

Mount Ascutney Board Meeting
Draft Minutes
April 13, 2020

Present: Elizabeth Burrows, Amy McMullen, Nancy Pedrick, Beth Carter, Kris Garnjost, Dave Baker, Jenifer Aldrich, Tiffany Riley, Jenifer, Angie Ladeau

Not Present: Bill Yates

Meeting called to order at 6:39 PM.

Additions/Corrections to Agenda: Resignation; do away with Principals Report

Public Participation: None

Announcements and Celebratory Remarks from Board Members: Elizabeth Burrows mentioned Ann Ackley passed away on Saturday evening and was a lifelong member of the West Windsor community.

Discussion Items:

Covid 19 Update: Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she, Amy McMullen, and Dave Baker attended a webinar put on by the VSBA and run by Mark Perault, analyst for state house. Things were grim as little money going into the education fund. They feel that after July 1 businesses will not have enough to submit taxes. Spending is up 20% and cannot reduce as passed by 2019 vote and teacher contracts require full pay. Urge others to take a look at the e-mail sent out by the VSBA yesterday and included webcast and flyers. Dave Baker mentioned the basic problem those with budgets is that the contract states that RIF notices had to go out by April 1, and beyond that so no reduction. The support staff contract was settled with a salary increase and in negotiations with teachers around salary. We will do a one year contract and anything left on the table will remain status quo. We are trying to convince teachers is a bleak picture and hard to offer them step. Teachers go up one step and if increase credits can also move over one column and is preset. The Board did not want to do that. We might not be able to settle and, if cannot, we would stop and wait until social isolation and distancing stops. Means will offer letters of intent and come July 1 have to offer a contract and are entitled to step increase but retroactively could take away in settlement. We hope to finish Wednesday. In this time of confusion be nice to have settled and teachers feel the same way. We will go into next year stretching for revenues but the real test will be FY22. We put on a spending freeze except for

essential items and saving on subs. No one requesting courses and workshops. We have had a couple resignations. We should end this year in the black and expenses for food service are expensed to Covid line. No prediction for next year.. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she is very impressed with Dave's work and all the staff has done an outstanding job. Amazed to watch the staff in action and prioritizing things and getting kids in the forefront and working efficiently, maintaining stability and knowledge level. Dave Baker mentioned a team effort from those delivering food and teachers keeping it alive is wonderful. People appreciate being updated and want to hear that. Still get some concerns that feel still too much. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned glad to see Tiffany Riley back.

COVID 19 Update: Dave Baker mentioned Angie Ladeau has done an enormous amount of work and submitted the comprehensive learning plan. Angie sent a survey out on what doing now, how to send lessons back, amount of time spending, and feedback from parents. Last week Angie Ladeau and myself joined every pod meeting. We asked for feedback on where learning on plan. The plan spells out details on what doing in the next two months. Basic mantra and theme is make sure do not fall back. We will not see large gains on performance indicator growth and aware of this, keep kids engaged and keep in contact with them. Section on accessibility that done by Karen Woolseu and Katie Ahern and figuring out ways to supply support services to those who may fall through the cracks. Support people working behind the scenes. Hope to service kids on client base and get new referrals. Support staff assigned to special education are working on assignments and can reach out to their students and help get work completed. A very comprehensive plan and out in draft form on April 8. The State will get back to us on their comments on the plan. Angie Ladeau mentioned it had been a collaborative effort of the administrative team and trying to put in place a plan that is equitable and does no harm. We received plans from pods across the SU. The Agency of Education will look at the plan and should hear within the next day or two. Kris Garnjost asked on the academic side how addressing high school seniors. Tiffany Riley mentioned for seniors well aware brought disappointment to them and the end of year looks different. Spent a lot of time putting together a project that will remain a top secret project until it out to them. Thinking of them and many schools announced cancelling graduation, prom and we want to be creative and find an alternative plan. We want to do something for them. The 9-12 continuation of learning plan will continue as school is not over and get that message out to high school students. Dave Baker mentioned in grades 9-12 need the ability to keep up and credit bearing toward graduation. Modified to do no harm at this level and responsible for turning work in, doing projects, and passing exams. Teachers asked to have built in our system the opportunity for redos and retakes. Concern at high school level, even on March 17

when left school, some students not making it as did not have the grades or performance standards to get credit. Tiffany Riley mentioned going back to moment in time with staff and maybe reduce requirements for those kids on those standards not met in time. We will be working on this when get back. Seniors are more worried about prom, graduation, and awards. They make reference to class rank, valedictorian and salutatorian.

Kris Garnjost mentioned at River Valley does not affect us as much as four year schools and looking at GPA for acceptance in college. Some schools have pass/fail such as in Lebanon. Beth Carter mentioned seniors looking toward graduation but more importantly sophomores and juniors look at their credit level when looking at colleges and hate to look to pass/fail. Tiffany Riley mentioned we are having a conversation tomorrow around the grading piece. All work going to proficiency based learning is enormous. We have questions to figure out but in a good place. When do pass/fail it does not transfer to the GPA. With true proficiency based model should be able to grade their performance and give a grade. Angie Ladeau mentioned we will get guidance from the AOE and we will do what's best for our kids.

Food Service: Dave Baker mentioned in the middle of the transition of food service delivery. Spent time with Craig Locarno, Jim Taft, and food service staff to get centralized. We worked out a separation agreement with Cafe Services. Last day was Friday, April 10, and not costing us much for May and June. We were not happy and the biggest was looking at the quality of food coming out of Weathersfield and Hartland and what coming out of Windsor not comparable. Using this opportunity to start a partnership as a self -operating system. Weathersfield and Hartland are coming around and not equitable way was what was happening. Rearranging the way the kitchen looks and sanitizing the whole kitchen. Monday after vacation all buses will come to Windsor to pick up food, stagger buses, and will be delivered to communities. The volunteers will all meet at the school and pack meals in the Multipurpose room. Weathersfield and Hartland were sending out Shepards Pie, American Chop Suey, chicken dish that came in microwaveable containers. Applaud Craig and staff. We feel can increase participation in Mount Ascutney School District as quality will go up. Amy McMullen mentioned at the meeting last week when Weathersfield having complaints about having a contract with Craig, not sure how complaining as we are not taking him away. Was the main concern that centralized in Windsor location. Dave Baker feels that people in Weathersfield feel there should be a station on either side of Windsor and is an odd dynamic. We hired an assistant which is a Mount Ascutney expense and financially they are not paying more but will be saving. Feels was around centralizing and rumors out there and blowing things way out of proportion. We cannot control what

is going on in people's minds and dispelled that. Recently getting positive e-mails from Weathersfield and Hartland.. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she went on the facebook page and pasted a link to the SU Board meeting as a lot of rumors were flying around. Dave Baker mentioned another rumor was that Weathersfield and Hartland parents and kids would have to drive to Windsor to pick up food. Tiffany Riley is opening the building to this and is an asset to these communities. Only reason kids in Weathersfield and Hartland qualify is that Windsor is a summer site so can serve those meals. Elizabeth Burrows asked for clarity on comments about centralization. Did Craig Locarno have a dedicated contract with Weathersfield and Hartland? Dave Baker mentioned they did not and Craig is an SU employee. What Weathersfield and Hartland did have was a dedicated agreement with each other that would share expenses. There will need to be signed a similar Memorandum of Understanding with Mount Ascutnrey. Dave Baker mentioned he will have Ed Connors do an expense sheet and some going to COVID. Summer meal reimbursement is higher than during the school year. Feels everyone will turn out better as merging sooner.

Dave Baker mentioned was glad the governor did not put childcare in the school system. Backed off and said school districts encouraged to support essential workers and find childcare and trying to match up with private providers. We did some but not all were satisfied. We were able to back off on that. Thought we might have to set up childcare in the school and is a different agency controlling it and our workers are not trained in that. Angie Ladeau mentioned she and Jenn Sprague spent two weeks and were starting to make connections. There was a parent in Hartland who works at DHMC Childcare and Jill Lord at Mount Ascutney helping. Jill Lord put on volunteer website those interested in childcare. When the directive came out it was a relief as we had no way of vetting volunteers.

Dave Baker thanked the school boards and gave the administrative team a lot of latitude and not trying to micromanage. Done a great job of letting us get the first plan rolled out. Jenifer Aldrich thanked everyone for being there to support us and the staff being there and connecting with staff and students.

Resignations: Emily Gissel and Kolie Blair

Retirements: Donna Ewald, Wendy Bodley, Margaret Russo, and Katharine Gionet Kloszewski.

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to accept resignations and retirements. Kris Garnjost moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed

Transfer Protocol:

Amy McMullen mentioned after reading through she felt the most straightforward was the Addison Northwest Beth Cater asked if revisiting SU policy as have until June 1 to come up with one for our district. Amy McMullen mentioned for our district is different. Dave Baker mentioned Bill Yates has strong feelings about this. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned would just like to talk broadly what agree on principles and come back next month. Dave Baker mentioned what liked about Addison is that say protocols no way intended to apply to mid-year requests of transfer of students, but sounds that based on concerns of teachers or school and needs to be done in advance, thoughtful process, and list reasons where could be considered. Also say decisions regarding choice shall be made by superintendent and decisions final. Should avoid lengthy appeals from parents. Honored two requests and were to stay put for the remainder of the year and honored requests. We did not honor any at SU level asking that students go to another school. Did honor one at Mount Ascutney but was around a special education issue and social/emotional. The current policy does work but good to say to parents when ask to appeal to the board and answer is no. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned she did not feel we agreed any transfers mid year and fall back on the SU policy. Tiffany Riley asked if interdistrict policy is in place would that supersede Mount Ascutney School District policy come up with. Dave Baker mentioned that the policy is working as everyone gets involved and would discuss it. If go with July 1 does not give us many transfer requests for next year but, if adopted policy, and had February/March deadline for applications, have predictions if anyone taking advantage of this. Elizabeth Burrows feels the deadline for transfer should be the same as for registration. Dave Baker would like a February 1 deadline. Elizabeth Burrows feels it is unreasonable and should be allowed to change their mind if want to go to that school over the summer. Tiffany Riley mentioned 10% of students can ask to go to a school outside district and application is due by the end of February. Worried about staffing patterns if waited until first day of school. Amy McMullen feels having it be the first day of school that the child would want to know what is happening long before the first day of school. If family moving to community a different scenario, but a child in an established family should be thinking about it long before July 1. In many ways one should have a clue in February that a particular child or family might want to move to a different school and feels an earlier deadline gets them talking to kids long before school starts.

Dave Baker mentioned the theme in policies is about siblings and common request in Mount Ascutney School District has been around that siblings at Windsor so convenient as kids at one spot. Is tricky as Windsor is K-12 and all West Windsor kids starting in grade 7 going to Windsor and a lot of West Windsor kids could ask for this for convenience. Dealing with K-6 issue and not talking about sibling in school. Elizabeth

Burrows asked do you think could really make concrete decisions without having a policy and is it reasonable to come up with policy.

Amy Mcullen feels as innovation team decided that any move toward grouping students is not going to happen in the next two years and need a policy in place and could revise policy based on the innovation team decision. Dave Baker mentioned he was going to suggest, in light of the innovation team, do we want to just adopt the SU policy as our policy for the upcoming school year. This leaves it open and up to the judgment of the principals and superintendent and for us would be better criteria. Elizabeth Burrows feels strongly that we work to try to get a policy. Personally feel the SU one act as policy for any midyear transfers and feel we should come up with something. Tiffany Riley mentioned a benefit for a policy is that have had some requests and, if something in place, easier to make decisions. Nancy Pedrick asked about summer dates, and someone changes mind, hate to think of cut and dry date that have to decide and should be a little flexible depending on the situation as schools are small. Dave Baker mentioned what Elizabeth stated would cover this that not negating a mid-year transfer and go back to other policy. Elizabeth Burrows feels should have rules set out and anything outside the deadline reverts to the SU policy. Kris Garnjost mentioned he is trying to figure out the function of this policy. Things for kids can change multiple times and what is the purpose of offering some kind of choice. Not sure want to give people a lot of options and will take them for many reasons. Dave Baker mentioned there are districts that do not allow inter district choice and is based on town living. In Addison, requests will be denied if have negative impact on class size.

In West Windsor could have a negative effect on any class size. Any request would be Windsor to West Windsor and not equitable if West Windsor to Windsor. It is easier for us if some criteria or board says that no interdistrict choice. Jenifer Aldrich asked what is the problem trying to solve; balance class sizes, which could be community flexibility, and need to identify problems to be solved. What are the goals of the problem to solve? Tiffany Riley mentioned the policy or criteria that class size is needed. We need consistency on how to respond to families. Kris Garnjost asked, in process so far, are you basing it on concepts in the SU policy. Dave Baker mentioned yes, but criteria using is almost asking if request based on legitimate or social need or related to a particular issue with teacher/student. Feel kids need to work these things out. This is the only criteria used so far. Often a sibling request comes up and if they open that door then everybody will have siblings at Windsor and then no Albert Bridge school. Elizabeth Burrows asked why sibling requests when never been a possibility? Dave Baker mentioned when had choice people realize in the end choose high school and know the entire family going to Windsor and feel more convenient all at one school.

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned West Windsor parents never before seemed to bother them prior to now. Amy McMullen mentioned some ask now as do not have to pay tuition as did before. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned they see it as one district and why can't they all be in one school as not balancing child care/transportation. Kris Garnjost feels we need to be careful why doing this and should not be about personal convenience as not the reason for moving kids around. If lots of people making choices this year and next year and situation with Albert Bridge and size may affect education dramatically and are we providing equitable education. Elizabeth Burrows feels this is a very good point.

Dave Baker asked where we left off with the innovation team and outside facilitation. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned we decided on outside facilitation We discussed using Jan Willey who has had successes. Dave Baker asked if should try to do an innovation design team remotely. Elizabeth Burrows feels as not had a chance to do review research that should be shared and could have a meeting discussing all options, see how it goes, and decide how proceed from there. Dave Baker mentioned he, Tiffany, and Jenifer are collecting research. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned the drive has been shared and is under MASD Exploratory Planning Team. We have our own administration drive for MASD and where we have done our work and we wanted to make sure there was cohesive information. Dave Baker asked if we should reach out to Jan Willey. The board feels should contact Jan Willey. Dave Baker mentioned he will contact her. What about policy? Elizabeth Burrows feels should revisit it at the next meeting.

Minutes: March 16

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost motion passed.

New Business: Jenifer Aldrich mentioned do not have to address end of year trips.

Agenda: May 11

Coivid 19 Update

Interdistrict Choice Policy

Exploratory Planning Team

Financial Update

Food Service Update

Executive Session:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of Title 1, Section 313. Amy McMullen moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost; motion passed. Entered executive session at 8:32 PM.

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to exit executive session. Kris Garnjost moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed. Exited executive session at 8:57 PM.

Adjournment:

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:59 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary