

LAMOILLE NORTH MODIFIED UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

Board members present: Bill Sander, Andrew Beaupre, Mark Stebbins, Mark Nielsen, Lisa Barry, Heather Rodriguez, Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton, David Whitcomb, Wade Chivington, Patti Hayford, Chasity Fagnant, Angela Lamell, Sue Hamlyn-Prescott, Angie Evans
Others present: Catherine Gallagher, Michele Aumand, Marilyn Frederick, Deborah Clark

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order, Adopt the Agenda, Announcements and Public Comment*

A. Call to Order – 6:02

C. Gallagher called the meeting to order at 5:36.

B. Adopt the Agenda

C. Gallagher asked to change the agenda by moving the review of articles of agreement to be in conjunction with the transition framework discussion and moving nominations to come after the presentation on board roles and responsibilities.

B. Sander moved to adopt the agenda with the suggested changes, D. Whitcomb seconded and the motion was passed.

C. Announcements

M. Stebbins said Dan Regan is stepping down as the VSBA representative from Lamoille so there will be an opening. Anyone who is interested should send VSBA a bio and picture.

2. *Introductions*

C. Gallagher welcomed everyone. She said we are getting positive feedback from the state about being the district that is moving forward. We are a leading group of people who can help make sense of these moves for our communities. She is excited to be part of the leadership team. She asked each board member to talk about their background, why they want to be on the board, and what they hope to see as a consolidated district.

D. Whitcomb described his long experience serving on school boards. He said he wants to see the consolidated district work for students and taxpayers. His biggest reason for wanting to be on the board is that he is concerned about Big Brother taking over.

H. Rodriguez said her main interest in being on the Johnson board was to open up communication lines between the community and the school. She hopes we can do that here on a broader scale.

B. Moulton said he has been on the JES board for about 2 ½ years. He likes knowing what is going on and being part of decision making about what goes on with kids.

K. Orost said she feels it is important to be fiscally responsible to taxpayers and communication between home and school is also important. She wanted to see the decision to merge followed through.

A. Lamell said this is the first school board she has been on. She thinks it is important for the community to be involved in making sure our kids are getting what they need out of school.

C. Fagnant said there is a lot going on in Hyde Park and she wanted to be involved in outcomes there. She was convinced to run for this board, too. She is really interested in the merger.

P. Hayford said Hyde Park has had issues for years. She started going to school board meetings and decided if she wanted to see change she ought to be part of it. She has wanted to see a merger for a long time. She is hoping all the kids will become a community like at the high school and that all will have the same opportunities from beginning to end. All deserve to have the same chance.

L. Barry is from Hyde Park. She ran for this board because there wasn't anyone running. She thinks it is important to have a voice for community members who have been in the community for a long time. She is also a teacher in Essex. They are merging. She has experience as a teacher in that situation and with the board here. She ran for the merged board because she wanted to make sure Hyde Park didn't have open seats. (*Sue Hamlyn-Prescott arrived at 5:49.*)

W. Chivington said he is on the board because Waterville needed a representative and he wanted to get more involved in his community.

M. Nielsen said he has been on the Lamoille Union board, seeing all the communities working well together. He thinks Act 46 can add a lot to that. He wants to see it through.

M. Stebbins said he wanted to be on this board and the Cambridge Elementary board to be an advocate for the quality of his kids' education and to help the town balance that with fiscal responsibility. What he wants to see out of the consolidated district is for a group to come together and be able to recognize the unique needs of the different towns involved and work together to get what's best for all the different communities and increase the quality of education all around.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott said when she joined the high school board it was interesting to see all board members working together for the 7th to 12th grade community. It has always been her hope for us to view education PreK-12. She would like all kids at all schools to get the same opportunities and the same quality education.

A. Beaupre said he is here because he believes in public education and he wants to push quality education.

B. Sander said he is very deeply committed to education. He talked about his experience in education and social work. He served for 17 years on the Lamoille Union board. He has been primarily concerned with enhancing the academic program and improving relationships between faculty and the board. While he was on the board Lamoille Union improved its graduation rate.

C. Gallagher introduced minute taker Donna Griffiths, business manager Deb Clark, executive assistant Michele Aumand, and former business manager Marilyn Frederick, who is our Act 46 consultant.

3. ***Consent Agenda Items (Minutes of the July 21, 2016 Board Organization Meeting)***
D. Whitcomb moved to approve the consent agenda, W. Sander seconded and the motion was passed.

4. ***Presentation on Role & Responsibility of Boards***

M. Aumand passed out confidentiality training information for board members to review. C. Gallagher pointed out that any breach of confidentiality at the board level could result in withholding of federal funds. She said if there is ever a situation where the board needs to discuss personnel a board member who has heard about the issue beforehand may have to remove themselves from the discussion. She invited anyone with questions to call her. She can meet with people one on one if necessary.

C. Gallagher said it is essential that people understand the role of the board chair and the role of board members. Board members need to understand when they are acting as individuals and when they are acting for the board.

She asked board members, if you are at the grocery store and a parent approaches you and says they are having trouble with their child's teacher, how might you respond? W. Sander said he would suggest they follow the chain of command. M. Stebbins said he would ask if they have spoken to the teacher or principal. C. Gallagher suggested a board member might also say they are speaking as an individual and not for the board. W. Sander said the board member should also ask the parent not to discuss the issue further because then if it comes up at a board meeting they will have to recuse themselves. C. Gallagher said she gets calls from parents all the time and she asks them if they have spoken to the teacher or principal – whoever would be the appropriate starting point based on the chain of command.

C. Gallagher reviewed "The Essential Work of School Boards" from VSBA. She talked about characteristics of successful boards. What makes a meeting successful? An agenda, clarity on why the board is there, and board members coming prepared to meetings. Characteristics of boards that don't work well together include lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities and individuals with their own personal agendas. Everyone has their own agenda and assumptions they bring to the table. It is communicating that effectively that can move us forward. One board member may disagree with colleagues, but the statement that goes out is what board's position is. Lack of trust can be another characteristic of boards that don't work well together. The role of a school board is to assure high quality education for every student, a good return on the public's investment, and an efficient, effective and ethical system.

This year the board chair is going to need to meet with C. Gallagher weekly, Friday nights or during the day. It will be a year of rollout, collaboration, and time spent doing research and understanding budgets. The board chair position will be a massive time commitment. (A. Evans arrived at 6:10.) She wants to make sure the role is not taken lightly. Vice chair and clerk are also important roles. The board will also need subcommittees.

5. *Nomination and Election of Officers for One Year*

C. Gallagher called for nominations for board chair. M. Nielsen nominated David Whitcomb. W. Chivington moved to close nominations, seconded by B. Moulton. **The board voted to elect D. Whitcomb as chair with S. Hamlyn-Prescott abstaining.**

D. Whitcomb called for nominations for vice chair. M. Nielsen nominated Katie Orost. **M. Nielsen moved to cease nominations and elect K. Orost as vice chair, B. Moulton seconded and the motion was passed.**

D. Whitcomb called for nominations for clerk. K. Orost nominated Mark Nielsen. **M. Stebbins moved to close nominations and elect M. Nielsen as clerk, B. Moulton seconded and the motion was passed.**

6. *Articles of Agreement/By-Law Review as Passed for LNMUUSD*

M. Frederick said LNSU contains 3 districts and 4 tax entities. The 3 districts are LNMUUSD, Cambridge and Waterville. Those 3 plus LNSU are the 4 tax entities. LNSU is not a district. According to Donna Russo-Savage we have 3 districts and one SU.

LNSU continues as the administrative, planning and education service unit for all 3 districts. LNSU is still charged with employing central office staff and taking responsibility for transportation, special ed, etc.

LNMUUSD serves and governs Belvidere Central School, Eden Central School, Hyde Park Elementary School, Johnson Elementary School, Lamoille Union Middle School/High School and GMTCC. The names of the schools are not changing.

LNSU acts as the governing board for LNMUUSD, Cambridge and Waterville districts. The LNSU board is composed of representatives from each of the districts. LNMUUSD board members were elected in April. In Cambridge and Waterville LNSU representatives need to be appointed.

M. Frederick reviewed the 21 articles of agreement.

Article I: Necessary Districts

Defines necessary districts to create Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District

Article II: Grades

Defines grade levels operated as PreK-12

Article III: Employment Contracts

Recognition of Employment contracts. Must negotiate new agreement by July 1, 2017, or comply with existing (16 VSA CH 53) Master Agreements & individual contracts existing 6/30/17

Article IV: School Facilities

School Facilities. School closures after July 1, 2017 requires 75% majority of board, in two consecutive votes, with at least 1 year between votes

Article V: Student Transportation

LNSU/LNMUUSD determines transportation

Article VI: Curriculum

LNSU/LNLMUUSD determines curriculum

Article VII: Operating Deficits & Surpluses

Deficits & Reserves to the LNLMUUSD, but reserves voted as designated, remain designated by school

Article VIII: Property & Real Estate

School building & property assets to LNLMUUSD. Policies and procedures for facilities community use continue for 5 years. After 5 years, requires 75% board vote after 3 warnings.

Article IX: Proportionate Board RepresentationArticle X: Terms of office

M. Frederick showed a chart with each board member's term of office. She explained that Cambridge and Waterville, in addition to being represented on the LNSU board by those elected to LNLMUUSD from their town, will each appoint someone from their existing board. But that doesn't mean Cambridge and Waterville get an additional vote.

Waterville still gets one vote, so each LNSU board member from Waterville gets half a vote. Each Cambridge board member gets .83 of a vote. Cambridge and Waterville members participate fully on the LNLMUUSD board except for elementary school decisions. They still have secondary students from those communities. But they must recuse themselves from elementary decisions. B. Sander asked if they also have to recuse themselves from discussion of elementary issues. M. Frederick said she is told that they don't; they just can't vote.

Article XI: Formation Vote: April 12, 2016Article XII: Transition Provision

Gives authority for new board to act *preparing & presenting FY18 budget*

Article XIII: Annual Budgets

LNLMUUSD *SHALL* Propose

Article XIV: Transition Period

Current boards *may* remain in existence for the completion of outstanding business, through 12/31/17

Article XV: Cost/Benefit Analysis ProjectionsArticle XVI: School Grade ConfigurationsArticle XVII: Student Mobility

Attendance of school in their Town of "Residence" until 2020. Act 153 allows grandfathering of tuitioned students if allowed "fewer options." *The question for the MUUSD board* is whether this applies for Belvidere.

Article XVIII: Local Input

Must provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget.

Article XIX: Board Configuration

Defines Modified Union classification. CES and WES are classified as Non- Member Elementary Districts (NMED) and are given voting representation for general Union school district action, but no PreK-6 program or building decisions.

Article XX: Board Procedures

Describes the Modified Union District representation, Governance Board (LNSU), Fractional Voting, Joint LNSU/LNLMUUSD meetings, charges or assessments in compliance with law.

Article XXI: Non-Member Districts Joining

NMED may still join through April 12, 2017 without LNMUUSD voter approval.

B. Sander said currently we have Australian ballot voting for the high school budget. Now he assumes we will have a unified budget for the high school, middle school and the 4 elementary districts in LNMUUSD, but since Cambridge and Waterville are not in LNMUUSD, how do they vote on the high school budget? M. Frederick said she thinks there will have to be separate articles for the high school, tech center and elementary budgets. W. Sander asked, and everyone else will have a combined budget? M. Frederick said she was thinking everyone else could vote on just two articles. She thinks in towns that are part of LNMUUSD people will not vote separately on the elementary budget and the rest of the budget but will just have one budget to vote on. But she is not sure. A committee will have to look at that. W. Sander asked if this supersedes the articles of agreement that created LUSD #18, which requires that all ballots be commingled before being counted. M. Frederick said ballots will still be commingled.

7. Transition Framework

M. Frederick said she has a cloud-based project management chart system each committee could access to coordinate committee work. It is important that all the work be coordinated.

Committees of the LNMUUSD board will need to:

- Commit to the time necessary to enable committee work
- Identify essential *Tasks* necessary to meet July 1 unification
- Objectively gather, review and evaluate information
- Prepare to report committee work information and recommendations for full board meeting actions
- Moves processes forward with timely resolve to attain Board identified *Goal & Objectives*
- Maintain the boundary of the *Scope* the Board has identified

M. Frederick suggested the following board committees and staff liaisons for each committee:

- Negotiations/personnel – Charleen McFarlane
- Finance – Deb Clark
- Operations/facilities and technology – Dylan Laflam/Brian Pena
- Communication/PR – Cat Gallagher
- Policy/legal – Cat Gallagher

She recommends 2-3 board members per committee.

The negotiations/personnel committee would oversees the negotiation of contracts with district personnel, establish and review evaluation systems for school department staff and the superintendent, assist in the review and development of policies related to staff, and assist as needed in the hiring recommendations of the superintendent.

The finance committee would review and monitor issues related to the school district budget presented by administration in the support of students, as balanced with community

affordability, recommend adjustments and modifications to the school district's budget to be presented to the voters, and recommend cost effective and efficient projects and initiatives for full school board consideration in budget development for board approval in accordance with the adopted necessary budget timeline.

The operations/facilities and technology committee would review current operations in food service, facilities, transportation and technology for quality, efficiency and economies of scale and recommend major initiatives and expenditures to the whole board, as needed, to coordinate orderly management of assets for the district.

The communication/PR committee would develop and disseminate information through the use of district and local media to staff and public concerning the work of the board and the district and act as a liaison to the local municipalities and state agencies for matters related to the district as recommended by the superintendent.

The policy committee would identify, develop and review necessary district policies, recommend changes to current policies, addition of new policies and deletion of outdated policies based on changes in law, review policies and procedures related to students, meet with student representatives periodically to seek and review input from students on a variety of topics related to school life and the educational experience, and make recommendations as needed for changes to policies governing student issues.

M. Frederick showed a suggested timeline for committee work:

- Month 1 (September): Board Retreat
- Month 2 (October): Tasks Identified & Assigned
- Month 3 (November): 15% of Work Complete
- Month 4 (December): 25 % of Work Complete
- Month 5 (January): Budget Approval
- Month 6 (February): 40% of Work Complete
- Month 7 (March): Budget Voted
- Month 8 (April): 60% of Work Complete
- Month 9 (May): 85% of Work Complete
- Month 10 (June): 100% Work Complete

C. Gallagher said she thinks it is important to identify who would like to be on each committee tonight, but electing committee chairs can wait until October. She can check with other SU's to see what the charges for their committees are and she can bring those as suggestions to the committees in October.

B. Sander said he would like to be on the negotiation committee, but it has already been established and started work. C. Gallagher suggested that he be on the policy committee.

A. Beaupre offered to serve on the communication/PR committee.

S. Hamlyn-Prescott is already on the negotiation committee. She said she also has an interest in finance.

M. Stebbins would like to be on the operations and technology committee and is already on the negotiation committee.

M. Nielsen is on the negotiations committee.

W. Chivington would like to be on the operations and technology committee. A second choice might be the communication/PR committee.

A. Evans would like to be on the operations and technology committee. Her second choice would be the communication committee.

L. Barry would like to be on the operations and technology committee. Policy would be her second choice.

P. Hayford would like to be on the communication committee.

C. Fagnant is on the negotiations committee. She would also like to be on the finance committee.

A. Lamell would like to be on the finance committee.

K. Orost is on the negotiation committee. She could also be on the policy committee.

B. Moulton said he will serve on any committee. M. Aumand suggested finance or policy for him.

H. Rodriguez would like to be on the communication committee.

D. Whitcomb said he and C. Gallagher will have a lot of work to do. He will be on the communications committee but will also attend other committee meetings.

8. Review Board Calendar, Meeting Schedule and Requests for Future Agenda Items

It was agreed to schedule the next meeting for October 17 at 6:00. C. Gallagher said between now and then she will look for examples of tasks the committees would complete and offer them as suggestions. On October 17 the committees will meet and elect chairs. D. Whitcomb, M. Frederick, C. Gallagher, and D. Clark will move around from committee to committee.

9. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:16 and the motion was passed.

Minutes submitted by Donna Griffiths