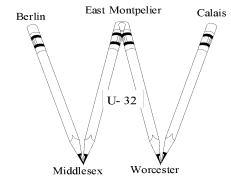


Washington Central Unified Union School District

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

Minutes

9.18.19 6:30PM

Doty Memorial School, 24 Calais Road, Worcester

approved 10-2-19

Board Members Present: Scott Thompson, Jonas Eno-Van Fleet, Dorothy Naylor, Flor Diaz Smith, Lindy Johnson, Jaiel Pulskamp, Marylynne Strachan, Chris McVeigh, George Gross, Mia Smith (student representative), Townes DeGroot (student representative)

Administrators Present: Superintendent Debra Taylor, Director of Special Services Kelly Bushey, Director of Curriculum Jen Miller-Arsenault, Business Administrator Lori Bibeau, Technology Coordinator Keith MacMartin, Berlin Principal Aaron Boynton, EMES Principal Alicia Lyford, Doty Principal Gillian Fuqua, Rumney Principal Casey Provost, U-32 Principal Steven Dellinger-Pate, U-32 Assistant Principal Jody Emerson

Others Present: Mark Andrews; David Delcore, Times Argus; ORCA videographer; Rick Kehne, Calais; David Lawrence, Middlesex; Ellen Knoedler, East Montpelier; Michael Duane, East Montpelier; Bruce Johnson, East Montpelier; Chani Waterhouse, Worcester; Elise Thorsen, East Montpelier; Pat Hagouri

1.0 Call to Order: **Scott Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.**

Jonas Eno-Van Fleet moved to go into executive session to discuss the matter of hiring a new superintendent, Dorothy Naylor seconded. Motion passed unanimously at 6:32 pm.

Chris McVeigh moved to come out of executive session, Dorothy Naylor seconded. Motion passed unanimously at 7:04.

No action was taken during executive session.

1.1 Reception of Guests: Scott Thompson welcomed the guests and invited them to tour the school building with the board, when the time comes.

1.2 Agenda Revisions: completed article 5.1, discussion of public comment received via email regarding VSBA.

Lindy Johnson renewed the motion to consider the VSBA dues; the Chair decided that this motion is out of order because it is finished business. The ruling would need to be

appealed in order to be considered and warned at another meeting. The appeal can overturn the Chair's decision with a majority vote. Lindy Johnson has requested that this issue be on the next agenda.

Motion was made by Lindy Johnson to appeal the Chair's decision, seconded by Jonas Van Fleet

Discussion:

The Chair would like to not rehash old issues once they have been finished unless there is a material change in the basis of the issue that puts everything in a new light.

Lindy Johnson note that many people have contacted her asking why the board is rejecting the help that the VSBA has given over the year over a sum of \$7000. Her job is to represent the people.

Marylynne Strachan was asked to not re-open the motion by a resident; she agrees with Lindy but isn't sure that having another vote will be move us forward.

Chris McVeigh feels that another vote should be taken if there is momentum for it; he would like to see the emails that Lindy received from community members before it is brought before the board for discussion. This will be setting a precedent for the future.

Jonas Eno Van-Fleet noted that Chris McVeigh has litigation against the VSBA in the courts right now. He also received an email from a resident in support of re-visiting the issue.

Dorothy Naylor feels that the board should not revisit issues that have been finalized. She stated that she is not against Act 46 anymore, she is trying to work for all of the students in the district and going back to closed issues does not help the board move forward.

George Gross wonders what the harm is in leaving the VSBA for a year and re-visiting this next year; he would like to move forward.

Flor Diaz-Smith wonders what the repercussions would be of not being part of the VSBA. She felt that the decision was made at the last meeting simply because of Act 46. At a time when we need more help rather than less, it doesn't make sense to leave the VSBA.

The board discussed the new Policy Committee that was formed at the last meeting and will meet next Monday.

Lindy Johnson is concerned with losing the policy help from VSBA, that is why she voted to stay in VSBA. They have very good training for boards, as well. The board will then not spend legal fees for outside policy review.

Jaiel Pulskamp is concerned with the lack of transparency of the VSBA. She would support joining them next year if they show more transparency. She is comfortable with having a second vote on the issue.

The VSBA could review policies for a fee for non-members.

The Chair was interested in the perception that the vote failed because of Act 46.

Vote on Motion to Appeal the Chair's decision that the motion was out of order:

Yes - Flor, Chris, Lindy, Jonas

Nay - Scott, Marylynne, Dorothy, George, Jaiel

The appeal failed.

1.3 Public Comments:

Rick Kehne feels that the issue with the VSBA goes beyond Act 46; they were doing many unprofessional things behind the scenes that harmed our towns and the district. He wants to hold them accountable.

Bruce Johnson would like the board to revisit the precedent that was just set by the Chair of the board.

Chani Waterhouse thanks the board for the hard work that they've done to work with each other and build relationships. She feels that this issue has already harmed the relationships that they have worked so hard to build.

Ellen Knoedler thanks Dorothy Naylor for putting information on the Front Porch Forum regarding the board; she wishes other board members would also share information so that residents are better informed. Marylynn and Chris have been posting a summary to Front Porch Forum and a Middlesex Facebook page.

Steven Dellinger-Pate noted that there previously was a process in place to share one document and that should be looked at again. The board needs to have a consistent voice.

Rick Kehne stated that each town needs to have its own voice, as well for things that interest that town.

Chani Waterhouse stated that each board member represents all towns and feels that it is disruptive to split the information sharing by town.

Request for easier access to Board information on the district website.

Request for a district string training.

2.0 Administrator Voices

2.1 Spotlight – Doty Principal, Gillian Fuqua – Tour and Update

Gillian Fuqua reviewed Doty as the smallest jewel in the crown. She wanted to go outside to review the work that has been done on the siding and the playground, however it was too dark. All of the exterior doors will be re-keyed next week, being mindful of privacy and security, as it is not known who has keys. Many of the doorknobs will be replaced with levers with locking buttons on the inside. The board and administrator's toured the building.

2.2 Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Taylor had prepared a written report. She reviewed the WCLT Plus section. Based on a question from Townes, she is hoping for broader representation of teachers on the committees.

3.0 Consent Agenda

3.1 **Approve Minutes of 9.4.19: Flor Diaz-Smith moved to approve the minutes of September 4, 2019. Seconded by Marylynn Strachan, this motion carried unanimously.**

4.0 Finance (Discussion/Action)

4.1 Committee Report

Flor Diaz-Smith wondered if the board is okay with the format of the report that will be presented going forward. She referred to the minutes from the most recent Finance Committee meeting on 9/12. Lori Bibeau noted that the report will be updated and presented quarterly. The Fund Balance summary is a snapshot of the cash on hand at the date of the report.

At the end of the last fiscal year, the U-32 board deferred the fund transfer to the U-32 Capital Fund, so this board needs to approve the transfer. The amount of cash available will be slightly above the 2% target.

The Chair wondered if the board members are comfortable with looking at these numbers. He suggested a quick tutorial from Lori Bibeau at each meeting to help with understanding. This will be added to a future agenda.

Motion was made by the Chair to transfer \$437,490 from the general fund to the capital fund earmarked for U-32, seconded by Flor Diaz-Smith

Discussion:

Amended Motion: Chris McVeigh made an amendment to the motion to transfer \$300,000 to the capital fund and use the remaining funds to move \$137,400 into a separate fund to address skill level inequities, seconded by George Gross.

Flor Diaz-Smith noted this money has been earmarked for U-32 and the funds should not be diverted at this time. The U-32 capital fund is in need of being replenished. Steven Dellinger-Pate asked for the full amount to finish capital projects for the year.

Vote on Amended Motion: motion was defeated unanimously

Vote on Original Motion: motion passed unanimously

Chris McVeigh requested a monthly report instead of a quarterly report. Lori Bibeau noted that changes don't generally happen on a monthly basis.

Debra Taylor noted that there is a request to increase the English Language Learner specialist from .5FTE to .8FTE. the amount of \$30,000 in the report which includes benefits.

Motion was made to increase the English Language Learner position by .3FTE for a total of \$30,232 by Flor Diaz-Smith, seconded by Marylynne Strachan; motion passed unanimously.

4.2 Approve Board Orders (Action):

Lindy Johnson noted that an invoice from Calais was included in the board orders to pay for special election. Debra Taylor noted that going forward the school district would pay for the costs of special elections. She is willing to speak further with the Calais Town Clerk. The board will spell out what expenses will be approved in the future. Lindy is uncomfortable with paying for this amount for Calais as no other towns had submitted expenses and this has never been done before. Flor will be more comfortable with a specific policy going forward. The Chair suggested pulling this amount from the current board orders and send it back to the Finance Committee for discussion.

Chris McVeigh moved to void the check made out to the Town of Calas in the amount of \$3,739.90, seconded by Marylynne Strachan; motion passed unanimously.

Scott Thompson moved to approve the board orders in the amounts of: \$263,925.75. Seconded by Flor Diaz-Smith. This motion carried unanimously.

The student representatives gave a quick review of what is happening at U-32. Homecoming is this weekend. There was a College Fair for juniors and seniors today. A new group, YATST, has been brought back to help bridge the gap between students and teachers. Townes DeGroot wondered about school action based on the planned climate change strike; it may affect sports as students will be absent from school. Steven Dellinger-Pate noted that the students represent the elementary students, as well, so they need to work out how to gather that information.

5.0 Board Organization and Planning

5.1 Superintendent Search Consultant

See above

5.2 WCUUSD Annual Meeting Date, Election of District Officers & Co-Mingling of Budget Ballots (Action)

Debra Tylor noted that the District Annual Meeting is currently scheduled for Town Meeting Day and it has been decided that this won't work. The three officers will be voted

by Australian Ballot at Town Meeting. The ballots will be commingled for the budget and election of officers. A technical change needs to be made to the Articles of Agreement. The board should decide if they would like to have an Annual Meeting. Not having an Annual Meeting would not preclude an informational meeting. The Town Clerks feel that having a vote by the residents would make sense for November since people are used to voting then. Jonas Eno-Van Fleet suggested having an informational meeting prior to February vacation as well as the Monday before Town Meeting.

Motion was made by Chris McVeigh, amended by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet to adopt Version 2 of Article 1, deleting 'last' and inserting [the Monday before the first Tuesday in March], seconded by Lindy Johnson

Bruce Johnson noted that these motions would make an Annual Meeting unnecessary. He suggested taking this process slowly and adopt these changes for this year only.

Vote on Motion: passed unanimously

Article 2 discussion - the board is comfortable with having the Moderator voted on by Australian ballot.

Motion was made by Flor Diaz-Smith to adopt Article 2 as written where the Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer be elected by Australian ballot, second by Lindy Johnson; motion passed 8-1

Article 3 discussion

The board discussed whether this article affects decisions on closing of schools.

Motion was made by Lindy Johnson to adopt Article 3 as written, seconded by Flor Diaz-Smith

The majority of the board needs to agree to close a school in the district; it would not go to the town voters. The election of officers and the school budget will require the ballots to be commingled with adoption of this article amendment. Chris McVeigh is interested to see the voting separately by town to get a sense of how the board is doing. Lindy Johnson feels that we need to look at the budget voting as a district instead of continuing to divide the towns; we should all be one.

Vote on Motion: passed 7-2

5.3 Board Goal Monitoring Schedule (Action)

Tabled

5.4 Book Reflection – Equity from the Board Room to the Classroom Chapter 3 (Discussion)

Tabled

5.5 Board Committees (Discussion)

5.5.1 Superintendent Search Committee & Charge (Action)

Motion was made by Flor Diaz-Smith, seconded by Chris McVeigh to form a committee with the charge as follows: *Draft the hiring and evaluation criteria for the board approval by end October 2019. Identify prospects, screen applications, interview and refer top candidate(s) to the board for final decision by end of February 2019; motion passed unanimously*

The make-up of the committee would be board members, administrators, teachers and residents. Lindy Johnson suggested having four board members appointed to the committee.

Motion was made by Jonas Eno-Van Fleet to appoint Scott Thompson, Flor Diaz-Smith, Chris McVeigh, and Dorothy Naylor to the committee, seconded by George Gross; motion passed unanimously.

5.6 Community Budget Forum Dates (Action)

Tabled

5.7 Appoint Representative/Proxy for VEHI/VSBIT Annual Meeting (Action)

Motion was made by Chris McVeigh, seconded by Flor Diaz-Smith, to appoint Debra Taylor as the proxy/representative to the VEHI/VSBIT Annual Meeting; motion passed unanimously

6.0 Personnel

6.1 Approve Hires (Action): none

6.2 Approve Increase in English Language Learner (ELL) Contract by .3FTE Due to Student Needs

See section 4.1 above

7.0 Future Agenda Items

7.1 CV Fiber - Solar Power

7.2 Possible Renaming of District

8.0 Reflection and Summary of Meeting – Next Steps for Board Members:

Marylynne Strachan has volunteered to write up a summary of tonight's meeting to be distributed to the district towns.

9.0 Adjournment: The meeting adjourned by consensus at 10:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristi Flynn, Board Recording Secretary



TA article on VSBA Membership

1 message

Rubin Bennett <rubin@rbtechvt.com>

Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 3:13 PM

To: "vfrazier5477@aol.com" <vfrazier5477@aol.com>, "dnaylor@u32.org" <dnaylor@u32.org>, "sthompson@u32.org" <sthompson@u32.org>, "ljohnson@u32.org" <ljohnson@u32.org>, "fdiazsmith@u32.org" <fdiazsmith@u32.org>, "mstrachan@u32.org" <mstrachan@u32.org>, "jpulskamp@u32.org" <jpulskamp@u32.org>, "jenovanfleet@u32.org" <jenovanfleet@u32.org>, "cmcveigh@u32.org" <cmcveigh@u32.org>, "ggross@u32.org" <ggross@u32.org>
Cc: "dtaylor@u32.org" <dtaylor@u32.org>, "Metivier, Krista" <kmetivier@u32.org>

Dear WCUUSD School Board

I read with disappointment the article in last week's Times Argus about your ongoing deliberations about membership in the VSBA. Once again, political agendas and wrangling are taking a toll on the schools and communities of WCUUSD.

As all of you are aware, the VSBA does much more than advocate for Vermont Schools (which, as several of you have repeatedly pointed out, they did not do to your satisfaction with regards to Act46).

The annual dues in the VSBA cost roughly \$7,000, an extremely low price to pay for all of the benefits that the organization brings a newly formed Board. A key responsibility of a new Board is to adopt new policies for governance and operations, all of which must be very carefully written to avoid legal or policy snares and reviewed by attorneys for compliance with both state and federal law. The VSBA offers a complete suite of up-to-date, and legally reviewed model policies for all of their members, which you have, in turn, adopted for the vast majority of the policies currently governing WCUUSD. I find it highly unlikely that writing and legal review of the remaining policies to be adopted will cost less than your membership dues if you elect to 'go it on your own', and in turn, I hope that you will reconsider your membership in the VSBA.

There are several members of the WCUUSD Board who seem to believe it is your duty to endlessly re-litigate Act46. I respect that belief, even if I do not share it. But that fight must not be at the expense of the students and staff of WCUUSD. Distractions like months-long conversations around a \$7,000 expenditure take away from the critical work facing this Board: Hiring a permanent Superintendent, staying abreast of and involved in the potential legislation around special education funding (not coincidentally, work that the VSBA is actively involved in on behalf of all Vermont schools), and most importantly, creating a culture of open, healthy communication that will be modelled throughout the 6 schools in the district.

For those of you who feel so strongly about Act46 that you continue to burden the work of the new Board with these conversations, perhaps consider making that your primary purpose and resign from the Board, making room for members who will put our school community and students first. Only then will you be free from the conflicts of interest that are inevitable when you act as both plaintiff and defendant in legal actions, and the new Board can function unfettered by the same.

Respectfully,

Rubin Bennett

Former Chair, East Montpelier Elementary School Board, 2009-2019

Rubin Bennett

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