

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and  
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union District Board Meeting  
Minutes of Meeting  
December 10, 2018**

**Board Members Present:** Belvidere: Angie Evans; Cambridge: B. Sander, J. Sander, Mark Stebbins (left at 7:02 p.m.), Sue Prescott; Eden: Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb; Hyde Park: Tina Lowe, Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford; Johnson: Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton, Mark Nielsen, Angela Lamell; Waterville: Amanda Tilton-Martin

**Board Members Absent:** Cambridge: Laura Miller, Bernard Barnes; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant; Johnson: Eve Gagne

**Others Present:** Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Michele Aumand, Charleen McFarlane, Sherry Lussier, Jade Hazard, Chris Damato, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Brian Schaffer, Dana Jewett

**Minute Taker:** Sue Trainor

**Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment:** Chair Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. McFarlane requested that the approval of the custodial candidate be removed from the agenda and Stebbins noted that the Cambridge Support Staff Master Agreement Possible Ratification would not occur until Wednesday, so the scheduled recess was not necessary. Nielsen made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Tilton-Martin. The motion passed unanimously. There was no public comment.

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

**Minutes of the November 12, 2018 Board Meeting:** Tilton-Martin made a motion, seconded by Lamell, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board Orders:** Orost asked about funds being paid for cameras for the Cambridge bus service from the SU budget. Clark explained that transportation costs came out of the SU budget and were then billed back. Mark Stebbins made a motion, seconded by Tilton-Martin, to approve the Board Orders. The motion passed unanimously.

**LNSU Support Staff Master Agreement/Possible Ratification:** Prescott asked for a motion to ratify the Support Staff contract. B. Sander made the motion, seconded by Tilton-Martin, to ratify the contract. Prescott was happy to report that this agreement came about after just two meetings with the support staff. Prescott provided the highlights of the contract. It was a one-year contract, running from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. The likelihood of the minimum wage being increased to \$15/hour was taken into account during the negotiations. Therefore, all current staff would be brought up to \$13.40/hour or would receive a \$0.85 increase, whichever was greater. The current base was \$12.24. This would allow the District several years to increase salaries to \$15/hour. Health coverage would continue, with 83% being paid by the employer and 17% by the employee. First dollar coverage would be paid by the employer for the health reimbursement arrangement (HRA). The employer would pay \$2,150 for the HRA single plan and the employee would cover \$350. For all other HRA tiers, the employer would pay \$4,300 and the employee would be responsible for \$700. Prescott reminded the Board they would be moving to a statewide health insurance plan and would hopefully know the results of that by July 1, 2019.

Gallagher noted Prescott's skill in negotiating contracts and informed the Board that Prescott had been invited to negotiate for the State. B. Sander noted the excellent job that Prescott had done in negotiating. Sander also noted it was now almost a certainty that there were enough votes to override the Governor's veto of an increase to the minimum wage and he was happy that the contract was moving in that direction. Prescott stated this contract recognized what administrators had come to the Board asking for: an increase in the minimum wage in order to attract and keep staff. Prescott also acknowledged the rest of the BNC for their efforts: Orost, Whitcomb and B. Sander. The motion then passed unanimously.

**GMTCC Budget Presentation:** Lussier explained that the Tech Center's funds came from tuition and grant funds from the State. The Regional Advisory Board, which included superintendents,

representatives from all sending schools, and some at-large members, voted last Wednesday on the budget that was being presented to the Board at this meeting.

Lussier explained that this year 162 students were attending the Tech Center, with 25 of those students being 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in Pre-Tech Foundations. Because this class was not full day class, only 1/5<sup>th</sup> of those students could be counted. Therefore, the total FTE was 141. Last year this number was 112, so it was a 35% increase from last year. Lussier explained the increase could be from a bump in the increase of the number of available students, but was also because of the strategic marketing plan being used. However, because the six-semester average came to 128, there would be lower revenue coming from the State. Therefore, revenue was down 5%.

Lussier then provided information on the formulas used in funding. The base number provided by the State per student was \$10,130. That number was put into a formula for the basic education state assistance and the tuition reduction grant. The basic state assistance was money that went through the sending schools, with 87% of those funds being transferred to the Tech Center. The tuition reduction grant was for anything to do with a career in tech.

Some cuts were made in order to reduce costs. The RAB voted on the following changes: to close the Power Sports Program and to have the Assistant Director position absorb the job of the school liaison. That school liaison position would change from a full time to a half time position. Finally, the Director would now be responsible for the disciplinary duties. The percentage change of the budget was -5.37%. Even with the budget reduction, the amount of tuition required to bill high schools would be up almost 13%. That was how much the six-semester average affected what the Tech Center received in revenue.

B. Sander made a motion to approve a budget of \$3,230,526 for the Tech Center's FY2020 school year. Tilton-Martin seconded the motion. B. Sander was distressed at the student numbers and asked if sending schools were actively dissuading students from attending the Tech Center in order to keep the funds. Lussier stated this did happen across the state and they were using strategic marketing to combat that. J. Sander suggested considering a slight budget increase so that those students who might not be financially able to attend the Skills USA national competition could attend. Lussier stated there was a line item in the budget to assist students in that regard. Orost asked that Lussier explain the decision to discontinue the power sports course. Lussier stated the attendance was lower than usual and they couldn't find an instructor who would leave the industry. The program had already been on hiatus this year. Stebbins asked if the state funding was variable. Lussier stated it was. In response to another question from Stebbins, Lussier noted the six-semester average was put in place about twenty years ago as a way to buffer the number of students who attended. It helped when the numbers went down, but Stebbins stated it penalized a growing program. The motion to approve the GMTCC budget of \$3,230,526 for the FY20 school year was then approved unanimously.

Lussier then informed the Board that as part of an extension of Act 77, the Legislature passed a bill in which they would offer four pilot opportunities for a grant for tech centers to investigate and implement the idea of a change in the funding mechanism or the governance of a tech center or both. While Lussier wasn't concerned about the governance of the Tech Center in this region, she was concerned about how centers were funded. The current system was competitive with sending schools and encouraged territorialism. The RAB recently asked Lussier to investigate this issue. What she found was the Maine Model. The Maine Agency of Education visited each tech center, saw what each center was doing and then made decisions on how the tech center should run their programs and how much funding they needed to do that. The funding was then sent to the tech centers from AOE. The funding did not go through high schools and the tech center did not have to bill the high school. Lussier was able to meet with Tyler Backus from the Maine Department of Education to discuss their funding mechanism. Dan French, AOE Secretary, would be in touch with Backus soon. Stebbins asked whether the sending schools would still need to pay to have students attend the Tech Center. Lussier was unable to answer the question. B. Sander stated his skepticism, reporting that Maine had had a lot of issues during a restructuring several years ago. He also was concerned that the State could dictate their program priorities to the centers.

**Central Office Report:** Gallagher reported that Principal Anderson had broken her wrist and recently had eight pins installed. This happened on the heels of significant water damage that Cambridge experienced. She appreciated everyone's efforts in making sure that the school was running smoothly. Gallagher then provided an update on Act 46, stating that she had received an email officially informing the District that Cambridge would become part of the Supervisory Union on July 1, 2019. The District's Articles of Agreement state that following a deadline, the MUUSD would have to vote to accept. The question was whether it was the Board members or the electorate who voted. Legal was being consulted on this question.

Gallagher talked with the Board about the media, noting that she was concerned about the potential of a number of Board members talking to reporters. She believed the information provided could mutate and she would prefer a unified message. Therefore, she requested that Board members refer reporters to the Superintendent. Gallagher then provided the Board with Chair Whitcomb's new cell phone number: 802-730-2475.

Gallagher reported on the information provided to Board members in their packet about First Amendment rights in relation to student expression and employee expression. Gallagher then commended Jen Stevens who had received an annual letter from the State Director of Special Education in conjunction with the Finance Department at the AOE for receiving 100 out of 100 points for special education compliance. This had to do with service plans, staffing, service delivery, and compliance with paperwork. Gallagher then read comments from a parent who expressed appreciation for proficiency-based learning. Gallagher believed that parents were beginning to understand what the school was trying to do and she thanked administrators and teachers for their work in moving the proficiency piece forward.

Gallagher stated she attended many superintendent meetings where she frequently heard others speak of how difficult it was to work with their boards. Gallagher had never had that experience and she felt very supported by this Board. She expressed appreciation to the members. Clark agreed with Gallagher, stating that the Board worked very hard and provided invaluable insight and guidance to the administration. Clark then discussed Board pay, stating that last year best practice was put in place and the Board was paid at the end of February. However, she had no issue with issuing a year-to-date payment in December, with the final balance paid in February. Therefore, payroll would be issuing a payment this week to Board members.

Gallagher then informed the Board that a forum would be held at LUHS on January 15<sup>th</sup> by Healthy Lamoille Valley and the Vermont Parent Network on bullying, harassment and hazing. Gallagher would be a panelist. She asked that Board members attend if possible. B. Sander noted that Cambridge had voted twice not to join the District. He asked why the question needed to come up at the Town Meeting. Gallagher stated the surrounding towns would be the ones to vote, not Cambridge. However, they were continuing to investigate this. Whitcomb noted that there were many newspapers that provided excellent coverage on this subject. Lawsuits were going to take place about the merger. Whitcomb said there was information that was known now that had not been provided at the original time of the merger.

Clark stated the District was doing okay financially. There were two schools that had a recommended spending freeze.

#### **Elementary Principal Updates:**

**Eden:** Mascolino reported that Jan Reynolds, a children's author and photographer who traveled the world, presented a slide show of indigenous people to the students at Eden. The purpose of the visit was to bring information of other cultures to the students. Students were now researching and writing on the art, clothing and food of other countries. The second storage shed had arrived, which allowed equipment that had been stored in the gym and hallways to be moved to the shed. Mascolino informed the Board that the school had been used as an emergency shelter during the last snowstorm, with fifteen people

using the facility. Both Mascolino and Hunsberger discussed the event. The Promise Community Grant of \$150,000 was winding down, with \$17,000 remaining to be spent. This had been an important grant to the community and would end on December 31.

**Johnson:** Manning reported a custodian had been hired to work the 3-11 p.m. shift. Parent-teacher conferences had been held and while data had not yet been collected it appeared there was decent attendance. In the spring, teachers were going to pilot student-led conferences. Manning stated he had recently been trained by the Vermont Principals' Association to be a mentor for new principals. He also informed the Board of the group Vermont Fatherhood. This group was raising awareness on issues specific to fathers being connected to their children, with schools being a major part of that. Manning noted that outside of sporting events it was rare to see fathers at school. To that end, Manning had been speaking with fathers about the importance of participating in their child's life. Last week there was a celebration of learning where almost half of the 75 community members in attendance were fathers. The fathers were recognized and applauded for their attendance.

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

**High School:** Schaffer explained that Act 77 continued to make the school adjust their practices on a weekly basis. Student-led interests were coming to the forefront. These changes to teaching were giving the adults pause to realize a lot of the barriers to providing opportunities in this area were in their minds and there were a number of ways to expose students to things that were going on in the community. Schaffer then discussed the Capstone Project, a graduation requirement of all students in 2020 and beyond. The school was continuing to deepen their practices in restorative justice. Mark Scott and Heather Hobart were working with LUHS and the circle structure was starting to shift the culture. Schaffer then thanked Prescott and the negotiating team for listening to the administrators about pay rates. He also expressed appreciation for the work the Board did with the administration. Finally, Schaffer informed the Board that, along with Jessica Bickford, the school was holding a community circle to discuss vaping and e-cigarettes. Data showed that there was a spike in the amount of students using e-cigarettes. With Community Health Services of Lamoille Valley, a cohort counseling group was being set up for those students who have been caught vaping at school or who wanted to quit.

**GMTCC:** Lussier informed the Board she had been on an accreditation team for the Central Vermont Career Centers. She noted that a group from the Twinfield area had copies of the transcript that GMTCC had recently developed and were very interested in it. Brian Schwartz was now raising funds to transport fire gear that had been collected to Africa. Lussier reported that both the agriculture and the health students worked with goats on vital signs. Damato encouraged Board members to look at the house being built. Shingles were being put on the roof of the house and they were a month ahead of schedule. Damato then noted that he had been at a cyber security conference in Texas. A national thought leader at the conference praised Ted Weed as an incredible collaborator.

**Other Business:** There was no other business.

**Adjourn:** B. Sander made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to adjourn the meeting at 7:21 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.