer. All about ownership and giving opportunity to build a program that is unique. Each school is unique and has important features. Important to understand is about food, not feeding, education, teaching, and supporting local community. Craig mentioned he is a Farm to School supporter, quality is key, educate children on how to eat correctly, where food comes from by supporting local agriculture and neighbors. It is about building relationships and

find what is important in each community. Brought in local beef, maple syrup, and vegetables. Reaching out to local farmers is educating and supporting community. When cooking quality product it tastes better and presents better with a ripple effect of success. Hartland's program is very successful and numbers increased by 20%. At Weathersfield there is still work to be done. Weathersfield had their community Thanksgiving meal yesterday and served 350. It is about building a sense of community and being a part of the community. Work hard every day to make it better. The big key is ownership, control, communicating and understanding the importance of what is needed in your school. Nancy Pedrick asked if in both schools physically. Craig Locarno mentioned he goes to each school every day. Stops in Hartland every morning, then Weathersfield and goes back depending on what happening 2-3 times a day. In the office one day a week. Dave Baker mentioned Craig is creating menus and there are committees in each school to talk about what works and what does not. Craig Locarno mentioned that Weathersfield did not get a fresh fruit/veggie grant this year. As has relationships with people, every week Upper Valley Produce sends him a list of what is available. Buying veggies and fruit for Weathersfield at lowest possible price. There are benefits to having independent food program. Every day is a new day and do what has to be done for students.

Today in Weathersfield went into the Kindergarten classroom working with them on. place setting and five components of a meal. Educating is very important. It has to be a movement; serving good food in dining hall and proper eating in dining hall. Educate on how to eat good healthy snacks and make good choices on food quality. Elizabeth Burrows asked if feel stretching too thin to be whole SU. Craig Locarno mentioned will build it as one and just be another rotation. Menus are quality enough for all schools. This gives better buying power, better control, and communication is good. Dave Baker mentioned talked about hiring an assistant. Craig Locarno feels it is about making and buying good food, cooking properly, and presenting well. Once build team and, all on the same page, it moves. Dave Baker mentioned not sure of staffing patterns at Windsor as presently have five full time. The real power is that the program spreads evenly across all four schools. Nancy Pedrick asked about the summer program in Windsor. Dave Baker mentioned Cafe Services does the food and could keep some staff working all summer long. This was not figured into the budget. Amy McMullen mentioned the summer program is through Hunger Free Vermont. Dave Baker mentioned would want to continue with summer program. Amy McMullen mentioned has to do with who is eligible to eat in your community. Elizabeth Burrows asked, for West Windsor, how would food get here. Does the district own what Cafe Services uses to transport food? Dave Baker mentioned he will research this.

Amy McMullen feels if have a program it should be uniform in all schools. Nancy Pedrick mentioned for Albert Bridge the problem is having staff here early enough for breakfast. Dave Baker feels we are stronger together than apart. Having seen the quality of the new program all kids should have that opportunity. This program will cost the district more. Bill Yates feels if provide good reasonably priced meals children will eat is the key. Hiring people who will be there for a longer time and buy in with people here to help teach that is a joy but also lifelong responsibility. Elizabeth Burrows feels food is part of the community system. Will there be uniform pricing across the SU? Craig Locarno mentioned yes. Dave Baker feels could do a lot

better ourselves. Bill Yates would like Ed Connors to run numbers and what has been the participation level for the last year. Dave Baker feels can increase participation rates. Bill Yates mentioned is creating quality but goal is a way to get rid of the opportunity for them to leave. Craig Locarno mentioned high school food service is a challenge and would put in things; such as, build your own deli bar, create own stir fry. Make it exciting for them to want to stay and eat. There is a lot of room for improvement and every day is a new challenge. We need to bring it out for kids to see and should be colorful and exciting. We are here to provide good food for students and staff. Tiffany Riley mentioned high school students want to improve the quality of the food. Craig Locarno mentioned he would like to talk with them.

Amy McMullen asked when need to vote. Dave Baker mentioned as soon as possible. Amy McMullen mentioned need to see in context of the whole budget. Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve doing our own food service. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Elizabeth Burrows. Kris Garnjost and Bill Yates mentioned they have some questions on affordability. Nancy Pedrick withdrew the motion.

Visionary Process:

Dave Baker mentioned he had met with Tiffany Riley and Jenifer Aldrich. Entering into budget cycle and thought that rather than make independent but look at actual carry over, with no new programs, incentive to taxpayer and tax rate. The board had talked more about long range vision. We have had several conversations on what both would look like. Bill Yates had talked about an ungraded and more pod based on performance. Before get into budget do we have a long range goal for staffing patterns and curriculum instruction. Dependent on Portrait of a Graduate piece but budget piece does not match up with Portrait of a Graduate. Started with non-negotiables, do not want to compromise, parameters critical to us all, status quo, and what numbers look like and what pods would look like and what appropriate. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she thought the board was going to have meetings about this? Dave Baker mentioned is level 1 and where go from here. What is the next step to map out? We could alter things in the spring. Bill Yates mentioned we create pod or level for different instruction but a lot of things need to happen. What are your summative assessments so know what have to accomplish? Those need to be developed, some benchmarks, and some computer generated. Students should have input in developing assessments. It is a lot of work but worthwhile. Jenifer Aldrich has a background in the ungraded approach. Dave Baker mentioned there are nonnegotiables when looked at K-8 numbers and each pod has the same number of kids. Pre-K-8 will be about 400 students. Numbers lend themselves to that pod arrangement. One of those pods would fit in this building. Dave Baker feels is a starting point. Need to know if this is the direction moving in or not. It is a lot of work to get to that point. Elizabeth Burrows feels that goes back to grouping by ages and thought was based on proficiency. Amy McMullen feels moving to pod system is a goal but if put everything on hold until worked out would be here for years. To be working toward that would be a group of students in a continuum which is developmentally feasible.

Bill Yates feels to move forward a lot has to happen with just not training teachers but informing community on what looks like. When grouping by ability not just skill ability but functional ability.

If student decoding at 8th grade level does not mean can utilize text. Not how well read aloud, spell, memorization, but get information, process and present in a cohesive way. Difficult part is community to understand and create assessments. Assessments need to be in place to have pods in place. One pod in the building is not the direction going but could be a possibility. Each year talk about special education costs rising and when go to towns with budget need to have a plan to deliver instruction in another way. Steps talking about, presenting in a different way and looking at fundamental purpose of education. Dave Baker mentioned when say pod fit in building, not in current figuration, and this building needs some work. Part of the work doing and came to merger realization with distinct impression to keep this building thriving for kids. This lends itself to better support services. Bill Yates feels, as a board, sending a transparent message should not be what happening in this building or that but move away from that and how deliver instruction in a better way for all students. Elizabeth Burrows feels the greatest success areas of a pod is the mentoring system between pods. Studies show that neither traditional structure or pod left them with greater capabilities but those in a pod system were farther ahead than peers because of mentoring. Nancy Pedrick is worried about age groups not working together. Bill Yates mentioned it lends itself to pod level if assessments and goals are clear. Students in the next pod know what expectations to reach and the next pod is the perfect group to present how get there. Feels discussion is premature as need teachers involved. We need to develop a goal, the means to get to that goal, and best ways to use those resources.

Dave Baker mentioned need to know where going as there is a lot of work to do here. Amanda Yates mentioned special education budget and co-teaching with special education teachers can provide the same level of service when looking at staffing levels.

Kris Garnjost mentioned he is not clear on how the vision connects with Portrait of a Graduate discussion. Bill Yates feels meshes well as Portrait of a Graduate is looking at the end product K-12 and, to get to that goal, have to create sub goals along the way. Elizabeth Burrows thought Portrait of a Graduate was curriculum. Dave Baker mentioned that's the how and this is the what. This is a five-year plan and, if follow portrait plan, can backwards map into structure. There is a lot of work to do on this and contained in the competencies of portrait. Kris Garnjost asked why having discussion now if has to do with budget, signed onto portrait process, and sounds like a good idea, feels working on two different processes that should fit together. Bill Yates mentioned we have to develop the means. The goal is that portrait is done in a couple years but this transitional phase to different instruction model will take more. They complement each other but two different projects. We need to develop instructional means to teach them.

Tiffany Riley mentioned looking at this when went into merger, cost containment, how ensure best outcomes for all students, and what are the current system and structures. This is a means for doing that and looking at authentic numbers. Thinking about pod system for kids is developmentally and socially better. Kris Garnjost mentioned he is all for this conversation but needs to be put in context. The general public hearing about this have less ability to see the distinction between the two things discussing. Dave Baker mentioned if see numbers and look at systems, structures, staffing patterns, and best way to educate kids, what is the next step in this discussion. Do we have enough options or more questions? Elizabeth Burrows mentioned that at the last meeting she expressed frustration on the passive budget planning process, do

not identify problems that need to be addressed, and do not look at vision/mission. No purpose in it. When handed budget our task is only to reduce and do not get to put thoughts behind initiative. We are not presenting taxpayers with a cohesive thought where headed, tell town doing for a reason, and not enact anything that is moving toward something. Dave Baker feels this is the first step and being transparent about this and throw ideas around, get community and staff to discuss.

Amy McMullen mentioned last time things were handed to us and did not feel principals were consulted. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned doing our best with what have and cut if need to. Portrait of a Graduate has a clear outcome so should become our vision/mission. The ideal is comes two years later but the question is what do we want to do now. Feels they blend but have to decide structures, supports, and then the system to do that. Kris Garnjost feels we all are afraid that we are all doers and forget the vision part has value. We want to get into the doing. Amy McMullen mentioned we need to be mindful of the community and taxpayers as some relatively vocal so have to make the most of resources and serving kids in the best way possible and why keep open to serve this group of children in our community. We need to start talking about that now. Bill Yates mentioned some work can start with teaching benchmarking, creating summative assessments, and investigating assessments. What would look like next year is to get teachers up to speed on assessments. Kris Garnjost asked if is proficiency based learning system. Bill Yates mentioned looking ahead to the next step and teachers can do and, if need help doing that, can provide that development. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned not just professional development but talks a lot of time developing one assessment. Tiffany Riley mentioned the work has been happening and is in progress. If use pods is a new way of thinking and requires professional development. Elizabeth Burrows feels would be helpful in framing this to have a universal idea of what is needed and what is required to make it work in a year, 3 years, or 5 years. What professional development is needed, time needed, and what kind of budget.

Amy McMullen mentioned what talking about is plan in year one happening, in year 2 what see happening, pod grouping, and how to meet goals. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned first year would require teachers to be trained. Tiffany Riley mentioned need to be clear what training is in. Elizabeth Burrows asked administrators what is the end goal and needs to be layered. Tiffany Riley feels is where portrait would be by January. Dave Baker mentioned by summer should have efficiencies and then overtime create the assessments tied to those. The staff has been talking about this proficiency work for some time but more needs to be done. First step is getting consensus from the community and staff on what they feel. Some of this work needs to be done up front. Start with a vision and people flush out what they think about it while getting competencies built. Talking about a concept that comes from knowledge base that some staff may have already worked with this and steps to get there. This is an opportunity with great staff, board thinking outside the box, good communities, and want a plan. Kris Garnjost feels needs more clarity but need to get out in the community as some not sure about proficiency based. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned is basically talking PLP's and extending down to Kindergarten. Kris Garnjost feels should communicate to the public the logic. Tiffany Riley feels community members want to see something different and not do the same thing over and over. Amanda Yates mentioned is thinking about what is working and not lose sight of that. What is strong, working and build on those.

Kris Garnjost would like more information on the pros and cons of the pod system. It sounds doable and interesting. Dave Baker feels need an executive summary of what talking about; advantages and disadvantages. Jenifer Aldrich and Tiffany Riley will do a conceptual map of the staff and bring back variations. Elizabeth Burrows asked if could have a public discussion around the first week of December. Dave Baker mentioned he likes the idea but the set up could be part of this. Maybe put out a preliminary article outlining some of our challenges and thinking about staffing patterns.

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned what she has read about it is another appeal was in K-12 systems gives boost to intrinsic motivation.

Jenifer Aldrich feels should put together a basic presentation on non-grading learning and any other learning environment looking at. Dave Baker mentioned you do not want to lose sight of using resources in the communities and getting them involved. What do we want it to look like? Amanda Yates mentioned when thinking of the social services we rely on and can we build on those and not contracting out. Jenifer Aldrich feels other options should be considered.

Consent Agenda:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the minutes of October 29 and the resignation of Jana McLoughlin. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yates; thanking Jana for her time and wish her the best. Motion passed.

Old Business: Elizabeth Burrows mentioned how we add student voice to our board. Amy McMullen mentioned the board will look at the proposal presented last month.

Elizabeth Burrows asked as passed place holder policy on interdistrict student transfers and had a couple of people ask that the discussion continue and seek public input. Townspeople had hoped was a placeholder until full discussion on what would look like and would like on the agenda. Amy McMullen mentioned is part of looking at numbers and part of larger conversation. Dave Baker mentioned the board either agrees with the SU policy by July 1 or create one of our own.

Agenda: December 5
Budget/Food Service
Student Presentation on PLP

December 9:
Student Representative on Board
Interdistrict Choice Policy

Adjournment:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Kris Garnjost moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary