

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union District Board  
Cambridge Elementary School, Cambridge, VT  
Minutes of Meeting  
January 8, 2018**

Members Present: Belvidere: Angie Evans; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Andrew Beaupre, Chasity Fagnant, Lisa Barry; Johnson: Angela Lamell, Heather Rodriguez, Bobbie Moulton, Katie Orost (Acting Chair); Cambridge: Mark Stebbins, Laura Miller, B. Sander; Sue Hamlyn-Prescott; Waterville: Amanda Tilton-Martin

**Members Absent:** David Whitcomb, Patti Hayford, Mark Nielsen, Heather Hobart, J. Sander

**Others Present:** Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Jade Hazard, Brian Pena, Dylan Laflam, Janet Murray, Mary Anderson, Diane Reilly, David Manning (arrived at 6:16 p.m.), Melinda Mascolino, Brian Schaffer, Wendy Savery, Chris Damato, Dana Jewett, Lucy Boyden

**Minute Taker:** Sue Trainor

**Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment:** Acting Chair Orost called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Moulton made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Miller. The motion passed unanimously. There were no public comments.

### **LNSU/LNMMUUSD Routine Business**

#### **Consent Agenda Items:**

**Minutes of the December 11, 2017, Meeting; Minutes of the December 11, 2017, Communications Committee Meeting, Safety Committee Meeting; Minutes of the December 7, 14, 21 and 28, 2017, Budget Committee Meetings:** A motion was made and seconded to approve all minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Stebbins, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

**Corporate Resolution for Sweep Accounts:** Clark reported there was occasionally excess cash in the bank account that was above the FDIC-approved limit. A sweep account would take that cash and place it in a very conservative and secure investment account overnight and then replace the cash in the operating account the following day. This would involve three separate accounts. Whitcomb needed the Board's approval to sign the resolution. A motion was made and seconded to approve the sweep account arrangements as described. B. Sander asked if the bank determined the investments and Clark stated they did. The motion passed unanimously.

**LUHS #18 Accounts Name Change to LNMMUUSD:** B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve a resolution changing the name. The motion passed unanimously.

**Bid Results for Van Purchase:** Clark reported that despite sending the bid request for a seven-passenger all wheel drive van to a dozen vendors, Heritage Toyota was the only vendor to submit a bid. Student Transportation Services was retiring the 2008 van as a student transport van but would still be using it for other purposes. B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the bid of \$34,906 for the purchase of a Toyota Sienna. B. Sander suggested that in the future the District research whether they could purchase a vehicle through a State bid at a significantly reduced price. The motion passed unanimously.

**Approve Paraeducator Pay Rate:** Manning reported he had interviewed Christina Iavarone who was also interviewing for a position at the high school. Iavarone had a Bachelor's Degree and six years of experience in a school setting and, if she chose to work at Johnson Elementary School, would be a one-

to-one paraeducator. This position would replace a contract with Laraway. McFarlane recommended that Step 8 be the appropriate placement for the candidate. A motion was made and seconded to approve the pay rate. Beaupre asked if the tool created by Student Support Services had been used in making the decision to switch paraeducators. Manning explained he had not used the tool. In this particular case the decision had been made to move away from Laraway Services. B. Sander commended Manning for moving from an outside placement to an on-site position. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge members abstaining.

**Central Office Report:** Gallagher reported she had made a presentation to the Cambridge Rotary Club and had discussed education standards and Every Student Achieves (ESA) with the group. The Club members stated they understood that the Act 46 transition had gone smoothly and asked if that had surprised her. Gallagher replied that every time change was embraced there were unintended consequences and gifts. Noting that a number of Club members were former Board members, Gallagher stated they had asked how behaviors were being managed at the school. The Club was impressed with the stated Board goals and had informed her that this was the first time the Board had adopted goals that were things they could work on based on federal, state, and administrator alignment as well as student interest.

Gallagher then reported that she had attended a Student Council meeting where students discussed what it would mean to have an open campus. Students stated that seniors had a good deal of free time during the day. They suggested offering more courses that would be of interest to seniors, such as a course on college readiness or digital citizenship. Gallagher would be following up with them.

Gallagher then discussed the recent school bus incident. She stated there had been great teamwork involving the Sheriff's Department, Fire Department and EMS Services. Gallagher reported that many of the students on the bus were former Johnson Elementary School students and David Manning had stepped up to help as he knew many of them. No students were transported by ambulance, nine students were double-checked and all parents were called. The check in and check out system had worked very well. She noted that cell phone service was spotty which had been a bit of a concern. Gallagher wanted to review how to get a message out sooner and to determine what the family tree looked like when there were emergency situations. The District received great reviews from the Sheriff's Department for the actions taken. Clark agreed it had all been very well coordinated.

Gallagher then reported the Hyde Park Fire Department had asked the District to open their facilities recently for people who had lost heat. It was a great team effort on the part of the Fire Department and the District. Gallagher stated there had been a collaboration involving two high school students. They were interested in designing alternative learning environments. Gallagher had taken them to the Hyde Park Elementary School Plaza location so they could see how those classrooms had been laid out. These students made a presentation on their findings and made suggestions to incorporate classroom design ideas in the high school. Gallagher noted that behavior referrals had gone down significantly at Hyde Park based on the new classroom design.

Gallagher informed the Board that she had attended the Youth Risk Behavior Retreat at the Middle School. Students were asked to review a survey and identify the strengths and challenges of the school. Some strengths identified were student assemblies, Lancer pride, check in/check out system, mentors, 4-H Club, Girls on the Run, and sports teams. Three large concerns noted were 40% of the students didn't think binge drinking was a problem. Gallagher stated this was a problem because there were a number of students who participated in having five or more drinks at a time. 26% of the students thought that exercise wasn't as important as it should be. Of particular concern to Gallagher was that 19% of the students played video games five or more hours a day. That was very high compared to the Vermont average. Action items would be developed to address these challenges.

Gallagher reported that four former students currently attending college were coming in to speak with her about their Pre-K through Grade 12 experience. They would offer ideas on what helped and hindered their ability to be successful.

Gallagher then informed the Board that she had attended the recent Governor's Summit. She stated it was the first time a large group of stakeholders agreed that student outcomes needed to be looked at in a different way. There was a push to help students become both college ready and career ready, rather than one or the other.

Gallagher stated that more students were involved in accessing vouchers for dual enrollment. She said they were seeing more of a push for students to explore options earlier. Gallagher also noted this was very expensive. B. Sander asked for the number of students accessing the vouchers and the financial cost. Gallagher's response was that the direct investment in dual enrollment vouchers increased from \$961,000 in FY15 to \$1,483,000 in FY17. The number of vouchers increased from 633 to 2,660.

### **Elementary Principal Updates:**

**Cambridge:** Anderson thanked Janet Murray for going to the Licensing Board to attempt to obtain a waiver for Mary LaFountain to finish off a year of pre-school. Anderson reported they had a new program this year where students served as tech ambassadors. These students were given tasks to support teachers in various programs and the students loved the responsibility. The 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders organized a food drive as part of the EarlyAct group, a subsidiary of Rotary International. As part of the service project, student volunteers for the North Country Animal League initiated a bake sale on their own and arrived to volunteer with funds in hand to donate.

**Eden:** Mascolino reported that Spirit Week was last week. There had been a pep rally scheduled to celebrate the athletes and cheerleaders were planning to perform. Unfortunately, because of the weather it couldn't take place. An evacuation drill had taken place, with students leaving the school, meeting up at the storage unit and moving on to the North Hyde Park Fire Station. The drill went very well and the students were quiet, cooperative and took it very seriously. The Home Town Play Group started in December and was taking place on Fridays. The First Sports for Life Day would begin next week and the ice skating rink was ready to go. Mascolino reported there was a new schedule incorporating a half-hour of learning time for students. She had mixed feelings about it.

**Johnson:** Manning reported that the JES Tech Committee had organized the JES Intertechnology Festival in which all staff signed up for tech learning activity. The topics ranged from how to update a page on a website, how to use Google sheets, how to use Google Earth and how to incorporate history and geography using Google Earth, and setting up Google webpages within a teacher's webpage. This had not cost the school anything, as those individuals teaching were all employees of the school. Manning then reported that the second Alice lockdown scenario would take place this week.

**Hyde Park:** Reilly informed the Board that students had used Christmas carols as part of their poetry unit. They went caroling throughout the Plaza. She thought it was a perfect way to study poetry and to share with the community.

### **Middle School, High School and GMTCC Principal/Director Updates**

**Middle School:** Savery invited the Board to attend the Geo Bee on Friday. Winter activities and skiing would begin on Friday. All students would be participating in the program, which included downhill/cross country skiing, skating, bowling, dance, martial arts, snowshoeing and use of the high school weight room. Savery appreciated being able to expand this program, as only 25% of the students participate in the Ski and Ride Program. Middle school students would be participating in the Youth Leadership Summit with the high school. The middle school was piloting a pen pal program with one of the social studies teachers and Savery stated she hoped this would expand reading and writing skills, empathy, and an opportunity to connect with national and international students. Savery believed it had the potential to meet some social and emotional needs by exposing students to other students, other cultures, and other ways of living.

**High School:** Boyden stated the senior class was planning their Winter Ball, which was open to all Lamoille students. Winter sports were now in full swing. Boyden reported that the Student Council was discussing Capstone projects, noting that a number of underclassmen weren't aware of these projects. Schaffer discussed the Youth Risk Behavior Survey and how it tied into the Board's fourth goal of a safe and drug free school environment. He stated the data was telling. He noted they saw higher rates of consumption. Schaffer informed the Board of Healthy Lamoille Valley, an organization that worked within schools and across communities to provide data to help students and children make more informed choices. The ultimate goal of Healthy Lamoille Valley was to create a cross-county safety panel. This would be a forum for students to dialogue about increased use. Schaffer reported that as part of this effort he was working to send some LUSD middle and high school, Peoples and Stowe students to attend a national conference organized by Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America where students would receive advocacy training.

**Tech Center:** Damato explained that two students were being recognized this evening at the Presidential Scholars Recognition ceremony. A number of students were beginning to receive their college acceptances. Green Mountain Tech would be hosting a Lamoille Chamber of Commerce Legislative Breakfast January 15<sup>th</sup> at the Tech Center. The topic would be education and Damato encouraged Board members to attend. Sixty or seventy visitors from Lamoille Union High School came to the Tech Center to review the programs being offered. Damato reported that a recent graduate, a junior at Mass Art, had just illustrated a book. Eight students and six adults were going to participate in the Tanzania project this summer and planning was now underway.

Following these reports B. Sander expressed concern that using Christmas carols for the poetry classes might be going over the line. Reilly stated the songs were traditional but not religious and included Jingle Bells and Frosty the Snowman.

**Budget Presentation:** Clark, providing an overview of the SU budget, stated this was the third year of transportation costs being accumulated at the SU level. The budget incorporated the increased consolidation of special education costs at the SU level. It included comprehensive benefit adjustments for the new consumer-driven health plans with a high deductible and the HRA accounts. There was an additional \$110,000 of SU reserves being applied to reduce the general assessment in support of the health cost recapture and an additional \$130,287 of SU reserves were being applied to offset the increases in special education costs.

The total FY19 LNSU budget, not including special education costs, totaled \$3,758,114. With the subtraction of grant funded items totaling \$155,000, the subtraction of transportation and services to schools of \$1,906,300 and subtraction of \$50,419 of miscellaneous revenue, the non-special education assessment expenses totaled \$1,645,919. Applying \$189,713 in reserves to offset the health cost recapture, the total FY19 non-special education assessment costs would be \$1,456,206.

Special education total costs for FY19 were \$6,026,610. Reserves of \$130,287 were subtracted along with estimated special education revenues of \$3,867,898. This brought the FY19 special education assessment to \$2,028,425. Adding in the \$1,456,206 FY19 special education assessment brought the total FY19 assessment to \$3,484,631. Clark reported that the assessment in FY17 was \$4,234,478 and FY18 was \$3,493,247. Transportation costs were also reviewed. Based on the October population, the following assessments were being applied:

Non-Special Education Assessment: Cambridge: 18%; Elementary Schools of the MUUSD: 38%; MUUSD High School: 38%; and GMTCC: 6%.

Special Education Assessment: Cambridge: 18%; Elementary Schools of the MUUSD: 38.61%; High School: 43%

Clark noted that there was no action required by the Board at this time. The MUUSD budget was still being worked on. Clark stated this was a challenging budget year because it was being reported that

the State tax rate would increase either 6% or 9%, which would be in addition to whatever increase the Board approved.

Clark then moved on to provide detail on the LNMUUSD, noting there were six campuses with 1,611 students in total. The combined elementary budget was \$10,942,962 and the combined secondary budget was \$12,616,384. Factors involved in building the budget included:

- the rate increase of between 6% and 9% reported by State agencies
- the State Property Yield dropped to \$9,842, which would mean a rate increase
- the Income Yield was now \$11,862
- the State Property Tax Rate was \$1
- the Non-Residential Property Tax Rate was increasing to \$1.629 from \$1.535
- the Excess Spending Threshold was increasing to \$17,816 from \$17,386
- State announced income sensitivity of 2%
- Unassigned Fund Balances available of \$320,990 with this budget applying \$150,000 of that reserve

At this time, there was a total increase of 1% in the FY19 elementary school expenses. The Budget Committee requested that the total MUUSD education spending increase be no more than 2%. Therefore, administrators level-funded their budgets which was a difficult task considering there was a 3.14% increase to teacher and administrator salaries and a 3.4% wage and salary increase to all support staff. While it was hoped there would be savings with the new health plan, a 10% premium increase would occur on July 1. The Union School expenses were increasing less than 1%. The LNMUUSD combined total spending would increase .90%.

Clark noted that a loss of revenue was driving the rate and stated the special education revenue was decreasing 226%. Additionally, less money than last year was being applied from the reserve fund to reduce the rate. The final increase in revenues was 2.01%. The combined equalized spending for FY19 was \$23,559,346, with combined equalized pupils of 1475.08, and per equalized pupil spending of \$15,971.57.

Clark reported the administrators had provided the Budget Committee with details on what they had cut in order to level fund their budgets. These items included significant cuts to the physical plant budget, and technology initiatives wouldn't be able to take place if funded through the budget. Capital reserves would need to be used if technology initiatives went forward. Clark noted that the ability to use unrestricted reserves to hold these rates down wouldn't be available in 2020. Clark stated \$25,000 had been cut from Central Budget from the health reimbursement account. Cutting these funds came at some risk, as it was unclear how much employees would use of their HRA's. This could expose this item to deficit spending. The Art Lab and Research Lab were now using eleven-year-old equipment and had hoped to upgrade the equipment this year. The Committee would be meeting again this Thursday to determine what these cuts meant. Clark was concerned about the budget because it was so lean and yet still required an increase. She noted the first year of Act 46 brought some savings but this year those savings were being reversed.

Hunsberger stated he was concerned about how this would be presented to constituents. Act 46 was supposed to have provided savings to the towns. Clark stated that a statement would be drafted that would help to explain the situation. Clark explained that all districts were dealing with a special education drop in funding. Hunsberger reminded Board members of the upcoming Legislative Breakfast and encouraged members to speak with their local representatives about state funding.

**Adjourn:** Moulton made a motion, seconded by Beaupre, to adjourn at 7:36 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.