

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
 Regular Meeting
 January 6, 2020
 Fair Haven Union High School
 6:30 p.m.

Approved Minutes:

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Kris Benway	Director of Special Services	Slate Valley UUSD	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
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Tanya Tolchin	Board Member	West Haven 9/30/19 1st meeting	X
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	X
Michael (Trevor) Ezzo	Board Member	West Haven	-
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	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Vice Chair	Orwell -- Vice Chair	X
Dave Carpenter	Board Member	Orwell	-
Brooke Olsen Farrell	Superintendent	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Cheryl Scarzello	Director of Finance	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Chris Cole	Director of Operations	Slate Valley UUSD	X
Casey O'Meara	Director of Curriculum I&A	Slate Valley UUSD	X

Audience Attending: Stefanie Wilbur, Steve Binshader, Faruk Menguc, Regina Charron, Mark Mordashy, Tanya Desrocher, Sarah Tetzlaff, Joshua Lucas, Kim Lucci, Donna Kelly, Jason Rasco, Dan Redondo, Robert Rogers, Jacob Allard, Terry Norris, Karen Jockall, B.R. Orleans (sp?)

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

Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.: Julie Finnegan, Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:34p.m..

Approval of Agenda: Mike Bache approved the agenda with one change in the agenda, Casey O'Meara's presentation will be moved to the next meeting; this was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion carried by the full Board.

Approval of SVUUSD Minutes of 12/10/19: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the minutes of 12/10/19; this was seconded by Toni Lobdell, there was one change to a sentence that was incomplete. There were two abstentions, Peter Stone and Tara Buxton.

Public Comment: Public Comment/Oswell Parents come to speak about desire to have the Schoolwide (K-8) Ski program fully funded by the Board for the Fy 21 School Year. Stefanie Wilbur came to speak about the Oswell ski program and how many it has served over the last 5 years. She cited many examples of the benefits to the children that have participated in the program and mentioned they had achieved national recognition in the May 2019 edition of Woman's Day for the value of the program in an article called Students of the Slopes. She and others present were of the impression that even with the merger of Act 46 that they were told they would not lose their ski program. They talked about the growth of the program and having to seek special permission to include students as young as Kindergarten, as Pico typically has only serviced grades 1 and up. She and others shared how amazing it was to see the confidence of these students as they developed their skills and how nice it was to see them transition from fear to pure joy. She talked about the funding sources and how this has morphed over the years. She and others on the Booster club continue to seek grants and other funds to support the program. They have a deal that includes individual ski passes to Pico for the season and all equipment rentals for \$90.00 per student. They talked about the fact that a young girls health needs were first identified when she went to try on ski boots and couldn't get her foot into the boot and how they worked with VT Adaptive to make this happen for her. Many parents in this community would never be able to afford these opportunities for their kids if it were not for the funding that has been provided, and they don't want their children to lose out on these experiences. The costs can be very prohibitive and they begged the board to reconsider their decision to cut this valuable program. We want to create well rounded students with strong, body, mind and soul. It is such an inclusive program and is recognized by several national magazines. Josh Lucas is a parent volunteer who helps each and every day of the program and speaks to the benefits of the program and how he has seen students that struggle in the school system really take off and show their skills on the slopes. Saving taxpayers money was the idea behind Act 46 Merger, but several parents spoke about the fact that they were guaranteed at a Board meeting and it was recorded in Minutes from March 20, 2018, that they would not lose this important ski program. Now you are taking a program away. Peter Stone, Board Member, spoke in favor of maintaining this program. Josh Hardt, Board Member thinks we should be looking at funding all students within SVUUSD to participate fully in a ski program. Two participants in the audience mentioned that they do not have children in the school currently, but they fully support reinstating this program for all students at Oswell.

Correspondence: None

Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee: Recessed for now, some overall big picture points:
- The District has worked hard to level fund the budget for FY 21 and has come close.
- Double digit increase to health insurance this year are a factor.
- Interest on the bond has not been included in the FY 21 budget. At this time the district does believe it will be in the Bond pool until the summer of 2021.
- Discussed Tuition rates, Elementary & Secondary to be discussed later in agenda.
- Teacher Salaries need to be discussed as we are in a negotiations year.
- We covered the trends of the enrollment summary for the last 7 years
- Decrease in Equalized Pupils of 3.06%
- There are proposed staffing changes-reduction of 4.5 FTEs (in direct instruction and support staff). The reduction in FTE over the last three years has resulted in 13.5 less staff.
- Addition of 2.4 FTE
- Cheryl recommended transfer of \$200,000.00 to capital improvement to go towards the repair/reserve fund
- She reviewed the language of the article for the FY 21 budget which proposes a \$26,527,180.00
- This is \$33,540.00 greater than last year's budget
- Revenues decreased by \$38,000.00 over last years
- Spending per equalized pupils is 3.50% higher than last year.
- This years projected Per Equalized Pupil Costs is \$16,619.33, while the state average is around \$17,133.00; so we are less than state average.
- CLA's have changed quite a bit. When the CLA decreases tax rates increase.
- Greater than 50% of SVUUSD Taxpayers pay their property taxes in part based on income versus solely on property values.
- Draft #2 of the budget does not include bond interest.
- The tax rates shown include the .04 tax rate incentive we are still entitled to receive based on our merger.
- Oswell will not receive the small schools grant (now referred to as merger support grants).

- Health costs increases are up this year in double digits again.

Warrants: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve total payments in the amount of 1,704,247.90, this was seconded by Peter Stone; Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the Food Service bills in the amount of \$70,996.05, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell. Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve Grants in the amount of \$75,345.09, this was seconded by Peter Stone.

PBL Presentation: Board decided to put this off until the next meeting in January, or potentially February as there is so much to accomplish in the next meeting.

Announced Tuition: Toni Lobdell made a motion to accept the proposed rate for Elementary rate at \$15,000 (a \$500 increase over last year); The secondary tuition rate is recommended to be set at \$17,000.00 (an increase of \$1,000.00). This motion was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion carried by the full Board.

Project Graduation 2020: Project Graduation submitted a letter seeking donations for the Project Graduation Night as we have supported this in the past. Mike Bache made a motion to support Project Graduation at the same level as last year, Peter Stone seconded the motion. Discussion ensued. Motion carried by full Board.

Field Trip Request: Toni Lobdell made a motion to support the DC trip for CVS and BVS, this was seconded by Peter Stone. This trip is totally 100% funds raised by taxpayers. Discussion ensued. Motion carried by full Board.

Resignation: 2 Resignations

Julie Finnegan read a letter from BVS Teacher, Jeff Walker as the end of the school year, June 30, 2020; Glen Cousineau made the motion to accept Mr. Walker's letter, and Peter Stone seconded this motion; Motion carried by the full Board.

Julie Finnegan read a letter from Jason Rasco, FHUHS Principal, intends to resign from his position at the end of the June 30, 2020 School Year. Glen Cousineau recommends accepting the letter of resignation with regret, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; discussion ensued and Mr. Rasco was thanked for stepping up to the plate and for all of his fine work. Motion carried by the full Board.

Central Office Report:
Superintendent's Report

I wanted to extend a huge thank you to the Central Office Team in Slate Valley. They really pitched in with additional duties when I was out on medical leave these past few weeks. We are so lucky to have them working on behalf of the students in Slate Valley!

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

On December 13, 2019 Abby Wald, Julia Adams, Kristen Whitman, Cathy Darley, Deb Ehler-Hansen and I completed Northeastern University's EDU6001. This learning experiences offered:

"an opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to design and facilitate engaging and meaningful learning experiences. Compare different theoretical foundations for how people learn through experience and how these theories are put into practice using different approaches for teaching through experiences including active learning, inquiry-based learning, service-learning, place-based learning, and project-based learning. Discuss the principles of deeper learning and how to support the development of deeper learning competencies through experiential learning."

Participation in this course allowed the five of us to plan, and in some cases implement, experiential learning as part of Slate Valley's vision of "authentic, experiential, individualized learning". Slate Valley's October IDEA Fair, a potential redesign of the Orwell Village School's playground, deeper learning experiences with Hubbardton Forge and the Binding Site, the collection of feedback from students regarding Slate Valley's efforts in experiential learning, a website connected to the Slate Valley homepage with experiential learning resources, the design of a google classroom for Instructional Vision Team members focused on experiential learning, and a deeper learning summer institute for K-5 educators were all incubated in this graduate course. Each of the deliverables reflects experiential learning designed for implementation incorporating principles of Project Based Learning, Deeper Learning, and Project Management.

Starting on January 6, 2020 Kate Leather, Phil Hall, Jason Rasco, Jenna Laslocky, Deb Ehler-Hansen, Laura Aprilliano and I will begin Northeastern University's EDU 6002 - Culturally Responsive Experiential Teaching and Learning This experience offers experiential educators:

“an opportunity to obtain the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to design and facilitate engaging and meaningful student-centered learning experiences that meet the needs of a diverse range of learners. Explores the constructs of culture, equity, power, and positionality and how educators facilitate the learning of others, it is important to understand who we are and how our own learning experiences shape our practices and perspectives. Also explores how to facilitate social emotional growth, agency, and self-authorship in students through culturally responsive experiential learning.”

Slate Valley Mission for ALL students to meet or exceed standards for college and career readiness through our vision of authentic, experiential, individualized learning is seen through our collaboration with Northeastern University. Educators from Slate Valley who complete all four modules (EDU 6001-Experiential learning Theory and Practice, EDU 6002-Culturally Responsive Experiential Teaching and Learning, EDU 6003-Applied Research in Experiential Teaching and Learning, and EDU 6004-Leading Experiential Teaching and Learning can earn a Certificate in Experiential Teaching and Learning.

Slate Valley Proficiency-Based Coach Kristen Whitman and CES Fifth grade teacher Molly Clark are co-teaching Responsive Literacy Instruction starting on January 16th. Kristen and Molly will use three primary texts Slate Valley provided to all educators in order to meet the needs of our literacy learners. Please see the course description [here](#).

Relatively short, but very informative, reads and listens to start 2020:

Chris Unger Northeastern University Professor and collaborator with Slate Valley

- [The Superhero Schools of Philadelphia](#)

Adam Bunting, Principal at Champlain Valley Union High School

- [An argument for proficiency-based learning](#)

Andrew Jones Director of Curriculum Mill River Unified Union School District and Gabe Hamilton PBL Coordinator at Mt. Abraham Union High School

- [Proficiency-based learning is best practice](#)

On Being with Krista Tippett

- [Bessel van der Kolk-How Trauma Lodges in the Body](#)

Director of Operations

Over the December break work was completed to replace carpeting in the Benson Village School library and main office as well as installing new floor tile in the cafeteria in the Orwell Town Hall. The break also saw the library at the Fair Haven Grade School get repainted to support the school's ongoing project to reconfigure and update their library space. We have also successfully installed a new bus radio located at the Central Office to be better able to coordinate with the schools and buses when needed.

Director of Special Services

The 2020 Legislative Session will begin on Wed. Jan 8th - as we approach a new session, I thought it may be helpful to share some pertinent links and ways to access information as well as our representatives for Slate Valley. Here are the contacts for our Slate Valley district:

Sen. Christopher Bray (D)	cbray@leg.state.vt.us
Sen. Brian Collamore ®	bcollamore@leg.state.vt.us
Sen. Ruth Hardy (D)	rhardy@leg.state.vt.us
Sen. Cheryl Hooker (D/P)	chooker@leg.state.vt.us
Sen. James L. McNeil (R)	jmcneil@leg.state.vt.us
Rep. William Canfield (R)	wcanfield@leg.state.vt.us
Rep. Bob Helm (R)	rhelm@leg.state.vt.us
Rep. Terry Norris (I)	tnorris@leg.state.vt.us

The General Phone # for all Senators and Representatives is (802) 828-2228. It is important that they hear from our administrators and school board members throughout the legislative session and that we are able to clearly articulate the impact of their considerations on our students, faculty and schools. With that in mind, the discussion continues with regard to the funding of special education in the future with a meeting of the Census-Based Funding Advisory Group on January 6th. I will share pertinent details as they emerge and are made available.

Over the winter break, we relocated some of the alternative classrooms and support spaces at Castleton Elementary School to better meet the needs of the learners in these district programs. Special thanks to Bonnie Lenihan, the support staff, and the custodial and tech staff that dedicated time over the break to make this all happen and to create a welcoming environment for the student's return from the holidays.

Director of Finance

The Business Office has been busy with calendar year end compliance and beginning of calendar year set up. We will be issuing W2s and 1099s for the last time from ProFund for Addison Rutland SU and Orwell School District. When 1095-Cs are done in February for ARSU and Orwell, it will be our last use of the old ProFund databases. We will then be operating solely on the eFinancePlus database.

On January 15th and 16th, the Business Office staff will be attending offsite training in Windsor, VT. The first day of training will cover W2, 1099 and 1095-C processing. The second day of training will cover additional modules that still need to be implemented by the school districts that have implemented eFP as of July 1, 2019. The modules are employee benefits, position control and employee timesheets. As of July 1, 2019, eleven school districts have implemented eFP.

Other Business:

1. Innovation Committee - Brooke wants to clarify the intent to move forward with the full scope of the project in order to meet the Bond deadline. The Board was in support of moving forward with specifics of the plans to be delivered later if the Bond passes. We can review estimates on the current plans, at the Building and Grounds Committee meeting recommended to be held on 1/21/20 with the Board meeting to approve the Budget and the Bond vote being proposed for the 27th of January, 2020. Julie Finnegan proposed putting a letter in the brochure from the Board to explain the Boards level of support for the project. We are proposing the concept of a middle school addition as well as the renovations to FHUHS, Orwell and other school buildings. The Board discussed other venues on how to get the accurate word out to communities prior to the Bond vote. First and foremost the Superintendent and Board Chair stated we need to present a united front and show at every opportunity our support for the project. Patti Beaumont suggested using social media to further get information out to proposed tax payers.
2. BVS Middle School Students: Mike Bache raised concern that the full Board never fully discussed the transition of BVS Middle School students to one of the other middle school programs in the next academic school year. This would provide greater opportunity and equity for these 12 students per Mr. Bache. The Finance Committee brought the recommendation but the Board did not fully discuss all the implications. Rebeckah St. Peter shared that there was a community forum where parents were for the most part not in support of such a move. Amy Munger disagreed with this generalization and representation of this information. Further discussion ensued. Tim Smith, Board Member agreed with Mike Bache that the full Board did not get to weigh in on this discussion before a decision was made. Brooke Olsen Farrell said she would share the results of the BVS survey completed by parents of K-8. Rebeckah St. Peter said she was under the impression that the Board tabled further discussion on the matter until they see if the Bond vote passed. At that time the discussion of moving students to another middle school could be looked at again. Mike Bache would like it revisited again once we have information on the bond vote again speaking about what is in the best interest of the students. There was one reduction of a middle school teacher with the resignation of Jeff Walker this leaves 12 middle school students with two full time teachers. We may need to look at this teacher student ratio moving forward. Mr. Bache is more concerned than ever about one less staff member and three grade levels of students and what may or may not be available to them.
3. Julie Finnegan said we needed a motion to move the Board Meeting to January 27, 2019. This motion was made by Peter Stone and seconded by Glen Cousineau. Amy Munger made a motion to cancel the policy committee meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2020 due the large agenda of the Building and Grounds Committee. This was seconded by Tara Buxton.
4. Glen Cousineau made a motion to continue talking about the Orwell Ski Program at the Finance committee meeting continuation. See the results at the conclusion of Finance Committee meeting minutes.
5. LifeTime Activities & Inclusive Ski Program fully funded for all other schools. Amy Munger made a motion to support all 6-8 students in SVUUSD that want to participate in the fully funded ski program based on limits set for number of openings by Pico staff. This was seconded by Angela Charron. Motion carried by the full Board. Stefanie Wilbur offered to make contact with her ski contact at Pico to obtain the same deal as Orwell students receive.
6. Angela Charron made a motion that if there was another SVUUSD school that wanted to fully embrace the Orwell model in the future with the community members taking on the same number of responsibilities in carrying out the program and all its planning that we as a Board support this. This was seconded by Mike Bache. Motion carried by full Board.

Executive Session - If Needed: Glen Cousineau made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8:05 p.m. for purpose of discussing Personnel with Superintendent and Director of Finance, this was seconded by Tara Buxton.

Peter Stone made a motion to come out of Executive session at 8:24 p.m with no action taken, this was seconded by Glen Cousineau.

Agenda Building:

1. FY 21 Budget final draft and approval
2. Final Decisions about Innovation Project
3. Student Presentation at CVS; Board member asked if students from all area schools could be invited to share their feelings on a unified Middle School and the other renovations that are being proposed.
Brooke will check with Admin team as she feels CVS students may have already prepared something.

Adjournment: Tara Buxton made a motion to adjourn at 9 p.m. and Peter Stone seconded this motion. Finance Board members need to reconvene to complete the Finance Committee business.

SV Building & Grounds/Policy Committee - TUESDAY, January 21, 2020 - CVS - 5:30 p.m.
SVUUSD Special Board Meeting - Monday, January 27, 2020 - CVS - 6:30 p.m.