

**Mount Ascutney Board**  
**Draft Minutes**  
**August 10, 2020**

**Present:** Elizabeth Burrows, Bill Yates Amy McMullen, Beth Carter, Nancy Pedrick, Kris Garnjost, Dave Baker, Katie Ahern, Angie Ladeau, Kate Ryan, Colleen DeSchamp

Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM.

**Changes:** Agenda changed to: Financials, School Reopening, Special Education, Collaborative Problem Solving, Community Process, Add: Student Representation and Portrait of a Graduate

**Public Participation:** Elizabeth Burrows asked those who wanted to speak to put name in text box and will call on you and have two minutes to speak.

Keighan Eaker: Acknowledging hard work the administrative team has done and a lot of unanswered questions and decisions not being made lightly on the reopening of school.

Jennifer Meagher: Raised the same challenge to the SU Board if meeting in person for school, and proponent for that, should meet in person for board meetings. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned is in agreement but two towns and at moment, not matter of not wanting to expose ourselves, but a matter of convenience. Dave Baker mentioned the state is looking at a virtual hybrid model for meetings and noticed attendance way up in virtual setting.

Announcements and Celebratory Comments: Elizabeth Burrows congratulated Keighan Eaker, Grade 7/8 teacher in Windsor, as being named as the very best history teacher in the state of Vermont.

**Discussion Items:**

School Reopening:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a report on the plan for the three buildings and updates from the task force and logistical details. Dave Baker mentioned meeting today and essentially discussed variety of things to be worked on. Reopening plan as stated seems to be ready but details will make it work. Global reopening task force moved to building opening task force with health check stations, traffic patterns, etc. A survey question was asked on transportation and early results have large share transporting students. Bus transportation will work with one or two staff members on the bus doing health checks and one or two to seat, if in the same family. We should have plans finalized by early next week and the bus company and principals will work out bus lists. In process is the notion of quarantining, what happens if teacher or students are symptomatic. School nurses and a pediatrician are on the task force and working on protocols and receiving final protocols from the Department of Health. What is tolerance if have to shut down a classroom or a building. General consensus is that nurses will be COVID people

and be with those people who have a temperature. They will be in contact with the Vermont Department of Health. Some level of threshold and trust contact tracers will be the ones through this hot line directing our nurses as to if a student needs to go home, be tested, be quarantined.

Elizabeth Burrows asked what if a nurse gets sick. Dave Baker mentioned they all will help out and all have a back-up person on call equally trained. We might put out advertisement for LNA's. With level of anxiety and complex nature could provide assistance needed and could also back up our nurses. Early prevention grant pays for a back-up nurse one day a week. Athletics up in the air at this point. We received an email from VPA and VSA saying can start practicing on September 8 and will give us guidelines. Jim Taft and Andy Tufts waiting for guidelines and will make sure we can adhere to them.

Decision made today was on staff health checks. Talked about honor check that are done at home and people getting anxious. There will be a google form that teachers fill out before leave home asking have you been symptomatic or been around someone who presumed or found to be positive. We will do temperature checks when a staff member gets to school. We have assurances from Dr. Mary Bender that are safe to open according to science. It's about the science, level of anxiety, and everyone's situation.

Elizabeth Burrows asked one question from last time and follow up as closer to the start date, do we have enough remote teachers to handle students' remote cohort. Dave Baker mentioned Angie Ladeau is trying to match up students and teachers (those that asked for ADA accommodation or willing to go remote). Less numbers in the building so more opportunity for teachers to do remote. We are going to ask if interested in teaching remote, reasons why, or will hire remote teachers. Angie Ladeau mentioned the survey has 75% in person and 25% remote SU wide. Those that said at home, 15% filing for AOE plan. So far 207 K-12 students are asking for remote. Elizabeth Burrows asked the possibility of using substitute teachers for this cohort as a lot of kids. Angie Ladeau mentioned there are a lot of teachers willing to teach remote and grades 7-12 have to be content specialist. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned at the last meeting that provide a way for parents to get questions answered. Angie Ladeau mentioned the frequently asked questions document still in process. Angie was wondering if could put the survey form on the website and ask questions there. Dave Baker mentioned each district talking about virtual forums as good attendance at board meetings. Elizabeth mentioned there are a lot of random questions and should be one way where people can go to get questions asked. Use an FAQ with a searchable component would be helpful, direct people there first, and other questions to designated person. Angie Ladeau mentioned is a matter of getting better answers and most of the questions have answers. Dave Baker mentioned some medical questions do not have answers. Elizabeth Burrows asked when talking about quarantining teachers, how define end. Is it the end of two week prescribed or two weeks after green light from the Department of Health. Dave Baker mentioned we would use the Department of Health protocol. For positive case is 14 days from the time of the test and we might require another test before returning.

Elizabeth Burrows asked are we at 100% success rate for people with access to adequate internet. Dave Baker mentioned do not think at 100% but we will prioritize those that want all remote and, if and when, all might go remote there are some places, not many, that cannot get internet. In this situation might have to bring those kids in, maybe set up in a lab.

#### Tour of Buildings:

Jenifer Aldrich: All schools identified objectives: decreasing risk of transmission, identifying staff and students quickly if exposure, ensure concerns thoroughly addressed, and meeting health guidelines. Opening in step 2: daily health check, asking if contact with someone, feel unwell and symptoms, temperature check at car or bus. Students will not get on the bus if they have any of the symptoms. Every classroom space, primary space, in and outside school, wear masks, outdoor mask breaks as planned, lunch in the classroom, recess time, and classrooms disinfected three times per day.

Remote Learning: at home learning 1:15-3:15; afternoon time developed to support students unique learning needs and interventions. Outdoor spaces will be identified and if raining may still have outdoor space. Schedule in the afternoon for us on what staff and students can do. Masks for students must be clean and will have them available if they don't have one. Have a room in school with reverse airflow for those with symptoms.

#### Windsor K-8;

Colleen DeSchamp mentioned students come through the door 8:00-8:15 alphabetically. Support staff helping us with entry places and students start at 8:30 when they arrive on a bus already screened. Separate entrances for different pods. All students stay in their pods with a team of teachers. Part of objectives for school health and talked about is regular updates with staff and different pod meetings. Once students are in the classroom, breakfast will be in classrooms and support staff will help deliver lunches to classrooms K-8 being careful not to cross over different pods and wings and adults in the same places. Teachers crossing over are art, PE, music, counselors, administrators for least amount of adult movement. Physical Education will be outdoors as possible. Students have walking permission slips and grades 4-8 have the possibility of walking to Paradise Park or other places close for social distancing. Grades K-4 could be interacting with two teachers, and Grades 5-8 have four teachers and teachers rotate but not students. Dismissing at 12:30.

#### High School:

Kate Ryan mentioned the same health checks and entrances depend if drive to school. Once come in take a grab and go breakfast and divided in pods with adults wrap around support depending on grade level. Broken into groups of 15 students per teacher. When come in is time for socialization and social/emotional/support. First class begins at 9:00; second class at 10:15; 11:00 dismissal with two locations for grab and go lunch. The first three days breakfast and lunch free and after that order system. In the afternoon have remote option of one to three classes. Schedule set up so at the end of freshman year have academy, elective, english, history, biology, math credits. Grades 10-12 set up similarly with seniors have more flexibility.

Encouraging outdoor time. Elizabeth Burrows asked what will happen to free/reduce lunch students doing remote learning. Dave Baker mentioned those doing remote is a challenge and plan is they will order and plan is to have people pick them up. Do not feel can have a delivery system as last spring. Elizabeth Burrows asked what about those that do not drive, how would they get lunch. Dave Baker mentioned it is a problem and no solution now. Anyone with a solution let us know.

James Aldrich at Windsor Rec will be doing an after school program with students wearing a mask and social distancing as in school and has limited to 60 students. Asked that walk students or transport and not all coming on their own. We will either transport or we will walk them over. Elizabeth Burrows asked what about Albert Bridge or those outside of Windsor School. Dave Baker stated if parents choose this, they will be transported. Is open to Hartland and Weathersfield students, if slots open, but those towns need to figure out their own transportation.

Dave Baker mentioned if the first 2-3 weeks go right will go into Phase 3 according to the Governor. Beth Carter feels it's great the rec center offering this. As trying in school, keeping in cohorts and pods and in the afternoon spending time together and mix schools, what is the point of cohorts in school if together in afternoon. Dave Baker mentioned during the summer program had them in pods and cohorts and after school will try to keep them together in the same pods. For us is risk management. The Rec Center has to worry when students get there. Kate Ryan mentioned two separate entities and have school guidelines to follow. After school is parent choice and not our legal issue. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned that looking at meeting students needs should be flexible and some might not get to after school program at all and need to build condensed work to meet needs while at school. Hope to support kids after school, possibly using paras, and the problem is how to solve it as a group. Kris Garnjost appreciated Beth's question and consents but missed the point. A lot is trying to reduce odds of transmission and if half day better than a full day. Not a perfect system, and if want to be perfect, keep kids home for another 3-4 months. We need to reduce the potential for transmission. Masks are not all perfect but at least reduces chances. Dave Baker mentioned we have to make sure buildings are safe as we go back. Everything needs to be in place and rooms set up. We need a system in place with either the SU Board, in conjunction with me or the executive board, making a final decision the weekend before as safety needs to be number one. Trying to improve the remote system and Angie Ladeau and teachers working on that.

Special Education: Katie Ahern

We have most staff returning with a large number of new staff. Bringing on in-house speech pathologists and this year found, through agency, SLP between Weathersfield/Hartland. We need professional staff if in person or remote. Every students IEP will be revisited before school starts; services and supports for students in school and take into pods, outside team, and access to specially designed instruction We need to offer services for those students that choose remote only and those in AOE home study can have services determined in a limited way as resources allow.

SU special education list: determination letter based on 2018-2019 found us in need of interventions. Targets and cyclic monitoring will happen; technical assistance; withholding IDEA-B funds if the state does not feel assistance set up; requires corrective action plan (PD, training, supervision); anything else AOE adds based on visit. The AOE has created a new layer of intervention.

#### Special Education Financials:

Replaced 11 HCRS BI's with eight in-house BI's plus existing support staff for a savings of \$130,300; replaced 1.5 FTE independent contracted LEA's, Assistant Special Education Director with 1.5 in house LEA's - 1.0 hired, one TBD for a savings of \$81,250; hired six special educators instead of some support staff and filled former open positions including BCBA special educator. Due to COVID two positions unfilled as unable to find staff. We have reduced caseloads and embedded special educators in classrooms. Looking for folks who can work with multiple students.

Elizabeth Burrows asked that at the SU meeting you mentioned whether to open schools and that all special education might take place in person. What do you think if special education takes place in person and the majority learn remotely and we agree inequity, who has the inequity. Katie Ahern mentioned any parent choosing remote we then offer services remotely. If our SU would decide completely remote, we could be in position to be open as parents could ask services to be in person. Some schools are starting remote but bringing back most intensive needs students who cannot access remote. In person try to do it all while in school. We will be as flexible as we can. Elizabeth Burrows mentioned psychologists hired, do students have to qualify for services. Katie Ahern mentioned students do not need to be tested by psychologist. Elizabeth Burrows asked would be offering therapy services for those traumatized by what already been through and do services need to qualify. Katie Ahern mentioned psychologist services paid for out of special education funds and have to do with special education. Supporting families is something can figure out .

#### Data: Angie Ladeau

Windsor: 120 responses; 91 yes, 29 no, and total remote option 27. Grades 9-12 received 175 responses, 136 yes, 41 no and total school remote is 39. Most choosing school remote option. Beth Carter said 44 per grade and seems high 9-12 and what is average class size. Freshman-60 9; Sophomore 60; Juniors 40; Seniors 40. A lot of high school students are doing remote.

Albert Bridge: 35 responses; 28 yes return child to school; 7 no and of 7 no's five will home school with AOE and two use school remote only plan.

#### Financials: Ed Connors

4th quarter balances: Revenue - negative \$197,000 is Albert Bridge deficit as moving two schools to one; tuition payment less. Cornish students is a short fall. Beth Carter asked the \$197,000 extraordinary item thought no debt carried over. Ed Connors mentioned at the end of

year have deficit or surplus. Surplus is tax relief or capital reserve and deficit either bring in current year or fund out over three years. As FY 20 was the first year combined, I had to carry the entire number. Beth Carter asked about Woodstock prior year tuitions, it was discussed that the board felt it should not pay it. Ed Connors mentioned was not paid. You are 97% of what budgeted and \$326,000 short.

Expenditures: runs right on budget. Contracted services over as still getting bills for HCRS for support for non special education students. Kids in school until March 18 and spent 96.95% of the budget. Beth Carter asked why transportation is so close to budget. Ed Connors mentioned there was a bus not budgeted costing \$43,000. We kept buses running delivering lunches. Beth Carter asked why dues, fees and transfers over. Ed Connors mentioned was food service transfer. End of year surplus is \$27,000. Mount Ascutney's \$100,000 deficit is special education overage. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned two things that led to this was going to Friday early release and put together an enrichment program and lost title funding for intervention position.

Elizabeth Burrows asked if the state CFO said anything about the education fund shortfall. Ed Connors mentioned waiting for the legislature to reconvene and will be addressed.

Collaborative Problem Solving: Jenifer Aldrich

Think about what works, why talking about it, and now. The three critical pieces are how vital research of catalysts of social emotional strategies and are predictive in future life outcome. Grade 3 social/emotional ability to connect more important than to read. Interventions and strategies will be change in children's ability. Stress on the brain impacts behavior. Time to work on this as a central approach with families and teachers also feeling stressed. Specifically is a completely different mentality and who the challenging kids are; such as, shutter downers, cryers, runners, screamers, cutters, etc. and have them in schools and working to help them. Philosophy is kids do well if they can and if cannot, something in the way. Traditional plans of all interventions aimed at telling child to shape up as tough consequences or saying do well, stay in school, stay in class, do not explode and eventually these kids will give up, drop out of school, and sending wrong message. Unlikely that these kids are not motivated and probably among the most motivated to do well. Shift from extrinsic to more intrinsic and what guides us. Philosophy embedded in formative belief that all kids want to do well and do not if something is in our way. Solve problems together and five goals, reduce behaviors, meet needs, stop unwanted behavior, and build relationships. We address five key areas: communication/language; functioning (memory); frustration; cognitive flexibility; empathy (start conversation and engage in reading). Started collaboration with Mt. Ascutney and a formal assessment process. Make sure to be aware of individual capacity for new stuff and, if do this, moving in a way that is helpful.

New initiatives: Trauma informed approach and working all in the same direction to move forward. How to figure out where to add learning, not to overwhelm staff, but move into next changes to help students. Elizabeth Burrows asked to what degree has our SU had training to

date. Jenifer Aldrich mentioned in 2015 many administrators and change leaders went to Boston for level 1 or 2 training. We send a cohort each year for training. In 2017 Think Kids came to us for training. We offered parent training 2-3 times a year. We have done work with paras from Windsor, Albert Bridge, Hartland, social/emotional interventionists and counselors throughout the year. Next step is to become a collaborative problem system. This is a 15 hour training, coaching as to what getting in kids way, get people ready to be certified, and some become tiered trainers. Dave Baker mentioned part of what dealing with does the staff have capacity in terms of time and training. Sorting this out now and wanting to move forward but the question is when.

#### Community Process:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned the board decided on a committee of three people to talk about pieces want to drop into place when time is right. The committee members are: Kris Garnjost, Elizabeth Burrows, Amy McMullen or Beth Carter.

#### Updates:

Elizabeth Burrows mentioned last time discussing who should coordinate student involvement on the board. Student involvement on the board right now would be Kate Ryan. Elizabeth feels the board should stick with this as is an important part of portrait work.

#### Portrait of Graduate:

Angie Ladeau mentioned a strategic plan drafted and worked on goals. After the meeting Wednesday will start operationalizing. Dave Baker mentioned once the plan finished and boards adopted, will decide how much ongoing support from Mike Nicholson and Mr. Patel.

#### Minutes:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Amy McMullen moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost; motion passed with one abstention.

#### Principal Report:

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to approve the principal report. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Amy McMullen; motion passed with one abstention.

#### **Agenda:** September 14

Opening of School

Sports

Financials

Community Process

#### **Executive Session:**

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of Title 1, Section 313. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yate; motion passed. Entered executive session at 8:51 PM.

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to exit executive session at 9:43 PM. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Bill Yates; motion passed.

**Adjournment:**

Elizabeth Burrows asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy McMullen moved; seconded by Beth Carter; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 9:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary