

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

DRAFT MINUTES

Call to Order

1. David Cain called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Introductions. In attendance:

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

-Staff: Superintendent Michael Clark, Business Manager Rob Gess, Julie Pidgeon, Helen Bishop, Daniele Holm and Megan Besette.

-Audience: Jim Jones (LCATV), Heidi Chamberlain, Andre Bertmann

3. Adjustment of Agenda

A letter from the teachers' association will be added to Board Discussion.

4. Public Comments

There were none.

T. Maxham asked staff present at the meeting for their feedback about the district inservice speaker, former Education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe. Julie Pidgeon, Helen Bishop and staff in the audience shared appreciation for having Ms. Holcombe speak on the topic of equity in education.

T. Maxham asked M. Clark about his impression of the new secretary of education, Dan French. M. Clark said French is a strategic thinker who has a reputation for looking at structure, and while M. Clark doesn't think there will be a radical change in direction for education, he thinks there will be some structural change in how we get there. These are first impressions.

5. Consent Agenda (Action)

A. Approve minutes from Aug. 16, 2018. The minutes of the Aug. 16, 2018, meeting were approved on a voice vote. M. Henderson made a motion to approve the minutes. T. Maxham seconded.

B. Approve new hire contracts. There were none.

6. Reports

A. Financial (R. Gess): Gess provided the board with the first budget-to-actuals report for this fiscal year. He noted some restructuring at Central Office to support Human Resources needs and financial budgeting and reporting. He shared the new responsibilities of staff at the Central Office related to financial reporting.

M. Clark said he would like the board to start voting to accept the financial report based on his previous experience with financial audits in the Northeast Kingdom. B. Vaughan moved to accept the financial report of Sept. 6. D. Cain seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

B. Superintendent's (M. Clark): M. Clark referred the board to his written report. He has moved from an acting role to an interim role as superintendent. He expressed appreciation for the opportunity to spend this year in the islands. He called Secretary Holcombe an inspirational leader and appreciated her message that teachers become teachers because they want to make sure all kids succeed. He visited every school on the opening day. Friday, Sept. 7, he will be in South Hero and North Hero for his visits to schools.

C. Principal's (S. McKelvie)

D. Cain noted that S. McKelvie could not be present due to a previously scheduled medical leave. M. Clark said she provided a written report. Open House will be from 6-7 p.m. Sept. 19.

M. Clark said Matthew Brankman will be substitute principal next Monday-Thursday, Sept. 9-12.

Business of the Board (Discussion and Possible Action)

7. Substitute Pay Rates (M. Clark) (Action). M. Clark passed out a written summary of research from Central Office about substitute pay in neighboring districts. His summary included that South Hero currently pays substitutes \$75 a day. Vt. minimum wage went up to \$10.50 per hour on July 1. This allows substitutes to work 7.1 hours per day. They should get a 30-minute unpaid lunch and 15-minute unpaid break based on work rules. With these work rules, the district is currently paying substitutes just over minimum wage. The minimum wage in Vermont will rise to \$11.50 an hour on Jan. 1, 2019, and at that point, the district will be paying less than minimum wage. Neighboring districts pay at least \$90 a day. The substitute rate must be increased to at least \$87 per day effective Jan. 1, 2019, to ensure the district does not pay substitutes less than minimum wage. He recommends the district meet at least the minimum of what other districts are offering this year, which is \$90 a day. That will ensure the district is paying more than minimum wage and is competitive. He noted it is a 20 percent increase from \$75 a day and that will likely result in an overspending of the substitute line in the budget.

He said 2 GISU districts have increased their substitute pay recently. Alburgh increased to \$90 per day and North Hero increased to \$100 per day.

D. Cain said the board has budgeted \$23,000 for substitutes. If the pay is raised to \$90 per day, the cost is about \$4,600. If the pay is raised to \$100 per day, then the cost is \$7,700 a year in the line item. T. Maxham noted the school was overspent in that line item last year and would likely spend more than that. B. Vaughan said he thinks South Hero should be in line with North Hero on substitute pay and remain competitive in our region. T. Maxham suggested making any change in substitute pay retroactive to the start of the school year.

B. Vaughan move set substitute pay to \$100 a day starting Sept. 1, 2018. T. Maxham seconded. Approved on a voice vote.

8. Approve Bills (M. Henderson) (Action). B. Vaughan moved to pay bills totaling \$11,526.40 on batch 3092. T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote.

9. Audit Update (R. Gess) (Discussion): GISU received the draft audit for South Hero for FY17 last Thursday morning, 8/30. The auditors had questions and need additional information. Gess said his goal is to get responses back to the auditors by tomorrow, 9/7. He said he has noted several areas where GISU can't reconcile the numbers on the capital side. Before he signs off on the audit report, he needs his questions answered. He said the district is close to the end.

On the GISU audit, Gess said they have fully reconciled the accounts and returned information to Sullivan and Powers, the auditors. He hopes to be able to submit the final audit soon. The weekly conversation is continuing with AOE. When the audit is finalized, it will be submitted to the federal clearinghouse and that will free up grant money.

The FY18 audit has been scheduled. Field work begins in December. Draft audits are scheduled to be submitted to the district no later than the end of January. The full audits should be finished by the end of March, according to Gess.

He will invite the auditors to present to the board about their findings when the audit is completed.

10. Review Timeline for FY20 Budget (M. Clark) (Discussion): M. Clark referenced a timeline for the board for budgeting for FY20. In October, the administration will be sharing priorities and would like board members to share their priorities as well. He asked how the community would be engaged. GISU plans to have a draft of the budget in November. In December a second draft would be presented. In January all budgets would be finalized. February is budget education. M. Clark asked how the community would be engaged in the process. He noted work on the GISU budget is moved up a month so it should be finalized before South Hero's budget.

D. Cain wanted to know when South Hero would get an equalized pupil count from the state. M. Clark said that the number often changes, and his approach has been to proceed with budgeting while continuing to update that number. R. Gess noted the AOE tries to get a number out by Dec. 15. M. Henderson said she would like to know what happens to the base rate this year.

T. Maxham said he is looking at the current budget and already noting that certain line items will be overspent, such as substitute pay. He wants to know if there are line items where South Hero overbudgeted and suggested the board take a closer look at the current budget to ask why certain line items were or were not spent.

D. Cain said the board has not done community engagement in the budget process in the past and he's not sure what that would look like. M. Clark said that publicizing the budget discussion timeline will provide the public with information that discussion is taking place.

T. Maxham said the board will be looking at an increase in the library budget for next year, as well as building maintenance for facilities. B. Vaughan noted a bond for repairs will be off the budget next fiscal year.

D. Cain said there is no need for the superintendent to do anything different for public engagement.

D. Cain said the board would like to talk about the library, maintenance of building, understanding the food budget line items, and busing cost. J. Pidgeon mentioned the board has talked in the past about looking into the cost to send a bus to Grand Isle to attract future tuition-paying students. T. Maxham added that the school needs to look at procedures for tuition students. M. Henderson would like to discuss that issue at the board retreat.

11. Review Specials Schedule (S. McKelvie) (Discussion). D. Cain said this is a discussion about the number of specials scheduled for kids per day. M. Clark said he will collect information. He wondered if board members were being asked questions, and if they could direct those questions back to Mrs. McKelvie. He noted that if those questions were not answered, then they could be directed to the superintendent. B. Vaughan said the board was not clear on whether the issue was resolved.

T. Maxham asked for clarification. D. Cain clarified the issue was the number of unified arts classes that are offered for kids.

M. Henderson added that the specials block in the schedule was reduced. She said board members got some feedback from parents who were upset. She asked M. Clark to put the topic on the agenda. She said this is an opportunity to get feedback. She noted that Folsom is a school and its primary focus should be academics, but she wondered if additional art/music could be offered to kids who are accelerated. She also said some parents might feel differently and that it's a philosophical discussion the school should have.

B. Vaughan said he was concerned the board budgeted for these services and the school was not fully utilizing the staff that it has contracted with. He said he was concerned about retaining those staff. He wants more information. D. Cain asked M. Clark to send a summary note of the changes to the board and asked whether there needs to be a note to the parents. M. Clark said he expects S. McKelvie will be at the next board meeting and will address the issue.

12. Other

- Letter from the National Education Association Local: D. Cain said the board has received notification from the teachers' union opening negotiations for the next contract. M. Clark said health care will be negotiated statewide starting in April for 2020. M. Clark noted upcoming negotiations will be for a one-year agreement for health insurance at the GISU level and then health insurance will be negotiated at the state level. D. Cain asked if there were any other statewide issues to drive negotiations. M. Clark said the district will have to look at the priorities of the boards. He also said he will reach out to principals to see if they have any thoughts about the contract that he can share with the board.

-D. Cain asked about the situation of the Grand Isle 7th graders. M. Henderson said the board decided not to get involved. M. Clark said several Grand Isle parents requested Grand Isle pay tuition for their students. Those requests were heard at the Grand Isle Board and acted upon.

-M. Clark asked if the board members are ready to only get emails at the Google email address for the GISU. M. Clark asked if the district should continue double addresses for the board for another month. The answer was yes.

T. Maxham asked about office space for the GISU. He wants to know if the South Hero board needs to talk about it and incorporate it into the budget process.

M. Clark said the new CIUUSD board met last week and has a transition grant. It believes it has space in a building to house the GISU office. At the last GISU Board meeting, there was a conversation about whether current space meets the district’s needs. M. Clark also noted that he provided a list of what he needs to prioritize as interim superintendent, and there are many items that need immediate attention. He believes the CIUUSD is committed to looking at a reconfiguration of the space and to consult an expert about it. He thinks this is a conversation that will primarily take place between CIUUSD and the GISU. He noted the office that currently houses GISU is cramped. One employee is working in a closet. T. Maxham said South Hero has 3 representatives on the GISU Board and that the space issues need to be addressed. He would like a resolution in the next year and to see it addressed in the budget.

T. Maxham reminded the board that he served on the GISU Board in D. Cain’s place and it should reconsider who on the board is representing South Hero at the GISU.

Executive Session (if needed pursuant to 1 V.S.A. sec. 313)

None.

Closure

13. Setting the next agenda (Discussion). The future topics include the following:

- GISU Board membership.
- Finalize retreat plans for Oct. 5. M. Clark noted Megan Grube will come to all the 2nd South Hero meetings of the year. He suggests the first meeting of the month be operational with the superintendent and the business manager. The second meeting could be focused on curriculum and technology.
- Inservice feedback.
- Report on the camping trip.
- Rise Vermont.
- Continue discussion of specials schedule

14. Adjourn

B. Vaughan moved to adjourn, and T. Maxham seconded the motion. Approved on a voice vote. The board adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

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