

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

Board members present: Cambridge – Bill Sander (remote), Jan Sander, Mark Stebbins, Denise Webster, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott; Eden – David Whitcomb (remote), Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park – Lisa Barry, Tina Lowe; Johnson – Katie Orost, Angela Lamell, Allen Audette; Waterville – Bart Bezio

Board members absent: Belvidere – Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge – Tommy O’Connor; Hyde Park – Chasity Fagnant, Patty Hayford; Johnson – Mark Nielsen, Bobbie Moulton

Administrators present: Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Dylan Laflam, Wendy Savery, Jennifer Hulse, Diane Reilly, Mary Anderson, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Erik Remmers, Denise Maurice, Bethann Pirie, Brian Peña, Jeremy Scannell, Valerie Sullivan, Rene Thibault

Minute taker: Donna Griffiths

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

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

K. Orost called the meeting to order at 6:01.

J. Sander moved and M. Stebbins seconded to approve the agenda as written and the motion was passed.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

B. Bezio moved to approve the board minutes of October 10, 2022, the Curriculum Committee and Social/Racial Justice Committee meeting minutes of October 10, 2022 and the directors’ orders as printed on the agenda. The motion was seconded and passed.

Meal Charge Policy – 2nd Reading & Possible Adoption

D. Clark reviewed the changes to the policy. There is added language that covers continuation of universal meals and language that has been corrected for the new TITAN system vs. the old point of sale system.

J. Sander moved to adopt the revised Meal Charge Policy as presented, L. Barry seconded and the motion was passed.

Central Office Building Options

D. Laflam handed out some information about the options identified. The Finance & Capital Committee permanently tabled the lease option so we are looking at the options of purchasing and renovating or building new. If we went with a new building we would need to invest about \$51K for design and engineering to come up with a total project cost so we could go out to bond. That would not provide a final design.

One purchase option is NVU’s McClelland Hall. The FCC toured the building last Monday. The committee was split on whether that is a better option than building new. It is an 18,000 sq. ft. building built in

1942. Central office needs about 6000 sq. ft. (Currently they need 5500 sq. ft. but we would want a little extra.) McClelland Hall has 3 times that, but the building would provide many options, such as space for JES afterschool or summer programs or a preschool tied into the tech center.

A third option is a big commercial building at 52 VFW Drive. It is a 6000 sq. ft. building. It would need renovation. There is infrastructure at the site. The estimated purchase price is \$750K. D. Laflam estimates renovations would cost \$1.5 million.

D. Clark said another option was suggested this morning. A store and gas station across from Eden Central School is up for sale. It is 3638 sq. ft. and the property for sale includes a 3.9 acre lot and a 3.4 acre lot. The purchase price is estimated to be around \$300K. It has some issues such as buried fuel tanks. D. Laflam said he will vet that out.

D. Laflam said he was asked by the FCC to come up with a list of pros and cons for the different options. Every one of us might see different pros and cons. But he will give a summary of his thoughts. The VFW Drive building is probably the fastest to get into and the least expensive. It is an industrial building now. There will be other construction-related activity happening on adjacent property. It is not joined to any of our other properties. He would have to consider how lawn mowing, snow plowing, etc. would be provided. McClelland Hall has the largest footprint. It provides a lot of options. It is a beautiful building. It is up to code regarding fire and life safety. It is by far the most expensive option. He thinks building new may be the best option. We can build just what we need and want. The new building would be attached to this campus, which would make it easier to provide services like lawn mowing and plowing.

M. Stebbins said McClelland is in a more central location. The FCC saw the utility costs and considered some of the unknowns we might uncover in the building.

L. Barry said there is never enough room for anything. We are always looking for new space. There are so many potential uses for the space at McClelland Hall – the classroom space and the other areas. She thinks we would find that all the space would get used over time. She is leaning towards buying rather than building. The cost of building is so unknown. She thinks it will get really expensive. And once you build something, that is all the space you have.

S. Prescott said one of her concerns about McClelland Hall was the height of the ceilings. The estimated annual utility cost D. Laflam came up with was very high. And there is the question of whether NVU would even be willing to wait for us to do a bond in order to sell it.

M. Stebbins said it was clear among FCC members that leasing was definitely off the table. The committee recommends either new construction or buying something.

D. Webster asked where we would build. D. Laflam said on the same plot of land where the storage garage is on Cricket Hill.

D. Laflam said we have some fairly large initiatives that still need to be funded at the secondary level. Sidewalks and drives are approaching end of life. The cost estimate for those is \$1.5 million. The cost for a track is also \$1.5 million. There are roofs approaching end of life. If the board is looking at a bond for a

new building, he would encourage packaging it together with some of these initiatives. He can't see a time when we will ever be able to add money to the general fund for them.

D. Clark said she is proposing a second meeting in December. Maybe at that meeting the board can have a working session to narrow down the options to one or two to focus on. D. Laflam said there is a lot of work that needs to be done for all the options. For instance, for the NVU option we would need to discuss the process with the NVU board. It would be nice if we could narrow it down to no more than 2 options.

C. Gallagher said the question is what the board needs to make a decision. She suggested sending any questions to D. Clark and D. Laflam.

M. Stebbins said one thing that came up was the challenge of passing a bond. When looking at the list of additional initiatives we might want to bond for we should think about how to package it to make it appealing. Both McClelland Hall and a new building on Cricket Hill have different appealing options. The committee was split between McClelland Hall and a new building. At the time of the FCC meeting, the option on VFW Drive was too new for committee members to fully comprehend what was available.

D. Laflam said he will look into the Eden property and at least get hard numbers for the purchase price. It doesn't meet our square footage requirement so we would still be talking about building. Any of these projects would need a design team to reconfigure the space somewhat. We should count on design work taking almost 5 months.

K. Orost suggested that board members get questions to D. Clark and D. Laflam by this Friday so we can discuss this again at the December 5 meeting.

B. Bezio said if we were going to bond to purchase McClelland Hall he would feel more comfortable bringing that to the voters knowing some of the programming we might use the space for. He thinks it would be helpful to put on paper what the uses might be.

J. Hunsberger said that goes along with talking about whether a new building project could incorporate things like a track and a student support center. McClelland Hall sounds great but it is disconnected from the schools, except for JES. Being able to say we are bonding for a multi-use facility, not just an administrative building, will get more people's attention. If we build a new building we will want state-of-the-art audiovisual and communications equipment to be able to communicate with schools, AOE and the Department of Health. With a new building all of our professionals can be looking at all those details and putting them together. It seems appealing to build a package right on this campus.

FY24 Budget Timeline / Possible Adjusted December Board Meeting Schedule

D. Clark said the annual meeting is February 20. She suggests two meetings in December, on December 5 and December 19. We are hoping to have a community forum about challenges facing school districts on December 12.

M. Stebbins moved to change the December board meeting schedule to have meetings on December 5 and December 19, B. Bezio seconded and the motion was passed.

Email Domain Consolidation

B. Peña said we are looking to consolidate all emails. Currently different schools have different email domains. (*D. Laflam left at 6:25.*) We have only been able to find one company that has the resources and staff to do a project this size. We are not staffed to do this ourselves. The cost including Cambridge would be \$33,970. Without Cambridge it would be \$28,303. M. Stebbins said he will be bringing this to the Cambridge board.

L. Barry said when the FCC talked about this project, she advocated for Cambridge using the same domain as the rest of the SU. Students would be able to have the same email and Google Drive accounts for K-12. And management will be easier if there are not two separate domains.

D. Clark said there will be fewer errors with only one domain. We have had some difficulty with smooth communications because of the different domains. She thinks it makes sense to approve an amount up to the amount that includes Cambridge.

J. Hunsberger moved to authorize use of up to \$33,970 of capital funds to cover the cost of the email domain consolidation project, A. Lamell seconded and the motion was passed.

Central Office Update

C. Gallagher said she and R. Thibault had the first community advisory group meeting last week. There was a lot of participation. The majority of members who attended were from Cambridge but the group talked about things that would be beneficial to the entire SU. One great idea that would be easy to implement was for each school to have a welcome committee to help with orientation for new families. There was great interest in community forums. There was discussion about why they have never been well attended. Part of that has to do with how they are advertised. Students sharing information with other students and families seems to be something that gains traction. Maybe high school students could provide childcare as community service. The group discussed providing meals and childcare and having open discussions, maybe rotating the location of the forums. Someone suggested the Cambridge Community Center as a location. Another suggestion was to have each principal and C. Gallagher have an evening event each year for parents to come in and talk about things they think are important. The group's next meeting will be November 28. The hope is that members who could not attend the first meeting will be there and the group will come up with action steps.

NVU has applied for a grant in partnership with our school system to place 6 student school counseling interns every year in each of our schools for 5 years. NVU would pay their stipends. They would work under the supervision of our school counselors. We are waiting to hear if NVU got that grant.

Special education directors and superintendents around the state have talked about collaborating to support the mental health needs of students and staff. All school community members have challenges, not just students. We have talked about having an early education program in McClelland Hall or a similar building. That could serve staff who want childcare. Perhaps there could also be a place for students and adults who seek an opportunity other than their school for part of the time. That would have to look different from Laraway. We believe we can educate all our students in a public school setting for the most part.

Only 62% of our seniors responded to the VSAC senior survey. Of those, 82% took higher level math classes compared to 70.9% for the state as a whole and 80% had a GPA of 3.0 to 3.9 compared to 65% statewide. The parents of the students who responded were for the most part high school graduates. Forty-eight percent of the students felt they had appropriate guidance to reach their goals, which is lower than the statewide average. Seventy percent felt they had received help with learning skills – much higher than the statewide figure. For the first time, a majority of students said they wanted a master's or doctorate degree. The percentage planning to attend a 4-year college was 86.8%. NVU was a school 25.7% wanted to attend. Only 2.9% identified UVM as a school they wanted to attend, compared to 15% of students statewide. Most students were applying for grants and scholarships. The statewide percentage applying for grants and scholarships was much less. About 40% were very to extremely concerned about their ability to pay for college, less than the state average. It was interesting to C. Gallagher that aspiration levels have increased for those who filled out the survey. We didn't see as much interest in a trades path as in previous years.

C. Gallagher said a memo from AOE today said that every school building in Vermont is going to be inspected to identify needs for improvement.

D. Clark said she had hoped the data assessment results would go to the FCC for their November 7 meeting but the document is quite unwieldy. She will continue to work on it. She thinks maybe there needs to be an electronic document because there are a lot of links. Hopefully later this week she can send it to C. Gallagher, the FCC and some senior staff for vetting.

R. Thibault said the plan is to have a community forum on December 12 to address concerns. For marketing and promotion we plan to use the LNSU website, social media channels, Front Porch Forum, local media partners such as the News & Citizen and the Stowe Reporter, and a message board outside Lamoille Union. Maybe the community advisory group members can help spread the word, for instance by putting up posters in their community. He would advocate for paid advertising on Front Porch Forum or Facebook. C. Gallagher said she thinks we want to involve students as they will give us the biggest draw. She noted that there are a number of students who will be attending board meetings as representatives beginning next month. R. Thibault encouraged everyone in the room to help spread the word about the community forum. J. Hunsberger said it would be nice if everyone could personally invite 4 or 5 people. R. Thibault agreed. He suggested that people invite constituents from their towns that they know have concerns. C. Gallagher said we need to design a flyer.

Principal/Director Updates

Eden: B. Goodman said last Friday ECS had an Abenaki presenter who talked about the history, experiences and future expectations of the Abenaki people. It was thought-provoking and emotionally challenging at times. The engagement team met on Friday to talk about events for the winter. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center has started their theater session. The student council has started work on a food drive.

GMTCC: E. Remmers said Open House numbers were in line with pre-COVID turnout. High school students from grades 10 and 11 are coming to tour GMTCC. Next middle school students will have tours. This year applications have been opened up already. In the past they were opened later in the year. They hope to have students tour GMTCC then go home and apply.

Johnson: D. Manning highlighted partnerships with other organizations. The ECHO Center is doing work with numerous grade levels, teaching teachers how to teach high quality science lessons. There is a program through UVM that provides social/emotional learning and physical activity for preschoolers through activities that can be done in the classroom. VINS is coming to the afterschool program with raptors for a couple of weeks. There are a lot of activities where school staff build relationships with experts in other fields to bring in enrichment activities. The second graders are spearheading a food drive. They hope to make a human chain with all the food they have collected to get it to the food shelf.

Communications: R. Thibault said he has been here almost 2 months and has loved every minute. He has predominantly focused on external communication so far. We have discussed our website and how we can continue to modernize our presence online, making sure we have consistency from school to school. He continues to be in better communication with all staff to hear what is happening in schools and be there to capture those moments.

Cambridge: M. Anderson said she has been visiting NCAL once a week with 6th graders. Math and literacy professional development has resumed. Classroom teachers are meeting with interventionists to plan instruction for kids who are struggling. The food drive is returning. CES hasn't had one since before COVID. The PTA is organizing it. CES is also exploring the return of the Four Winds environmental program run by volunteers. The Thanksgiving meal returned this year. There was a full cafeteria. Fifth and sixth graders helped with serving. The in-service day on Veteran's Day included CPR and first aid instruction. It will be expanded to all staff as recommended by the state.

Hyde Park: D. Reilly said HPES had a school-based in-service in November 11. They had "just in time" professional development on report cards. Teachers were able to work on report cards during that time. D. Reilly set up 15-20 minutes intervals to check in with each teacher. She asked them about what is going really well, their biggest challenge and how she can support them to help learners in their classrooms learn. One of the things that is working really well is having 2 hour blocks each week for math, literacy and project-based learning coaches to work with teachers. Another thing that has been really helpful is "just in time" professional development addressing things that are currently going on. The biggest challenge is subs. They have had to cancel outside professional development due to lack of subs. She asked teachers what she could do to support them and they said she should continue to listen to them. She doesn't try to offer solutions, just help them come up with their own solutions. She thinks everyone felt listened to and supported. Spruce Peak Performing Arts Center had a chamber music group come to HPES. Many kids were fully engaged. (*K. Orost and A. Audette left at 6:56.*) She recommends bringing them to schools. Sports for Life is back. It is a 5 week program including cross-country skiing, bowling and ice skating. HPES has been focusing on CPR and Stop the Bleed training for staff.

LUMS: Denise said LUMS students just finished the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Students feel supported in friendships. One thing LUMS started this year was a Kindness Council. It is a group of students who are focused on how to make connections between students and between students and teachers and how people are treating each other. They did a Kindness Week with a door decoration contest. They meet every Tuesday at lunch with teachers. They will be activities like sponsoring food drives. As part of the skills block applied academics teachers are doing a theme on community involvement and engagement. They looked at Lamoille Food Share. Tomorrow people are coming from the Vermont Holocaust Memorial to share personal family stories as children of survivors. She and C. Gallagher went to UVM when

Danielle Peveril was recognized as a teacher of the year. C. Gallagher noted that the two other LNSU teachers honored were Roy Hutchins from WES and Sam Rowley from GMTCC.

Other Business

Jeff said Seussical was an outstanding performance. There was a wonderful dance performance earlier this fall with dance groups from all over the area. GMATV did a nice job broadcasting it. Right now the high school principal is at the National Honor Society induction. It is a huge honor for those students. Music students will be inducted into the Tri-M Music Honor Society on Monday. It would be nice to have Tim Messier and Stacy Stokes come once in the fall and once in the spring to talk to the board about what is happening with sports. The Lamoille-BFA Fairfax football team made it to finals. A number of girls' soccer team members were named to coaches' first teams. Getting that information out and honoring our students is something we are missing. He wants to make sure we are noticing not only what students are doing but how staff are supporting them by putting in extra time. He encouraged board members to thank people for what they are doing. It all feeds into the community learning environment we are trying to promote. Our special ed staff are under tremendous pressure right now. Let's make sure we are giving staff the credit and focus they deserve.

Adjourn

J. Sander moved to adjourn at 7:07 and the motion was seconded and passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

UNAPPROVED