

LNSU/LNMUUSD BOARD MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2024

Board members present: Cambridge – Mark Stebbins, Denise Webster, Amy Listenik; Eden – Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park – Lisa Barry, Patty Hayford, Philip Kiely; Johnson – Mark Nielsen, Katie Orost, Allen Audette, Monica Stearns; Waterville – Bart Bezio

Board members absent: Belvidere – Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge – Jan Sander, Susan Prescott, Christy Liddy; Eden – David Whitcomb; Hyde Park – Tina Lowe; Johnson – Angela Lamell

Administrators present: Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Dylan Laflam, Jennifer Hulse, Diane Reilly, Betzi Goodman, David Manning, Denise Maurice, Paula Beattie, Blake Nemeth, Rene Thibault

Others present: Rich Westman

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 5:15.

K. Orost moved to approve the agenda as printed, L. Barry seconded and the motion was passed.

No members of the public wished to comment.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items

J. Hunsberger moved to approve the minutes of the LNSU/LNMUUSD Board, Finance & Capital Committee, Curriculum Committee, and Social/Racial Justice Committee meetings on January 8, 2024; the minutes of the LNSU/LNMUUSD Board special meeting on January 16, 2024; and the minutes of the January 30 and February 7, 2024 Personnel Committee meetings, K. Orost seconded and the motion was passed.

B. Bezio said he has reviewed the board orders listed on the agenda with dates from November 14, 2023 through December 29, 2023 and he recommends approval. **L. Barry moved to approve the directors' orders printed on the agenda, K. Orost and the motion was passed.**

Eden Bus Transportation Update

D. Clark said Eden has been short a driver all year and attempts to hire one have been unsuccessful. Lamoille Valley Transportation has been filling in as they can but they don't have a dedicated driver for Eden. The support staff union has agreed to allow us to move forward with contracting with Lamoille Valley Transportation to provide regular dedicated transportation. If we contract with them, they can hire a driver to fill routes in Eden. Deb Newcomb will continue in her position. D. Clark will get quotes from LVT this week. We don't need to go out to bid because this is an extension of an existing contract. This

year we have one person on staff who has a CDL with a bus endorsement who has agreed to be an on-call bus substitute. Two others have agreed to pursue getting a CDL with bus endorsement.

Recommended Amendment of In-District Transfer Policy

C. Gallagher said the proposed amendment to the in-district transfer policy is under legal review. Our attorney is suggesting that we look at this policy in conjunction with our class size policy. There are some questions about siblings of transfer students and some deadlines that don't feel firm enough. There is no applicable VSBA model policy, so we are having our attorney look at it. With the number of transfers we have had this year, some Hyde Park classrooms are at capacity and over the recommended Agency of Education limit. The proposed amendment will be presented to the board at the next meeting. (*Denise Webster arrived at 5:21*)

Central Office Updates

C. Gallagher said the premise of Act 127 was to redistribute resources to districts that were historically underserved. The intent is good but implementation has been less so. Some districts are proposing adding capital improvement projects costing \$3-6 million to their budgets. This is not tenable when we look at the pot of money available statewide. A legislator has suggested lifting the 5% cap. If that happens, the yield will go up and taxes will go down. But nothing is set in stone yet. There are 3 districts that would like to postpone the votes on their budgets. We are not in a position to need to do that. Whether Act 127 is implemented as is or with changes, this board has developed responsible budgets that are 75% or more student-serving. We indefinitely put off the bond vote and major capital repairs. Our budgets are responsible and there is nothing in them to cut. Stowe, Champlain Valley and Mount Mansfield are actively seeking to delay their budget votes. We are not in that position but what is happening in those districts has created noise about the topic. People need to be educated about what is happening.

D. Baker said the January finance report has been shared with the board. She would say we are still okay. It is still a tight year. She doesn't expect we will have a big surplus but we may not have a deficit either. We are not buying anything unless it is absolutely necessary.

D. Laflam said the maker space at Hyde Park Elementary tested positive for PCBs, but it was the only room in the building that did. It has been closed down, along with other rooms that were considered to be in the same group. (*M. Stebbins and D. Manning arrived at 5:25.*) Stowe Environmental will be our consultant on this. We are trying to discover the source of the PCBs. It could be some equipment in the room. He is hoping to have more information at the next board meeting.

R. Thibault said he attended a rally at the statehouse last week with some Lamoille North students. Students in the allied health program were part of an anti-vape, anti-tobacco rally. It was the largest student rally ever at the statehouse. It was a great example of our students using their voices to push for change. He also saw students from three of our elementary schools who were here for the elementary chorus festival. Bob Fredette's business students recently participated in a nationwide livestream to talk about the business program here, which is one of the most successful campus business programs in the country.

D. Laflam said we recently got 2 grants that will offset the cost of large capital projects. We got about \$167K to upgrade the Johnson biomass boiler and \$225K to offset the cost of the mandated new storm-water system we are putting in this summer. The grants will cover 90% of the cost.

C. Gallagher said we got the first of our Juul settlement payments. It was calculated at a little over \$30K but after attorneys' fees we got about \$15K. She thinks we will probably use it for substance use education.

D. Webster said she was involved in principal interviews where she works and one of the candidates praised the program here.

Adjourn

J. Hunsberger moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded and passed at 5:30.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths

UNAPPROVED