

**Lamoille North Supervisory Union and
Lamoille North Modified Unified Union School District Board
Minutes of Special Meeting
June 22, 2020**

Board Members Present: Belvidere: Stephanie Sweet; Cambridge: Laura Miller, Jan Sander, Bill Sander, Bernard Barnes; Eden: David Whitcomb, Jeff Hunsberger; Hyde Park: Chasity Fagnant, Lisa Barry, Tina Lowe, Patty Hayford; Johnson: Bobbie Moulton, Angela Lamell, Katie Orost, Mark Nielsen, Allen Audette, Jr.; Waterville: Bart Bezio

Board Members Absent: Cambridge: Sue Prescott, Mark Stebbins

Administrators Present: Catherine Gallagher, Deb Clark, Charleen McFarlane, Michele Aumand, Janet Murray, Denise Maurice, Jeremy Scannell, Brian Schaffer, Jennifer Hulse, Wendy Savery, Jan Epstein, David Manning, Melinda Mascolino, Brian Pena, Erik Remmers, Dylan Laflam

Others: Galen Reese, Maggie McGee, Thomas O'Connor, Betzi Goodman, Erin Carr, Heather Rodriguez

Minute Taker: Sue Trainor

Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment: Because both co-chairs were unable to chair the meeting, Barry made a motion, seconded by Miller, to appointment Jeff Hunsberger as Interim Chair of the meeting. Hunsberger called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m. McFarlane asked that the French teacher hire be removed from the agenda.

LNSU/LNMUUSD Routine Business: Consent Agenda Items:

Minutes of the June 8, 2020, meeting, and June 3, 2020, Personnel Committee Meeting: Barry made a motion, seconded by Barnes, to approve the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Board Orders: Miller made a motion to approve the Board Orders dated May 15, May 26, and May 29, seconded by Nielsen. Miller then commended the staff in the Central Office for their efforts in staying current with the bills, especially during the pandemic. The motion then passed unanimously.

Personnel Items:

Approve LNSU Physical Therapist Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Kaylene Brown at an annual salary of \$65,000 based on her experience and pro-rated to .4 FTE until December 31st. In January she would move to .8. This was a non-represented, non-educational, licensed position. Miller asked if this was a new position. McFarlane explained that the current PT was moving toward retirement in December. Nielsen made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve LU Administrative Assistant Pay Rate: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Travis Hoffman at the rate of \$19.42. McFarlane explained that the part-time middle school finance position had been RIF'ed and this position would now take on both the Middle and High School finance pieces. Huffman had a strong financial background. The Union was supportive of this pay rate. Gallagher noted this position was replacing two positions and Gallagher stated her appreciation to the administrators for making this work and in watching the budget. Moulton made a motion, seconded by Nielsen, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve LUHS Science Teacher Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Karalyn Burke at an annual salary of \$46,840. McFarlane stated Burke used to work at LUHS. Sweet made a motion, seconded by Whitcomb, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve GMTCC Business Instructor Hire: McFarlane stated the recommendation was to hire Marcus Wilson as Business Instructor at the Tech Center at the annual salary of \$63,550. This was a special consideration because Wilson had extensive experience. The Master Agreement stated that anything above a Step 12 must get special approval from the Board. McFarlane noted that approval would be for both the salary and the special consideration. Miller noted Wilson was working toward his doctorate. He would also need to receive either a provisional or apprentice license in CTE. Gallagher noted this pointed to the disconnect between experience and education. Lowe made a motion, seconded by Miller, to approve the recommendation. The motion passed unanimously.

Food Service Management Contract Renewal for Johnson Elementary School FY 21: Clark reported this would be the first year renewal of a potential five-year contract with the Abbey Group. This was now a fee for service contract. A quick review showed that Johnson was coming in under budget. Whitcomb made a motion, seconded by Barry, to approve the contract renewal. J. Sander asked why the Johnson School food service program had a different arrangement than other District schools. Clark explained that part of the reason was because of legacy. Additionally, at the time the District needed to go out to bid, the District was not prepared to take over the operation. It was a big endeavor to take on purchasing equipment and supplies for another kitchen and it would also affect personnel. McFarlane stated it could also touch on unfair labor practices. Clark stated the Board could review this arrangement during the budget development discussions. The motion passed unanimously, with Cambridge members abstaining from the vote.

Payroll During School Closure Policy – Second Reading: Clark reminded the Board they had approved the first reading of the policy at the last meeting. Orost made a motion, seconded by Moulton, to approve the policy. The motion passed unanimously.

Pilot Expansion of Lancer 1:1 Program Discussion: Clark stated that the Board had voted at the last meeting to accept the Apple iPad bid. That decision could not be changed and the contract needed to be honored. However, in light of the current learning environment it was clear that students would benefit from some diversity of devices. The Administration wanted to continue to explore the question on the appropriateness of purchasing other devices and, if appropriate, they would seek CARES Act funds to support those devices. Gallagher added that survey results showed some individuals were very happy with iPads. However, some students would prefer Google Chromebooks. Gallagher noted that Lisa Barry had pointed out years ago the importance of differentiating devices. Gallagher informed the Board that years ago the school had been established as an Apple distinguished school and the school was able to receive substantial discounts on Apple devices. Now was a good time to have a conversation about which devices would serve students better.

Schaffer reported he had surveyed teachers and students last week about devices and had received 239 responses. While the majority of students agreed that iPads were good devices to use, there was not complete agreement. Schoology was the primary format for distance learning and iPads worked well with that. It seemed though that PowerSchool was not working well with iPads. From the responses, it was clear that individuals believed that other devices should be reviewed and considered. Schaffer wanted to convene a group of teachers, students, Brian Pena, the tech integrationist, and Board members for a conversation on this.

Gallagher noted that the Tech Committee was now part of the Finance and Capital Committee, but she stated it made sense to reconvene a Tech Committee. Additionally, it made sense to look at devices to be used across the Supervisory Union, not just at the high school. Bezio asked about the use of CARES dollars. Barry suggested the District could also consider looking at whether professional development was needed. With new teachers coming in over the years, it might be time to train on the use of the iPad, which may make that device more usable. Barry agreed with the recommendation to review the use of other devices. The Board agreed to move forward with this discussion.

Fall Reopening Guidance Discussion: Gallagher reported to the Board that the guidance provided by the State was a big disappointment. Many factions worked on providing input, but it appeared the State felt under pressure to provide a report and the plan presented was very draconian in nature. The plan was to begin with in-person instruction with significant restrictions. This would be very difficult for many students. Gallagher stated since the report was issued, she had received many emails from parents stating they didn't want to send students to school wearing masks. She stated there was nothing in the statute that allowed for hybrid learning when not in a state of emergency closure. Statute would need to be changed to allow for hybrid learning, which would impact the future of education.

The District would need to look at what a hybrid learning model looked like. Superintendents and principals were pushing for a definition of hybrid learning that would make sense for everyone. Vermont still was fairly contained as far as COVID cases, but visitors from surrounding states was increasing and could affect things significantly. There was no way to plan, other than to ask the Governor and the Secretary of Education to make it possible to have hybrid learning for the families who wanted that. The middle and high school were easier

to manage because project-based learning, internships, etc., was available. Pre-K through 6 would be difficult. Families worked and children can't be home alone. Distance requirements in the classroom could require that classes be broken up and the AOE was suggesting using gyms for class overflow because gyms wouldn't be used for physical education.

The local leadership team was reviewing the surveys that went out to families, students and teachers to try to make sense of what worked and what didn't work this spring. The team would contrast that information with what the District had received so far from the State to see if they could fit any of those suggestions into the guidelines. Ultimately, though, it would not be a local decision, which was difficult for Gallagher. Each town in Lamoille North had different needs. Some residents would be able to take on remote learning, while other residents needed to be able to go to their workplace without needing to worry about the education of their children. As far as safety and hygiene at all facilities, the District would be fine. Since March, Flo Kelley had been working with the District nurses and would now work with Dylan Laflam to purchase all the necessary PPE's, hand sanitizers, etc.

Fagnant noted that things would continue to change up until school started and it seemed difficult to plan for that. Gallagher stated if the hybrid learning model were allowed to occur, the District could then plan for any situation. Gallagher stated there were some parents who just weren't going to send their kids to school. Barnes asked for Gallagher's opinion of the guidance received from the State. Gallagher stated she didn't like it. She thought the State had distributed a policy mainly because they felt pressure to. The plan that had been provided to Superintendents was amorphous and raised more questions and anxiety than anything. She had spoken with childcare centers and doctors in the area who thought it was a terrible decision. The only answer was a hybrid learning model. Barnes noted it wasn't physically possible to fit twelve students six feet apart in the Cambridge school.

Gallagher stated the District didn't have the authority to offer remote learning until the State put something in the statute. B. Sander asked if Gallagher had spoken with local legislators. Gallagher stated she had. B. Sander noted his concern about opening up too soon, especially after seeing what happened with the rise of COVID numbers in other states.

Heather Rodriguez stated her two children had been really successful with the online learning. While she didn't have a plan to take her children out of school, she did have some hesitation about sending them back to school. Gallagher stated her concern was valid and there were other parents who felt the same way.

Central Office: Gallagher then reported that the VSA, the VPA, and the NEA were working to craft an equity policy that would be required for all schools. Gallagher noted that she was working with some students, including Galen Reese and Maggie McGee, on how to get more representation of student voice and the importance of student voice within schools. They were going to be working monthly on this and J. Sander had just informed Gallagher that she wanted to participate as well. The first task was going to be to offer to craft a policy that the Board could review and adopt at some point. Students on campus were supportive and Gallagher was receiving daily guidance from the AOE on what should be considered and what would be mandated. Gallagher said she had many conversations with Board members and they were all very excited about taking a stand against all forms of social injustice.

Maggie McGee stated they had been meeting to discuss upcoming plans. Gallagher stated they collectively thought it was much more important to take consistent, visible and vocal efforts rather than responding to an event with one action. Responding to one action was important but more needed to be done. Gallagher noted that two parents had also reached out to say they wanted to be part of this effort as well.

A question was asked about whether parents would need to register an official homeschool plan with the AOE if a hybrid model was not allowed. Gallagher stated a plan would be required. However, there were some circumstances where students who were medically fragile or had different educational needs would need to provide different kinds of documentation.

A question was asked about driver's education. Schaffer stated they had tried moving to online instruction, which was less than desirable. While the school was statutorily required to provide the course, it was clear

there was a big gap between what the school wanted to do and what they could do. He reminded the Board that finding and keeping personnel in these positions had been difficult. Normally the school would have had a spring and summer session, however, COVID changed that. There was an intervention model set up now for the spring semester students and classes would be held at the Tech Center. There would be an opportunity for in-person driving and there needed to be three people in a car. There would be a pause on bringing new students in for classes over the summer and they would enroll those students in the fall. Maggie McGee was surprised to hear that students who had signed up for summer lessons were now going to have their classes in the fall. She asked that the information be communicated to the students who were signed up for the summer.

McFarlane reported that Fern Aguda-Brown had declined the position of counselor for Hyde Park Elementary School.

Murray provided an update on Pre-K. She stated that both the Hyde Park Elementary School 4-year old preschool and a multi-age classroom for three and four year olds was fully enrolled and now had a waitlist. They were looking for guidance from the AOE which stated that the District could either have a lottery or allow a first come first serve policy. The District would follow the guidance to have a first come first serve policy with the families on the waiting list. They would see if any families might decide to wait a year to send their child to school. Families on the waiting list could wait for a spot or they could enroll with any of the pre-K partners in order to receive Act 166 tuition.

Principal/Director Reports:

Belvidere/Waterville: Epstein reported on their end of year graduation ceremony. Staff was reviewing surveys received from families, students and staff and determining how to move ahead next year. Hunsberger stated his appreciation to Epstein for providing treats for the lunch personnel at Eden Central School.

Eden Central School: Hunsberger informed the Board that the school graduation went really well. Hunsberger applauded Mascolino, the teachers and staff for making it a special event.

Johnson: Manning reported they had a drive-through graduation ceremony. Pre-recorded speeches would be going out tomorrow. Feedback he received had been that people enjoyed a ceremony without a lot of speeches. Manning and a group of teachers were participating in Data Wise, a program through Harvard Graduate School of Education. They were being trained in a variety of protocols in which they reviewed data with a focus on ensuring the school was providing equitable outcomes for all students.

Middle School: Maurice stated they were in the process of sending out the team placement letters. Part of the normal transition would be to have the students visit the school and meet their teachers. That wasn't possible this year, but each team made welcome videos. The videos were posted on the website and sent to guidance counselors at the elementary schools. Report cards would be going out.

High School: Schaffer reported yearbooks were now available. Tim Messier would be leading the summer intervention program remotely. He would be working with those students who had fallen behind or did not engage during the school year. With restrictions being lifted, some sports programs would be able to take place. Schaffer stated that the feedback on graduation had been that the truncated ceremony was appreciated and that the focus being exclusively on the students was welcome. Proficiency-based learning was instrumental in the school being able to recognize 50 students for their achievements. There were many things that happened during the ceremony that could be brought back in years to come.

GMTCC: Remmers reported they were wrapping up for the year. The year-end completion ceremony went well and they were saying goodbye to several staff members.

Other Business: Schaffer asked how new hires would be approved over the summer. Gallagher stated the Personnel Committee had the authority to approve new hires.

Adjourn: Moulton made a motion, seconded by J. Sander, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m.