

**SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**August 12, 2019**  
**Fair Haven Union High School**  
**6:30 PM**

**Approved Minutes**

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Kris Benway	Director of Special Services	ARSU	X
Pati Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson (Appointed 4/8/19)	X
Amy Munger	Board Member	Benson	X
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	X
Tim Smith	Board Member	Castleton	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Chair	Castleton--Board Chair	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Joshua Hardt	Board Member	Hubbardton	X
Mike Fallis	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
John Oakman	Board Member	West Haven 9/11/17	-
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	X
Michael (Trevor) Ezzo	Board Member	West Haven	X
Tara Buxton	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Mike Bache	Board Member	Fair Haven (Appointed 4//8/19)	X
Rick Wilson	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Peter Stone	Board Member	Orwell NMD (Non Member District)	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Vice Chair	Orwell NMD -- Vice Chair	X
Dave Carpenter	Board Member	Orwell NMD	-
Brooke Olsen Farrell	Superintendent	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Cheryl Scarzello	Director of Finance	ARSU	-
Chris Cole	Director of Operations	ARSU	X
Casey O'Meara	Director of Curriculum I&A	ARSU	X

Audience Members: Matthew Prouty, Alan Saltis, Chris Hulquist, Sarah Roy, VT. Dept. of Health

Pledge of Allegiance: Julie Finnegan led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order-6:30: Julie Finnegan, Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Angela Charron made the motion to approve the agenda with a couple of amendments, move Project Vision Survey before Committee Reports, under Other Business Add Fuel Oil bid, and Propane Bid Information and Warrants to the agenda. This was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Motion Carried.

Approval of SVUUSD Minutes - June 24, 2019: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the Board Minutes of June 24, 2019, this was seconded by Angela Charron, there was (1) abstention, Tim Smith. Motion Carried.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: There were two items. Julie Finnegan read a note of appreciation for the thoughtful gift from Retiree, Linda Peltier, Principal of CVS. A letter of Appreciation was also received from Mary Ellen Barker for the thoughtful retirement gift, which Julie Finnegan also read into the record.

Committee Reports:

- Slate Valley Innovation Committee  
Energy Savings Performance Contract - Peter Stone said the Innovation Committee recently met and heard a presentation from Dean Angeles of Johnson Controls. He was proposing that the Board consider an Energy Savings Efficiency Project. The preliminary review by Johnson Controls would not cost the district anything. Chris Cole, Director of Operations suggested that this come before the Building and Grounds Committee's next meeting on August 26, 2019 so that there was not repetitive work being done. He mentioned that we may be recognizing our own efficiencies without committing to the Energy Efficiency Project. Peter Stone made a motion to have this go through the Building and Grounds Committee so as not to duplicate efforts and this was seconded by Josh Hardt. Josh also mentioned that he did not feel he had the needed information or expertise to make the decisions. Motion carried, the Building and Grounds Committee will review this proposal and decide what action to take moving forward.
- Executive Committee - The Executive Committee met this evening prior to the Board Meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation, job description and Evaluation Rubric. Tim Smith shared the information from the committee and shared that Sue Ceglowski, from the VSBA would be facilitating this process for us. Sue will put together a survey monkey to send out to the three groups identified, will collect the survey results, collate it and write a report to share back with the Executive Committee. Brooke will also be required to do a self-evaluation as part of the process. Tim Smith said this survey should be filled out by all Board Members, All Administrator's and all Central Office Staff.

Project Vision - Survey: Chris Hultquist and three others, Matt Prouty, Alan Saltis and Sara Roy came to present information on Project Vision and to ask the Board to decide if they wanted to be part of this exciting project. Chris described the collaborative teams from around the community that have been coming together. The vision and goal of these meetings is to determine How we can strengthen the outcome for all Rutland County Communities Youth. He referenced some significant research out of Iceland that has created substantial positive changes in the youth of Iceland. They used to have very high incidents of drinking, drug involvement suicide, depression and other significant risky behaviors. Over the past twenty years they have taken a community approach to solving these issues. They have agreed to partner through a pilot program in Rutland area and Fair Haven. This will be their first attempt to replicate these results in the United States. It is a very exciting project to be involved. In. The major information comes from a survey that will be given to all youth grades 6-12. In Iceland this has typically been done grades 7-12, but in VT some of our Middle Schools include 6th grade.

Chris mentioned the statistics associated with the original study in Iceland where over 47% of their youth were very involved in drinking and drug activity and this has declined over time to 6%. This decline has come about through very intentional community activities where youth and their families come together and have developed access to after school programming, enhanced hobbies, community based models. There are tons of family integration activities. He described that every youth in Iceland receives a card with \$500.00 on it so that money is not a barrier to accessing after school activities, etc. Amy Munger, asked if families could opt out of the survey, the answer was yes they can. Though Chris said the ideal is to get feedback from at least 85-90% of our population. Chris shared that our communities' youth may have different issues identified than Iceland's but the fact that the community partners come together to identify their own needs and how they want to spend their resources is the draw. Julie Finnegan suggested they put the discussion on the next Board Meeting as to whether we want to participate in the survey aspect. Kris Benway mentioned how exciting this project is and placed a link in her Central Office Report. She said this is a very timely and goes right along with our district mission and vision to enhance and address the social emotional needs of our children. Patti Beaumont had also attended this community information forum on this project and was equally as excited about the prospect of becoming a part of such a positive project. Board members are encouraged to take a look at the link in Kris' report or to google the success of Iceland youth project. We would need to consider a \$5,000 investment in next years budget to participate. This program usually requires \$50,000.00 but due to the wish to expand to the United States the pilot is being offered over the next 5 years at a price of \$5,000. There are also community foundations that can help offset the cost of this project if need be. A sense of Belonging and Value is missing from a large portion of our youth, this is certainly one way to minimize some of the damage. Julie Finnegan mentioned that this comes along at a great time as we have many children with several risky/problem behaviors like vaping, marijuana use, depression, etc.

Board Resignations: We have received letters from two additional Board Members who have to resign their position. Mike Fallis wrote to the Board expressing the need to resign from his Hubbardton Board seat as his family has moved to Weybridge. John Oakman, of West Haven also wrote to resign from his position citing other family commitments that are conflicting with his ability to attend regularly. This creates now three Board openings as Shannon Baldwin of Hubbardton also resigned effective June 30, 2019. Brooke will draft a letter for Tara Buxton Board Clerk to sign and it will be sent to the Selectman to let them know of these Board seat openings. Brooke reminded the Board that it is the Slate Valley Unified Board that will make any appointments. Peter Stone made a motion to accept the resignations, this was seconded by Angela Charron; Motion Carried by full Board.

FHGS Property Transfer: Chris Cole updated the Board on the Property transfer which was begun during the merger. Research showed that the Town of Fair Haven thought they owned one section behind FHGS and it turns out they own another one and the school district owned the reverse property. The deeds must have been originally recorded improperly. To rectify this the School District has been working with Attorneys and the State of Vermont. The district to date has paid over \$10,000 to research this and over \$2500.00 in Attorney fees, and as of yet the Town of Fair Haven has not paid any portion of this research. Chris Cole suggested at this point we move forward with this Easement regardless of the lack of payment. Chris Cole said the State was contacted and has approved a letter for a lot line adjustment. Chris shared a colored map whereby the School District new property line are outlined in blue and equate to 1.3 acres, while the Town's new property lines are highlighted in pink and shows the Town to be gaining 2.3 acres through this line adjustment. The Attorney has prepared an Easement Deed that still allows the school access to the fields and the town access to the parking lots for accessing the fields when they have activities going on. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Easement and the Lot Line Adjustment, this was seconded by Amy Munger; Motion Carried by full Board.

Resignations: Julie Finnegan read into the record a letter of resignation from Tanya Stone. Tanya had originally accepted a nursing position in our district to have started this school year and has now resigned from the position. Peter Stone made a motion to accept the resignation and this was seconded by Trevor Ezzo; Motion Carried by full Board. Trevor asked if there was another resignation from a Counselor and Brooke responded she had not yet received one.

Contracts: Tara Buxton read the following contracts into the record:

Eric Gross - English Teacher- Amended Contract - \$52,442

Archie Clark - Middle School Teacher -Amended Contract - \$48,076

Laura Budde - School Based Clinician/School Counselor - \$62,692

Cathy Clarke - Physical Education Teacher - \$61,173

Peter Stone seconded the motion to approve the contracts as read into the record; Motion Carried by full Board.

Central Office Report:

Central Office Board Report  
August 2019

Superintendent's Report

This summer has been extremely busy as we put systems and structures in place as a result of another merger. I would like to especially thank our Building and Grounds, Technology and Business Departments. There has been a multitude of complicated systems transitions underway that have occupied a huge amount of their time and energy.

We are welcoming a much smaller group of new faculty and staff compared to previous years. We are excited to have new folks on-board but are very grateful for the low turnover this year. I believe this speaks to the exciting work that we underway in Slate Valley. We have been able to hire some very talented individuals that I know our students will be excited to engage in learning with.

The Virginia Department of Criminal Justice asked Jason Rasco and I to present along with Rose Kennedy (State's Attorney), Bill Humphries (FH Chief of Police), Rob Evans (VT State School Safety Liaison) and Henry Alberico (Detective for VSP) at their annual conference in Hampton, Virginia. It was great to be able to share our successes in the area of school safety with others. We have a lot to be proud of as a school district, region and state.

Opening In-Service Day is August 23rd. It would be great to have school board members join us you are able for our morning kick-off and awards. I will send you the details via email as we get a little closer.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

This [commentary](#) was submitted by ARSU Superintendent Brooke Olsen-Farrell to the Rutland Herald in December 2018. The following pieces were developed over the past few months connected to the above commentary:

1. [Valley Commons: Creating Connections Across Slate Valley for the Common Good](#)
2. [Engagement in learning means being an active participant](#)
3. [Moments of play and self-discovery](#)
4. [An Invitation to Discover](#)

Experiential Learning Theory facilitated through community-based projects provide curricular and instructional techniques supporting inquiry and personal interests. Systematic efforts to establish pedagogy, focused on the larger needs of the learner with the goal of self-sufficiency in time for transitions to secondary school, higher education, or the workplace is a focus for learning in Slate Valley Unified School District (SVUSD).

In preparation for the next school year I wonder what experiential learning in our communities has to do with being a member of a community? What does the combination of classroom learning, in partnership with our communities, look like K-12 as SVUSD?

Teachers in our district continue to demonstrate the remarkable ability to share their interests with students while encouraging learners to discover what matters most to them. The abilities of our students to pursue interests with the support of experienced faculty provides learners opportunities to

consider who they can be, reassessing what they could become, as they move through our K-12 educational system.

SVU's personalized proficiency based framework supported by Differentiated Instruction and Experiential Learning Theory moves us from the safety of the familiar toward the curiosity of a good adventure in and outside of school.

### Director of Operations

The scheduled summer projects reconfiguring school entrances in several of our Slate Valley schools are well underway and progressing well. Painting was completed at the high school at the end of last week and the tile and carpet installations are nearing completion at the high school as well. Across the district maintenance staff have been working diligently to get the floors waxed and the overall buildings ready for the opening of school. The Royal Group has been in several times over the summer to replace and install new doors in the building as well to add additional access control systems to further bolster our efforts to ensure safe schools for our students, staff, and community. A new visitor management system will be rolled out this fall as well based on recommendations from security consultants to help track visitors and guests within our district.

In the realm of tech, approximately 250 new students Chromebooks have been delivered and configured and are ready for student use. The installation of new E911 compliant phone systems is in its final stages. We've encountered some obstacles in this project with respect to getting all of the different vendors involved in this project to hit their agreed upon completion dates, but the new systems are in place and working with just some finishing steps required to reach full E911 compliance in all of our district schools.

### Director of Finance

This summer has been extremely busy for the Business Office. The entire staff has worked hard all summer long. I wish to recognize their efforts, and the huge task of learning and implementing eFinancePlus successfully. They are a great team, and I am grateful every day for their diligence and hard work. A BIG thank you to Jennifer Book, Paula Danforth, Sheri Nichols, Ann Pelkey and Barbara Phillips!!!

We are now on the other side of our eFinancePlus(eFP) implementation having completed 3 payrolls and numerous accounts payable check runs successfully. We are looking ahead to the first payroll at the end of August that will include all our school year employees. Preparing for this payroll requires a great deal of work. Besides learning an entirely new way to process payroll we have had to deal with going from 3 separate databases to 1 database. The old databases all used different account structures, and our new database has yet again an entirely new account structure. This has been a double whammy for the staff as we must continually crosswalk from the old chart of accounts to the new chart of accounts. It also requires a great deal of time making the budgets from the old databases align with the requirements of the State of Vermont's Uniform Chart of Accounts.

To the extent that we can, we are fully utilizing all the components of eFP that are available to use. We have implemented fund accounting, human resources (which includes payroll) and purchasing (which includes requisitions, purchase orders and accounts payable). As part of purchasing we have implemented an electronic workflow process. What this means is that staff are able to enter requisitions directly into the system and then the requisition goes through an electronic approval path on its way to becoming a purchase order. My hope is that eventually all staff that need to will have the ability to enter requisitions, including teachers. Besides the training involved to accomplish this district wide, a great deal of set up is required in the background to restrict users to only the areas in the system that they should be able to access. We have also implemented the Employee Access Center (EAC) which allows employees to access anytime, anywhere their payroll and personnel information through a web portal. With the EAC we can allow employees to update specific personal information and route those changes to appropriate personnel for review and approval. We have also added links in the portal to FrontLine which is the system we use for all our absence approval and leave tracking.

At the end of July, Barbara Phillips, Walter Ripley and I attended 2 days of training in Montpelier with other Vermont school district and a PowerSchool trainer learning COGNOS. COGNOS is business intelligence and performance management software suite sold by IBM. It is designed to enable non-technical personnel to extract data and then produce reports. COGNOS has query and report writing capabilities which will allow me to create reports and extract data from the system. Unfortunately, what I call - off menu reports from eFP are not at all user friendly and not anything I would expect anyone other than myself to be able to use. This means that we will have to spend hours developing reports in

COGNOS using our eFP database that in ProFund took minutes to create. The functionality of COGNOS is far greater than ProFund, but with that powerful functionality comes a steep learning curve. Most of July in the Business Office is spent closing out the prior fiscal year. Once all invoices and other financial transactions that we know of are entered and posted, we can begin doing the many reports that are required by the State of Vermont. At the end of the month the final reports for all of our grants and special education expenditures are due to the Vermont Agency of Education. After those reports are completed I spend the first 2 weeks of August preparing the Annual Statistical Report of Schools (StatBook) for the State of Vermont. The goal of the StatBook data collection is to identify all revenues, expenditures, and other financial transaction for every school district in Vermont. The Vermont AOE is required by statute to collect financial data for the purposes of computing education agency grants, computing allowable tuition and for complying with State and Federal reporting requirements. Once Statbook is done I try to take a week of vacation. Upon my return our auditors will be in the office beginning their work on our fiscal year 2019 audited financial statements and staff will be getting ready for the start of the new school year. And so it goes in the Business Office...

### Director of Special Services

"Fall and Winter is a time for reflection, Spring and Summer is a time for living." I hope that you have all enjoyed some time for "living" over the last few weeks of summer. It is important that as we rejuvenate our minds, bodies and spirits, that we also reflect on the accomplishments of the last year. A new district, a new board, new policies, new staff, new programs, new roles and responsibilities...times when the only constant was change. Many thanks to all those who have worked to see these ideals met! And, while the numerous meeting and committees are easily forgotten, acts of kindness and moments of generosity that leave an impact are quite memorable. One example of a positive impact this year has been the [Snack Pack Program](#) in Slate Valley. It is through collaboration and the strengthening of relationships with our community partners that we will again be able to offer this phenomenal program to our students and families and will be exploring ways of expanding and sustaining support into the future. A generous grant of \$20,000.00 from the United Way of Rutland County is again making this opportunity possible. It is through this networking that our district has been invited to explore a collaboration with the Vermont Youth Project. Our district has been selected as 1 of 5 schools/communities in the state to participate in the Vermont Youth Project which is in partnership with Iceland. This is a community project designed to address specifically the "third space," where your youth live, work and play. This project provides communities with different resources and supports for their youth. The primary goal of the [project](#) is to reduce risky behaviors and for youth to feel more connected to their communities. The goal of the project aligns tightly with our ideal in Slate Valley...ensuring that every child is connected and comes to school ready to learn. It's an exciting opportunity for our communities and our kids that we will learn more about at the board meeting.

### Other Business:

- Fuel Oil Bid Chris Cole, Director of Operations, recommended we stay with Champlain Fuels and we were offered a fixed price of 2.12 per gallon, or 2.05 for prepaid. He estimated we would need some 85,000 gallons and that we go with the fixed price as Champlain had always adjusted down when the prices dropped and we did not have to prepay that much money in advance.
- Propane Bid- Chris Cole, Director of Operations recommended we go with Fyles company, they gave a fixed rate of 1.36 per gallon or a prepay amount of 1.29 per gallon. We generally use 8,100 gallons and so Chris thought it best to prepay the amount of 1.29 per gallon.
- Warrants: Trevor Ezzo made a motion to pay the Orwell warrant for \$102,390.39, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Motion Carried by full Board. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve The Slate Valley Unified Warrant in the amount of \$2,222,651.66, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell and Motion was Carried by full Board. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the ARSU Warrant in the amount of \$915,336.08, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Motion Carried by full Board. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Foods Warrant in the amount of \$127,670.41, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Motion Carried by full Board. Trevor Ezzo made a motion to approve the Grants Warrant in the amount of \$72,948.86, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Motion Carried by full Board.

## Executive Session

- Student Matter-Transfer: Peter Stone made a motion to go into Executive Session with Administration present at 7:40 for the purpose of discussing student matters (transfers); this was seconded by Glen Cousineau. Tara Buxton made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:50 with the following action taken: Tara made a motion to approve the requested transfers for the following student id #'s: 1436901, 1430308, T017058, 11002, and 1437094; Glen Cousineau made a motion to go back into Executive Session at 7:50 for the purpose of discussing a legal matter with Superintendent and Kris Benway.
- Legal Matter - Peter Stone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 7:50 with No action taken.

## Agenda Building:

1. Principals' Reports
2. Project Vision Survey
3. Policy Committee Report
4. Building and Grounds Committee Report
5. End of Year- Finance
6. School Safety Update

Adjournment: Tara Buxton made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 pm this was seconded by Peter Stone.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - August 26, 2019 - CVS - 6:30 p.m.

SV Building and Grounds Committee/Policy Committee Mtgs - August 26, 2019 - CVS - 5:30 p.m.

SV Innovation Committee Mtg. - August 26, 2019 -Slate Valley Central Office - 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Bonnie Lenihan