

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

Board members present: Belvidere – Angie Evans; Cambridge – Jan Sander, Bernard Barnes, Laura Miller, Mark Stebbins; Eden – none; Hyde Park – Raven Walters, Lisa Barry, Patti Hayford, Richard Bailey; Johnson – Bobbie Moulton, Beth Foy, Katie Orost; LUSD #18 – David Whitcomb, Mark Nielsen, Beth Bailey, Balu Raman; Waterville – Amanda Tilton-Martin. Others: Catherine Gallagher, Michele Aumand, Brian Schaffer, Andrew Martin, a community member

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 6:01. He said if there are no objections items for which M. Frederick is needed – teacher negotiations and executive committee’s recommendation regarding superintendent’s resignation – will be moved down on the agenda and addressed after she is here. There were no objections.

MOTION: J. Sander moved and B. Moulton seconded to approve the agenda as amended and the motion was passed.

Introductions were made. D. Whitcomb explained that E. Gagne was unable to attend this meeting so she resigned as LUSD board representative and the board appointed B. Raman in her place. He will be a representative just for this meeting and then E. Gagne will be reappointed.

2. *Approval of Consent Agenda Items (Board Minutes 3-28-16, Clerk’s Report on Directors’ Orders)*

MOTION: M. Stebbins moved to approve the minutes of March 28, 2016, B. Moulton seconded and the motion was passed with B. Raman abstaining.

M. Aumand distributed copies of the clerk’s report on directors’ orders. A. Tilton-Martin said the total directors’ orders amount is \$2,344,271.77. **MOTION: A. Tilton-Martin moved to approve the clerk’s report on directors’ orders, B. Barnes seconded, and the motion was passed.**

3. *Appoint Teacher Negotiation Representative & Support Staff Negotiations*

M. Nielsen said he would be willing to serve on both support staff and teacher negotiations committees. **By consent, M. Nielsen was appointed board negotiations committee representative for support staff and teacher negotiations.**

4. *Accept Director of Student Services Leave of Absence for One Year with Option to Return to Director of Student Services Position*

C. Gallagher said she is respectfully requesting a leave of absence from her position as Director of Student Support Services for FY17 with the option to return to her position thereafter. (*M. Frederick arrived at 6:09.*)

L. Miller asked, she is just putting her job on hold for a year while she is interim superintendent and then if she continues as superintendent after that she would resign from the Director of Student Support Services position? C. Gallagher said later the board will hear her recommendation to fill her position on an interim basis for next year.

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to accept C. Gallagher's request for a leave of absence from her position as Director of Student Support Services from July 1, 2016 until June 30, 2017 with an option to return to her position for the 2017-2018 school year, seconded by B. Moulton. K. Orost asked about the time frame for deciding if C. Gallagher is going to go back to her student support services position. C. Gallagher said the full LNSU board will need to discuss, probably in early fall, whether to do a full superintendent search. **The motion was passed.**

5. ***Teacher Negotiations***

M. Frederick said premature public knowledge of the matter to be discussed would place the municipality at a substantial disadvantage.

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to go into executive session to discuss teacher negotiations with M. Frederick, B. Schaffer, M. Aumand, C. Gallagher and non-voting board members remaining, M. Stebbins seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:12. During the executive session R. Walters, P. Hayford, R. Bailey, and L. Barry arrived and joined the meeting. The board came out of executive session at 6:27. (*Andrew Martin arrived.*)

5. ***Superintendent's Resignation/Executive Committee Recommendations***

Minutes of the last executive committee meeting were distributed. D. Whitcomb said premature public knowledge of the matter to be discussed would place the municipality at a substantial disadvantage. **MOTION: A. Tilton-Martin moved to go into executive session with administrators remaining, B. Bailey seconded, the motion was passed and the board entered executive session at 6:29.** The board came out of executive session at 7:02. (*A member of the public arrived.*)

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to accept the committee's recommendation, seconded by B. Moulton. J. Sander asked for someone to repeat the committee's recommendation. D. Whitcomb read the motion from the executive committee minutes:

J. Hunsberger moved to recommend to the full board that the board pay E. Beatty the \$8,199.19 which will compensate her for her time and accrued vacation days up until April 10, M. Stebbins seconded, and the motion was passed with R. Walters opposed.

D. Whitcomb said M. Frederick said that has already been paid. R. Walters said if the superintendent has already been paid it seems like we need a different motion. We need a motion to deny the superintendent's request for additional compensation. M. Stebbins said he thinks the effect is the same.

The motion was passed with R. Walters opposed.

5. *Approve Executive Committee Minutes 4-7-16*

MOTION: M. Stebbins moved to approve the minutes of the April 7, 2016 executive committee meeting, B. Barnes seconded and the motion was passed.

6. *Interim Superintendent Compensation for FY 17*

M. Frederick said for this current year C. Gallagher did not want any additional compensation; however she will want additional compensation if she is interim superintendent all next year. M. Frederick looked at superintendent salaries in SU's around us through the Vermont Superintendents' Association Salary Survey. The average superintendent salary in SU's around us is \$119,289. The average number of years of experience those superintendents have is 4.18. There are 5 superintendents with 2 years of experience or less. Those make \$113,500; \$120,000; \$126,500; \$120,000 and \$100,000. The lowest salary is in Essex-Caledonia SU, which is a small district. Three years ago the average was \$105K. If we adjust that it is about \$115K. C. Gallagher felt \$110K would be a reasonable amount to pay her given that she has no direct superintendent experience. Her current compensation as Director of Student Support Services is around \$90K. Next year it would be closer to \$93K. The recommendation to the board is to pay C. Gallagher \$110,000 as interim superintendent. C. Gallagher said she agrees with that recommendation.

MOTION: B. Bailey moved to accept the business manager's recommendation of \$110,000 for the interim superintendent's salary, B. Moulton seconded and the motion was passed.

7. *Approve SU Coordinator of Student Services/Accept SU Coordinator's Leave of Absence for FY 17 to Become Interim Director of Student Services with the Option to Return to SU Coordinator Position/Approve Compensation*

C. Gallagher said Jen Hulse Stevens recently interviewed for the position of SU Coordinator of Student Services. The recommendation is to hire her as interim Director of Student Support Services and grant her a one-year leave of absence from the Coordinator of Student Services position, with the option to return to that position afterwards.

Laura Nichols, who is currently in the Coordinator of Student Services position, would make \$74,263 in FY 17 if she stayed in the position. The SU-wide position J. Stevens was hired for has additional duties. The recommendation is for her salary as Coordinator of Student Support Services to be \$78,000 and for her salary as interim Director of Student Support Services to be \$85,000.

MOTION: M. Nielsen moved and B. Moulton seconded to approve the recommendation to hire Jennifer Stevens as interim Director of Student Support Services and grant her a one-year leave of absence from the Coordinator of Student Services position, with the option to return to the Coordinator of Student Services position and to approve the recommended salary of \$78,000 for J. Stevens as Coordinator of Student Services and the recommended salary of \$85,000 for J. Stevens as interim Director of Student Support Services.

M. Nielsen asked who will take J. Stevens' place as Coordinator of Student Services. C. Gallagher said the plan is to look within the SU first. There are several potential candidates. She thinks we will have no trouble finding someone.

The motion was passed.

8. *Act 46 Update and Next Steps*

C. Gallagher said central office has assembled questions people have been asking and they are working on getting consistent answers. Four towns voted yes to unification. Two voted no and have the option of reconsidering. One is believed to be actively reconsidering and we don't know about the other. The best advice from AoE, attorneys, and our consultant is not to answer any questions until everyone says the same thing. The list of questions generated so far was distributed. We can't answer most of them yet. The people who are supposed to advise us don't know the answers.

B. Foy asked if anyone has made sure that all questions from previous forums were answered. C. Gallagher said she thinks some of those questions had incorrect responses when they were first asked.

R. Walters asked, will the new board not even be seated until we get answers? There were people elected. C. Gallagher said board composition is different for a modified union than for a unified union. We will wait until the 30-day period for petitions for a revote has passed to see what happens. People have 30 days to get signatures and submit a petition signed by 5% of voters in their town. We have heard a petition is being circulated in one town. We haven't heard of anyone petitioning in any of the towns that voted yes.

R. Walters said we had talked to S. Sanborn about using a consultant to guide us through the next phase. C. Gallagher said apparently we have exhausted the funds for our consultant. M. Frederick said the initial amount was \$20K. That has been exhausted. There is additional money to help the new board. C. Gallagher said if Waterville and Cambridge want help rethinking this there are no funds for consultant services for that. R. Walters said we were told there was a second layer of funding to facilitate the unification process. M. Frederick said there is additional funding for the new modified board. But there had been a question about whether there is more money for Cambridge and Waterville and the answer is no. The new money doesn't come to us until later on.

D. Whitcomb said no money at all was appropriated by the legislature for this. Any funds would come out of the education budget.

J. Sander said she is concerned and somewhat upset that we hired this consultant and she was told that he said at one Act 46 meeting that, should a town vote no, the new representatives elected would represent that town on the modified union board for matters relating to grades 7-12 and after the vote was over he said the opposite. What is the point in hiring him if he doesn't know what is going on?

D. Whitcomb said VSBA hired him. He suggested trying to get answers from Nicole Mace and Emily Long at VSBA. The consultant didn't have all the answers. The legislature doesn't have all the answers.

C. Gallagher said the people in authority have different opinions. So it is important to give all our questions to those who say they can answer them. The consultant was a facilitator. She doesn't know that we can place all the blame on him.

L. Barry said the articles of agreement speak to how towns are represented on the modified union board. She thinks some of these questions are already answered in the articles of agreement. C. Gallagher agreed that some are.

C. Gallagher said in times of confusion we can take one of two directions. We can ruminate and not take a constructive approach or we can work together to try to figure things out. There are strong minds around this table. She and M. Frederick are always available. We will all figure this out together.

M. Stebbins asked, should the articles of agreement be the last word? It sounds like there are interpretations from outside the SU and people referring to something else to answer questions. Should we fall back on the articles as the last word? C. Gallagher said she doesn't know that we know. Some of our articles were based on others that were approved.

M. Frederick said sometimes an attorney looks at things differently from AoE. We are trying to get consensus between 2 or 3 different opinions so we can have a good feeling about what we are doing.

C. Gallagher said it feels really irresponsible if she hears two yeses and one no to discount the no. We need to understand the reason for the no.

R. Walters said some of these questions seem complicated and some seem simpler and seem like they could be answered internally. The voters voted on the proposal we developed. She is concerned we are getting conflicting advice. On what points are we getting conflicting advice?

M. Frederick said board composition is one of the points – the question of who actually sits on which board. She made up a spreadsheet showing which members would be on each board and she had a gray area where she was uncertain. She has not yet gotten official answers about that.

D. Whitcomb said the Secretary of State's office puts out opinions every month. He suggested to a lawyer who works in that office that he call up the Principals' Association, Superintendents Association, VSBA, and AoE and answer some of the questions in their monthly opinion. The lawyer thought it was a good idea.

K. Orost said Johnson has an open seat on the new board. They were told the Johnson board should appoint someone. Should they proceed with doing that at their next meeting in 2 weeks? D. Whitcomb said people have 30 days to petition for an election for the open seat. He thinks the board should wait until after that. C. Gallagher said the board could wait for petitions or could appoint someone within the 30 days. L. Barry asked if the current Johnson board or the new board appoints someone. D. Whitcomb said the Johnson board.

M. Frederick said one thing she got in writing was how many legal entities there will be. There will be 4: Cambridge, Waterville, the modified union and the SU. AoE told us in writing that there will be 4 federal tax IDs.

M. Nielsen said he would think we could take the initiative and do things the law doesn't say we must do, like go to town meeting and give information.

B. Foy asked if we will have an SU board. M. Frederick said yes, definitely. But what she can't get an answer on is the question of who will be on it. B. Foy said then if we were unified we would still have 2 federal ID's. M. Frederick said no, then we would just have one.

B. Schaffer brought up Section 721a of Title Sixteen, which is about withdrawal from a district. Is not joining in on the initial merger an indication of the Waterville and Cambridge voters' desire to withdraw from the district? Are they looking to secede from the union?

L. Miller said at the Act 46 meeting the board asked Steve Sanborn, if Cambridge doesn't join, do they still owe Lamoille Union's bill? And the answer was yes. So they are still part of the union. She doesn't think anyone has any intention of getting out of the union.

B. Schaffer said the other member districts would also have to vote for them to leave.

M. Stebbins said a no vote on the merger doesn't mean they want out of the union. A. Tilton-Martin said certainly the sense at the forums and board meetings was that people understood the difference between PreK-6 and 7-12 and that the vote was just about PreK-6 and 7-12 would remain as it had been.

B. Foy asked, if the towns decide to vote again, what is the next step? Do we wait until May 23 to discuss next steps or do we need to before then? M. Frederick said the Secretary of Education or someone from her office will have to come here to form the new union. Central office was trying to schedule that but they wanted to wait until after the 30 days to see if there is a petition.

9. Adjourn

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:48 and the motion was passed.

Submitted by Donna Griffiths

Actions taken at the LNSU Board 4-25-16:

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

MOTION: J. Sander moved and B. Moulton seconded to approve the agenda as amended and the motion was passed.

2. *Approval of Consent Agenda Items (Board Minutes 3-28-16, Clerk's Report on Directors' Orders)*

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9. *Adjourn*
MOTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:48 and the motion was passed.