

Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District
Minutes of Meeting (draft)
April 10, 2017

Members present: Belvidere – Angie Evans; Cambridge – Bill Sander, Mark Stebbins; Eden – David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park – Chasity Fagnant, Patti Hayford, Lisa Barry, Andrew Beaupre; Johnson – Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen; Waterville – Amanda Tilton-Martin

Others: Catherine Gallagher, Superintendent; Michele Aumand, Charleen McFarlane, Kate Torrey, Jennifer Stevens, Brian Pena, Janet Murray, Diane Reilly, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Jade Hazard

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Adopt the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment: Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Orost requested that the item regarding a sabbatical request be moved up on the agenda. Tilton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to move the item. The motion passed unanimously.

Gallagher then stated she would not be making a recommendation to the Board about the Waterville principal and would be removing the item from the agenda. This recommendation would instead be brought before the local board on Thursday. Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Tilton-Martin, to remove the agenda item. The motion passed unanimously.

Nielsen made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended, seconded by Tilton-Martin. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Wade from Waterville then addressed the Board as part of the public comment section of the meeting. Attached is the document that was read into the record.

Routine Business - Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes of the March 20, 2017 Meeting and March 27, 2017 Personnel Committee Meeting Sander made a motion, seconded by Orost, to approve the minutes of both meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

Superintendent and Human Resource Topics for Discussion and Action:

BNC Recommendation Regarding FY18 Sabbatical Request: Orost stated that the BNC recommended to the Board that due to the unique situation and the timing of the uncertainty of the negotiations, in good faith, the BNC recommended a side letter agreement to allow this one sabbatical to be paid with the understanding that the BNC will push forward with removing this language from the new contract. Beaupre made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Affirmation that Belvidere Students will attend Waterville Elementary School should Waterville become part of the Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District (LNMUUSD)

Gallagher stated the Board had previously discussed this issue and there had been an understanding and assurance about this matter. However, she believed the Board needed to show goodwill and understanding by stating that the Board agreed with the law that stated if Waterville came into the MUUSD, Belvidere students, per the terms of Article 17 of the final Articles of Agreement, would attend Waterville Elementary School as their school of residence.

Barry made a motion to approve Belvidere Elementary students to attend Waterville Elementary School per terms of Article 17 of the final Articles of Agreement if the town of Waterville joined the Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District. Neilsen seconded the motion.

While Sander stated he wasn't allowed to vote on this item he strongly endorsed it and was committed to keeping the Waterville school open even after the statutory period had passed. He believed the sentiment of the Board was not to close any of the schools in the District. Gallagher stated the information meeting in Waterville would be on April 20th where the primary discussion would be how to amend the Articles of Agreement.

The motion passed unanimously.

Elementary 5th Grade Teacher Hire: McFarlane explained that she was looking to the Board to approve a hire as well as approve a salary that was outside of the Master Agreement. Johnson Elementary School wished to hire John Lukens as a fifth grade teacher. Lukens had 14 years of service and Johnson Elementary had asked that Lukens be placed at Step 14, at an additional cost of \$3,000. Gallagher explained to the Board that Johnson Elementary School was now putting in place a foreign language program, and had a math intervention program, as well as an enrichment program. Gallagher stated that for the first time there was a veteran teacher requesting they be able to return to where they had started. Lukens student taught at Johnson Elementary and wanted to return. Manning informed the Board that being able to hire someone with many years of experience meant that significant training wasn't required. Lukens was already familiar with many of the systems being used at Johnson. Manning noted Lukens' biggest strength according to his references was his capacity to work with at-risk students who were historically disengaged from the learning process.

Sander asked what the approval of a Step 14 would do to the Master Contract if the Board approved this request. He was concerned it might be precedent setting. McFarlane stated the Master Agreement did provide an out by allowing the Board to approve an increase. Fagnant asked about negotiations and Luken's placement. McFarlane explained that anyone hired this year would be placed on this year's contract and whatever percentage increase was ratified would be applied. Sander asked if this approval would place Lukens above someone with equivalent experience who was making less money. McFarlane said it would not. Beaupre then made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to approve the request. The motion passed unanimously.

Negotiations Update: McFarlane informed the Board that both teacher and support staff negotiations were at an impasse. May 4th had been set for teacher mediation. Minutes of all meetings were available on the website.

Set Ongoing Agendas for Committees: Gallagher stated it was becoming apparent that every building had things that were germane to their building. Therefore, on behalf of the Policy Committee, she requested that all building administrators join the Committee to work through any policies other than the SBA required policies.

Other Business: Gallagher then noted that Marilyn Frederick and Deb Clark would be at the next meeting that would be held on May 15th. That meeting would be largely committee driven.

Whitcomb then spoke to the Board about keeping track of updates about Act 46. He suggested keeping up with news through Vermont Digger and Vermont Watchdog and noted that local newspapers were failing. He stated that once the law was in place, the District needed to follow the law. Court action would be the only way to change Act 46. As of July 1st this Board would be in charge of all the schools and it was important that the Board know what was going on at all the schools.

Beaupre noted there had been discussion about the Board visiting each of the schools and he wondered if that was still planned. Gallagher stated after the vote was taken, there would be a weeklong Board orientation that would include visiting the schools.

An audience member asked when the budget discussion would take place if Waterville decided to merge. Gallagher stated it would start the day after the vote and information meetings would take place with final numbers.

Adjourn: Orost made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to adjourn at 6:28 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Next LNMUUSD Board Meeting: May 15, 2017

Next LNSU Board Meeting: May 22, 2017

My name is Chrissy Wade, and I live in Waterville. I am here tonight speaking to you from the heart. From the heart of a mother who has had the pleasure of having two children go through Waterville Elementary School, and Lamoille Union Middle and High School, with incredible success. Phineas Wish class of 2014, attends Bowden College in Maine while Ariel Wish (who has cerebral palsy and doesn't let it stop her from anything) class of 2016, is a freshman at St Mikes.

My husband Jason and I have two children currently attending Waterville Elementary School (WES), and the towns of Belvidere and Waterville rely on our school as a heritage now, a place that forms the legacy of our future. Our ability to connect with each other and celebrate milestones, annual suppers, and meat raffles, all emulate from the vibrant place we call Waterville Elementary School.

I want to address this board as fellow parents; mothers & fathers who care deeply about their families and community. I also want to express my gratitude for your commitment to showing up and making really hard decisions about the fate of our children and communities. I am here to say that you have more power over them/us than you might realize.

I would like to share a brief re-cap from a Waterville perspective...

Waterville and Belvidere didn't know that we could be separated. The Act 46 consultant did not warn us.

Belvidere was told by Agency of Education (AOE) staff not to bother trying to get out of the merger, and Waterville was told we'd better join or we will lose our union with Belvidere and our school would crumble.

Part of the hesitation in Waterville stems from the fact that joining the merger will put our school at undeniable risk of school closure in a few years, by the power of this board, a board we fear will review the charts the AOE and Lamoille North Supervisory Union presents, without time and scrutiny, or studying the impact of such decisions before making them. Think for a moment if you were the little town on a merger with (for example) Essex? How would you feel about preserving your heritage? Would you trust Essex to take care of you?

I have heard people say that we should be advocating our concerns in Montpelier, "this is the State's fault" is the mantra... while yes there is responsibility at that level, and I have been to the Golden Dome twice now to advocate my concerns alongside other Watervillians. What I came to realize, is that for my town, and the school children and families of Belvidere & Waterville, this board, the 13 of you... hold our children, and our future, in your hands more closely than the Education Committee in Montpelier.

The AOE staff told Waterville and Belvidere that continuity of care would be at the forefront of decisions made by this board. Then, on January 10th, when called to vote on this issue, the presentation you received from the administration represented that you should consider how much money could be saved by NOT tuitioning Belvidere students to Waterville, and nothing was mentioned about continuity of care, community preservation, mutual respect or building relationships. There wasn't any student and community impact study done prior to this vote, in fact I don't think the original study committee

addressed the possibility of separation from each other or they might have done something to prevent it.

Some of us were provided information in a memorandum dated March 30th, from Donna Russo Savage who suggested that in relation to Article 17 and ACT 153 of 2010 sec. 3 (f) (3) the intent of the law is to provide continuity of care for students. I hope that you would be encouraged to honor the intent of the law that was made to protect children from unnecessary disruption.

My friend Melissa, from Belvidere did some research after the decision was made to NOT tuition Belvidere to Waterville. She learned that this board saved the taxpayers approximately ½ a cent on the overall tax rate by forcing the merger on Waterville, and perhaps unintentionally dividing & devastating our community.

My hope and prayer is that this will be a board that doesn't make hasty decisions without deep consideration, especially if it puts your neighbors at risk, and that we will move forward treating each other how we teach our children to treat each other.

As mothers and fathers, residents of beautiful towns all in the same county- we are your neighbors, we are your brothers and sisters, your children's best friends, your future in laws? We are seeking transparency, accountability, protection, and mutual respect.

Montpelier may have set this stage, but how we play it out, is up to you.

Sincerely submitted by Chrissy Wade

(Waterville resident , mother of four, Waterville Elementary Parent Organization member, Waterville Town Library Trustee and fellow human with a heart sharing Lamoille County)