

MINUTES



**Addison Central School District
ACSD Board
Board Meeting
Monday, August 26, 2024, 6:30 pm - 9:00 pm
Middlebury Union High School Library 73 Charles Ave, Middlebury**

ACSD District Vision and Mission

OUR VISION

Our vision is for all ACSD students to reach their full learning potential, have a sense of belonging in our schools, and enrich our community and the communities where they live in the future.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to provide high-quality, equitable, and varied learning environments that inspire a passion for learning and growth among our students.

In-Person Attendance

Barbara Wilson; Brian Bauer; Courtney Krahn; Ellen Whelan-Wuest; James Malcolm; Jamie McCallum; Jason Chance; Joanna Doria; Laura Harthan; Mary Heather Noble; Nicole Carter; Steve Orzech; Suzanne Buck; Tricia Allen; Wendy Baker

Remote Attendance

Ellie Romp; Matthew Corrente

Not In Attendance

Darcie Arensmeyer

A. Call to Order Upon Reaching A Quorum

Barb Wilson

Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

1. Introductions - Board Members, Administrators, and Staff

Barb Wilson 5 min

ACSD Staff present:

Wendy Baker, Superintendent
Nicole Carter, Assistant Superintendent and Director of Equity & Student Services
Courtney Krahn, Director of Teaching & Learning
Emily Blistein, Director of Communications & Engagement
Bruce Macintyre, Director of Facilities
Matt Corrente, Director of Finance & Operations (remote)

Student Reps to the Board Sophia Lawton and Navah Glickman also present.

Barb Wilson requested a motion to adopt the agenda. Suzanne Buck made a motion to adopt the agenda; Jason Chance seconded. Barb Wilson noted a mistake in agenda item E.5 -- it should have been listed as an action item so the Board could take action on approving a bid for provision of heating oil and propane to ACSD buildings during the 2024-

25 school year. Barb called the vote to approve the corrected agenda -- it passed without objection.

2. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Barb Wilson 10 min

No public comment.

B. Recommendation to Approve Minutes of 8/12/2024 and 8/13/2024

Barb Wilson 5 min

Motion to approve minutes from the 8/12/24 and 8/13/24 Board meetings.

Move: Steve Orzech Second: Joanna Doria Status: Passed

C. Approve ACSD Bills

James Malcolm 5 min

James Malcolm presented a summary of the ACSD Bills, read on 8/19/24:

General Fund: \$1,241,980.24 (note: \$617,400 of this is related to healthcare)

General Fund (for staff retirement benefits): \$351,841.31

Payroll: \$313,544.73

Motion to approve and pay the ACSD bills as presented.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Jason Chance Status: Passed

D. Welcome Student Representatives: Sophia Lawton and Navah Glikman

5 min

Barb Wilson and Dr. Baker welcomed returning Student Rep Sophia Lawton back to the Board, and welcomed incoming Student Rep Navah Glickman to the Board. They will arrange to have a brief training for the students so they understand the Board's role, etc.

Sophia Lawton reported that the first day of school at MUHS went well -- there were lots of Peer Leader activities to welcome new freshman students into the school and to connect with existing MUHS students who might have been sitting alone in the cafeteria. Lots of community-building.

Navah Glickman reported that students and teachers seem pleased so far with the roll out of the new schedule, and are especially appreciative of the later start time.

E. Report of the Superintendent

Wendy Baker

1. Summary of School Year Opening

5 min

Dr. Baker provided a brief summary of First Day of School events, including back-to-school ice cream socials, orientation, and other events held at ACSD school to ease the transition into the new school year. She reported that everything appears to have run smoothly, and shared some photos that Emily Blistein gathered from the first day back.

2. Update Meeting Locations

5 min

Dr. Baker reminded the Board that she had been asked to facilitate hosting every other Board meeting at ACSD school locations, and had some additional information to share with the Board in light of updated Open Meeting Law requirements. In order to provide high-quality recording and zoom capabilities at all meetings, the District will have to spend some money to bring the technology capabilities up to speed. Director of Technology Will Hatch provided a summary of the work required and an estimated cost to enable streaming from the District's devices. The information is included in meeting materials, and totals between \$1,500 - \$2,000 per school. Dr. Baker wanted to bring this to the Board's attention before committing

to this work and rotating meeting schedule.

There was some discussion about the legal requirements for compliance with the new Open Meeting Law standards -- meetings must be recorded, but the District is NOT required to provide a zoom link for remote participation.

Steve Orzech expressed concern about the recording sound quality -- it has not been good in the past, so might require additional money to buffer the sound. Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked about the quality of past recordings. Mary Heather Noble noted that it can vary, depending on the school. Some were worse than others. Meetings in gymnasiums generally resulted in the poorest sound quality.

Tricia Allen and Mary Heather expressed concern about the Board's commitment to visit all of its member communities and schools -- the Communications & Engagement Committee identified this as the best engagement opportunity since the meetings are already on everyone's schedules. If not this, what else would all members of the board be willing to do to satisfy this work? Ellen Whelan-Wuest agreed -- either the Board commits to rotating meetings (perhaps without high-quality remote participation), or the Board establishes another routine for engagement.

Both Sophia Lawton and Navah Glickman expressed concern about getting to outer locations as students without driver's licenses. Steve Orzech again expressed concern about the obligation and expense of providing high-quality recordings. Barb Wilson took a straw poll of board members to get a sense of the preference: 7 board members are in favor of rotating meetings between Middlebury and other member towns; 5 board members and 2 student reps are in favor of keeping meetings in Middlebury to provide a high-quality experience and recording, and committing to additional outreach to engage other towns.

Barb asked the Facilities Committee to explore further. This was not a formal vote, but the Committee can at least investigate the sound-quality issue based on past recordings and propose other alternative engagement activities for the board to consider. Dr. Baker also suggested reaching out to MCTV to see if they can continue/commit to providing the required recordings. This issue will be discussed and decided at a future meeting.

3. Action: Personnel Appointments and Resignations

5 min

Mary Heather Noble asked if these appointments are reflected in the latest vacancy figures that Dr. Baker presented in her weekly update. Dr. Baker responded that they are not.

Joanna Doria asked if the appointments could also specify where their placements will be. Dr. Baker noted that student services staff may shift among several locations, depending on student need, but that she can include initial placement locations in her next report.

Steve Orzech cautioned against specifying a particular location in the motion to approve staff appointments so it is not misunderstood as a permanent work location. Mary Heather agreed that this should be clear. Dr. Baker reminded the Board that all positions are subject to relocation. Ellen Whelan-Wuest suggested providing just a verbal indication of a newly appointed employee's first assigned location.

Note: Laura Harthan abstained from voting.

Motion to approve the following ACSD appointments, retirements, and resignations:

- a. Appoint Wendy Blanchette, Paraprofessional, 1.0 FTE, Step 2, Effective 8/20/24
- b. Appoint Paige Cusanelli, Paraprofessional, 1.0 FTE, Step 1, Effective 8/20/24

- c. Appoint Debra Karpak, Health Teacher, .27 FTE, Step 17, Effective 9/5/24
- d. Appoint Shannon Minor, Paraprofessional, 1.0 FTE, Step 12, Effective 8/20/24
- e. Appoint Michael Patterson, Paraprofessional, .5 FTE, Step 14, Effective 8/26/24
- f. Appoint Shannon Thurber, Administrative Assistant, 1.0 FTE, Non-Union - No Step Placement, Effective 9/9/24

Move: Suzanne Buck Second: Tricia Allen Status: Passed

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4. AOE Capital Funding Pre-Approval Process (phase 1 & 2) Matthew Corrente 15 min

Matt Corrente and Bruce Macintyre provided a presentation concerning the AOE's Capital Funding Pre-Approval Process. This process is grounded in the requirements of Act 72 of 2023, which sets District Quality Standards for public school buildings, and requires Districts to maintain a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for each of its facilities. This legislation is due to the state's recognition of significant deferred maintenance in VT schools and an effort to bring its public school facilities to a minimum standard.

The state is also contemplating how it will assist in funding such capital improvements, and is leaning toward the following approaches:

- Preauthorization for "shovel ready" projects (with defined scope, timeline, blueprints, financial plan, etc.)
- Triage approach to fund most urgent needs
- Providing incentives for Districts that invest in a smaller footprint and green/energy efficient construction
- "Grandfathering" projects already in-process that meet the state's standards, with options to apply for retroactive match funds

The task before ACSD: How do we move district facilities toward 'shovel-readiness'? How do we consider capital improvement needs of all buildings in pursuit of educational outcomes (e.g., prioritize to get the biggest impact for investment)? How do we minimize institutional gridlock and achieve planning unity?

Matt Corrente explained that the Facilities and Finance Department have broken the process for preauthorization down into two tracks:

PROCESS 1 -- Initiating Preauthorization for Middlebury Facilities:

Phase 1: ID remaining improvements needed at Mary Hogan, MUMS, and MUHS; place work in Capital Improvement Plan; other "shovel-ready" actions

Phase 2: ACSD School Construction Finance Initiative (tied to VT State Construction Aid Timeline)

PROCESS 2 -- Initiating Preauthorization for Small Schools:

Phase 1: Board evaluates options to address Policy C-30 (class size & student population) issues and use resulting decisions to inform Capital Improvement Plans for small schools

Phase 2: Pre-authorization: scope and scale, engineering drawings, bidding, financial planning

Both processes can proceed simultaneously. The goal is to be ready with eligible improvement projects when state funding becomes available.

BOARD QUESTIONS:

There was some general discussion about the two suggested processes, why Middlebury facilities are grouped together instead of grouping all elementary schools together, and clarification around the intend to have both processes move forward at the same time.

Jason Chance asked about what is known re: the state's preferences for funding improvement of existing facilities vs. new construction. Matt and Bruce said that there appear to be incentives developing to favor new construction, and that those districts that invest in energy efficient facilities, green construction, and reducing the school footprint will likely earn more matching funds.

James Malcom noted the expense of getting projects "shovel ready." Bruce mentioned that the District needs to look very carefully at the work needed and evaluate what will be the most appropriate investment for the long run.

Barb Wilson asked if the state has identified which buildings they don't recommend investing in, based on its high-level assessment of ACSD facilities. There was some discussion about the Facilities Condition Index (FCI) ratings for all of the ACSD school during the Facilities Master Planning process -- these figures will need to be updated based on recent improvements to MUHS and Mary Hogan, but we do have some baseline information to inform the process.

Mary Heather Noble asked about the timeline, and when the Board should have its Capital Improvement Plans in plan in time to get in line for state funding. Bruce speculated that the state likely won't complete any funding program within this next year, so he believes the District is in a good place to begin preparations to become eligible for any potential funding.

Dr. Baker also offered other considerations: The Champlain Valley Superintendent's Association members met with AOE Secretary and brought up 2 points: 1) Bond payments that Districts have may not be included in what is counted toward the spending threshold, and 2) that the legislative Commission on the Future of Education in Vermont seems to be developing a vision about reducing the statewide education building footprint, and that they are expecting to see additional legislation toward that end be proposed this spring. There are also spending threshold considerations, and how bond .

Jamie McCallum noted that the Policy Committee is planning to look at Policy C-30 and suggested having Matt and Bruce join the meeting to inform the discussion. Brian Bauer expressed concern that politics has infiltrated education -- we have to be very careful about what the state is telling us to do. He brought up the Burlington High School/PCB issue, and how the State's decision to use more stringent State PCB standards instead of Federal clean-up standards forced the Burlington School District to build a new school.

James Malcolm returned to Dr. Baker's comment, noting that the state may simply force consolidation by setting minimum standards for facilities.

Mary Heather noted the similarity to state-driven unification of school districts and state-required coordinated curriculum. ACSD voluntarily made those changes, and even though there have been ups and downs, the District is in a better place for having done that work on its own before being forced by the state. She suggested it would be better to get ahead of the wave and have intention in planning the vision for facilities now and take advantage of the incentives.

Brian Bauer pushed back, arguing that consolidation won't save money. It may improve aspects of education but it won't save money.

5. Fuel Oil/Propane Bid Memo Matthew Corrente 5 min

Bruce Macintyre presented a summary of bids received for delivery of fuel oil and propane to ACSD buildings during the 2024-25 school year.

The lowest bid for fuel oil was Champlain Valley Fuels at \$2.65 fixed price rate, and the lowest bid for propane was Fyles Brothers at \$1.56 fixed price rate.

Ellie Romp asked whether other providers were also invited to bid. Bruce confirmed that they extended the invitation to several companies and these were the ones that followed through with a bid.

Steve Orzech asked why the pre-buy option wasn't considered. Bruce responded that it is too difficult to estimate the need and runs the risk of over-purchasing.

Motion to award fuel contracts to the lowest bidders as presented: Champlain Valley Fuels for fuel oil at \$2.56 fixed price rate, and Fyles Brothers for propane at \$1.56 fixed price rate.

Move: James Malcolm Second: Ellie Romp Status: Passed

F. Report of the Chair Barb Wilson

1. Superintendent Evaluation Next Steps/Update 5 min

Barb Wilson reported that the Executive Committee had met with Dr. Baker, and that Dr. Baker has offered to prepare a hybrid evaluation tool based on the 3 examples preferred by Board members from the 8/13 training. The Executive Committee will review her first draft and make necessary changes based on local priorities, and then deliver the revised draft to the full board for its review and approval. The timeline:

9/3 - Dr. Baker delivers 1st draft of Superintendent Evaluation Tool to Executive Committee

9/10 - Executive Committee meeting w/ Dr. Baker to make revisions as needed

9/23 - Executive Committee shares revised draft with full Board.

2. AOE Rule Adoption Discussion 5 min

Suzanne Buck reported the status of the rubrics that are being developed by the AOE and VSBA for the new AOE rules for School Boards. The VSBA completed its work and sent the draft rubrics back to AOE for final approval. The final rubrics might be available at the next VSBA meeting on 9/5.

Suzanne also emphasized that the Committee working on this project has strongly advised school boards to only select one rule to focus on for this academic year -- with the

understanding that work put toward compliance with one rule will very likely move the board toward compliance with other rules as well.

Barb Wilson shared that the Executive Committee felt it would be best to focus on the budget rule that the Board had already prioritized: making sure that the budget reflects/is consistent with the stated priorities. There was general agreement on this approach, which will be reflected in the Board's work plan.

3. Facilities Committee Charge Update

15 min

In light of the information provided during Matt Corrente and Bruce Macintyre's presentation on the AOE Capital Funding Reapproval Process, Barb Wilson suggested updating the charge for the Facilities Committee.

Mary Heather Noble noted that the addition of this agenda item was also in response to Jason Chance's suggestion about revisiting and confirming committee charges every year after reorganization. The need for this effort is most pressing for the Facilities Committee, but the Executive Committee is in favor of adopting this practice every year.

Suzanne Buck stated that the 2 Processes referenced in the presentation should be conducted in parallel, so that there is forward movement on developing improvement plans for both Middlebury and rural schools. Ellen Whelan-Wuest asked a clarifying question to confirm this. The Facilities Committee can be working on identifying and planning for shovel-ready improvements to the Middlebury schools while the Board examines options to address student population issues in the rural schools, and then develops a plan to inform facilities work in those buildings. Joanna Doria asked if the Policy Committee would be doing that work. Barb Wilson and Ellen Whelan-Wuest clarified that the full board still needs to decide how it is going to proceed with that work -- Barb noted that the June 24, 2024 meeting minutes show that the options suggested then included: 1) having the Policy Committee do this work as part of Policy C-30, 2) creating an ad-hoc committee to specifically examine school configuration/boundaries, or 3) having the Facilities Committee resolve this question as part of its pre-qualification work. Ellen asked the Executive Committee to direct the Board on how to prepare for that conversation.

Sophia Lawton mentioned the challenges with construction at facilities that are in use during the summer, as the Mary Johnson program had to navigate through construction at Mary Hogan School this summer.

Ellen Whelan-Wuest made a motion to charge the Facilities Committee with completing Phase 1 of Process 1 in the presentation, which focuses facilities assessment and planning efforts on the Middlebury schools.

Mary Heather asked if it would be good to specify a deliverable for the Committee to complete for the Board. There was some discussion about what this might include, and Bruce was asked to provide input.

Mary Heather made a motion to modify the original motion to include the addition of a report that delivers: 1) assessment of the educational capacity of each building, 2) identification of remaining improvements needed to provide a safe and effective learning environment, and 3) prioritization of the projects in terms of their eligibility for AOE match funds (i.e., "shovel-readiness"). Laura Harthan seconded. Barb Wilson called the vote on the motion to amend and it passed with 12 'ayes.' Steve Orzech abstained.

Barb Wilson then called the vote on the modified motion -- which also passed with 12 'ayes.'

Steve Orzech abstained again.

[Revised] Motion to charge the Facilities Committee with completing Phase I of Process 1 from Matt Corrente and Bruce Macintyre's presentation on the AOE Capital Funding Preapproval Process, and deliver a report to the board that includes:

- 1) Evaluation of current educational capacity of Mary Hogan School, MUMS, and MUHS;
- 2) Identification of remaining improvements needed at those facilities; and
- 3) Prioritization of projects identified, based on their urgency and eligibility for AOE match funding.

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Laura Harthan Status: Passed

4. Board Member Roles & Responsibilities 2 min

Barb Wilson took a moment to remind Board members of their role, and that any requests for data or information from ACSD administrators (District Office admin and/or Building Principals) must be directed to Dr. Baker. There have been a few instances where Board members still haven't followed that practice and Barb and the Executive Committee are requesting cooperation with this requirement.

Mary Heather Noble added that Board members may reach out to the Executive Committee if they have questions about what is appropriate. Dr. Baker also noted that she is happy to provide guidance, particularly for members who are also parents/volunteers in the schools.

G. Report of the Board 25 min

1. Communications & Engagement Tricia Allen

Tricia Allen reported that the Communications & Engagement Committee did not meet in July or August, but will be meeting in September and will discuss the rotating board meeting vs. additional outreach events issue then.

2. Facilities Jason Chance

Jason Chance reported that the Facilities Committee will be meeting on 9/18.

3. Finance James Malcolm

James Malcolm reported that the Finance Committee has not yet met as a group, but will be soon.

4. Negotiations Steve Orzech

Steve Orzech reported that Chris Leopold just informed him that there is a tentative agreement with the Support Staff reps, so they are close.

5. Policy Jamie McCallum

Jamie McCallum presented the final revised A-20 Policy -- Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution. The Board reviewed and approved.

Jamie also noted that the Policy Committee will be meeting twice a week to get through a backlog of policy updates, and committee members should expect a big packet.

a. Action A20 - Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution

Motion to adopt updated Policy A-20 -- Board Meetings, Agenda Preparation & Distribution.

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Tricia Allen Status: Passed

6. PAHCC

Tricia Allen reported that the PAHCC Board recently finished a retreat with similar training to the 8/12-13 Board training that ACSD just completed with Judy Sclair-Stein. They have set goals for the year and are pleased to report that enrollment appears to be up.

7. Addison County VSBA Update

Suzanne Buck referenced her prior update on the work that VSBA has been doing to assist in the development/finalization of a rubric for the AOE's new rules for VT School Boards. She also noted that VSBA has 2 reps from Addison County, and that anyone interested in being a VSBA rep should reach out to Sue Ceglowski to express interest and learn more. Suzanne also reminded board members that the next VSBA board meeting will be on Thursday, 9/5/24 at 5:30 p.m.

8. Addison Central SEPAC Update

SEPAC has not met recently, so no update was reported.

9. Middlebury Community TV

No update.

Also no update from Middlebury Parks & Rec Board.

H. Public Comment - Any Topic

10 min

No public comment.

I. Board Reflection

Suzanne Buck 2 min

Barb Wilson noted that this is a new addition to the agenda, per Suzanne Buck's request, and asked Suzanne to provide a brief reflection.

Suzanne commended the Board on adhering to the norms and running the meeting efficiently and consistent with Open Meeting Law. She noted that members maintained a friendly and respectful atmosphere.

Mary Heather Noble expressed support for continuing the practice of Board reflection and asked members how the group might continue with participation from all. James Malcom suggested having the Board Chair select someone to reflect at the end of each meeting. Suzanne Buck mentioned VSBA's resource for Efficient & Ethical Operations for School Boards, and offered to distribute to all members so people have a sense of what elements might be reflected upon in the future.

J. Adjournment

Barb Wilson

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Motion to adjourn.

Move: Ellen Whelan-Wuest Second: Laura Harthan Status: Passed

Total Meeting Time: 2h 9m

*Public Comment Guidelines:

Public comments are encouraged and welcome at each regular board meeting during the period designated for public comment. Comments are limited to three minutes per person. Citizens will be called to make their statement by the board

chair. Public comments regarding personnel, students or legal matters will not be heard by the Board.