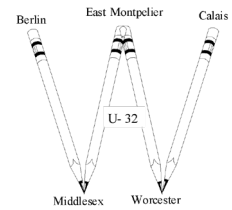


# Washington Central Unified Union School District

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

---

1130 Gallison Hill Road  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Phone (802) 229-0553  
Fax (802) 229-2761



## WCUUSD Finance Committee Minutes 8.13.24 8:30-9:30 AM Central Office, 1130 Gallison Hill Rd. Montpelier Via Video Conference

**Present:** Flor Diaz Smith, Zach Sullivan, Ursula Stanley, Steven Dellinger-Pate, Chris McVeigh, Susanne Gann, Allen Gilbert, David Delcore, Noah Weinstein

- 1. Call to Order:** Flor Diaz Smith called the meeting to order at 8:30 am
- 2. Approve Minutes of 6.11.24, 7.31.24:** Chris McVeigh moved to approve the minutes of June 11, 2024, and July 31, 2024. Seconded by Zach Sullivan. This motion carried unanimously.
- 3. Informational Reports**

**3.1. Monthly Reflections:** Susanne Gann provided a written monthly update memo, dated August 8, 2024. Some highlights: fiscal year convergence - end of year, new year, etc. - close one year then open the next. Business Office staff is working feverishly this time of year! She thanked her staff! She shared that auditors are done with initial planning for 24/25 years - this will be done a little differently with remote and onsite options (the onsite option being later in the year than years past); expecting a draft in November; bringing final to the board in January. She shared that there are numerous ads for new positions. New teacher orientation is planned for August 21 & 22. Some regularly scheduled meetings with building administrative assistants are planned. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared that the contract with the U-32 Buildings and Grounds director has been continued this year; he feels that it is in the best interest at least for the coming year, as we continue to look at configuration, and savings have been found in other areas to support this continuation. Chris McVeigh asked how this leaves the board, when a position was eliminated but now has been reinstated. He asked what savings were found to be able to sustain this position. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared some of the savings in other positions that created this scenario. He shared also that there was an issue with the contract that factored into this decision-making. Chris McVeigh asked for details but Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that this is an Executive Session discussion. Chris McVeigh stated that this is a policy issue and that it does not sit well with him when the board makes a decision to cut a position and the superintendent reinstates the position. Superintendent Dellinger-Pate reminded him that it is within the purview of the superintendent to hire and fire; the board sets a budget goal and we have met that. Ursula Stanley stated that during the budget process we create a

budget; we get information from administration; ultimately we do not have control over what positions they hire; that is why we hire them, to make those levels of decisions. Chris McVeigh stated that he has difficulty with presenting a scenario to the community and then changing the practice (as in this situation.) He would like to reinstate the role of the board - e.g., he spoke about the board's role to hire principals. We did not do that this summer; he is not aware of delegating that authority. He feels it is important to abide by what our roles are. Flor Diaz Smith stated that we hire the superintendent - it is our only hire as a board - we put all of our faith and trust in him to make sure that our schools are safe, that we are keeping up with goals for our district. The superintendent has the flexibility, especially with buildings and grounds, to make staffing decisions that will benefit our schools and our district as a whole. This happens all the time, e.g. at this time, there is a need for an additional teacher at Berlin - we are kept informed. As long as the hiring procedures are followed, it is not our job to micromanage. Otherwise, we just want a "manager" as opposed to a "superintendent." Our power as a board is to say "yay" or "nay" to administrative position hires. She stated that the culture of WCUUSD is to collaborate, but the concerns his stated are not within our purview. She recalled that the board approved the principal hire - Chris McVeigh stated that this did not happen for Calais School. Flor Diaz Smith stated that this would be formally approved at the next board meeting. Chris McVeigh stated that the board had received a welcoming email about this hire but already appears to be a "done deal. "Superintendent Dellinger-Pate shared the hiring process for this position, which is considered a summer hire. The hiring committee was comprised of teachers, staff, and community members, this was their top candidate - the board will see more at the next meeting as far as qualifications. In the practice of summer hiring, it was necessary in order to have the system in place for the coming school year. Chris McVeigh stated that he wanted to reaffirm the role of the board in circumstances; if we do not continue to consider it, then he has concerns that soon the board will have no role in the hiring of principals. Flor Diaz Smith thanked Susanne Gann and asked her to thank her staff for their hard work this summer.

- 3.2. FY 25 Capital Improvement Project Report:** Susanne Gann had provided a written update to capital projects, especially over the summer, dated August 9, 2024. She stated that, regarding the projects altogether, we are anticipating coming in on budget. Zach Sullivan asked, if the timeline for the projects goes later than hoped, would this interfere with student learning? Susanne Gann explained that some of the last minute finishing touches, etc., can be done after students arrive without interruption to learning; e.g. students might have to use a different route to get to the playground for the time being - not hugely impactful.

#### **4. Discussion/Action**

- 4.1. Approve District-wide Exterior Door Rekeying Project:** Ursula Stanley moved that the board approve the use of the capital improvement fund reserves to pay for a Districtwide Exterior Door Rekeying Project for an amount not to exceed \$35,000. **Seconded by Zach Sullivan.** Discussion: Susanne Gann explained that this is ancillary to the security system project. **This motion carried unanimously.**
- 4.2. Approve Contingency Increase for the Safety Systems of Vermont Contract:** Chris McVeigh moved that the board approve increasing the allowed contingency for the Safety Systems of Vermont contract by \$39,140, for a total contract amount not to exceed \$469,671. **Seconded by Ursula Stanley.**

Discussion: Chris McVeigh asked, what would be the total cost of this project? Susanne Gann explained the total of contract \$469,671, but we do not anticipate going over the \$600,000 allowance for the project. **This motion carried unanimously.**

**4.3. Award Bid for U-32 Replacement Mower: Ursula Stanley moved that the board authorize the Superintendent to purchase a 2024 Ventrac Kubota Tractor 4520Y with Wide Area Mower and accessories from Grassland for an amount not to exceed \$41,855.76. Seconded by Zach Sullivan, this motion carried unanimously.**

**4.4. Review/Discuss draft FY 2025-26 Budget Timeline:** Steven Dellinger-Pate and Susanne Gann had provided a draft budget timeline, which includes presenting a baseline budget in September (this moves the timeline up) - also hope for configuration calculation at that time. Steven Dellinger-Pate explained that the hope is to move the process up by one month in order to allow more time to discuss. Zach Sullivan asked, how are we thinking about the fact that we move more and more forward before we know the tax impact (information required from the state level) - do we just focus on the spending? Superintendent Dellinger-Pate stated that, as always, the spending is what we are able to control. Just this morning there was some information about updated CLA. He stated we are trying to ensure that we have plenty of time for discussions. Chris McVeigh asked, would there be an opportunity for the leadership team to consider what we are NOT going to do. So there can be a potential reallocation of resources? Steven Dellinger-Pate - yes, this will come with draft one - looking for opportunities to streamline/ reduce, to prepare a responsible budget. Ursula Stanley asked, as the legislature develops, e.g., CLA, will we plan to do a board training when we receive this information? Steven Dellinger-Pate - there is already a small slide show prepared at the state level to explain the process to date - this will be shared. Ursula stated, regarding the draft document, in October - there are no listed dates where Finance Committee reviews/ board reviews. There are other places where the Finance Committee approves - given the new information we have received re: advisory, maybe change the language to "recommend" versus "approve." Flor Diaz Smith asked, how do we weave "data dumps" into this document/ timeline? (so everyone is referring to one document) Should we recommend to the board that we do budget training sooner? September 18th will be a full agenda. Is there a time before then to do board onboarding/ budget training? Susanne Gann stated that there are going to be some changes this year, and she is not sure she can have it ready before September 18. Zach Sullivan asked, would it work to do a little bit of sharing/ training in pieces, so that we can get going on the "what are we spending" piece - and put off the state impact until later on? There might be some information that would be useful to board members sooner? Flor Diaz Smith asked Susanne to consider this, keeping in mind the full agenda for the September 18 board meeting; she asked the administration to consider this. We might have to adjust and pivot this year; she appreciates moving the budget discussion to September this year.

## **5. Future Agenda Items**

### **5.1. Next Regular Meeting: September 10, 2024**

Flor Diaz Smith suggested opening to public comment since we have 15 additional minutes. Allen Gilbert stated that the amount of money that was on hand to make changes according to tonight's agenda and action was around \$220K. He stated that the savings that are being presented re: closing Doty School are similar to that amount - he feels that is noteworthy.

**6. Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 9:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lisa Grace, Committee Recording Secretary