

Slate Valley Unified Union School District
Innovation Committee Meeting
Wednesday, May 1, 2019
Fair Haven Union High School
ARSU Conference Room
5:30 p.m.

Unapproved Minutes

Attending: Mark Grossarth, Linda Peltier, Brooke Olsen-Farrell, Angela Charron, Jason Rasco, Peter Stone, Walter Ripley, Cheryl Scarzello, Peter Clarke, Rick Wilson, Julie Finnegan, Benson Parent

Call to Order: Brooke called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Jason Rasco made a motion to approve the agenda with the additions noted by Peter Clarke, this was seconded by Linda Peltier. Motion carried. Additions to agenda to include: Review of the Conceptual Plan & Timeline for next steps.

Approval of Minutes of April 10, 2019: Angela Charron made a motion to approve the minutes of April 10, 2019 with one correction to the name of Josh Burlette, this was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried.

New Business:

- a. Debrief from Forums: There seemed to be a support for the Unified Middle School from the Fair Haven Forum, there was a lot of discussion about costs and wanting more detailed information that the committee had just not discussed yet. There was also discussion of the deferred maintenance at all schools. Regardless, if the Unified Middle School goes forward, a Bond will be needed for the very costly items from each school that need to be addressed. At Orwell there was a large turnout, with more voices wanting to continue just as we are, not seeing a need to develop a Unified Middle School. There was discussion from the audience wondering if we had looked at multiple sites, especially Benson Village School. The committee explained that each site was carefully examined for potential based on available space. The Unified Middle School has to meet a certain number of square footage to include all that is required by law. That is about the equivalent of 30,000 square feet. Orwell Community also raised the question if it was to be just one Bond, and they asked if a separate Bond could be developed for each of the schools needing to address the deferred maintenance. This would not work per the Director of Finance. The entire Slate Valley Unified Union School District votes on each item, it would be of no benefit to separate out each building's needs. Busing was also a topic of concern, though someone mentioned that elementary, middle and high school students are currently mixed and on the same buses. It was noted that the length of time for travel to a Unified Middle School might be increased for some. At the end of the two community forums the attendees were asked to put a sticker on 4 charts indicating their level of comfort with the information presented to date. All of the stickers that were placed were in support of a Unified Middle School. Both Forums indicated a preference in considering a Unified Middle School that has 2 separate entrances for Middle and High School students, they also were interested in having a kitchen in the center with two separate dining spaces, separate bathroom and locker rooms for the two. They recognized the need to create new gymnasium space and to create performing arts space that may be utilized by both groups at alternate times.
- b. Walter Ripley reviewed the survey results from Faculty and Staff (of which we had about 22 responses). They are largely in support of the projects as outlined and understand for the most part the Innovation Project as presented. The community survey's only had a response of 15. Some of the 15 noted they did not feel they had enough adequate information to proceed with a Bond Vote. They did note that the long term facilities plan was well developed.

They felt that the facility needs and renovations proposed adequately address each school's needs. Most felt the timeline for a Bond Vote for the fall was too aggressive and the Administrative team agreed with this at their recent meeting on 5/1/19. Brooke explained they will be looking to revise the Bond Vote. Peter Stone suggested having it align with Town Meeting day as there is always a large voter turnout. We could proceed with just a Bond for the Infrastructure needs but there is an opportunity to include the Unified Middle School. It would not appear to make much sense to renovate and fix infrastructure now and then decide down the road to then build the Unified Middle School and have to redo what had just been repaired.

- c. Discuss Continued Communication Strategies: The Committee strategized about how to inform more of the taxpayers about the process as we move forward. They are not typically coming out for these forums. We could do mailings, visits into the community to Senior Centers, Libraries, etc. Be transparent in the information being presented. Share that the standards for Middle Schools require a minimum of square footage, and that all buildings new and existing have to be brought up to ADA compliance in terms of bathrooms, entrance ways, elevators etc.
- d. Finalize Document for Board Meeting and Adoption of the Educational Specifications on May 6, 2019: Peter Clark and the Innovation Committee feel that draft 4 of the Innovation Project is ready for approval from the Board. We need this in order to move forward and start having a cost analysis ready to bring to Board and voters. Draft 4 will be presented to the SVUUSD Board Members for a vote on May 6, 2019. Once this is approved/adopted by Board we can go forward to the architect to begin developing more specific plans and costs associated with them.

Community Input: Central Office has been meeting with Burlington Board and Administration members and they said when they went to their voters for a large bond to renovate buildings they had the most success when the School Board Members went out into the Community to talk to voters to explain the renovation project that had been proposed.

The Innovation Committee looked at some conceptual drawings to get a sense of what they were thinking if this were to move forward. Most were interested in a single level Unified Middle School to take advantage of the Pod teaching groups, interested in using as much existing space as is available already at FHUHS, interested in separate entrances, interested in separate bathrooms, locker rooms, eating spaces with a shared kitchen. Interested in new gymnasium space and a space for the performing arts. (closest to Option A). Peter will contact John the Architect after the Board has adopted the Educational Specifications and we will then determine when the next meeting would be and whether or not John would be able to bring some potential drawings and associated costs.

Adjournment: Julie Finnegan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:58 p.m. and this was seconded by Mark Grossarth.

Respectfully Submitted,

Bonnie Lenihan