

Grand Isle Supervisory Union
South Hero School District
School Board Regular Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 20, 2018, at 6 p.m.
Location: Folsom Education & Community Center

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

1. Call to order at 6:05 p.m.

Introductions. In attendance:

-Board members: David Cain, Melanie Henderson, Tim Maxham, Bentley Vaughan

-Staff: Susan McKelvie, Megan Grube, Julie Pidgeon, Tom Nolan, Samantha Cantell

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Gwen Hobbs, Sophia Bishop, Christine Bishop, Jayson Bishop, Mike Bishop, Evan Pidgeon, Michael Moretti, Kaight Althoff

2. Adjustment of Agenda

- A discussion of GISU representation was added to Board Business

- The board moved up the student presentation on the camping trip and the Rise Vermont presentation to first and second under Board Business.

3. Public Comments

Gwen Hobbs asked for more information about the student schedule and the reported reduction of art and music unified arts classes that was discussed at the Sept. 6 board meeting. She said the school has stellar teachers in both areas and the community expressed its value of those positions during Act 46 discussions. She noted her concern that restoring two specials per grade did not sound like a permanent plan in the minutes of the Sept. 6 board meeting. She also said she is concerned that some children could have more unified arts classes than others based on academics, and she feels that is stigmatizing and elitist. She asked for more information on why classes were cut in the first place. She also said she has an article from Harvard she would like the board to read. D. Cain said this topic is on the agenda for later in the meeting, and he would ask Principal McKelvie to address her questions and concerns then.

4. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. Approve minutes from Sept. 6, 2018. T. Maxham made a motion to approve the minutes of the Sept. 6, 2018, meeting. M. Henderson seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a voice vote.

Board Business

1) Camping Trip: Jayson Bishop and Evan Pidgeon presented about the 5th-through 8th-grade camping trip to Eagle Camp in South Hero. They shared about the two-day trip, which focused on team building and re-enforcing the school's core values of take care of yourself, take care of others and take care of

the community. M. Moretti of Rise Vermont created and led team-building activities for the middle schoolers. On the second day of the trip, the middle school partnered with South Hero Land Trust and Healthy Roots on several community-based projects. Students built benches for the garden, cleared the trail in back of the school and the outdoor classroom by the pond as well as gleaned corn from Pomykala Farm for the food shelf. S. McKelvie expressed appreciation for the work of the Land Trust, Rise Vermont and the middle school team.

2) Presentation on Rise Vermont by M. Moretti. Moretti said his position is its third year with a goal of bringing a culture of wellness to the school. In Year 1, he was in Alburgh. In Year 2, he came to Folsom to expand his school-based wellness outreach. Now, Rise has spread to Grand Isle School. He also is working on district-wide initiatives, collaborating with Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology, Megan Grube, writing curriculum for play-based teaching strategies. His goal is to expand the modalities of teaching and learning to incorporate movement-based learning. He provides technical assistance, support in the classroom and curriculum writing. The board expressed thanks to Moretti. Last year, Rise Vermont brought a wellness grant that supported long-term wellness in the building. This year, Moretti is creating a database of activities for teachers to use. He also plans to create videos of teachers modeling the activities to provide guidance on how to incorporate them into learning. S. McKelvie noted Moretti will not always be at Folsom, and the goal is to carry forward the culture of wellness, and that movement is an important part of learning. Rise Vermont will be going statewide. Folsom will be on the forefront of the Rise “playground” of movement-based learning activities.

3) Discussion of Specials Schedule: S. McKelvie began her discussion under the umbrella of her principal’s report:

-School Safety Plan: After Parkland last year, the governor asked law enforcement to review safety in schools. This meeting took place last year in S. McKelvie’s absence. She said Folsom still needs an audit of the building. The state provides a protocol for the school safety team to conduct. She would like to include Sheriff Ray Allen and a board member and potentially a parent for the review and discussion of school safety. She noted that it’s possible recommendations for safety could impact the budget. She would like the board to assign a member to participate in that process and requested a representative be appointed at the next meeting.

-She noted that she and M. Grube do not have Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) standardized test data to share due to delays in the release of data from the state Education Department.

-Scheduling Question: S. McKelvie apologized for missing the Sept. 6 meeting. She said the issue has been resolved and there is no reduction in specials in the current schedule. She noted there needs to be a larger conversation about how schedule decisions are made and what drives those decisions. She suggested she and M. Grube could educate the board about the process for making a schedule at its retreat. She also suggested she would hold community conversations about building the schedule. B. Vaughan said he would like more information on scheduling at the retreat. M. Henderson said the question is how the school prioritizes what students are doing with the limited number of minutes in a school day. S. McKelvie said many of the learning values of the community are integrated into many classes rather than separated into boxes. She said it becomes a conversation on the “have-to’s” vs. what research says works. M. Henderson said regarding intervention blocks that it was a scheduled time for students to receive individualized instruction. She said offering different options for that time was not

about taking away from kids who are struggling but engaging the kids who have finished up with learning and have time on their hands. M. Grube and S. McKelvie requested questions from the board about the topic to help them prepare for their presentation. S. McKelvie said she heard a question tonight about retaining staff and noted that could be addressed.

D. Cain asked that the presentation include the number of minutes students spend per week on each subject and what is required.

T. Maxham said he was not aware of the issue when it was raised at the last meeting. His understanding was that it was a parent complaint that went directly to a board member, and he understands the protocol is for those complaints to go to the principal first and then the superintendent. He noted the difficulties of the principal in juggling all the priorities in the schedule, and said some of the issue may be communication. S. McKelvie agreed that her absence last year did not allow enough communication and discussion of the issue. She plans to do that this year.

D. Cain confirmed that the scheduled number of specials was restored to last year's number. Cain asked S. McKelvie when she would like community engagement, and S. McKelvie suggested the first of the new year. She also said she could post resources online for the community to review the foundations that underlie scheduling decisions. D. Cain asked G. Hobbs if she had more questions, and G. Hobbs said she would wait to hear more information. She expressed again that keeping the art and music teachers at Folsom is paramount to her.

B. Vaughan asked why the school is trying to make a shift and said he needed more information. S. McKelvie said she would provide more information at the retreat and noted that the information may raise different questions.

4. Finalize Retreat Plans for Friday, Oct. 5: The retreat will be held at former interim principal Matthew Brankman's business at 6700 Main Street, Westport, NY, 12993. It will start at 9:30 a.m. and is planned to end at 3:30 p.m. D. Cain said he would work with Superintendent Michael Clark on the agenda for the retreat.

5. Approval of Bills for Payment. The bills were approved for payment on a voice vote. B. Vaughan made a motion to approve Batch 3110 bills totaling \$33,222.35. T. Maxham seconded the motion.

6. Inservice Feedback: M. Grube presented information about the first day inservice for district staff. Last year's focus was on future-ready students. This year's focus was on proficiency-based practices. This is a shift in education toward evaluating whether students are proficient in specific standards. Former Education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe gave a keynote speech on the specific landscape for teaching in Vermont, highlighting the challenges of trauma, implicit bias and other issues for children. The feedback was her speech was a powerful, meaningful start to the year. The afternoon time gave teachers an opportunity to collaborate with same-grade peers in other schools.

M. Henderson noted that Alison Perry is providing feedback to students on their proficiency with the math standards via the Exit Ticket. If the student does not successfully demonstrate proficiency, then he or she has an opportunity to redo the problem to meet the standard. She shared the value in that approach is the constant checking in so students know every day where they are at in their learning. M. Grube concurred that it's an important life skill for students to learn perseverance, set a goal and pursue it.

7. Board member resignation: Board member RJ Sweeney submitted a letter of resignation to the South Hero School Board. Due to other commitments, he is no longer able to serve on the board. He expressed appreciation to the board and the community in his letter of resignation. D. Cain said the board would post the vacancy on the Front Porch Forum and B. Vaughan asked that it be sent to The Islander. D. Cain asked that the board meet on Oct. 4 to review letters of interest and possibly appoint a new member so that person can attend the retreat. S. McKelvie suggested the board post the opening in school publications. D. Cain will be the contact person. Interested members of the community are asked to send a letter of interest to Board Chairman David Cain at dcain@board.gisu.org.

T. Maxham said it's important the information be disseminated via The Islander and that it should be noted the appointment would be until next March. S. McKelvie said she can disseminate that information but asked D. Cain to send her the language he wants posted. D. Cain will post the information on Front Porch Forum and at the Town Clerk's Office. D. Cain noted the last time the board had a vacancy, it invited applicants to the meeting to speak, and the board will follow the same process.

T. Maxham made a motion, and D. Cain seconded the motion, to accept RJ Sweeney's resignation from the South Hero School Board and expressed appreciation for his 4 ½ years of service.

8. GISU Representation: D. Cain confirmed that T. Maxham, M. Henderson and B. Vaughan will continue as South Hero's representatives to the GISU Board, and M. Henderson remains on the GISU Executive Committee.

12. Other Business: None.

Closure

13. Setting the next agenda

The board will hold two regular meetings in October (Oct. 4 and Oct. 18, 2018) plus the board retreat (Oct. 5, 2018).

M. Grube requested that the board provide feedback to her about what topics it would like her to address when she attends the second meeting of the month, and likewise identify topics it would like the superintendent to address when he attends the first meeting of the month.

M. Henderson asked M. Grube to address SBAC data at the Oct. 18 meeting.

B. Vaughan said he believed the Board is missing a couple of contracts and asked that M. Clark address that at the Oct. 4 meeting.

T. Maxham asked when the next principal's and superintendent's reports would be given. After discussion, it was determined the superintendent's report would occur at the Oct. 4 meeting, and the principal's report would occur at the Oct. 18 meeting.

The board would like to focus the Oct. 4 meeting on reviewing candidates for the open School Board position with a goal of filling that position.

14. Adjourn

B. Vaughan moved the board adjourn and T. Maxham seconded the motion. The board voted by voice to adjourn at 7:22 p.m.
