

LNSU/LNMUUSD BOARD MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2022

Board members present: Belvidere – Stephanie Sweet (remote); Cambridge – Bill Sander (remote), Jan Sander (remote), Laura Miller, Denise Webster, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott (arrived 6:40); Eden – David Whitcomb (remote), Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park – Lisa Barry, Tina Lowe, Chasity Fagnant, Patty Hayford (remote); Johnson – Mark Nielsen, Katie Orost, Angela Lamell, Allen Audette; Waterville – Bart Bezio. Administrators present: Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Dylan Laflam, Wendy Savery, Jennifer Hulse, Diane Reilly, Mary Anderson, Jan Epstein, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Erik Remmers, Denise Maurice, Bethann Pirie
Others present: Green Mountain Massage School (remote), Hector O. (remote), Dana Boyce (remote), Aaron Calvin, Debby Gillen (remote)
Minute taker: Donna Griffiths

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment

M. Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:00.

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as written and the motion was passed.

A remote participant (Green Mountain Massage School) said Vermont Stands Up had sent a letter to school board members with reasons why the district should end the mask policy as it stands and go for optional masking. Many board members said they did not receive it. M. Nielsen asked that the letter be emailed to him so he can distribute it to the rest of the board.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

J. Sander moved to approve the board minutes of January 10, 2022 and the Finance & Capital Committee meeting and Personnel Committee meeting minutes of January 3, 2022.

K. Orost moved to approve directors' orders as printed on the agenda, L. Miller seconded and the motion was passed.

New Required Special Education Policy D7 – Second Reading, Possible Adoption

J. Hulse reminded the board that she had brought this to the board in November and the board decided to delay action because the policy references procedures that had not been developed yet. The manual referenced in the policy has since been developed. The policy basically states that we will follow the AOE guidelines and ensure a free and appropriate education.

J. Hunsberger moved to adopt Special Education Policy D7 as presented, B. Bezio seconded and the motion was passed.

New Required Section 504 and ADA Grievance Protocol for Students and Staff Policy C14 – First Reading

J. Hulse said this is the first reading of a policy stating we will not discriminate on the basis of disability. She read the policy.

Commingling of Ballots – Discussion and Possible Action

D. Clark said just before we created our annual meeting warning there were two pieces of legislation going through that had not yet become law. One says that if a district's articles require commingling of ballots the district can opt to not do that. We had the warning already in place before the law became law. She reached out for legal guidance on whether we can change that and she received zero feedback. But there are requests from our town clerks to once again commingle. D. Griffiths said one clerk prefers that the ballots be commingled as usual. Four others would prefer using the same procedure as last year. Even in a normal year it is difficult for them to find volunteers who are willing to come to Lamoille Union and count ballots. D. Clark said she doesn't know the legal ramifications. She suspects if we decided not to commingle the worst case would be a slap on the wrist, but we have no legal guidance. If we commingled, the ballot counters would use the Community Education Center, which has more space, instead of the high school library. It was warned that ballots would be brought to this campus and commingled. Without legal guidance she can't say one way or another whether we should change that.

K. Orost said she thinks we should do what was warned. J. Hunsberger said if we want to be careful not have a legal challenge he thinks we need to do what was warned. The board agreed to require commingling of ballots.

Central Office Updates

C. Gallagher said the calendar for next year should be posted in the next week or so. It has been submitted to AOE. Next year town meeting falls on March 7, so the February and April breaks are pushed out by a week. That is in line with most of the state. The first day of in-service is August 22 and the first student day is August 29. There will be extra early release days. There is a statewide push for more professional development and time to look at data in a more meaningful way.

C. Gallagher said the community advisory group conducted a survey and got 268 responses. The results will be shared in detail first with the community advisory group. A general summary and graphs will be in her newsletter on Friday. The majority of responses came from families of 7th and 2nd grade students. Cambridge and Johnson were the towns that had the most responses.

C. Gallagher said we are told there will be a significant press conference tomorrow. Our guess is that there will be gradual lessening of COVID restrictions. Case counts have dropped dramatically. There is good reason to see what happens when people get back from break. A lot of people will be traveling and a return from break is when we typically see surges. Probably by the end of March the board will be asked what it wants to do based on AOE guidance. C. Gallagher's guess is that first it will be tied to an 80% vaccination rate in schools and eventually it is likely that we can have a mask optional setting.

K. Orost asked what our vaccination percentage is. C. Gallagher said she doesn't have access to that. Our nurses won't be asked to determine the percentage. The immunization registry will report to the state and the state will report to us.

C. Gallagher said there is no more contact tracing. Students are each going to be given 2 antigen tests to take home to use over break. The state will provide weekly testing for all staff members.

D. Clark said we joined in a project to research water and sewer rate structures related to the Hyde Park water and sewer issue. That work is done and a report is available. She will distribute it to the board next week. The assistant judges for the county have filed an injunction. We are being advised that if we want to participate in legal action we need to retain our own lawyer and sue on our own behalf. At the next meeting the board will need to decide if we want to go that far.

There was a request for an ad hoc committee and work group to study our data so we can be better informed during the next budget building process. D. Clark has followed up with a vendor who works for the state on population studies. She should be able to come to the next meeting with the next action on a population study. Some board members have been invited to be part of the ad hoc committee. The work group will be community members.

D. Laflam said we signed Lamoille North up to be one of the first districts to be tested for PCB's. A contractor will be doing the testing. A lot of materials with PCB's were used in construction from about 1940 to 1970. We are trying to determine which of our schools need testing. Cambridge, Johnson, and Lamoille Union definitely do. The testing is not costing us anything.

The bid process for Eden has started. M. Aumand handed out pictures of the layout with the addition. Bid opening will be March 14. Construction will start in December 2022.

Principal/Director Updates

D. Maurice said the middle school has been having special events on Fridays. Students are able to do things like skiing, painting glass or making valentines for veterans. Four banners painted by Lamoille Union students will be put on Legion Field. D. Maurice named the students who had their banner designs chosen. Middle school students have been filling out climate surveys, telling how they feel about how things are going this year and what they would change if they could. Third quarter progress monitoring is just starting.

B. Goodman said having the contractors in Eden was very exciting. It will be amazing for students and families to have the addition to serve students more effectively. Last week over 90% of students were present. Karyl Kent talked to B. Goodman about legislation around universal meals. The student council put together some public service announcements about how they felt about universal meals. They have been sent to the legislature. Students wrote and recorded them.

D. Manning said JES has had a dramatic reduction of COVID cases. Eleven kids were absent today. For most of the year it has been more like 70. The reduction in cases allowed him to visit classrooms for the first time since school started. JES has a staff climate committee that does things to boost staff's spirits. They have an employee of the week, chosen at random from all those nominated, and staff can read all the nominations praising different staff members. For many years JES used a third party vendor for food service. This year they decided to work through their own food service program under Karyl Kent's supervision. The quality of food is dramatically better. The amount of food is better and the relationships of food service employees with staff and kids are even better. .

D. Reilly said she felt like a principal for the first time in two years last week when the contract tracing guidance was taken away. She is not worrying about running out of subs every day. It is a relief and a joy

to have most students at school. It makes a huge difference in how the whole school feels. She got to visit classrooms. She has been doing walkthroughs and teacher observations. Teachers have finished all their assessments and they are making learning plans for spring. Every grade level looks at the data for each child and makes a plan for what they need to work on. HPES hasn't done Sports for Life or field trips for two years. The leadership team, with some grants, is trying to bring in a couple of artists in residence. SBACs and final assessments are scheduled. The leadership team is trying to plan things to look forward to.

J. Epstein said she has been able to get into classrooms recently. WES students were able to do winter sports this year. There were 3 days when kids could ski or skate. They recently celebrated the 100th day of school. To celebrate Chinese New Year the farm-to-school coordinator worked with the 5th grade to create a vegetable stir fry. For Valentine's Day one classroom creates elaborate Valentine's Day boxes and staff can vote on favorites. Some students are going to participate in Starbase soon. This week, 5th and 6th graders are participating in Project Linus, making blankets for children that need blankets.

E. Remmers said GMTCC is getting ready for SkillsUSA season. SkillsUSA will start in early April. It will be largely in person with different competitions hosted at different sites. Student leaders from state SkillsUSA are coming tomorrow to meet with the GMTCC leadership team. GMTCC has two groups from the culinary program competing in the Iron Chef competition. The school is working on a comprehensive local needs assessment for Perkins V – a complex, large-scale self-evaluation of GMTCC programs. They are looking at what credentials and college credits they offer and how many students are earning them. They are looking at the balance of IRC credits vs. college credits and making plans to add opportunities where needed. The state is making GMTCC justify the existence of some of its programs. They have recognized most as necessary but the culinary and creative media programs require more justification. E. Remmers has no concerns about the programs being able to continue. Both are very strong programs. (*S. Hamlyn-Prescott arrived at 6:40.*) Community surveys have been sent out to current students, parents of current students, employers, students who chose not to come to the tech center, and staff members. All the questions were developed by groups within CTE and AOE.

B. Pirie said students are taking SATs and staff are starting to prepare for SBACs. A lot of student activities are taking place. She named some athletic teams and individual student athletes who are doing very well in their sports. Some recent state champions will be recognized on banners.

Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 6:46 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths