

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Meeting
May 9, 2022**

Board Members Present: Cambridge: Bill Sander (remote), Jan Sander, Sue Prescott (remote), Mark Stebbins, Laura Miller, Denise Webster (remote); **Eden:** Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb (remote);

Hyde Park: Lisa Barry, Patty Hayford, Tina Lowe; **Johnson:** Mark Nielsen; **Waterville:** Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; **Hyde Park:** Chasity Fagnant; **Johnson:** Angela Lamell, Bobbie Moulton, Katie Orost, Allen Audette

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Michele Aumand, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Denise Maurice, Bethann Pirie, Erik Remmers, Melinda Mascolino, Wendy Savery, Dylan Laflam, Brian Pena, Jennifer Hulse, Mary Anderson

Others Present: Flo Kelley (remote), Erin Carr

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment: Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

LNSU/LN MUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

Minutes of the April 11, 2022 Meeting, Minutes of the April 22, 2022 Personnel Committee Meeting, Minutes of the April 25, 2022 Data Workgroup AdHoc Committee Meeting: Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Fagnant reported through Aumand that the Board Orders were in order. J. Sander made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Matters:

Approve LUHS Math Teacher Hire: Clark stated the recommendation was to hire Molly Burke at a salary of \$43,688. Burke was completing her student teaching and in the process of getting her license. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the recommendation. Pirie stated Burke had been student teaching at Stowe High School and was also a field hockey and hockey coach there. All of her recommendations were very positive. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve LUHS Assistant Principal Hire: Clark stated the recommendation was to hire Bethany Turnbaugh at a salary of \$70,000. Turnbaugh was the Interim Dean of Students this year. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. Pirie stated she couldn't say enough incredible things about Turnbaugh. This year had been challenging and yet Turnbaugh came every day with the ability to start fresh and build relationships with students and parents. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve LUMS Science Teacher Hire: Clark reported that the recommendation was to hire Walter Wendling at a salary of \$48,032. Walter was currently a teacher at Johnson Elementary School and the salary was a negotiated placement. Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. Maurice stated Wendling would bring his knowledge and experience from Laraway and Johnson Elementary to the job and she thought he would be amazing with the students. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve LUMS Social Studies Teacher Hire: Clark stated the recommendation was to hire Aaron McGee at a salary of \$61,628. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. Maurice reported that McGee was coming to this job after working at Laraway and offered a wealth of knowledge. He had a very peaceful demeanor and Maurice thought he would be a calming presence. Miller asked if his experience at Laraway would affect his salary on the pay scale.

While Clark couldn't specifically answer the question, she stated they took everything into consideration. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve JES First Grade Teacher Hire: Clark stated the recommendation was to hire Carrie Moore at a salary of \$41,000. Moore was completing her student teaching and was in the process of obtaining her teaching license. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the recommendation. Manning stated Moore was a first year teacher and was coming with the enthusiasm of a first year teacher. The motion passed, with Cambridge members abstaining.

Approve WES .5 Librarian Hire: Clark reported that the recommendation was to hire Audri Miller at a total salary of \$76,880, prorated based on a .5 FTE. Miller was currently the .5 FTE librarian at Eden Central School. This was a negotiated placement and would make Miller a 1.0 FTE MUUSD employee. Gallagher stated that Miller had served as a kindergarten teacher at Waterville Elementary School for years before going to Eden. Miller helped at WES when the librarian was out and she knows the families. Gallagher was thrilled that this configuration was able to happen for both Miller and the students. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge members abstaining.

LNSU Continuous Improvement Plan and the LNSU Recovery Plan Implementation and Summary of Outcomes/Highlights: Savery noted that the LNSU Continuous Improvement Plan was required to be done on an annual basis. Savery stated the Recovery Plan informed the Continuous Improvement Plan.

The Recovery Plan was required by the Agency of Education as the school went into the midst of COVID. After a great deal of data collection, conversations, and public forums, the focus revolved around the key areas of MTSS, supporting at-risk students across core subjects, student engagement, attendance, social emotional learning, restorative practices, building relationships and repairing harm. Conversation then focused on what learning should look like.

Key highlights were:

- An embedded coaching model in literacy and math;
- Having a menu of interventions;
- MTSS website and guidebook;
- Refining the EST (Educational Support Team) Problem-Solving Team Model. The District would use technology to create a folder for every student on an educational support plan that would follow them. Each year, especially during transition years, a password-protected folder would provide a history of interventions. This would reduce redundancy and the need for parents to constantly update a teacher in a new grade.
- The Forefront Data Housing System would be put in place for K-6 that would allow teachers to track data in real time and would be used for report cards.
- There would be a Social Emotional Learning Guide. The five key areas would be self-awareness, self-management, relationship skills, responsible and ethical decision-making, and social awareness.
- Restorative and Informed Practices: there was a recognition that every school needed different things in terms of what their needs were around trauma-informed instruction and restorative practice work.
- Student Engagement: A full time student engagement specialist had been hired through the Restorative Center, using ESSER funds. She had done excellent work. She was able to work with 42 families and had received 58 referrals. Ten petitions were filed, which was low compared to some years, in part because the specialist was able to spend time in-person with families and community partners. She had done a fabulous job spending more time on early intervention.

- The District was setting up facilitated peer groups, focusing on the transition to different levels, i.e., Grade 6 to Grade 7 and then Grade 8 to Grade 9.

The State required the Continuous Improvement Plan be focused on two or three goals. Specific focus areas for the District were extending restorative practices across all schools, as well as developing a foundation of K-12 curriculum across all content areas.

Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the Continuous Improvement Plan and the LNSU Recovery Plan. The motion passed unanimously.

Gallagher stated a Board member had asked her how courses were approved. Savery stated that high school teachers had topics and interests they'd like to teach a course on. Students also could have expressed an interest or desire in a subject. Students were expressing that they wanted to take courses that were relevant and spoke to the world they live in. Over the last few years, teachers had tried to respond to what students asked for. A request form is completed which goes to the principal for review. It then goes to Savery, on to the Curriculum Committee, and finally the Board. Pirie noted that the school counselors and department chairs also reviewed the request. Teachers were aware that even if the course was approved it may or may not run. It would depend on how many students signed up. Pirie noted that the numbers were high for the new courses. Gallagher stated the courses coming to the Board for approval were not core courses and did not pre-empt core courses.

LUHS IT Infrastructure Bid: Pena reported that the Finance and Capital Committee had met to discuss the use of the surplus at the secondary level. The Committee decided it was time to improve the network switches. They were at a point where it was proper to provide a stronger back-end for all the devices being used. The District requested bids from nine vendors to provide a solution to support LUHS IT infrastructure improvements. Four vendors responded. Laflam decided not to purchase the four C9200-NM-4X devices, which changed the stated dollar amounts in the final bids. The Administration recommended the Board accept the bid of \$104,752.92 from GovConnect for network switches and equipment. Hunsberger made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Bid Results: Laflam informed the Board he had received one bid for a Central Office lease from H.A. Manosh. Unfortunately, the bid was significantly over budget by \$100,000. The quote was for an annual cost of \$176,934 for the first five years and years six through ten would cost \$182,242 annually. The current budget was set at an annual cost of \$70,000. MSI did not submit a bid. At this point there were no funds to move forward with this and they were back at the drawing board.

AOE Facility Inventory/Act 72: Laflam explained that the state was doing an inventory of every school building to look into lifting the moratorium on construction. Lamoille North was ranked in the top 8% of the state of all facilities. This was a testament to the Board to ensure there was funding for improvements. Clark stated Lamoille North was tied for #4 throughout the state.

Review and Approve Guy & Anchor Easement Request for Cricket Hill Adjacent Property: Clark stated a new neighbor on Cricket Hill needed an easement to put in a power line. This wouldn't impede the District's property and would actually be to the District's benefit. Barry made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to have the Chair sign the document approving the easement. Miller asked if it would help the District if power were ever needed. Laflam said it would. The motion passed unanimously.

Central Office Updates: Gallagher stated the last student day would be June 10th. Gallagher noted Waterville had been fortunate at the beginning of COVID with almost no cases at the school. Unfortunately, about one-third of the school was out this past week. A few administrators were out but the District was still doing well. Testing and assessments continued.

Gallagher reported that Bob Fredette, the business teacher at the high school, was having a recognition celebration for Lamoille business students and their community partners who helped them on May 31st. This was the second year running where the business program had really taken off. There were also a great deal of teacher celebrations and honors that had been awarded. There was a lot to celebrate.

On May 11th Healthy Lamoille Valley was partnering with LNSU to bring information to a community discussion about cannabis. With the legalization of cannabis, there was concern the students had more access to it. There would be a panel of experts, students and parents participating in the discussion.

Gallagher then stated that many questions had come up from Board members about things that really needed to be discussed at Board meetings. The Board meetings were the forum for substantive questions and discussions. Additionally Gallagher thought it was important for the community to know what their Board members stood for.

Gallagher stated a local reporter had spoken with her about the rumor that litter boxes were in the school. Gallagher explained that the furrries and litter boxes were a statement that demeaned people who identified in their own ways and noted that when people engaged in rumors it was extremely harmful.

Hiring was a nationwide problem. She noted a California school district had gone out to bond to purchase apartment buildings for their teachers because they couldn't staff their classrooms. Teachers were leaving to move to areas where they could afford to live. New York and Massachusetts were also doing that. While she didn't see Vermont doing this, it was still difficult to find staff.

Gallagher noted that June 13th was the last meeting of the Board until August. Because the last day of school was June 10th, Gallagher suggested moving the Board meeting to June 6th. There were no objections from Board members.

Gallagher stated it had been a very active year. While there had been many good things that had happened in the schools, they had also had issues with bullying and all kinds of harassment. The schools dealt with those issues. The Board was protected from that information and the information had no place in an open board meeting. Gallagher reminded the members of the roles of the Board: budget development, accepting recommendations for hiring, and accepting recommendations for termination. This topic would be discussed at the Board retreat.

Maria Davies, the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator, and Gallagher were invited to speak to New England Superintendents about the work that the District was doing in restorative practices and inclusion. Davies was gracious, insightful and smart about involving the community in the schools. Gallagher pointed out the work done at Waterville and Hyde Park with the community murals. Community members now were asking to volunteer in the schools and that was a direct result of the work done by Davies.

Clark stated the AdHoc Committee for the Data Work Group adopted a scope of work and assessment tools so the work group could begin working on those. The Board members were given an internal checklist to review. Clark was going to ask the Chair to sign the document at the next Board meeting. An RFP would be going out this week for the tax anticipation note. Clark anticipated the TAN being awarded at the June 6th meeting. The projections for the end of the year were sent out with the agenda. There was an almost \$350,000 surplus projected at the secondary level, a \$34,000 deficit at the elementary level. The SU had a slight surplus in both the general fund and special education budgets.

Principal/Director Updates

High School: Pirie informed the Board she had spent the day with two teachers from Lamoille and a few staff members from the Tech Center at the first in-person meeting for Vermont Equity Practitioners Network. It was an incredible experience. One statement from the meeting was that what you paid attention to grows. This was what she tried to do at the high school. She noted that the rumors that had been circulating required a great deal of attention and she was being mindful of how much attention she paid to them because she didn't want them to grow. Specifically she was referring to litter boxes in the school and things such as critical race theory. She stated she could assure everyone that they did not have any furrries or litter boxes in the school. This issue was not just in Vermont, it was happening all over the country. School Boards across the country had to deal with these issues. The rumors were about real students. They were students that Pirie was proud to serve. Pirie added that the building was filled with professional educators who worked daily to foster inclusive and equitable learning environments for the students and prepare them for living outside of Vermont.

Pirie noted there was a lot of good news that she wanted to share. Emily Braggins was named the School Counselor of the Year. The Society of Health and Physical Educators of Vermont named Jeff Robinson the Vermont High School Health Teacher of the Year. Mae Searles won First Place in the Vermont Congressional Art Competition. In total, three Lamoille students won awards in the art competition. Eric Hutchins started a chess club and also started teaching the history of chess as an elective. The students decided they wanted to compete; five students went to the state competition and took first place. Overall, the students were doing amazing things. There were a lot of sports taking place and Pirie invited people to attend the games. This year had been tough and they were now finally getting to a place where students were feeling comfortable and safe and, if they were not, they found an adult to talk to.

Middle School: Maurice agreed that incredible things were going on in the District. The middle school had finished the SBACs. Maria Davies had been working with teams providing some very thought-provoking presentations, videos and conversations with students, which had been incredible. Maurice was looking forward to those discussions continuing next year. The school counselor had been bringing 8th graders to other places to review programs. The 7th graders had been going to elementary schools to discuss moving up to the middle school. The 6th graders were also able to preview the middle school. Maurice noted it had been a crazy year but it was ending very well.

GMTCC: Remmers stated it was testing season. GMTCC had hosted two events. The first was the National Technical Honor Society, where 20 students were inducted into NTS. The second event was the Stowe Rotary Dinner. The GMTCC culinary kids did a spectacular job. The event was to honor the students who were earning Stowe Rotary scholarships and the Tools of the Trade award. Remmers was very appreciative to the Stowe Rotary. Remmers then noted that about 85% of the school year had been spent developing and completing the Perkins Comprehensive Local Needs Assessment. Remmers would come back to the Board next month to provide highlights of the assessment.

Eden: Goodman stated they had started their SBAC testing this past week and ten minutes into it they lost power. Students were resilient and the IT Team was great. Goodman was impressed with the students being ready to continue despite the interruption. They would be holding their celebration of student work for the first time in two years. The hallway was filled with artwork. Goodman thanked Johnson Elementary for hosting the summer program.

Cambridge: Anderson stated that testing was taking place. She informed the Board that there were students serving as technology ambassadors, reviewing the technology rules after 2 ½ years of the pandemic. They were reviewing all the protocols that had been instituted during COVID. Staff were also reviewing and offering suggestions on what to keep and what to get rid of. Anderson said field trips were coming up. She thanked the Lamoille Union Student Council students who met with Cambridge students for Green Up Day. Additionally, the school had a fundraiser for Global Kitchen and had raised \$2,800.

Johnson: Manning reported they had had their first in-person community meeting with all of the students and staff in the gym. It had been more than two years since they'd done that. Second graders were putting in perennials and mulch. Manning reported he had had a lot of opportunity to substitute teach because the numbers of teachers with COVID had been quite high. He had been able to watch 4th graders tasked with design engineering a project. It had been great to watch students problem solve.

Manning then stated it appeared there could be quite a bit of turnover at Johnson and as a result he had talked to quite a few principals for references. The trend seemed to be that principals in rural schools that had high needs students and low pay were seeing massive turnover. A principal at Swanton had twenty teachers leaving. A principal in Barre stated that 60% of their K-2 team had left. Conversely, a principal in the South Burlington School District had only one person leaving but they were the highest paying school district in the state. It was clear that the higher the pay, the less turnover there would be. There were different reasons his teachers were leaving, but one of his employees was leaving for a job that paid \$21,000 more. Manning was confident they would find good teachers, but in many cases these were new teachers just coming out of school. He noted it set the school back to have to train new teachers. Manning asked that teacher salaries be reviewed and increased.

Gallagher added it was the first time they were seeing a number of teachers leaving the profession entirely. Manning agreed and said that paraeducators were leaving as well. He thought it was probably a result of the stresses of the pandemic.

Other Business: Miller expressed her thanks and appreciation for the middle school's presentation of Matilda.

Manning reported that he had been attending high school track meets. Despite not having a track, Lamoyille High School was well represented.

Bezio wondered if they could review a compensation study that compared benchmarks and pay schedules during the Board Retreat. It was important to know what the disparity in salary was. Gallagher said that could be done during the retreat.

Adjourn: Hunsberger made a motion to adjourn at 7:28 p.m.