

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District
Minutes of Meeting
August 26, 2019**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Bill Sander, Jan Sander, Bernard Barnes, Laura Miller; Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Lisa Barry (arrived at 6:25 p.m.), Chasity Fagnant, Patti Hayford; Johnson: Bobbie Moulton, Angela Lamell, Lauren Philie; Waterville: Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Cambridge: Mark Stebbins, Sue Prescott; Hyde Park: Tina Lowe; Johnson: Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Charleen McFarlane (briefly by phone), Michele Aumand, Jennifer Hulse, Brian Schaffer, Wendy Savery, Diane Reilly, Brian Pena, Erik Remmers, Chris Damato, Dylan Laflam, Mary Anderson, Melinda Mascolino, David Manning, Janet Murray

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Chair Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. Gallagher made a request to amend the agenda to include a request from McFarlane to approve the hire of a school nurse in Waterville. B. Sander made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Moulton. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

Request to Hire School Nurse in Waterville: McFarlane made a recommendation to hire Alyssa Fuller as a school nurse in Waterville at a salary of \$45,850. This was a full time position. Moulton made a motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes of the August 12, 2019, Meeting and Board Retreat: J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion to accept all Board Orders, except those from August 9th. Miller had not yet had a chance to review them. B. Sander seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

In-District Transfer Policy Second Reading and Possible Adoption: Gallagher reiterated the changes that had been made to the policy. Primarily the policy was changed in order to be less restrictive as to when parents could appeal a decision to the Board. J. Sander made a motion, seconded by B. Sander, to approve the revised in-district transfer policy. The motion passed unanimously.

JES Miracle 10-Foot Slide Purchase with Capital Funds: Laflam explained there was a large structure at Johnson Elementary School with multiple slides coming off of it. Most of the slides were enclosed but there was one slide that was open. Several students had fallen off the slide while coming down. The request was to use capital reserve funds to enclose the slide. The total cost to replace the slide was \$7,618.30. This figure included a refund of \$1,600 that the company was paying to buy back the unenclosed slide. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the purchase using capital funds. The motion passed unanimously.

Summer Building Projects Update: Laflam began by stating how impressed he was with the work the facilities staff had done cleaning, stripping and rewaxing the floors of the school. Laflam then stated they were finishing up all of the security projects, which included installing CCTV camera systems in Waterville, Eden and the Middle School; installing a whole school public address system at both Johnson and Waterville; and adding access controls at GMTCC and LUHS. Laflam noted that this had been a difficult summer to get contractors to do work at the District, as there was a lot of work for contractors to do in the community and the contractors were all very busy. Other projects included fixing the potholes at end of the driveway. They dug down 16 inches and put in structural fill. That was a two-year process because a permit had been required. Karyl Kent had received a grant to fund a classroom at Robtoy Farm and they would start work on that soon.

They finished the HVAC bond work at Johnson, which included heat pumps and mini-splits. Half of the building was now done and they were looking at working on the rest of the building over the next few weeks. Two weeks ago they received the permit for the health center at Johnson. The bid was being created now for that work. Nothing had been done at Hyde Park this summer, but a fence in the back of the school would be replaced very soon. Eden was the hardest spot to get contractors to do work. There were two contractors who were interested in doing some exterior painting and Laflam was trying to get Eden on their schedule. A lot of trees had been removed at Eden and they were doing landscaping work soon. Laflam was currently reworking the bid on the storage shed. Playground work had been done at Waterville.

B. Sander and Clark congratulated Laflam and the staff on the appearance of the facilities. Schaffer noted it was difficult to stress the need for the bond to pass when the facilities looked as nice as they did. He thanked Facilities staff for their work. Gallagher highlighted the video that Jeremy LeClair had made about the renovation and thanked him for the excellent work he did.

Central Office Report: Gallagher stated they had the best in-service in years. She thanked Patti Hayford, Lisa Barry, Mark Nielsen, David Whitcomb and Jan Sander for attending the in-service. There was more Board participation than ever before and she thought that was an important thing for staff to see. One of the takeaways of the in-service was that there was so much opportunity in the form of digital and social media. Schools needed to help students navigate how to use media responsibly. George Kouros, the keynote speaker, reminded everyone to say hello to those that they passed in the hallway because you might be the person that ends up meaning something to that student. Gallagher stated she saw that in action on the first day of school, with staff greeting students throughout the day.

Gallagher reported that she, along with Brian Schaffer, David Manning, and Heather Hobart, had met with representatives from Senator Leahy's DC and VT office about work being done in the district. Leahy's staff was very interested in the work being done with restorative practices and the school-based clinic.

Gallagher then spoke about transportation issues. She noted the issues were not due to money or any budget concerns. This was an issue of driver shortage. Gallagher stated information was provided at the end of the year and throughout the summer to parents about transportation. Some parents didn't acknowledge receipt of the information and in a few cases decided to post on social media about their transportation concerns. A lot of the weekend had been spent contacting those

parents that had posted and there was good resolution with those parents. Gallagher was able to help one parent understand that statutes regarding homeless transportation and the District's requirement to provide for those students were very different from any other transportation mandates. The District was not required to provide transportation unless the Board decided to have a policy regarding transportation. Additionally, Gallagher noted that Cambridge, LVT, and Eden decided their own bus routes in concert with the Business Manager, not the Board. Gallagher stated the parents were happy to be able to discuss the issue. She noted that transportation would continue to be an issue and they were doing their best with the situation they found themselves in. There had been multiple requests for route changes and a few concessions had been made.

Clark reiterated that the current transportation issues were not due to budget concerns. There were just no drivers available. Last week LVT lost two more drivers. It was a difficult position to fill as it was a split day, wasn't a high paying position and was a hard job. They were looking at creative solutions, such as hiring a driver full time. If there were questions, Clark asked that people contact her. Gallagher commended Board members who had talked with parents about transportation and had referred them to Gallagher and Clark.

Hunsberger stated his appreciation to Gallagher for speaking directly with parents and noted that not many superintendents made that effort. Philie asked if LVT was paying enough to the drivers. Clark stated their pay was in the same ballpark as the District. Lamell asked how the pilot program that involved someone riding on the bus had turned out. Clark stated they had one volunteer ride the Waterville bus and they did feel that it helped a lot. Bezio asked if exit interviews were done by LVT. He wondered if drivers left because of having to deal with students or the compensation. Clark stated it was both. Hunsberger stated this was an issue across the United States. Bus drivers weren't available. Barry stated that middle and high school students in Essex had to walk a mile to get the bus. Clark stated the routes have gotten longer and the buses are fuller now. Miller stated her husband had just started driving for LVT and he was very impressed with the people behind the scenes. They were very accommodating.

First Day of School Observations – Principals/Director:

High School: Schaffer read the statement he had sent to his staff, encouraging them to provide a positive experience for their students. He reported that many teachers met students at the front door on the first day. They held their first community circle today.

GMTCC: Remmers stated he had the most fun on his first day in many years. He was able to visit Robtoy Farm and many classrooms where students were very excited to be with their instructors.

Hyde Park: Reilly stated they had the best start they had ever had. She explained that the school had been part of a Connect Hyde Park grant that was written last year. As part of the grant, they asked the students what they wanted. Student surveys stated they wanted unicorn fountains and unicorn structures. The town bought unicorn suits and offered to decorate the sidewalks with rainbows. The parent group got involved and purchased five more unicorn suits. The folks from the Village Improvement/Connect HP group stenciled rainbows everywhere. The students were enthralled. Reilly stated this was a community event, with people from the Library, the Fork and Gavel, the Sheriff's Office and the Selectboard participating.

Eden: Mascolino reported they had some new people working at the school and they came to her throughout the day commenting on how happy the students were to be at school. Students ran into the building and offered hugs. It was a very happy and smooth day.

Middle School: Savery stated it was a great day. It was a full house at the annual 7th grade breakfast. It was calm and easy going. The staff was everywhere and offered assistance to students. She noted how many of last year's 8th graders came to visit the middle school at the end of the day.

Cambridge: Anderson stated they had a smooth start. The staff prepared ahead of time and the effort paid off. Cambridge was in the process of hiring a bus driver. An issue she spent time dealing with during the day was homelessness.

Johnson: Manning stated he and the staff had talked last week about the speech given by George Kouros. There was a moment during the first day of school that crystallized what he was talking about. Manning was outside at dismissal with parents and a 6th grader came out and told his parent that he had had the best day ever. Manning wanted to make sure that continued to be the case throughout the school year. Manning had set a goal to get to a classroom every day and today he had visited every single classroom. He was able to say hello to every student at the school. On Friday he learned that CHSLV had purchased a fully stocked backpack with pencils, pens, and folders for every student. Manning then stated that at each staff meeting they took the time to state their appreciation for other staff members. One of the staff members today talked about their appreciation of the bus drivers. Manning stated that he had found out that the climate committee at the school had provided each bus driver with chocolate and a personal handwritten card expressing their appreciation this morning.

Whitcomb stated he had read an article about a teacher giving a 14-year-old student a hard time about the death of the boy's father. The student went home and committed suicide. This story had upset Whitcomb a great deal. Whitcomb stated how much he appreciated hearing what the principals in the District were doing at their schools for their students. Whitcomb also expressed his appreciation to George Kouros for his speech, stating it was one of the best he had heard in a long time.

Other Business: There was no other business.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to adjourn the meeting at 6:53 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.