

LAMOILLE NORTH SUPERVISORY UNION BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2016
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER

Board members present: Belvidere – Angie Evans; Cambridge – Bernard Barnes, Mark Stebbins, Jan Sander; Eden – Jeff Hunsberger, David Whitcomb; Hyde Park – Raven Walters, Dan Regan, Lisa Barry; Johnson – Katie Orost, Bobbie Moulton; LUSD #18 – Beth Bailey, Eve Gagne, Carl Szlachetka; Waterville – Becky Penberthy, Marshall Pahl, Amanda Tilton-Martin. Others: Edith Beatty, Marilyn Frederick, Catherine Gallagher, Jade Hazard, Charleen McFarlane, Sherry Lussier, Mary Anderson, Joe Ciccolo, Kate Torrey, David Manning, Michele Aumand, David Jewett, Brian Schaffer, Wendy Savery, Diane Reilly, Harry Frank

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order, Approval of Agenda and Public Comment*

D. Whitcomb called the meeting to order at 6:03.

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the agenda as printed, A. Evans seconded, and the motion was passed.

2. *Approval of Consent Agenda Items*

MOTION: B. Penberthy moved to approve the superintendent evaluation committee minutes of December 17, 2015 and January 12, 2016, R. Walters seconded and the motion was passed.

MOTION: J. Sander moved to approve the board minutes of November 23, 2015, B. Penberthy seconded and the motion was passed.

It was moved and seconded to approve the clerk's report on directors' orders totaling \$1,616,908.89 and the motion was passed.

3. *Finance Update*

M. Frederick said central office is required to provide training to board members on the audit. (*E. Gagne arrived at 6:08.*) She gave some information about the audit. The auditors express their opinions on our financial statements based on their time conducting the audit. They are on site for at least 2 weeks in the fall. The audit involves reviewing and testing amounts and disclosures from the financial statements. It assesses the risks of a material misstatement in the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. But it is not a forensics audit, which goes into more depth. If they find something amiss, a board could call for a forensics audit, but it is very expensive. The auditor's opinion was that our financial statements fairly present our financial positions. All our districts got clean audits.

M. Frederick reviewed the different types of financial statements that were audited. She reviewed the different notes included in the audit. The auditors' report on our internal controls and compliance shows that they found no deficiencies or material weaknesses. A separate, extra single audit is required for federal funds if we have more than a certain amount of federal funds. No problems were identified in the single audit. The auditors' letter to the school board indicates they noted no transactions entered into by LNSU for

which there was a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. They encountered no significant difficulties in dealing with management in doing the audit. Any misstatements identified during the audit were correct and none were material. No disagreements with management arose during the audit.

C. Szlachetka asked if they do a separate report on internal controls. M. Frederick said they usually just cover that in the letters and footnotes.

C. Szlachetka asked if we have a policy on how often we will change auditors. There is a benefit to staying with one auditor because they get to understand our policies and procedures, but there is also a danger in it because they can become lackadaisical. Companies generally look at changing auditors every 3-5 years. M. Frederick said that is what we do. We go out to bid every 5 years. However, there are few companies in Vermont who want to do audits for schools.

MOTION: J. Sander moved to accept the FY2015 audit, B. Penberthy seconded, and the motion was passed.

M. Frederick gave the board information on budgets across the SU. She showed for each district the total budget change and tax rate. All our districts met the threshold. Cambridge was the only district that hadn't finalized its budget before the new threshold came out. Johnson's and Waterville's budgets went up; the others went down. The high school budget is going down, which helps all the elementary districts. Waterville's tax rate will go up, but only because of a change in CLA. Even though Johnson's budget is going up, their tax rate is projected to be less. Hyde Park's tax rate is also projected to be less. Eden cut its budget by 4%, but its tax rate is going up because of a CLA change. Cambridge and Belvidere will have slight reductions in their tax rates. She showed the ed fund change for individual districts and what the change would be SU-wide if we were a single district. If we were one district the overall ed fund increase would be 0.45%. Ed spending per equalized pupil would be \$14,738.84. She showed what the tax rate would be for each town if we were a single district. In most cases it would be less.

We were given certain threshold targets. Then the state said they made a mistake and gave us new targets. They also told us that the intent was for us to have the same exclusions we have had in the past. With the new targets, we were pretty considerably under the threshold in every district except Hyde Park. The reason for that is that Hyde Park doesn't have bonded debt (an exclusion.) The legislature is now discussing possible adjustments to the penalty threshold. The senate wants to throw out the threshold penalty and the house is talking about adding .9 per equalized pupil.

C. Szlachetka said M. Frederick had mentioned that Bernie Juskiewicz called her and asked her about the impact of the penalty threshold. Did any other legislators ask her? M. Frederick said no. K. Orost said she talked to Mark Woodward. C. Szlachetka said based on what he has read and heard, votes on Act 46 were uninformed.

4. Curriculum & Instruction Update

J. Hazard said our K-6 schools just received a total of \$245K in Continuous Improvement Grant awards. Principals worked in collaboration with central office to plan how to use

the funds to improve positive student outcomes. E. Beatty thanked J. Hazard and all their principals for their work on this.

5. ***Act 46 Update***

E. Beatty said the Act 46 study committee worked to draft articles of agreement and a report, which was sent to AoE. AoE's attorney and their fiscal person and some others gave it a careful review. The Secretary of Education recommended that our proposal go to the State Board of Education. Last Tuesday we went before the State Board and our proposal was approved. M. Frederick, Steve Sanborn, and Pietro Lynn were at the State Board meeting. One thing that was challenged was the membership and voting of the new board. The Act 46 committee felt strongly that it should be one man, one vote. Belvidere has fewer citizens, but the committee felt that Belvidere should not get half a vote or towns with more members should not get double votes. The committee stood firm on its original proposal and Pietro Lynn wrote a letter defending its constitutionality. In the end, the state board approved it. If all towns vote in favor of consolidation we are proposing to become a unified union school district. If not all towns vote in favor, then those that vote yes will become a modified union school district.

J. Hunsberger asked if there will be another Act 46 informational meeting. E. Beatty said yes. Tomorrow night the study committee meets again. Most towns have discussion of Act 46 on their agendas for town meeting. We will need to have a formal hearing before the vote. The study committee needs to decide how many hearings to hold.

D. Whitcomb asked if S. Sanborn will still be involved. E. Beatty said he will continue to be involved at least until the vote.

K. Orost asked about the time frame. E. Beatty said the Act 46 committee will work on that tomorrow. They will work on drafting a warning.

D. Whitcomb said he went to the legislative breakfast today. The topic of Act 46 came up and the Speaker of the House said it is likely to change.

6. ***Teacher Negotiations Update***

MOTION: C. Szlachetka moved to find it necessary to enter executive session to discuss teacher contract negotiations as premature public knowledge would place the municipality under a substantial disadvantage in teacher negotiations, B. Moulton seconded and the motion was passed.

MOTION: C. Szlachetka moved to enter executive session to discuss teacher contract negotiations, with the board, the superintendent, and C. McFarlane remaining, B. Bailey seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:59. The board came out of executive session at 7:16.

7. ***Superintendent's Report***

E. Beatty said the field review that was going to happen as part of our participation in the pilot review of Education Quality Standards has been postponed until next fall because AoE doesn't have capacity to do it right now.

At the February 5 in service there will be opportunities for elementary teachers in the areas of transferable skills or habits of mind; mathematical practices; STEM (Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics); creating units aligned with NGSS, the Next Generation Science Standards; and Technology Google Sites. Special area teachers will work together across schools in professional learning communities. Middle level and high school teachers will focus on continuing their work on proficiency-based learning and personalized learning plans.

C. Gallagher and her staff are working on a project for the AoE that requires data about the incidence of autism and emotional disturbance in students in our SU.

The business manager and ECS principal searches are both in progress. C. McFarlane said there were 17 applicants for the business manager position. They were narrowed to 4 by the screening committee. The interview committee concluded interviews last week. Now they will check references and determine whom to move forward. At that point the names will be made public and there will be site visits to their locations and they will visit here.

C. Szlachetka asked how many will move forward. C. McFarlane said that will depend on the results of the reference checks. C. Szlachetka suggested a minimum of 3. M. Frederick said another business manager resigned today. There are 3 openings for business managers in single districts. Business managers don't typically want to move from a single district to an SU. It will be very difficult to find a business manager. She doubts we will be able to move up 3 people. If we find someone that is good, she would recommend not delaying too long. E. Beatty said often when a team is interviewing, a natural cut emerges of whom to bring forward. In the business world, someone may lose their job if their employer learns they are looking for other positions, so we are trying to be careful. Every viable candidate will be moved forward.

C. McFarlane said the Eden principal search is right on track. She and E. Beatty met with ECS staff. The application deadline is this Friday. Screening committee membership is being determined. The hope is to interview in early to mid February. There will be opportunities for candidates to meet with staff, community, and the board. E. Beatty plans on bringing a recommendation to the board at the March meeting. C. McFarlane thinks there are about 12 applicants so far.

8. *Superintendent Evaluation Committee Report*

D. Regan said the superintendent evaluation committee's recommendation is for continuation of E. Beatty's contract, with terms to be set by the full board. He thanked the board for supporting Harry Frank's consultancy. He thinks it was a bargain. H. Frank worked hard on the board's behalf on this arduous and sensitive process. He reminded the board that the superintendent evaluation committee is the board's committee. The members volunteered to serve on it. Others could have volunteered.

D. Regan said the committee entered the evaluation process with at least two reigning assumptions and they reported on them at at least two board meetings. They wanted the evaluation to be a continuous improvement process that would inform work going forward. If possible, they wanted to stop the revolving leadership door we have seen in recent years, which has not served kids of this SU well. If the evaluation pointed to any egregious problem or a grievous lack of fit, they were willing to recommend otherwise,

but they wanted a process that could lead to continuous improvement of performance. Their other assumption was that superintendent performance is a product of board behaviors as well as superintendent behaviors, so they expected to come up with recommendations for the board as well as for the superintendent.

The survey instrument was crafted as a feedback tool for the evaluation. The survey itself was not the evaluation. The 10 items on the survey were drawn in part from VSBA's 5 dimensions for superintendent evaluation but they were cross-checked against relevant SU documents like the position announcement and hiring materials. It was decided for this cycle to tap the viewpoints of central office staff, AdCo, and board members. The committee was mindful of leaving out other constituencies, like the public, and would recommend tapping those in future evaluations.

D. Whitcomb said he would welcome a motion to find it necessary to enter executive session. H. Frank said he had consulted with attorneys at his office and was told that two steps are not required to enter executive session to discuss appointment, employment or evaluation of someone in a public office. D. Whitcomb said he finds it interesting that VLCT and VSBA have different views on the same law.

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to enter executive session to discuss a personnel matter, with only board members and H. Frank remaining, C. Szlachetka seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 7:34. The board came out of executive session at 8:56.

MOTION: A. Tilton-Martin moved to enter executive session with the superintendent remaining in order to let the superintendent speak and answer questions, C. Szlachetka seconded, the motion was passed, and the board entered executive session at 8:58. The board came out of executive session at 9:25.

MOTION: C. Szlachetka moved to accept the superintendent evaluation committee's recommendation, seconded by J. Sander. D. Whitcomb called for a ballot vote and appointed H. Frank and C. McFarlane to collect and count the ballots. **There were 17 votes: 7 in favor and 10 opposed. The motion failed.**

At H. Frank's suggestion, E. Beatty was given an opportunity to address the board. She said she is disappointed. She is sorry the board doesn't feel well served by her work. She would have appreciated being given an opportunity to resign prior to the vote.

J. Sander said she feels the board has made a big mistake. She feels board members have not all treated E. Beatty as fairly as they should have. She would like to thank her for what she has accomplished. She has done a great job.

9. *Adjourn*

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to adjourn at 9:33, B. Moulton seconded, and the motion was passed.

Actions taken at the LNSU Board meeting 1-25-16:

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