

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
November 8, 2021**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Jan Sander (remote), Bill Sander (remote), Mark Stebbins, Laura Miller, Denise Webster, Sue Prescott; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Lisa Barry, Patty Hayford, Tina Lowe, Chasity Fagnant; Johnson: Mark Nielsen (remote), Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton (remote); Waterville: Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Eden: David Whitcomb; Johnson: Allen Audette, Angela Lamell

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Charleen McFarlane (remote), Wendy Savery, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Diane Reilly, Denise Maurice, Bethann Pirie, Melinda Mascolino, Brian Pena, Dylan Laflam, Jennifer Hulse, Erik Remmers, Michele Aumand (by phone)

Others Present: Four members of the track team – Maggie McGee, Noah Burnham, Anna Gale and Natalie Start

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment: Orost, acting as Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Clark stated that Policy F20 could be removed from the agenda as it had already been addressed at the August 16th meeting. Stebbins made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Sweet. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LNEMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the October 11, 2021, meeting and Social/Racial Justice Committee Meeting; October 18, 2021, Finance & Capital Committee meeting; November 1, 2021, Personnel Committee Meeting: Miller made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously, with Prescott abstaining.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

LUHS Track Study: Laflam stated the Board had last discussed this item in 2019. Laflam said he would have a new proposal available for the Board to review at the next Board meeting. The next phase would be site work. He wanted to make sure the Board still wanted to move forward. The next phase, Phase 1, would cost \$4,500. After that, design and permitting would cost \$20,000, and if they continued to move forward, construction documents would cost \$10,000. The total cost for Phase 1 engineering would cost \$35,000. The original estimate for the cost of constructing a track had been \$1 million. Now he anticipated the cost could have increased to \$1.2 or \$1.3 million.

Laflam stated that track and field was one of the largest growing sports at Lamoille Union. Several students in attendance spoke about the great success of the program, with several students having won state awards. They spoke about currently practicing hurdles in the parking lot, which required dodging buses and cars that were driving past. It would be safer for students to have a track to run on. Additionally, the community would benefit from being able to use it. Once a week the athletes tried to get to PA to practice, however, often they had no transportation to get there. Not having a track was a huge disadvantage to the athletes.

Miller asked how long the season was. The response was that track ran from March through June. However, the cross-country team could use the track as well. Additionally, the soccer team had been using the track at PA for preseason training. Therefore, it would be used in at least two seasons.

Bezio asked how long the walk took from campus to the proposed facilities. He also noted that other school tracks had football fields or soccer fields in the center of the track. He wondered if that was

included in the plan. Laflam stated that was all part of the master plan. Further, the walk to the track would take about 15 minutes. Currently there were no plans for a bathroom.

A Board member discussed the benefits of a student being on the track team. Not only was it good for individual growth, but also for the support that each team member provided to all other members. Prescott asked if this project would have to go to the voters. Laflam stated it was determined by the funding source. If it were a bonded project, it would need to go to the voters. Laflam noted that there was a lot of permitting required for this type of project. He anticipated it would take four to six months to get the permit approvals to build the track.

Stebbins made a motion to give Laflam approval to proceed with Phase 1 to determine the overall cost of the project, seconded by Hunsberger. Prescott clarified they were voting to approve approximately \$4,500. The motion passed unanimously.

New Required Policy D7, Special Education – First Reading: Hulse stated this was a new required policy. Lamoille North would use the guidelines developed by the Vermont AOE in the current edition of the *Vermont Special Education Procedures and Practices Manual* regarding special education issues. The manual was designed to assist Vermont school districts in understanding the provisions of the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) and with meeting its requirements.

New Policy E3, Community Use of School Facilities – Second Reading: This policy was for all schools except Cambridge Elementary School. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the policy. The motion passed unanimously.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Board Meeting Schedule: Gallagher informed the Board that over the past few weeks there had been several Board members who had inquired as to why there were two meetings a month. Gallagher stated it had come up after two recent brief meetings had been held. Fagnant stated she would prefer to meet once a month for two hours than meet for two short meetings. There were no objections. Prescott made a motion, seconded by Fagnant, to hold one meeting a month. The meeting would be held on the second Monday of the month, beginning in December. Special meetings would be held as needed. The motion passed unanimously.

Bus Driver Compensation: Clark explained that there was a challenge hiring and keeping bus drivers. Clark requested an Executive Session to discuss potential bus driver compensation adjustments. Stebbins made a motion to enter Executive Session, seconded by B. Sander. The Board and all administrators were invited to participate.

The motion passed unanimously and the Board went into Executive Session at 6:31 p.m. The Board came out of Executive Session at 6:40 p.m.

Clark asked the Board for a motion to move the current bus driver wages up \$5 an hour, create a new hire minimum of \$25 an hour with benefits, provide a substitute driver rate of \$25 an hour and a training wage for any new bus drivers who do not yet have their CDL or bus endorsement of \$20 an hour with benefits with a potential retroactive \$5 an hour catch-up once they complete the CDL and the bus endorsement and can drive students. There would be a limit of up to four months to complete the work and it would be a guided training with one of the bus professionals. Stebbins made the motion, seconded by Hunsberger, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher reported that the Department of Health was starting their vaccine clinics in local schools for ages 5 through 11 this week. The schools were the hosts for the Department of Health and the clinics were not school-sponsored. Families could not register students through the school, as, again, this was not school-sponsored. Registration needed to be done through the Department of Health website. Gallagher outlined a situation in which the State had opened registrations for individuals to take place in the schools and in some cases students were unable to receive their vaccine in

their own schools. Dr Levine was contacted and changes were immediately made to the process. Gallagher thanked the local Department of Health and school administrators for making this a smooth process.

The second public forum had been held and Healthy Lamoille Valley was showcased. Clark and Gallagher also talked about the ESSER funds during the forum.

Gallagher met with the community advisory group for the second time. The group talked about showcasing local businesses in newsletters. There had been talk of highlighting staff in the newsletters as well. However, staff stated they would prefer not to be highlighted. They discussed using social media throughout November to express thanks for anyone who worked in the school community for the work they did.

Recently a situation had occurred at the girls' varsity soccer team event. Gallagher stated the local paper had written a very accurate article about the situation and she commended the reporter for the article. The student athletes did a great job dealing with the event. They had the courage to bring the situation to the appropriate people. There had been body shaming and insults from the fans of the opposing team. The students supported each other and filed complaints with the VPA and others. Gallagher met with the team and commended them for their courage in speaking up and she expressed appreciation to the coaches and athletic department for their support of the students. There was an ongoing investigation going on at this time.

Gallagher reported that the school was working with the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. The Institute received a USDA Farm to School grant to work with K-12 schools across New England and Lamoille was one of eight districts participating. They were bringing seafood into the schools for students to try. Stowe Seafood was bringing thousands of pounds of fish from Boston to Karyl Kent. Kent would be offering taste tests, providing information on the benefits of eating seafood, and including it in the school lunch program.

Hulse stated that the number of English language learners had dramatically increased this year. She had been posting ads for an ESL teacher for quite some time and had very little luck. She expressed appreciation that they were increasing the diversity in the population at Lamoille North. She requested that Board members send any ESL teachers her way.

Principal/Director Updates:

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein stated several students had participated in the State contest to name a snowplow. Ultimately the school was able to name one of the plows Blizzard Bessie. The snowplow would be coming to the school soon. Epstein said it had been great to have some fun because some students were definitely struggling. Thanksgiving baskets would be offered again this year.

Eden: Goodman expressed her thanks to the Board for supporting the bus drivers. She believed the student's day started when the students stood waiting for the bus. By recognizing the hard work that the drivers did and increasing their pay it would ensure that people would still do that job. They had held a fun harvest festival where students participated in games and used a photo booth. It was great to be outside and for students to be able to enjoy that time together.

Hyde Park: Reilly talked about the building in Hyde Park that was being remodeled by MSI. MSI was allowing HPES students to put artwork in the windows and each season there would be a new display. Reilly thought this was a great community connection and it picked the spirit up of the entire school. Assessments were done. Teachers had now made plans for every student. The school was fortunate to have two academic coaches and Reilly hoped that other schools would be able to have coaches as well. They had made a really big difference. There was currently a lot of absenteeism in both the teacher and student population.

Johnson: Manning stated he thought Gallagher was being humble when she had talked about the changes made in the vaccine clinic. It only changed as a result of Gallagher's advocacy. Manning also credited whoever decided to increase the wage for substitute teachers. Prior to that he had only had one substitute teacher. Now he had four people apply since the rate was increased. It relieved a lot of stress when teachers needed to be out. He informed the Board that the school's partnership with ECHO had expanded and they were now working with preschoolers. One of the things that continued to be a challenge was the trouble students had with being emotionally regulated after being in a COVID world for so long. The students experiencing the most office referrals were from K-2 classes. This was unusual. He realized that students in first grade had never had a normal school year.

Middle School: Maurice informed the Board that the teachers met today with Joe Brummer online. Brummer was the author of *Building a Trauma-Informed Restorative School: Skills and Approaches for Improving Culture and Behavior*. The question and answer session was on Section 1 and they would meet again in January for Section 2. It gave the teachers a chance to look at how trauma affected how students were in the classroom and how teachers reacted to them and how their thought process affected the day-to-day work that they did. The questions today were insightful and reviewed how to make the school environment more productive for both the students and teachers. The middle school was also looking to expand student experiences by bringing in two speakers from the Vermont Holocaust Memorial. What they had found was that this increased a student's ability to empathize with others and expand upon their own experiences through the stories of families. The speakers were both children of survivors and they would be sharing their family stories, as well as those who stood up to help and aid their survival.

High School: Pirie spoke about the incident at the playoff game, noting that while it had taken place at an away game and was being investigated by that school, it was important to remember it could happen anywhere. She and Tim Messier had been discussing how to prevent actions like this happening at Lamoille North and what to do in the event they did. They were talking about steps to take even before the winter sports season started. Pirie agreed with Manning, stating that she was very thankful for the substitute teachers. Substituting was not an easy task and the school was trying to determine how they could support them. To that end, the school had created an 'everything you need to know' document for substitute teachers. The Quarter 1 award celebration would be taking place this week through Zoom. The Little Mermaid had been rescheduled for November 18th and 19th.

GMTCC: Remmers encouraged the Board to review the comparative data for the assessment of all CT schools in the state and how Green Mountain Tech performed. GMTCC did well overall and particularly well in math.

Other Business: Fagnant noted that the Lamoille/BFA football team would be playing in the championship this weekend.

Adjourn: Fagnant made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:12 p.m.