

**Mount Ascutney Board Meeting
Draft Minutes
October 29, 2019**

Present: Elizabeth Burrows, Amy McMullen, Bill Yates, Nancy Pedrick, Jenifer Aldrich, Tiffany Riley, David Baker, Amanda Yates, Owen Campbell, Ed Connors

Not Present: Beth Carter and Kris Garnjost

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM.

Additions/Corrections: No Presentation

Public Participation: Ashley Rich

Daughter in 4th grade and next year I have an incoming Kindergarten student. Mailed letter to Agency of Education and State Representative. Heard back from State Representative with concerns. Feel concerns have been minimized and want to make public. My daughter's physical and mental wellbeing is in jeopardy and have had concerns over the last five years. Daughter taught to be proud of community. Parents have the understanding when children dropped off that their physical and emotional safety is being protected and feels staff is not responsible. My child's doctor feels this school is toxic. My daughter knows cannot argue with teachers and should stay focused. Unable to navigate as has been tormented from peers. Parents concerns have been disregarded or ignored. Daughter told us that she is hated and does not belong and is damaging to her psyche and overall person. Culture created is toxic and negative and feels not supported by faculty. Administration disregards parent concerns but more about sports. Mrs. Rich mentioned asked for bullying investigation and met with superintendent and principal. Concerns are deflected by administration as saying this is nationwide. My daughter was told to be friends with those bullying her but then told did not say that. My daughter is confused as continues to reach out to teachers and nothing changing. Understand is nationwide but does not need to be this school and how explain not enough supervision. My child goes along with it to try and fit in. Was told things would change but not for those not interested in team sports. Urging you to shift the culture and try to reach children going to this school. My daughter does not want to go to school. She is only comfortable talking to two teachers.

Dave Baker mentioned you stated have a meeting Thursday afternoon. Dave Baker mentioned he is in this school a lot and this building is not what you say and child is not as you describe. She seems very happy. I would send my children to this school as staff do a good job. Mrs. Rich mentioned you are to protect this building and my child does not feel safe here. One of my daughter's peers said I want the swing and flipped her off. Mrs. Rich mentioned she heard this from her daughter and another student. This system is flawed and things need to change. This school is doing my child an injustice. My daughter's pediatrician feels that for her anxiety to go away should take her out of Windsor.

Announcements and Celebratory Remarks from Board Members: Amy McMullen mentioned kids did a good job in spelling bee and was announcer and Amanda was a coach. Windsor's 5/6 graders going to regionals this weekend.

Discussion Items:

Budget Process:

Tiffany Riley mentioned she and Jenifer Aldrich did some staffing numbers. Did not put Pre-K in staffing patterns but put in numbers. We put number of students in each grade level as well as teachers, paras, BI's. Contracting with WeRHope at both schools. We met several times to make sure did not lose sight of visionary process. What would like to see for the district and community is 2 years, 5 years and beyond. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she feels frustration over the budget process. Budget handed to us with no vision. Board has not looked at the budget with vision/mission statement. Budget has no board input except tweaking numbers only with questions. When talk where want to be does not have to preclude Portrait of a Graduate. Bill Yates feels can do some things within this district and trying things out especially with new law and MTSS. Bill Yates feels should take data and rearrange how instruction delivered in fundamental way and look at board level and financial level. We have control over the delivery of instruction in the classroom that is different and efficient and starts here. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned this fits with what talking about and MTSS.

Bill Yates mentioned when looking at Act 173 and state requiring us to organize students in age level groups, what feel, is fundamental failure of education. Research does not support that all students ready to learn at the same time. Students ready to learn when they are. Basic instructional organization will be addressing desire of Act 173 from the beginning and not doing catch up. We have the ability to move away from grade level and look at students where they are in means of organization. Bill Yates feels Albert Bridge would be a good school to pilot that next year. When looking short term should start giving it a try in a small school. What are the goals that move from one to another and how organized? Bill Yates does not feel can start district wide at this time. Tiffany Riley asked when talking about students moving forward at developmental readiness, are you saying remove grades. Bill Yates stated yes, a group of students working on certain skills. Tiffany Riley mentioned would need some proficiency to move on. Bill Yates mentioned students know what expectations are and gain ownership of assessment piece. You cannot ignore any piece of a child's development. Accommodations are there for students to be successful and not using basic skills as the basis from moving from one location to another. We would be looking at the fundamental delivery of instruction for the entire area. Tiffany Riley mentioned think about backward design and how makes a smooth transition into middle school. Bill Yates mentioned is developing into a functional, happy being.

Dave Baker mentioned the state backed away from requirements and went with educator quality and transferable skills. The other opportunity you have is to start from scratch and build a system. As build and vision out have the right players at the table. At some point need to include members of the staff. Dave Baker mentioned he is nervous about pilot programs and, if decide good for all kids, then it should be for all. This conversation maybe too big for this venue tonight. What seen in districts around here, forget visioning, in December/January people thinking about budgets that will not pass. We need to be proactive about building something different. There is a lot of research based around flexible pathways. The idea is transferable skills and project based on those skills and not rote memory of skills. This is a large task as staff trained in classical approach and with the right voices around the table could organize this. Elizabeth Burrows feels, as a taxpayer, would much rather, if budget increased, have the school board stand up and say we are working towards this. Bill Yates mentioned the reality is that could say this is our vision and this is what supports that vision. Dave Baker mentioned is the what and the how you get there. How organize kids into clusters and what look like in intervention standpoint,

enrichment standpoint, and plays all into this. The board needs time dedicated to this conversation. Do not feel the need to wait until the end of portrait process.

Ed Connors mentioned if this is what the board wants to do, and need budget by December 30, it will take a lot of effort from the board if want to take a different approach. Dave Baker asked Ed Connors to do status quo. Amy McMullen mentioned with preliminary numbers can get a baseline for vision/mission. Elizabeth Burros mentioned all in to get it done this year and probably would require a lot of professional development. Dave Baker asked what the budget increase was. Ed Connors mentioned \$97,000. Ed mentioned starting the year with a deficit close to \$100,000.

For benefits adding a 12% increase. Looking at insurance going up for liability and workman's comp. The board has to decide how to proceed with the food program, continue with Cafe Services or join part of the operation with Weathersfield and Hartland. If want to put bid out will need to put out an RFP. Projecting a 1.4% increase. Do not have all numbers and get those from the state. Anticipate numbers will be delayed in coming out. Elizabeth Burrows asked the drop dead deadline in passing the budget. Dave Baker mentioned early to mid-January. Food service conversation is a large item and needs to get done soon. Elizabeth Burrows asked about solar and savings. Steve Snyder mentioned would be about 15%. Dave Baker mentioned the next step is the visioning process. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned wages and benefits do not include special education, and if status quo, special education would look different and shift would have to go away from special education. Dave Baker mentioned if did any redesign here the assessment would come down. Way provide services in clusters is critical. Ed Connors mentioned anything that would alter this is the CLA.

Jenifer Aldrich mentioned if going toward that goal this year is another discussion. Amy McMullen mentioned need to set a date for this. Dave Baker mentioned just this board and then a focus group of the stakeholders and what would look like for the next year, 2 years and 5 years. We want the vision to drive the budget. Amy McMullen feels has to be the whole community that buys into it. Proficiency based learning has been a challenge.

Virginia Snyder: Student Council President

Getting non-voting student representative on the board. Amy McMullen mentioned what exciting is the VSBA has an outline for student representatives on the school board. This was discussed previously and the challenge was the timing and what we wanted for grade levels. Virginia Snyder feels should have student voice on this topic and should be interested and willingness to come to the meetings. Bill Yates mentioned should consider, if students participate and contribute to the development, how correspond to their transferable skills course. Virginia Snyder mentioned in this model could receive credit but maybe turn into something different. Amy McMullen mentioned if a junior, could possibly be their senior capstone project. Dave Baker asked if coming from student government. Virginia Snyder mentioned is part of internship.

Solar: Steve Snyder

Entered into net metering agreement with Norwich Solar. You will get a 15% discount off power bill. At the mercy of public utilities commission and in yearlong process and expect to get PTG soon. When given notice for go ahead, we start buying materials. Week 6 put in posts and racking. Juniper Hill is the preferred sight and can work there in the winter. Panels go on the second month; completion is when payments are made. Interconnect is Green Mountain Power and final completion is clean up

sight and property fenced. Looking to be finished in April. Elizabeth Burrows asked when originally presented, if site at Juniper Hill, will have an educational component. Steve Snyder mentioned that can happen anytime in the school year. Dave Baker wondered if could do some sort of internship if some students interested in this type of work. Steve Snyder mentioned can start the planning for this now. You will see savings on the May or June bill. Nancy Pedrick asked about upgrading panels. Steve Snyder mentioned they last for about 40 years. After nine years could buy the system at a discount. Savings are better if leave it and take the savings. Bill Yates asked if want to add on we could. Steve Snyder mentioned you can, just a new agreement.

Interdistrict School Choice Policy:

Dave Baker asked do you want it to look the same or more elaborate. Bill Yates mentioned he likes the one at the SU and feels should continue conversation and not look exactly the same but have something more flexible.

Pre-K:

Amy McMullen mentioned this was about looking at more in-house Pre-K as kids in different placements. Feel as part of bigger vision conversation. Bill Yates feels should keep in discussion and opportunity to serve the community and make Mount Ascutney School District a parent friendly, supportive place. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned Cabot doing this and got funding from the town. Reading does this.

Public Access to Windsor School Playground:

Tiffany Riley mentioned currently playground is on Ascutney and State Streets Gates are locked during the day and open at night and on weekends. There has been increasing issues around vandalism and trying to problem solve. Continue to keep it open for use but vandalism significant. Internal questions if need to close to public and how do that. Amy McMullen feels that might create more vandalism. Tiffany Riley mentioned wanted to bring a level of awareness to the board. Bill Yates asked about surveillance. Tiffany Riley mentioned have cameras. Nancy Pedrick asked have the police been patrolling. Tiffany Riley mentioned they do not specifically come by the playground but when patrol town. Paul, SRO, is aware of this. Elizabeth Burrows asked who owns the playground. Amy McMullen mentioned the Windsor School District. Tiffany Riley mentioned spray painting sidewalks, doors, and chain broken on swing. Amy McMullen feels should be a community conversation as well as board and a shame it is being vandalized.

Portrait of a Graduate:

Dave Baker mentioned meeting tomorrow night. This is the second community forum and being held at Weathersfield. Mike is meeting with a group of students in the morning here at Windsor as wanted more access to student voice. At noon Mike is meeting with the leadership team who attended the Lake Morey event. Second night is more compact and filled with a lot of information and visioning process.

Resignation: Angie Follensbee-Hall

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the resignation and thanking her for her time at the school. Bill Yates moved; seconded by Elizabeth Burrows; motion passed.

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned that she and Nicki Buck were meeting with John Bartholomew and Zack Ralph on Friday and if any issues want to communicate to them. Bill Yates mentioned the state had great things for schools to do but there has to be a time for schools to do them that telling us to do. If mandate stands should help to develop funds in providing standards. Dave Baker mentioned the superintendents and special education directors will be meeting. The State should reinforce looking at ways of having a more internal Pre-K program and not roll out Act 173 without some level of clear direction. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned more guidance on uses of resources, if add more, what do they not want us to do, creative uses of resources. Some clarity on schools rolls in helping families within our system and asked not to increase staff or budget.

Consent Agenda:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the Principals Report and minutes. Elizabeth Burrows moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick. Amy McMullen feels the Alice training is good and one of the biggest concerns. Motion passed.

Old Business: Covered

New Business: Covered

Agenda: November 11

Lunch Contract Food Service

Update on Visioning and Budget

Equity Presentation

Executive Session:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of Title 1, Section 313, Student Issue. Bill Yates moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed. Entered into executive session at 8:48 PM.

Adjournment:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to exit executive session and adjourn the meeting. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yates; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary