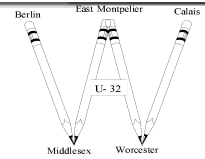


Washington Central Unified Union School District

WCUUSD exists to nurture and inspire in all students the passion, creativity and power to contribute to their local and global communities.

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Debra Taylor, Ph.D.
Interim Superintendent



Washington Central Unified Union School District Board Unapproved Minutes 3.4.20 6:30 PM

U-32 Middle/High School, Room 128/131

Board Members Present: Scott Thompson, Jaiel Pulskamp, Marylynn Strachan, Flor Diaz Smith, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Chris McVeigh, Lindy Johnson, Dorothy Naylor; Student Representative Mia Smith, Jill Olson, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Kari Bradley, Stephen Looke

Superintendent Debra Taylor, Director of Technology Keith MacMartin

Corinne Stridsberg (Berlin) , David Delcore (Times Argus), videographer, David Lawrence (Middlesex)

1.0 Call to Order: Debra Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

2.0 Board Reorganization:

For Board Chairperson:

Dorothy Naylor nominated Scott Thompson. Seconded by Stephen Looke.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet nominated Flor Diaz Smith. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith.

No more nominations were heard. Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether each would be willing to speak briefly, for those who are new to the board. Both Scott Thompson and Flor Diaz Smith spoke briefly. Superintendent Debra Taylor briefly described the role of the Board Chair.

A vote was called. **The majority of the vote went to Scott Thompson.**

Board members introduced themselves.

Chris McVeigh nominated Flor Diaz Smith for Vice-Chairperson. Seconded by Marylynn Strachan. No other nominations were heard. This motion carried unanimously.

Lindy Johnson nominated Jonas Eno-Van Fleet for Clerk. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp. No other nominations were heard. This motion carried unanimously.

Committees: Scott Thompson explained the role of the committees. Board members agreed to express interest in a straw poll and then nominate and appoint members.

Finance Committee - oversee development/ initiation of the budget - take feedback from the board around the budget, capital planning. Proposal: four members, maximum of five.

Superintendent Debra Taylor suggested that the committee meetings take place once a month on the night of the regular board meeting, in “break out” or as carousel-type format.

The following expressed interest in a straw poll:

Finance: Flor Diaz Smith, Kari Bradley, Chris McVeigh, Jaiel Pulskamp (maybe)

Negotiations: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet explained the role of this committee. Stephen Looke expressed interest.

Policy: Chris McVeigh explained the role of this committee. Jaiel Pulskamp, Dorothy Naylor expressed interest. Mia Smith suggested that the student representatives take turns attending the Policy Committee meetings, going forward.

Education Quality: Debra Taylor explained the charge for this committee. Kari Bradley and Flor Diaz Smith shared their experiences from the past around issues related to this committee. Mia Smith suggested that student voice be important on this committee as well. She expressed interest. Diane Nichols-Fleming, Jill Olson, Jaiel Pulskamp, Marylynne Strachan expressed interest in this committee.

The board discussed the idea of having the committee meetings as “break out” meetings on the night of a regular board meeting. Lindy Johnson stated that board meetings tend to run long and late, and that she worries that adding more to the plate will make for even later nights.

The board agreed to try out this model. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked that, when the board is fully represented, can we revisit the starting time for board meetings (currently 6:30)?

Beginning in April, the first meeting of the month will be the committee break out meeting.

Committee Membership was appointed:

Finance Committee: Flor Diaz Smith, Kari Bradley, Chris McVeigh, Scott Thompson - the board voted in favor of this configuration.

Policy: Chris McVeigh, Jaiel Pulskamp, Dorothy Naylor, Marylynne Strachan, Townes DeGroot - the board voted in favor of this configuration.

Negotiations: Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Stephen Looke, Lindy Johnson (and Suzanna and Chani) - the board voted in favor of this configuration.

Education Quality: Marylynne Strachan, Diane Nichols-Fleming, Jill Olson, Kari Bradley, Flor Diaz Smith, Mia Smith- the board voted in favor of this configuration.

Jaiel Pulskamp indicated that she would float between Finance and Education Quality.

Superintendent Taylor explained the board vacancies:

Berlin - 2 year vacancy - Jonathan Goddard has expressed interest - the town selectboard will have to take action to appoint him until the next Town Meeting Day.

Corinne Stridsberg suggested that this opportunity be publicized so that Berlin residents know about this vacancy and are able to express interest as well. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet suggested that the Worcester selectboard do the same, and that this opportunity be shared with Worcester residents.

Chris McVeigh moved to appoint each principal, or designee, as Truant Officer at their school. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. This motion carried unanimously.

Regularly scheduled board meetings: First and third Wednesday. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet suggested a start time of 5:30. Jaiel and Marylynne cannot be there until 6:30 on Wednesday. They agreed to try to make 6 p.m. start time work for their schedules.

Flor Diaz Smith moved to hold meetings on the first and third Wednesday of each month, at 6:00 p.m. Seconded by Jaiel Pulskamp. Discussion: Chris McVeigh wants to be sure to designate that the second meeting of each month is held at the elementary schools. (This is not part of the motion though.) **This motion carried unanimously.**

Some discussion followed around touring elementary schools as part of the meeting agenda. Jill Olson suggested that if building tours are planned, they take place before the actual meeting time.

Board members will adopt board norms after they are discussed at the board retreat. Jill Olson suggested that the board change the group configuration into more of a circle or a “U” shape. The acoustics in the U-32 cafeteria make it very difficult to hear one another, even with the use of a sound system.

Annual board work session (retreat) - the board will discuss this later in the meeting.

Designate locations for posting meeting agendas: **Lindy Johnson moved to keep the posting locations as they currently are. Seconded by Jill Olson, this motion carried unanimously.**

Robert’s Rules of Order: Superintendent Taylor stated that, with the board now meeting the criteria of a “large board,” there are more specific Robert’s Rules.

Code of Ethics for School Board Members: **Jill Olson moved to adopt the Code of Ethics, as presented. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith.** Discussion: Stephen Looke stated that the board in the past has never formally adopted this code. Chris McVeigh indicated that the Code of Ethics provides a signature place and he is not comfortable with providing a signature. **A vote was called and this motion did NOT carry.**

Identify communication practices: **Chris McVeigh moved, regarding communications: the chair speaks for the board, and the chair has the discretion to ask the superintendent to speak for the board on particular issues. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.**

Board development: The board will schedule a retreat to discuss this further. Some of the board developments offered by VSBA were pointed out.

Local and statewide education advocacy responsibilities: Superintendent Taylor spoke briefly about opportunities for board members to advocate locally and state-wide.

Designate newspaper of record: Flor Diaz Smith moved to designate Times Argus as newspaper of record. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

Stephen Looke moved to appoint Flor Diaz Smith a voting delegate for statewide health insurance ratification for next negotiations cycle beginning in 2021. Seconded by Lindy Johnson, this motion carried unanimously.

Chris McVeigh moved to appoint Flor Diaz Smith as representative to the Central Vermont Career Center Advisory Board. Seconded by Stephen Looke, this motion carried unanimously.

3.0 Welcome

3.1 Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed those present.

3.2 Agenda Revisions: none

3.3 Public Comments: Corinne Stridsberg noted that U-32 opened in 1971, and she hopes that the board will consider a way to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

4.0 Board Operations (Discussion/Action)

4.1 Board Orientation: Flor Diaz Smith shared the board work plan and reviewed discussions and ideas to date about plans for board retreats.

4.2 Retreat: Wednesday April 8th was suggested as a retreat to include the leadership team. Dorothy Naylor suggested that the board select two or three topics that have come up at prior board meetings, to devote time for discussion, at a retreat. For example, the idea of elementary school schedules and sharing resources around topics such as allied arts. Scott Thompson indicated that any and all board members can contribute to the agenda for retreat. Board members agreed on April 8, 6:00 p.m. for board retreat.

4.3 Appointment of New Board Members: Mary Ormsby will inform Worcester and Berlin Selectboards about board vacancies. Superintendent Taylor will work with them to publicize these vacancies in the community so that the selectboard can appoint board members. Chris McVeigh asked that the board be made privy to letters of interest. Superintendent Taylor indicated that the hope is that the board will take action at their next board meeting.

5.0 Policy (Discussion/Action)

Kari Bradley moved to approve the following policies: Seconded by Dorothy Naylor. Each policy was discussed in turn.

5.1 Second Reading of:

- B1 Substitute Teachers,
- B2 Volunteers & Work Study Students,
- B3 Alcohol & Drug Free Workplace: Jill Olson asked for clarification around the verbiage “employees and/or independent contractor” - *restore “of.”* Stephen Looke suggested that there is a definition of “impairing influence” - how do we know what this is? Some discussion followed around this. Chris McVeigh suggested tabling this policy and allowing the Policy Committee to address the concerns.
- B6 HIPPA Compliance,
- B7 Tobacco & Vaping Prohibition,
- B20 Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment & Background Checks: Kari Bradley asked whether there is a place in the policy to call for pursuing recruitment practices that will not limit diversity. Chris McVeigh suggested tabling this policy as well, and allowing the Policy Committee to address the concerns. Jill Olson suggested “diverse” versus “minority” applicant; she also noted that sexual orientation is not mentioned in the policy. Stephen Looke suggested that, in Vermont, if we value diversity, we need to actively seek it; he would like to communicate this in the policy.
- B21 Professional Development,
- B22 Public Complaints About Personnel: Scott Thompson suggested changing “individual” to “district employee,” and changing the term “individual” in the policy for more clarification. Some discussion followed around how to communicate who is the supervisor, for example, if parents are reading the policy and wondering where to go with a complaint. Chris McVeigh suggested adding verbiage in the policy that directs people, if unclear about “chain of review,” to check with the building principal.
- B30 Staffing & Job Descriptions,
- B31 Educator Supervision & Evaluation: Probationary Teachers,

- B32 Personnel Files,
- B33 Resignations,
- B35 Family Medical Leave Policies: Stephen Looke suggested that the policy is that we are going to follow state and federal law. Why do we include the statute in the policy, if we are going to follow the state and federal law? Superintendent Taylor indicated that it is beneficial for staff negotiations purposes, to have this policy in writing.

Chris McVeigh moved to amend the motion to table B3 and B20, and to amend the policy B22 as discussed tonight. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith. This amendment carried unanimously. The amended motion is now to approve B1, B2, B6, B7, B21, B22 as amended, B30, B31, B32, B33, B35, tabling B3 and B20. This motion carried unanimously.

6.0 Finance (Action)

6.1 Authorize the School District to Accept All Federal and State Grants; to Administer and to Act as the Representative of the School District: **Flor Diaz Smith moved to authorize the School District to accept all federal and state grants, to administer and to act as the representative of the School District. Seconded by Chris McVeigh. This motion carried unanimously.**

6.2 Doty Memorial School Siding & Window Project Bid Recommendation: Superintendent Taylor reviewed this bid process and the recommendation to select Connor Construction. **Stephen Looke moved to award the bid in the amount of \$321,715 to Connor Contracting. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.** Some discussion followed around the fact that this project is significantly more expensive than what was estimated. Superintendent Taylor explained that there is a shortage of contractors and that this will likely be the case for projects as long as this shortage is in effect. This motion carried unanimously.

6.3 Fund Transfer Request for Doty Project: **Dorothy Naylor moved to authorize general fund transfer to cover the project shortfall in the amount of \$42,000. Seconded by Chris McVeigh.** Discussion: Jaiel Pulskamp asked what material the siding is. Superintendent Taylor indicated that the material is a composite. Jaiel Pulskamp asked what is the plan for security entrance. Superintendent Taylor indicated that a school safety grant is being sought to cover some of the expenses for security barrier as part of the project. Kari Bradley asked for clarification - will this be the end of the Doty capital fund? Superintendent Taylor: yes. Superintendent Taylor explained the difference between the bid award and the cost of the project. **This motion carried unanimously.**

7.0 Consent Agenda (Action)

7.1 **Approve Minutes of 2.19.20: Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of February 19, 2020. Seconded by Flor Diaz Smith, this motion carried unanimously.**

7.2 **Approve Board Orders: Marylynne Strachan moved to approve the board orders in the following amounts: \$367,387.65, \$16,571.15. Seconded by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, this motion carried unanimously.**

8.0 Reports (Discussion/Action)

8.1 Student: Mia Smith reported that the Nordic Team (boys and girls) both won states championships. She shared other sports news and theater news.

8.2 Superintendent:

Superintendent Taylor had provided a written report. She invited board members to attend Continuous Improvement Plan meetings, the next being March 19th (at Doty School, 4:30 - 7:30). Flor Diaz Smith shared that the group had discussed that the current board mission statement is more of a vision statement, and that the board might want to work on a new mission statement.

Report on District Budget and Article Votes: Superintendent Taylor shared that the district budget passed with a good margin, and she thanked the board for their work. Scott Thompson also shared the community for attending meetings and for providing input.

9.0 Personnel (Action): none

9.1 Approve Hires, Resignations, Retirements: none tonight

Scott Thompson welcomed old and new board members.

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet asked how many board members are available next Wednesday to attend the hearing. At least eight board members are available to attend.

10.0 Future Agenda Items:

- 50th anniversary U-32

Flor Diaz Smith noted that she would like the board to put on the agenda: reconsider VSBA dues. Some discussion followed around how the board decides to put an item on an agenda.

Scott Thompson indicated that, for this school year, the VSBA dues are finished business.

Superintendent Taylor reviewed policy.

Diane Nichols-Fleming asked whether the “Agenda Revision” is a time when board members can bring other issues onto the agenda. She had suggested that the board wait until the board is fully seated to take up the issue of VSBA dues.

Jill Olson stated that she believes this needs to be discussed in time to consider membership for next year (20-21).

Jaiel Pulskamp asked that the agendas be planned mindfully so that time is allotted for discussion. She suggested that the agendas are so packed that discussion sometimes gets abbreviated.

11.0 Executive Session for Personnel: none

12.0 Adjournment: The board adjourned by consensus at 9:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Stoudt, Board Recording Secretary