

**Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District  
Minutes of Meeting (draft)  
May 15, 2017**

**Members Present:** Belvidere – Angie Evans, Cambridge – Bill Sander, Mark Stebbins, Laura Miller, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott; Eden: David Whitcomb; Hyde Park – Chasity Fagnant, Patti Hayford, Lisa Barry, Andrew Beaupre (arrived at 7:10 p.m.); Johnson – Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton, Heather Rodriguez, Angela Lamell; Waterville – Amanda Tilton-Martin

**Others:** Catherine Gallagher, Superintendent; Brian Schaffer, Michele Aumand, Wendy Savery, Janet Murray, Kate Torrey, Jennifer Stevens, Diane Reilly, Jade Hazard, Dylan Laflam, Marilyn Frederick, Deb Clark, Sherry Lussier, Melinda Mascolino, Dana Jewett, David Manning

**Minute Taker:** Sue Trainor

**Call to Order, Adopt the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment:** Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Sanders made a motion, seconded by Hayford, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously. Whitcomb then announced to the Board that Marilyn Frederick had donated the flag being used in the Pledge of Allegiance in memory of her son.

Aumand then read the attached two emails from Melissa Manka into the record. Prior to the emails being read, Gallagher informed the Board that responses to questions raised by the emails could not be dealt with during the public comment section of the meeting. One email addressed Article 18 and the structure and status of local advisory committees. The other email addressed Article 6. The concern was that a school in the District had hired a foreign language and math interventionist. The Board was asked to consider equity and standardization of programs at all elementary schools.

Gallagher explained the two articles referenced would be defined later in the meeting and assured the Board and the community that the Board was in compliance.

**Routine Business - Consent Agenda Items**

**Minutes of the April 10, 2017 Special Meeting and April 27, 2017 Personnel Committee Meeting:** Sander made a motion, seconded by Orost, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Petition for one HPES Resident to Attend JES for FY 18:** Gallagher introduced Mrs. Clancy to the Board. Gallagher then read a letter from the Clancy family formally requesting that their second grade son be allowed to transfer from Hyde Park Elementary School to Johnson Elementary School for the 2017-2018 school year. Miller asked if the student would return to Hyde Park after the building was built. Clancy stated he would. Sander asked if a policy was being established by approving this request. Gallagher noted that the district's elementary principals had recently met and student transfers were discussed. The plan was to have a policy in place before July 1<sup>st</sup> to deal with this in the future. Reilly stated she was confident the temporary building would meet the needs of the students but she was fine with the transfer. Manning stated his agreement with Sander that a policy needed to be put in place to govern movement between the elementary schools and he noted this was the second request from Hyde Park. He supported the student joining Johnson. Fagnant stated there hadn't been an open house yet and wondered why Mrs. Clancy was concerned about the facility. Mrs. Clancy stated her concern was that there would be no playground, cafeteria, gym, music or art room, or library. Miller asked if she had researched what impact switching schools would have on the child. Mrs. Clancy stated it depended on the child. Her child was extroverted and she was confident he'd have no problem. Barry agreed that a policy needed to be put in place quickly and she was concerned that this could be an equity issue. There may be another parent who couldn't transport their child and therefore wouldn't be able to change schools. Gallagher recommended that the Board approve T. Clancy's request to attend JES for the 2017-2018 year only, with the recognition that the MMU Board would have policy in place addressing movement of students within the MUUSD and that policy would govern all future decisions around enrollment. Orost made a motion to approve the request from the recommendation of the Superintendent, seconded by Moulton. The motion passed by a vote of 6 to 3, with Fagnant, Hayford and Barry voting against.

**Rowland Experience:** Lori Lisai, the Technology Integrationist and 2015 Rowland Fellow, addressed the Board, alongside Elizabeth Coleman, Pat LeClair, Brad Parker, and two LNSU teachers, Mark Gilbertson and Whitney Kaulbach, presently in the Dominican Republic. Lisai explained that the Rowland Foundation grant supported 5 schools every year with a \$100,000 grant. The grant ran for two years and supported schools in transformation. Lisai's focus was on game-based learning and technology integration, with the overall goal being to recapture

adventure in learning through games-based learning and by fostering student engagement with technology. This involved thinking about the design of a program, determining who you're designing for, practicing empathy, prototyping and practicing that cycle.

Lisai explained that staff from a game-based learning school in New York came to Vermont and led a professional development workshop on how to implement and address Act 77. Lisai then offered examples of schools throughout the country they had visited and she noted that each school had a very clear vision and mission. They knew what they were about and they used their differences to their advantage. LeClair outlined their trip to schools in Southern California. These schools integrated technology into the school and had students think critically about complex problems and determined how technology could solve those problems. Coleman reported that it was inspiring to speak with students at High Tech High. The students at the school had reported on how important it was to have choice and a voice in decisions. Upon her return, it was implemented immediately in Team Nova. Parker agreed and stated how impressed he was with High Tech High for giving students agency in the classroom in making decisions. Lisai also reported on schools they visited in Northern California. One school had a badging system that could be used to demonstrate to employers what the students could do.

Currently Mark and Whitney, teachers in the Dominican Republic, were Skyping with a class in Vermont and together were creating a game based on the hero's journey. They were happy to be creating global partners and Whit explained that the connection was continuing to be carried over into social media. Lisai explained that updates were being posted on Twitter at #Lamoillelearns. Next year there would be a new class that would inspire students to think critically and interact with members of their school community about education. They would be tasked with determining how to leverage the power of technology to bring more student interest and voice into school.

Whit explained how critical it was to keep the relationship with the schools in California, Austin, TX and the Dominican. Vermont students were now a resource for the students she was teaching. Mark expressed appreciation to Lisai for her work on this endeavor. He stated the connection he saw between all the schools discussed was they had a clear vision and mission and were not afraid to state what they couldn't do. Further, he noted that the personalized learning experience that Lamoille and Vermont was working on was world class and no one was embracing it as heartily and thoughtfully as Vermont. Savery followed that comment by stating she had gone on the trip to High Tech High and had spoken with teachers and others about the state of public education in California. She was very grateful to work in a state that valued public education. Vermont children were very lucky.

**BNC Update – Executive Session:** Hamlyn-Prescott made a motion to go into Executive Session in order to provide a BNC update. Gallagher and Clark were invited to remain. Orost seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously, and the Board went into Executive Session at 6:53 p.m. The Board reconvened at 7:02 p.m.

**Approve New Hires:** Brian Schaffer requested approval to hire the following individuals: Brittany Hammond, LUHS Social Studies Teacher; Ian Trombulak, LUHS School Counselor; Chelsea Circe, LUHS English Teacher; and Brittany Brogna, LUHS PLP/Pathway Coordinator. Moulton made a motion to approve the hires, seconded by Tilton-Martin.

Schaffer outlined the extensive hiring process used in selecting these candidates. Administrators, teachers and students were present during the work sessions and those groups assessed the candidates. He explained that while the process was lengthy, there was a good deal of stability in the district and the match should be purposeful. Each of the candidates had either certification or was on the pathway to certification. Miller questioned the fact that some of the candidates had a provisional license. Schaffer stated they did not weigh a current licensure over someone with a provisional license. Miller was surprised there were no qualified licensed candidates. Schaffer stated there was no policy or procedure that required the administrator to place more value over a currently certified individual versus someone who might be a good match for the school. Gallagher agreed with Schaffer, stating that the recruitment committee ultimately was in charge of deciding who was going to be the best fit for the job based on a number of variables.

Beaupre requested more information on each candidate, which Schaffer provided. Orost commended Schaffer for having the candidates work with the students. Schaffer stated that student reviews were often the tipping point of the decision being made.

The motion to hire the candidates then passed unanimously, with Beaupre abstaining.

**Personnel Committee Report:** Orst reported to the Board that the Committee had approved the hiring of a Math Interventionist for Johnson Elementary School, a Co-Op Coordinator for GMTCC, a Literacy Interventionist and a Math Interventionist for Eden, a Librarian for Hyde Park and approved the salary for the Waterville principal.

**Approval of Subgrant Agreement:** Clark reported to the Board that on March 27<sup>th</sup> the SU Board had agreed to enter into the annual Subgrant agreement. This approval allowed the subgranting of the federal and state funds that flow through Central Office to pass along to the districts. Moulton made a motion to approve the LNNUUSD entering into a subgrant agreement with the Supervisory Union for their federal and state grants for FY18. Tilton-Martin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Appoint Signing Authority for Closing on Property Transfer:** Clark explained to the Board that McNeil, Leddy and Sheahan had been hired to draft quit claim deeds for the conveyance of real and personal property. This firm would also deal with any conveyance of land going back to individual towns. It was recommended that an authorized individual be appointed to sign the documents at the closing on behalf of the Board. Sander asked whether the towns currently own the schools. Whitcomb stated the town school district owned the property. Orst made a motion to appoint the Chair of the Board as the signing authority, seconded by Moulton. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approve FY18 Anticipation Note:** Clark reported to the Board they had gone out to bid for the Tax Anticipation Notes. Merchants Bank, Union Bank, and Community National Bank of Derby responded. Community National Bank of Derby offered a 1.75% spread between the debt interest and the earning interest. Additionally, they were offering Interest on any amount that exceeded the loan. Therefore, funds transferred to this account would receive 1% interest. Clark recommended awarding the TAN for the MUUSD for FY2018 to Community National Bank. Beaupre asked for clarification and Clark explained it was a one-year borrowing that filled in the gap until the tax money was received. At the end of the year it would be fully paid off. Stebbins made a motion awarding the TAN to Community National Bank of Derby, seconded by Tilton-Martin. The motion passed unanimously.

**Elementary School Budget Presentation:** Before the presentation, Gallagher spoke to the Board about Article 6, which stated that the “forming districts of the unified school district recognized the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so and to otherwise standardize their operations on or before July 1, 2017”. Gallagher explained that district-wide curricula referred to what education quality standards look at in terms of a viable coordinated curriculum in math, literacy, science and social studies. It was not referring to things like intervention, enrichment, and foreign language.

Clark then presented the amended FY18 elementary school budget to the Board. Waterville Elementary School’s figures were restored to the original budget that had been passed in March. The new combined elementary budget was now \$12,858,362. The non-special education costs were increased by adding \$1,261,580 for a total of \$10,372,208, a reduction over the prior year of .24%. The special education costs now totaled \$2,486,153, a reduction of 25.15%. The total expenditures totaling \$12,858,362 were now decreasing 6.27% over the combined FY17 expenses. There were no changes to the middle or high school costs. The combined total expenses for the LNNUUSD were now \$26,342,012, a total decrease of 9.2%. The new combined revenues saw an increase of \$249,616 from Waterville, bringing the total of miscellaneous revenues up to \$3,142,717. Reserve funds being applied were now \$340,515, bringing the education spending up to \$22,876,780, an increase of 2.31% in education spending. The estimated cost per pupil at the elementary level was now \$15,615, for an estimated rate before CLA but after the \$0.08 incentive of 1.473.

The differences due to the new adjusted estimated rate for the towns after CLA were applied were as follows:

- Belvidere went from an estimated savings of \$169 per \$100,000 to \$145.56.
- Eden went from an estimated savings of \$201 per \$100,000 to \$178.59.
- Hyde Park went from an estimated savings of \$45.86 per \$100,000 to \$24.44.
- Johnson went from paying \$6.50 per \$100,000 to \$15.06.
- Waterville would now see a savings of \$195.57 per \$100,000.

Clark asked the Board to approve the following warning and article to go to the voters: “Shall the voters of the Lamoille North Modified Unified School District #58A (PreK-6<sup>th</sup> Grade) supplement the LNNUUSD budget approved

on March 7, 2017 by adding thereto the amount of \$1,389,496 to reflect the inclusion of the Waterville Town School in the LNMUUSD? The total amended budget of \$12,858,362 is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year. It is estimated that this amended budget will result in education spending of \$15,615 per equalized pupil. “ Clark explained the vote would be held on June 20<sup>th</sup> at each town and only the elementary school budget would be voted on. An informational meeting was tentatively scheduled to take place at the next regular meeting of the LNMUUSD Board on June 19<sup>th</sup>. Moulton made a motion, seconded by Beupre, to approve the warning and article. The motion passed unanimously.

**Bond Committees Discussion:** Clark informed the Board that Eden, Johnson, and Hyde Park still had active bond work going on. She requested that the Board understand and grant deference to the existing Bond Committees and Boards in order to continue their work and to stay in existence until December 31.

**Committees Meet:** Prior to breaking into groups, Gallagher mentioned that some administrators would like to be part of both the Finance and Technology Committee. She asked that when two monthly meetings started in July that the first meeting combine Communications with Operations/Facilities and Technology and the second meeting combine Finance with Policy/Legal. Orost made a motion to combine Communications with Operations/Facilities/Technology for one meeting a month and the next meeting combine Finance and Policy/Legal. Moulton seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Upon return from the Committee breakouts, the representatives reported the following:

**Policy/Legal:** Orost informed Board members that they should review the policies provided to them in their packet of materials and requested that suggested changes be reported back to her by next month’s meeting. Additionally, Policy C31, Admission of Resident Students, would be emailed this week to Board members and should be reviewed for implementation effective July 1. Gallagher explained the policies being reviewed were all required policies and the yellow highlighted sections were pieces that the LNMUUSD were adding. The Policy Committee and the Superintendent had worked on the highlighted sections in order to be more specific to LNMUUSD.

**Operations/Facilities and Technology:** Stebbins provided the highlights of the current projects. Permits were in place to construct and connect the new well; a secondary egress road was going in to Cricket Hill Road; and a new paging system was being installed soon at the high school. The proposed gym project was now on hold, and the sugarhouse project was continuing to move forward. The demolition of the Hyde Park Elementary School would begin on June 19<sup>th</sup>. The Tech Center would try to repurpose many of the materials from the Hyde Park School. An Open House for Hyde Park residents would be held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Plaza Hotel for Hyde Park parents. The Committee would be looking at a District-wide single contract for HVAC management and a help desk system for facilities.

**Communications/PR:** Rodriguez stated that the Committee had reviewed Article 18. Their perspective was that there was a Committee already in place. Committee members took notes, posted those minutes, and allowed time for comments from residents. The Committee was currently looking into having school-based councils for any town that chose to do that. Gallagher added that the letter read earlier into the public comment section of the meeting had asked what the LNMUUSD Board was going to do as far as developing those councils. Gallagher stated that the LNMUUSD Board didn’t need to do anything, as that was not in Article 18. The Board had broadly satisfied Article 18 by providing public comment and the development of a Communication Committee subgroup. If towns chose to have advisory councils, the recommendation was that they be run by the principals. This board would not appoint people. Gallagher stated she had just received information that would be forwarded on to Board Members. This information took the burden off the Board and offered choice to the communities. Gallagher stated what was clear was that the councils would have zero statutory authority and were only advisory.

**Finance:** Miller reported that the EIN and DUN number were in place. State Unemployment couldn’t be finalized until after July 1<sup>st</sup>. The state grant group already had the necessary information. The accounting software was coming along. Clark was trying to step up the audit so the ending numbers would be completed. As of June 30<sup>th</sup>, checks could no longer be written. Miller explained that the Supervisory Union would be shifting jobs, with positions being consolidated. As an example, while several people may have done accounts payable for the different schools, now one person would provide that service. Clark noted that following a review of three local banks, it was decided that Merchants Bank would house the general checking account.

**Set Board Retreat/School Site Visits Date in June:** Gallagher explained to the Board that despite Board members wanting to see schools and students in action, work schedules had prevented that from occurring. Gallagher hoped to plan a summer or early fall retreat and discussion on this would occur at the June meeting.

**Other Business:** Barry asked if a determination had been made when future Board meetings would be held. Gallagher stated the meetings would be held on the second and fourth Monday of the month.

**Adjourn:** Moulton made a motion, seconded by Hayford, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.

May 11, 2017

Dear MUUSD,

I have observations and questions pertaining to the elementary school budget & process on the agenda. I would like to thank you in advance for your time and consideration and ask that this letter be read at Monday's meeting. My comments and questions are as follows:

It is my understanding that one town has included new staff and programs for their school to the MUUSD's FY18 budget. While I fully support foreign language programs, math interventionists and literacy interventionists, I would like to point out that Article 6 of the Articles of Agreement states:

#### **Article 6**

**The forming districts of the Unified School District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise standardize their operations on or before July 1, 2017.**

I question whether it appropriate to add programs to selected schools when it is contrary to Article 6. Belvidere, Waterville, Eden, Hyde Park and Johnson children must be offered the same programs and opportunities under the MUUSD. First, I suggest the MUUSD focus on bringing all schools to the same level by providing the same resources, programs and curriculum. Then it seems appropriate to include additional/new programs to the District as a whole. I suggest that the FY18 budget include funding to level the playing field and the foreign language program and resources noted above be integrated into all MUUSD schools in FY 18 or inclusion be postponed until FY 19 to allow time for proper planning and budget discussions. I would like to offer that EES and WES have historically shared staff and this should be explored with regard to adding a foreign language teacher in our schools.

Furthermore, I would like to request comment from each town this evening to be recorded in the minutes as to whether programs and/or new staff were added to their schools in the FY18 MUUSD budget and, if so, what programs and staff?

I have attached a cost comparison spreadsheet developed after the tuitioning decision was made and the original budget approved by the MUUSD. It is a collection of numbers presented over numerous meetings and consolidated for easy comparison. It should be noted that it's likely the budget being presented by Deb this evening will vary slightly given any new information since the original budget was approved.. As you will see even the current makeup of the MUUSD, the inclusion of new staff, programs, bonds, etc. and the exclusion of cost saving measures, the tax rate for the larger towns will increase. On the face of things this should be of no surprise since this was presented to the towns prior to the initial April 2016 vote regarding whether to join a unified district. However, the intent and purpose of ACT 46 was supposed to be expanded opportunity while finding cost savings through efficiency. Unfortunately due to the decisions made regarding Belvidere and Waterville we find ourselves at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour scratching our heads over the numbers before us. I strongly encourage and believe it the duty of the MUUSD to find the savings, find the efficiencies, and do what is necessary to ensure all towns have at minimum the same tax rate in FY18 as they do today. Contrary to the LNSU's opinion, I do not believe this board fully addressed or discussed the budget impact of having four schools and five towns in the MUUSD as it was not a reality until after the MUUSD approved the budget. Therefore, I respectfully disagree that it would be "inappropriate to adjust the budget approved by voters". This is a new budget with new variables and tax impacts. I can assure you the electorate will not find it inappropriate for the MUUSD to do the work ACT 46 intended to ensure equal opportunity with financial responsibility. I ask that the MUUSD not approve the budget before you, if it increases tax rates above what they are today, but rather hold additional meetings to allow you the time to work on the budget as a Unified School District.

Additionally, I understand schools' desire to spend down any excess FY17 funds in order to keep funds local as opposed to being rolled into the MUUSD FY 18 revenues. I would like to request that local school districts be

conscience of spending and not run budgets into the negative which potentially the MUUSD as a whole will have to cover in FY18.

Lastly, I request that all MUUSD Board Members spend some time reviewing the cost comparables below and ask...

Where did we come from and where are we going?

Are we going to work together and raise each other up or is this going to be minority towns vs majority towns?

Are we really going to search for efficiencies per the intent of ACT 46 or are we going to close schools at the expense of those communities, families and children?

We need to start over on the right foot by ensuring equal opportunity and cost savings for all, while respecting the individuality and uniqueness of our five communities. Please take the time to ensure this budget is right and conforms to the Articles of Agreement.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss any of the above.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Melissa

May 12, 2017

Dear MUUSD,

I have been asked by a member of the public to request a status update regarding Article 18 of the Articles of Agreement.

We ask that this letter be read at the meeting and answers to the questions below be recorded in the minutes as we were unable to attend the meeting tonight due to previous obligations. Thank you.

Article 18 states:

**Article 18**

The Unified School District school board shall provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget development. Structures to support and encourage public participation within the Unified School District will be established by the Unified School District Board of School Directors on or before June 30, 2017. The school district board may create strategies for local participation at each school, and have procedures to receive input from each school.

Members of the community would like to know if the communications committee has made progress regarding Article 18. More specifically, there has been discussion in recent months that each town would be forming a school advisory committee to assist local school directors and the MUUSD as a whole in individual school matters. We request that the following questions be addressed:

Will the MUUSD be pursuing the creation of local advisory committees?

Will committee members be appointed by the MUUSD?

How does the board envision the structure and duties of the advisory committees' in relation to the work being carried out by the MUUSD?

Will policies and procedures be put in place to formalize said structure and guide the boards/committees to ensure a smooth, consistent and efficient processes?

Can examples be provided of how other towns or states have addressed the issue of local school advisory committees within regional school districts?

What other methods of public outreach, education and engagement have been discussed by the communications committee?

We look forward to working and learning with the MUUSD as we embark on this journey. Also, please know that we strive to be a strong, high performing school/community within the MUUSD and an asset to Lamoille North.

Again, thank you for your time and service to our communities.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Manka