

Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District
Meeting Minutes (draft)
June 19, 2017

Members Present: Cambridge: Bill Sander, Laura Miller, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott; Eden: David Whitcomb; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Patti Hayford, Lisa Barry, Andrew Beaupre; Johnson – Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton, Heather Rodriguez, Angela Lamell; Waterville – Amanda Tilton-Martin

Others: Catherine Gallagher, Superintendent; Wendy Savery, Janet Murray, Kate Torrey, Jennifer Stevens, Jade Hazard, Deb Clark, 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 5:34 p.m. Gallagher outlined changes to the agenda, which included removing the approval of the LUHS Art Teacher who had withdrawn from consideration, as well as removing the approval of the HPES 3rd Grade Teacher (one-year position), as Gallagher had not yet met the applicant. Additionally, Gallagher explained to the Board that a Personnel Committee meeting had not been recorded and, as a result, three hires would need to be approved at tonight's meeting. The Student Outcomes presentation was moved to the end of the agenda. Sander made a motion to accept the agenda as amended, seconded by Moulton. The motion passed unanimously.

Routine Business:

Consent Agenda Items: Minutes of the May 15, 2017 Meeting, and May 24, 2017, and June 7, 2017, Personnel Committee Meetings: Sander made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve New Hires:

LUHS School Nurse: Dana Jewett recommended hiring Holly Cooke for the School Nurse position at a salary of \$40,457, a savings of almost \$12,000. Jewett noted that Cooke came highly recommended. Sander made a motion to approve the hiring, seconded by Fagnant. Torrey expressed her approval of this hire. Miller asked if a license was required for the position. Jewett stated Cooke had served as a school nurse in 2005 before being called up by the National Guard. Tilton-Martin explained an endorsement was required to be a school nurse. The motion to approve the hiring of Cooke passed unanimously.

LUHS Paraeducators (2): Jen Stevens reported to the Board there was only one paraeducator being presented for approval, as the second candidate had declined their offer. Stevens recommended the hiring of Russ Roehl who had been a substitute teacher at the high school this year. He had been a teacher in Washington prior to relocating to Vermont. Stevens requested placement at Step 14, at \$14.15 per hour, given his previous experience and his Bachelor's Degree. Sander made a motion to approve the hire. Tilton-Martin seconded the motion. Sander asked when the policy changed that required decisions regarding paraeducators to come before the Board. Stevens explained it was because she was asking that he receive a higher rate of pay. Typically he would have been hired at a Step 2, but with his twelve years of experience it was recommended that he start at a Step 14. Orost asked if he had been a model substitute and stated that she had heard that several staff members were unhappy with this hire. Jewett stated he had done a solid job. Miller asked if placing Ruehl on Step 14 would interfere with staff who might be making less but had worked more years at the school. Stevens repeated that Ruehl had 12 years of experience as a teacher in Washington and a Bachelor's Degree. She noted the Union had been notified that his compensation request was being brought to the Board.

Beaupre commented that for a full-time position he would expect to see a cover letter with more than one paragraph and one without mistakes. Orost asked whether he had been a licensed teacher in the State of Washington and Stevens said he had been. Manning, remarking on Beaupre's comment, stated that 70% of the resumes and cover letters he received were poorly written. Because of that he had stopped worrying about that factor, otherwise he would have a very small applicant pool. Tilton-Martin noted that SchoolSpring was historically glitchy which could affect the presentation of the materials. Gallagher stated that much more was considered than just the cover letter, such as the interview process, watching the person in action, etc. She

agreed it was offensive, but had also seen it in professional applications. Miller noted that Ruehl had taught woodshop and PE. However, it was unclear whether he needed a license for those classes. Stevens replied that the HR Director would have checked for the license.

The motion to approve the hire passed, with Orost, Hayford, and Rodriguez voting against.

Sander asked Gallagher about the large number of hires this year. Gallagher stated that last year saw more new hires. She explained that there were a number of reasons, but compensation was one reason. Beaupre asked if exit interviews were conducted. Gallagher said she had started conducting exit interviews with those who requested it. Some individuals that Gallagher had approached had opted not to have one. Those she had talked with stated compensation was a factor. Beaupre asked if the District was still the second lowest paid district in the state. Gallagher was unsure but she knew it was close to the bottom. Miller stated it was the lowest in the area and reported that even Lamoille South paid more. Savery informed the Board she was losing two talented teachers to Essex with each of them making \$21,000 more per year to do the same job. Sander stated they had lost a Cambridge teacher to South Burlington for the same reason. He believed this was a concern that needed to be addressed. Beaupre stated it appeared that Lamoille North was the farm team for Chittenden County. Orost and Gallagher noted that the BNC had been working to bring up starting pay but this was not being agreed to by the Union. Gallagher agreed that the BNC been responsible, responsive, and had made reasonable gestures.

Gallagher then reported on the three hires that had already been approved by the Personnel Committee. She wanted the approval to be on the record and asked that the Board consider the following three candidates. Gallagher requested approval to hire Alan Cook as a middle school language arts teacher. Cook had been a long-term substitute. Savery explained that he would be in the same position he was in now, with the same pay and benefits, but in a permanent capacity. Both Savery and Gallagher had observed him in his classroom.

Gallagher requested approval to hire Toria Lajoie as a health education teacher at the middle school at a base salary. Lajoie was both a certified personal trainer and athletic trainer. Savery noted that Lajoie was coming from Essex. Lajoie had strong recommendations, especially in the area of student relationships. This would be a full-time position.

Gallagher then requested approval to hire Gabriela Fecher as an English teacher at the Middle School. Fecher was also being hired at the base salary. Savery noted that Fecher had been a Johnson State intern and had interned on the same team that she was being hired for. She had received rave recommendations and had very high energy. All three teachers were licensed.

Sander made a motion, seconded by Miller, to approve the three hires. The motion passed unanimously.

Personnel Committee Report:

Director of School Nutrition Services: Clark reported to the Board that they had hoped to hire Scott Fay. However, Essex decided to change his title, expand his responsibilities, and offer him more compensation.

Director of Facilities: Dylan Laflam's title was changed and Laflam would now be responsible for the entire LNMUUSD. School Nutrition would be removed from his responsibilities.

Technology Coordinator: This reflected a change in the position. The Union had already approved a change of classification.

LUHS Social Studies Teacher (one-year position): David Mitiguy was approved to hire.

JES 5th Grade Teacher: Patrick Spencer was approved to hire.

Bus Transportation Bid: Clark explained that the District bid on their transportation service every four years. Lamoille Valley Transportation was the only company that submitted a bid on most of the services, with Cambridge School District bidding on the high school services for the Cambridge district. Clark stated that all

quotes were within the budget. Fagnant asked if Cambridge always put a bid in for the high school portion. Clark said they did.

Miller noted there was a large difference in cost on the late run between Belvidere coming in at \$7,000 and Cambridge coming in at \$11,000. She asked if they charged per mile or per child. Clark stated they charged by mile. Clark stated she believed that Lamoille Valley didn't want to take on the Cambridge run. Miller questioned the fact that Lamoille Valley would charge \$6,500 for the Cambridge late run, while Cambridge would charge \$11,000. Clark expected that Lamoille combined runs. Clark also noted the numbers on the bid sheet had been broken down for allocation purposes only.

In response to a question, Clark noted that no other company had bid to provide transportation for the last 10 years. Whitcomb stated his concern was that Eden was unable to find bus drivers. He believed this would be a problem in the future, as people didn't want to drive school buses. Beaupre asked if there was an increased cost over the last bid. Clark stated they came in within \$10,000 of the previous budget. Fagnant asked if the amounts quoted were locked in for 4 years. Clark stated they were, however, if any routes were added or changed, the pricing could change.

Clark then moved on to discuss possible changes to Eden's bus scheduling. Eden currently owned three buses. One was seven years old and could no longer be used. Additionally, Eden had had difficulties with drivers and substitutes. One driver resigned and one position had been approved to be RIF'ed by the Union. Clark explained that if Eden were to operate as it did currently, providing all the elementary, middle and high school services for the town of Eden, a bus would need to be purchased and a driver hired. Mascolino reported to Clark they could handle the elementary run within the town with the buses and drivers they had lined up.

Lamoille Valley provided alternate options for Eden transportation, which the Board would now need to vote on. Lamoille Valley's bid of \$54,000 for the secondary run from Eden assumed they would pick up all students, including middle and high school students, in the morning at the elementary school. They would deliver all students to their homes in the evening run. If, instead, they picked up the middle and high school students at their homes in the morning, it would add \$66,000 to the original bid of \$54,000.

Whitcomb asked if the parents would have to deliver students to the elementary school in the morning. Clark stated they would. Whitcomb stated that Eden buses had always picked up the high school students, along with the elementary students. Whitcomb said that if the contract were given to Lamoille Valley Transportation, Eden would no longer be involved in any decisions. LVT would dictate their plans to the town. Clark stated the Board would be deciding which option they wanted. Whitcomb said if the Board required parents to deliver students to the elementary school there would be a fight on their hands. Whitcomb blamed the Legislature and said he was sick of it.

Mascolino stated that aside from looking at the financial impact of the decision, they needed to look at the impact on the students. Bus drivers could continue to pick up high school students as they had been, but that required management of those students in the morning, which would be an additional cost. Mascolino noted that many students chose to have their parents drop them off at the elementary school so they could sleep later. If the bus were to pick up the middle/high school students, it made the bus ride longer for the elementary students. It also put older students in with much younger students. Whitcomb stated that wouldn't be any different than it was currently. He stated there had been no problems over the years with anything she had mentioned. Gallagher offered that Mascolino was just presenting all the options. Mascolino reiterated that buses could continue as they had been. However, if a bus driver were sick or a bus broken, multiple runs were being done with one bus and the middle/high school students were late for school. The impact in the afternoon was that the elementary school day needed to end at 2:15 p.m. in order to get buses on the road to the middle and high school by 3:04 p.m. Therefore, part of the reason Eden wanted to relinquish some control over the transportation of the middle and high school students was that it impacted the school day for all students.

Whitcomb stated that Mascolino did not understand that once Lamoille Valley Transportation took over it would be out of Eden's hands. This was what he was against. Whitcomb stated that Mascolino assumed she could handle the situation, but it would not be up to her anymore. Whitcomb stated there had never been a problem with busing and Mascolino had now made it a problem. Hamlyn-Prescott requested a call to order.

Clark summarized the options again to the Board: LVT would pick the middle and high school students up at the elementary school in the mornings. In the evenings they would deliver all students to their homes. That option would cost \$54,000. If LVT were to pick up the middle and high school students at home in the morning, it would cost an additional \$66,000, bringing the total cost to \$110,000. Clark's recommendation was to go with the \$54,000 option. Mascolino explained that school could then be extended another fifteen minutes with this option. Mascolino stated that she agreed with Clark's recommendation. Whitcomb again expressed his irritation with the fact that the Board and town no longer would have control over this process and he stated it was the fault of the Legislature.

Sander noted that in the past Cambridge had experienced issues with the contractor they used and, as a result, he had an ongoing concern about whether background checks were done and whether equipment was inspected properly. Clark stated that LVT did a phenomenal job of maintaining equipment and replaced their buses every seven years. She also noted that LVT had purchased several buses with seat belts, which were being used in Morrisville. Seat belts had changed behavior and the numbers of incidents on buses significantly.

Sander then reminded Whitcomb that under Robert's Rules, if the Chair wished to participate in the discussion, the Vice Chair should be put in charge of the meeting. Whitcomb stated he had a right to speak without handing the meeting to the Vice Chair. Whitcomb then discussed his concerns again, stating that Eden had had buses for years with no big issues. Once the contract was signed, the management of the buses would be out of Eden's hands. He again noted this was thanks to the idiots in the Legislature. Clark stated she worked with the school administrators and the bus company whenever there were issues.

Orost made a motion to award LVT the bid for elementary busing runs excluding the Eden alternate as noted on the bid sheet. Tilton-Martin seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Orost made a motion to award LVT the secondary runs excluding Cambridge elementary schools and Cambridge late run and including the Eden bid alternate. Tilton-Martin seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Orost made a motion to award Cambridge School District the secondary runs for Cambridge alone. Hamlyn-Prescott seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Moulton made a motion to award LVT the runs to Wolcott. Barry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Torrey noted that the bids did not include the cost of transporting three year olds. Clark explained that at this time the SU did not transport that age group. Lamoille Valley Transportation now had the ability to do that if the Board wished to do so at an additional cost. Torrey suggested the Board discuss this further at a later date, as there were many three year olds who were unable to attend because they didn't have the transportation. She believed that enrollment would increase substantially. Whitcomb asked that this be noted for further discussion and Janet Murray was asked to address this at a future meeting.

Community Building Use Policies: Whitcomb addressed the Board stating his concern that buildings in the towns that had merged might be denied their ability to use their community buildings as they saw fit. He noted that in Eden alcohol was allowed in the building for weddings, dances and other events. Whitcomb wanted it recorded in the minutes that for the next five years towns could continue using their buildings as they saw fit. After that time, the Commissioner of Education could make changes to the policy, but as of now there was a policy and Article in place. Gallagher said that Article 8 stated: "The Unified School District will encourage

appropriate use of school buildings by the students and the community according to the policy and procedures. Current written community use policies and procedures will be maintained for each forming district and LUHSD #18 school buildings for the first 5 years of new ownership.”

Beaupre asked who would administer the rental policy. Whitcomb stated the principal of the school would administer the policy and it had been done very well in Eden. Whitcomb stated he wanted a motion to be made on this item. When questioned about whether this was necessary, Whitcomb stated he was asking the Board to do so. Hamlyn-Prescott stated she would recognize what was already in the Article and had no desire to reaffirm the matter. Whitcomb stated he wanted it recorded in the minutes that this matter had been discussed and for five years beginning on July 1st the Board was following Article 8.

Konica-Minolta Assumption of Debt: Clark explained there were three service agreements and one lease agreement for printers and copiers from Johnson, Hyde Park and Eden. This action would shift the obligation of the agreement that already existed for the service agreements and the lease of copiers to LNMUUSD. Tilton-Martin made a motion to provide Whitcomb the approval to sign the resolution agreeing to the assumption of debt on the service agreements and leases. Beaupre seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve and Execute Tax Anticipation Note: Clark explained that the Board awarded the Tax Anticipation Note to Community National Bank of Derby, Vermont. She asked that Board members sign the agreement.

Statement Regarding Boards’ Resolve to Accept All Assets, Liabilities & Obligations of the Merging School Districts: Clark stated this was a reaffirmation of one of the Articles of Agreement in which the Board noted that they were resolved to accept all assets, liabilities, and obligations of the merging school district. Sander wondered if the Board was putting into question everything else that wasn’t being formally reaffirmed. It was already in the Article and Sander was concerned the Board could be undermining themselves. Whitcomb stated he had no problem with this, as he didn’t trust the actions of Big Brother down the road. Sander then made a motion stating that the Board reaffirmed everything that was in the Articles of Agreement. Orost seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion and Possible Action Regarding Special Audit of District Cash Accounts Prior to Transferring Funds to LNMUUSD: Whitcomb was concerned about monies being transferred to the new Board without an audit. His concern stemmed from what had happened in Coventry where \$1.4 million was reported missing. Whitcomb believed an audit was required before any money was transferred so as to affirm that the books were clear. He noted that grant money was available to pay for this audit. Whitcomb explained that he had discussed this with David Kelley, an attorney in Greensboro, who had agreed this should be done.

Clark stated she also agreed it was a good idea. While no money would be moved until the audit was completed, there was a stepped up procedure the auditors could perform on the cash accounts. They would: examine receipts related to backup that supported deposits on a sample of three month statements and further procedures would be done if anything was questioned; examine related backup and approvals that supported selected transfers for three months from each school district and each treasurer; examine related backup that supported miscellaneous deductions or withdrawals selected on a sample three months from each district and treasurer; examine bank reconciliations for a sample of three months from each district and treasurer; and confirm the balance of the treasurer cash accounts for each school within the district with the financial institutions that held those funds.

Clark informed the Board the cost would be between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The audit could start in early July and be done in early August. These procedures and findings were not designed to detect fraud, however, the auditors would communicate with the Board if they had concerns about fraud. If there were too many unanswered questions, more testing would be done. Clark explained this was not a forensic audit. This was an audit that focused on cash because cash was such a vulnerable asset.

Sander asked how often regular audits were done. Clark replied audits were done annually. Sander asked if this reporting would be provided at the date of transfer. Clark noted these were additional procedures, specifically for cash. These were funds held with an outside individual, typically a treasurer, who was not part of the organization. She noted that it was also a quicker process making the funds a little more difficult to hide. Hamlyn-Prescott remarked that it was totally different than a regular audit. Clark also noted that this audit could be funded through the Act 46 grant.

Orost made a motion to approve the special audit of the District cash accounts prior to transferring funds to LNMUUSD in an amount up to \$4,000. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion, Second Reading and Possible Approval of Required and Recommended VSBA Policies: There was no discussion.

Student Outcomes – Highlights of the School Year: Janet Murray informed the Board that her Early Education team had developed 9 partner Pre-K programs. Five were in Lamoille County, one in Franklin County, and the others were in Chittenden County. 27 students accessed those programs, with 125 students accessing the school-based program. Murray noted that they had received a Vermont Community Preschool Collaborative grant for the third time. This year the funds would be used to hire a teacher at the Round Hill Kids Center in North Hyde Park. This would allow for a partnership in the District, as currently there were no qualified partners.

Trends in EEE continued to show an increase in issues related to behavior and trauma. Due to adult drug addiction, many three year olds were coming in with a lot of challenges and many were in crisis. This required a lot of support services for the families. More evaluation requests were coming in for students and the need for occupational and speech therapy was increasing. They also received a grant from the Agency of Education to be used for early multi-tier systems of support, primarily addressing the social and emotional wellbeing of the children.

Murray provided information gathered from the Gold Assessment Data. This was testing which all Pre-K programs were required to do each fall and spring. There was growth in the cognitive, literacy and math scores. Sander asked how reliable the assessment tool was. Murray stated it was very reliable and explained the training received to conduct the testing. Sander asked if the test was reliable enough to be used for a number of years or would a new test be developed which would make it difficult to compare past results. Murray stated the assessment tool had been used in the District for 5 or 6 years, was a nationally recognized tool, and she didn't see it being changed.

Jen Stevens discussed student support services being offered to the 1,835 students, PK-12, at the LNSU. Currently, 17% of the student population, 314 students, accessed special education services. Specific learning disabilities, developmental delay and emotional disability were the most prevalent disabilities for those students eligible for services. Stevens was pleased that 71% of those students were spending at least 80% of their time in the general education classroom, but she would like to see that number increase. Stevens reported that the number of students accessing separate therapeutic day programs was trending down: in 2013 it had been 22 and in 2016 it was down to 14. The number of students needing support due to developmental delay had risen from 15 in 2000 to 79 in 2016. Those with emotional disabilities had risen from 39 in 2000 to 47 in 2016. Those needing support on the autism spectrum had risen from 2 in 2000 to 19 in 2016.

Stevens then outlined the wide range of professional development trainings that the special educators were receiving in order to meet the needs of the students. This year Stevens noted they were working on developing a multi-tier support system within the entire district. Students moved from one school to another and a unified MTSS was needed to ensure continuity. Proficiency-based requirements for graduation were being reviewed, as

well as grading practices for students receiving special education services. Stevens also stated they were building capacity within the schools to reduce the need for contracted services.

Sander asked if the increasing numbers in the diagnostic categories came about as a result of better screening and diagnostic testing. Stevens agreed that was true in the case of autism. However, more students were coming from less than nurturing homes and children were coming in with less skills. Sander stated his appreciation for any effort spent in reducing the need for contracted services.

Jade Hazard then discussed some of the things they were doing well. Lamoille North had been part of a pilot program through the Agency of Education in which a group from both Washington Central and Grand Isle came and reviewed the schools' educational quality standards. What the review highlighted was that the LNSU staff embraced a whole-child approach and a collective responsibility for the well-being of all; they had a collaborative, data and needs based approach to choosing professional learning; and they offered a range of flexible pathways, academic supports, and enrichment to all students.

Hazard went on to explain that over the past year the middle and high school had been working on proficiency-based learning. Proficiency-based learning was a system of instruction, assessment, grading and academic reporting that was based on students demonstrating that they had learned the knowledge and skills they were expected to learn as they progressed through their education. The focus this year had been to improve the instructional core. When the teachers were able to improve their content knowledge, the student's learning improved.

Hazard explained that the Bridges Math Program was now being used in 4 of the 5 elementary schools. Embedded professional development was taking place in the area of literacy with a consultant teaching writing at all five elementary schools. Two teachers would be attending the Vermont Science Institute this summer and would be offering their information as part of the next generation science standards. Hazard explained that a new Standards/Proficiency Based report card had been developed this year. This new report card would be used at all elementary schools. This would allow for consistency and equity in grading, and would be especially helpful for the middle school to use when evaluating incoming students. Hazard then explained that the middle and high school faculty had worked diligently this year to implement proficiency-based learning and the rate of change had been impressive.

Hazard then outlined the growth seen in math and math fact fluency scores. In the fall, students in Grades 2 through 6 were struggling with math facts. Impressive gains were made in the math fluency over all grades by the spring testing period. Fountas and Pinnell reading fluency scores were also provided.

Gallagher wrapped up the presentation by stating that this was the first time in over a decade that there had been growth from every school at the elementary level in both math and literacy. Gallagher stated they would continue to set the bar even higher. Hazard thanked the school principals who had worked very hard alongside their talented faculty.

Orost then made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Moulton seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.