

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board  
Minutes of Meeting  
June 8, 2020**

**Board Members Present:** Cambridge: Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Bill Sander, Sue Prescott; Eden: David Whitcomb; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Lisa Barry, Tina Lowe; Johnson: Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen, Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

**Board Members Absent:** Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Mark Stebbins, Bernard Barnes; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Patty Hayford; Johnson: Bobbie Moulton, Angela Lamell

**Administrators Present:** Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Charleen McFarlane, Michele Aumand, Janet Murray, Denise Maurice, Jeremy Scannell, Brian Schaffer, Jennifer Hulse, Jan Epstein, Diane Reilly, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Brian Pena, Erik Remmers, Dylan Laflam, Cynthia Tighe, Terri Ayers, Erin Carr, Jacinta Raboin

**Others:** Galen Reese, Maggie McGee, Noah Burnham, Eric Hutchins, Patrick LaClair, Yvonne Jones

**Minute Taker:** Sue Trainor

**Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment:** Due to technical difficulties, Chair Nielsen called the meeting to order at 6:21 p.m. McFarlane requested that two items be added to the agenda: an Eden Central 5/6 Grade teacher hire and a middle/high school band teacher hire. Miller made a motion, seconded by Bezio, to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

As part of the public comment, Noah Burnham, Treasurer of the Student Council, stated he and several other students were present at the meeting to request that a Black Lives Matter flag be flown at the high school. Burnham noted the predominately white school in a predominately white state was not immune to racism. Maggie McGee stated that several other schools in Vermont were already flying the Black Lives Matter flag, so Lamoille North wouldn't be the first school to do this. Orost asked if this matter was even a School Board decision. Nielsen stated it wasn't necessarily a School Board decision, but it certainly warranted a discussion. Gallagher stated she was supportive of the suggestion, but she believed it was important to include the entire student body in the discussion. J. Sander thanked the students for the suggestion and was very much in favor of it and also of bringing it to the student body. Fagnant asked if the flag had ever been flown before. Gallagher stated it had not. The reason Gallagher wanted to have a broader conversation was because she didn't want this to be considered an optical performance. She believed it would be considered disrespectful to the people they were trying to support.

Pat LaClair expressed his support of the students and said that over the past few weeks there had been well-attended conversations led by teachers about current events and actions that the school could be taking. A good number of students participated in those conversations. He stated he thought the flag needed to be the outward representation of the school community's priorities of acceptance and equal treatment. There also needed to be a review of whether the school was practicing those priorities.

**LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items:**

**Minutes of the May 11, 2020, meeting, May 4, 2020, Curriculum Committee Meeting and May 28, 2020, Personnel Committee Meeting:** Bezio made a motion, seconded by Prescott, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** Miller made a motion to accept the Board Orders. Orost seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

**Award and Approve FY20-21 Revenue Anticipation Note:** Clark stated the District had gone out to bid for Lamoille North School District's FY21 Revenue Anticipation Note. Community National Bank, Community N.A., and Union Bank responded. Community National Bank bid 2.05% cost on the lending, with a 2.27% rate on the earnings but only up to the amount of the note itself. Community N.A. bid 2.02%

cost on the lending, with a 2.3% rate on the earnings, but only up to the amount of the note. Union Bank bid 1.75% cost on the lending, with a 1.85% rate on earnings. However, anything put into the cash sweep account would earn 1.85%. Therefore, even though they had the lowest spread, this year Clark recommended that the Board move the Revenue Anticipation Note to Union Bank. B. Sander made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

**Accept & Award Lancer 1:1 Bid:** Brian Pena informed the Board that the District had gone out to bid twice. The first RFP received no response. The second RFP resulted in a bid from Apple, Inc. The funding would come from the FY21 operating budget for instructional technology. The items included 310 iPads and cases at the total cost of \$117,164.50. Orost made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to accept the bid of \$117,164.50 from Apple, Inc.

Eric Hutchins stated he was surprised to see this on the agenda, as he was unaware that new iPads were being purchased. He believed that input from staff and students should have been solicited. He noted that two years ago students had reported that iPads were insufficient for the high school. They wanted devices with full screens. Further, the school worked on a Google platform and with Schoology and those didn't always work well with iPads. Hutchins was also concerned that only one bid was received. Hutchins asked that the Board reconsider this decision and request input from staff and students.

Pena stated there had been discussion about the devices; however, they had not been able to have a large group reassess the computer devices. Several years ago a mini-focus group was held to determine if and how well the iPads were working. The major issue at that time was the keyboard. Pena had looked into purchasing wired keyboards and purchased 100 for the high school and 100 for the middle school for the teachers to use in their classrooms for lengthier assignments. He noted there was an inventory that needed to be refreshed, as some of the devices were now four years old and no longer under a warranty.

Brian Schaffer noted that a number of years ago there had been a two to three week waiting period for students and teachers to access available technology. Over the course of time, iPads were brought in. It could be debated which device was preferred, however, what was found to be most user-friendly for the community and the network was the iPad. This purchase was meant to sustain the supply. Lisa Barry stated she had argued from the beginning that iPads should not be used. Devices should have a full screen and a keyboard. She believed the Chrome Book was a good match. Bezio then asked what the replacement/refreshment cycle was for the computers. Pena outlined the replacement cycle.

At this time, Nielsen suggested that those participating in the public comment on this item speak with Brian Schaffer and Brian Pena about future needs. Clark then asked what it would mean if the Board decided to shelve this item. Pena stated if they didn't move ahead with the purchase now, the older model iPads would remain in circulation. Any problems experienced with the devices in the classroom would continue. They were smaller iPads with less storage and had been purchased in 2016. He was trying to make sure they were set up for success by purchasing new computers each year.

Nielsen stated it might be in the Board's best interest to put this decision off for a month and have discussions with the Technology Committee.

Schaffer stated this was part of the general budget that had been built over time. Every single student now had access to a device and seven years ago that hadn't been an option. What the Board had the capacity to do now was to continue a program that had made sure that every student had access to a device. This was not the time to hit pause. It was unclear what the District was heading into next year and pulling away from purchasing these devices because some people would prefer a Chrome Book did not seem advisable to Schaffer. This item had been budgeted for and next year the budget was questionable. To sustain what had been built, Schaffer stated it was important to continue moving forward.

Denise Maurice stated that middle school teachers had done a lot in both training and adjusting the middle school students to the iPads. Some of the idiosyncrasies of the iPad versus the Chrome Book had been worked out. Students had a good understanding of the iPad and teachers wouldn't want to split between Chrome Books and iPads going into a very uncertain year. She requested the Board move forward with iPads for the middle school. She agreed that keyboards were a concern but noted that Pena had purchased wired keyboards to address that.

Pena noted that this was the first time he had heard a negative stance on using iPads. Gallagher reminded everyone that there was a subcommittee devoted to technology. All meetings were public and people were encouraged to participate. Gallagher stated this meeting was not the forum to bring up an issue that no one had heard about. Survey results coming in now from families about what had worked and not worked did not mention computers being an issue. The District had been able to provide some service to everyone who had needed it, due largely to Brian Pena. Gallagher suggested that if there were communication issues in the schools about technology, people should talk to the building principals who then would bring the issue to the Board. Gallagher stressed that it was important to be respectful of the process.

The motion then passed, with Barry and Fagnant voting against.

**Eden Central School Grade 5/6 Teacher Hire:** McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Jena Pike as the Eden Central School Grade 5/6 teacher at the base salary of \$40,000. Bezio made a motion, seconded by Orost, to approve the recommendation. Mascolino discussed Pike's qualifications. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge Board members abstaining.

**Band Teacher Hire:** McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Molly Maroney at a salary of \$41,170. Orost made a motion, seconded by Prescott, to approve the recommendation. Maurice reported that Maroney was coming from an elementary school music teacher position. She had been looking to work with middle and high school students, as well as looking to relocate to northern Vermont. Schaffer noted that Nick Allen had rebooted and refreshed the approach to band and music instruction. He had been influential throughout the District and was leaving behind a legacy of collaboration and coordination with the elementary schools. Maroney stated she felt up to the task. The motion then passed unanimously.

**Payroll During School Closure Policy – First Reading:** Clark stated this was a short-term policy, effective for March 18 to June 30<sup>th</sup>. It related to the emergency dismissal of school and the request that school districts honor contracts. In order to pay employees through federal funds, there had been a debate as to whether a policy or a procedure was required. In reviewing federal documents, they referenced a policy. This policy stated the District would pay employees during this period and in the same manner as before.

**Central Office:** Gallagher stated this was a week of momentous graduations. She was very impressed with the students who had ended up being the most resilient of anyone through this process. Most of the actual celebrations had been taped.

The District was waiting for a tool from the State to use in developing plans for the fall. It was unclear what that would look like. Teachers, parents, staff and students all wanted to help with that planning. The best way to help was to respond to the surveys being sent out. Three different surveys had been sent to students, to parents, and to all staff. The results of the surveys would then be sent to everyone for review. The Union also had meetings with their members to discuss their concerns. Once the District received the tool from the State, hopefully by mid-July, there would be principal-appointed small groups of school teams reviewing what could be taken from the work that's being done this week by teachers and staff and incorporate that into a template offered by the State. The State would have very strict guidelines as to what in-person teaching would look like. Those teams would then report to their building leaders.

Those leaders would make up the District Task Force. The District Task Force would take all the responses and incorporate them into something that could be rolled out.

Gallagher stated that teachers and staff were not compelled to work in the building for this school year. While they were compelled to work, they were not compelled to work in the building. That had been the statement all along, but apparently there had been some confusion around this.

Gallagher then outlined the fact that the District had been involved with the REAL Schools Coalition since January. Much of what was being seen was a reaction to events, but she was proud to say that Lamoille North had been working on this well before now. Gallagher was working to advocate against all social injustices. There was much work to be done and she appreciated the fact that the students wanted to participate. Gallagher explained her position on including the entire school in the matter and speaking face-to-face with people. She then noted that the recent Principal letter that she wrote to District families about racism and social injustice had ended up in the newspaper and resulted in threats to her family.

Clark reported that summer meals would continue through June 30<sup>th</sup>. In July there would be a short break over the holiday, then they would begin curbside pickup and delivery on Tuesdays and Thursdays. They would still provide five days worth of meals. Karyl Kent and her team have been phenomenal. The fiscal year was winding down and was ending in a healthy position. The audit would start a few weeks earlier this year. She thanked everyone for their work during this difficult year.

Eric Hutchins stated the work that Superintendent Gallagher, Brian Schaffer and the Board had done during the pandemic to address the safety of the community and staff had been amazing and was greatly appreciated. Heading into the new school year he and other teachers had faith that the safety, security, and comfort of the students and staff would be well taken care of. Hutchins stated there was a lot to be done to improve online education, but there was a great deal of positive feedback from community as to how things had been handled.

Dylan Laflam reported work on the roof had been going on for seven weeks and they were currently two weeks ahead of schedule. Unfortunately, they had found a layer of vapor barrier between the metal roof and the concrete that tested 25% positive for asbestos. That had to be removed. Because Evergreen Roofing was so far ahead of schedule and had saved money because no crowd control had been required, they were passing the savings back to the school. The entire removal would be done for the cost of Casella's removal fee of \$15,400. This could have cost over \$100,000 to remove, so they were being very generous. Work on the gym project had been going on for four weeks and they were ahead of schedule on the construction project. The bleachers and scoreboards had been ordered. However, trucking schedules were way behind and those items would get here later than anticipated. He was confident the gym would be finished by the expected date of October 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Principal/Director Reports:**

**Belvidere/Waterville:** Epstein informed the Board they would hold a curbside graduation ceremony tomorrow. There had been some fun end-of-the-year activities. They also held virtual field day activities. She was very impressed with what her staff had done during this period of time. Over the next few days the teachers would meet to work on the continuity of learning plan for next year.

**Eden Central School:** Mascolino reported that they had filled all of their posted positions. Graduation would be held on June 11<sup>th</sup>.

**Hyde Park:** Reilly reported the 6<sup>th</sup> grade drive-through graduation ceremony would be held tomorrow. Reilly stated that Gallagher and Wendy Savery had provided guidance for in-service. The staff was starting to plan for next year.

**Johnson:** Manning stated they would be holding a drive-through graduation ceremony this Friday. As part of a year-end project, both of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teachers had asked students to record their thanks to

someone that they had worked with at the school. Everyone in the school received thanks including the lunch lady. Manning noted it was important to remember that everyone made an impact on a child. Finally, he reported there was still a special education position open that he was trying to fill.

**Middle School:** Maurice informed the Board that the math teacher from the high school, Olivia Bryce, had decided to transfer to the middle school and would replace John Brown who would now be the Dean of Students at the middle school. The team placement process would be starting tomorrow. Maurice highlighted some of the creative activities the teachers had engaged the students in, one of which resulted in a virtual art museum. There would be an award ceremony on Tuesday and certificates would be handed out curbside on Wednesday and Thursday.

**High School:** Maggie McGee, a student representative, stated that her teachers had done a wonderful job continuing to teach while having to provide instruction online. She suggested that if online teaching continued next year, Zoom would be a better platform to use, as it was a better videoconferencing platform.

Schaffer stated that things remained unsettled. The school was attempting to trim down positions where they could in order to save money. They were changing the Assistant Principal position to a Dean of Students model, which should result in savings. Additionally, they were consolidating their Administrative Assistant positions. They were looking at course offerings and student selection to determine what positions needed to be filled. Schaffer thanked Wendy Savery and Superintendent Gallagher for their assistance during this time. Graduation was going to be a celebration on June 13<sup>th</sup>. There would be a red carpet and students were selecting their own entrance music.

Schaffer noted that because of proficiency-based learning they were now able to expand the number of students being recognized with awards. Close to 50% of the students would be recognized versus in the past when one or two students were recognized. He thought this was one example of providing equity to students. Schaffer recognized Thad Tallman for his efforts in bringing resources back to the campus in the middle of a pandemic.

**GMTCC:** Remmers stated their completion ceremony would be tomorrow night and would be fully virtual. Remmers had prerecorded messages to students, staff and families and awards and scholarship winners would be announced. Program instructors would be meeting online with their programs tomorrow evening and each student would be honored. Remmers was interviewing for a business administration position. The GMTCC crew was taking a ten-hour seminar through Vermont Virtual Learning Cooperative on online teaching best practices in preparation for the potential of going back to remote learning next year. Perkins V had been completed and was soon to be sent in to the State for approval.

**Other Business:** Nielsen recognized Galen Reese, thanking Reese for his input throughout his time working with the Board. Nielsen stated it was extremely important to hear from students and Nielsen enjoyed learning from Reese. Nielsen also thanked those who had participated in the public comments.

**Adjourn:** Orost made a motion, which was seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 7:51 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.