

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

Regular Meeting

March 9, 2020

Fair Haven Union High School

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
Vacant	Board Member	Benson	-
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	-
Tim Smith	Board Member	Castleton -- Board Chair	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Chair	Castleton	Via Phone
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 - Clerk of Board	X
Mike Bache	Board Member	Fair Haven (Appointed 4/8/19)	X
Rick Wilson	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Peter Stone	Board Member	Orwell - Board Vice Chair	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Vice Chair	Orwell	X
John Wurzbacher	Board Member	Orwell	X
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: Jennifer Clement, Emily Rutherford, Alyssa Thompson, Pete DeCarolis, Sue DeCarolis, Tim Short, Ben Worthing, Kim Prehoda, Kim Lucci, Jim Sabatasi, Abby Wald, Kim Ransom, Alexis Vander Els, Steve Hudson

Pledge of Allegiance: Brooke Olsen Farrell, Superintendent opened the meeting and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.: Brooke Olsen Farrell called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Board Reorganization: Brooke started the evening by sharing it was the time of year for completing the process of Board Reorganization and asked the Board members for nominations for the different positions. Tara Buxton nominated Tim Smith for Board Chair; this was seconded by Josh Hardt; Tim took a moment to speak to the Board, mentioning that the Board knew he was not a proponent of the Bond, nor did he support the scope of the

project. Brooke asked for any other nominations and Angela Charron nominated Julie Finnegan. This was seconded by Tonia Tolchin. Since there were two nominations, Superintendent Farrell asked for a paper ballot. Board members present voted and Tim Smith received 7 votes while Julie Finnegan received 5 votes. Tim Smith was announced and welcomed as Board Chair by Superintendent Farrell. Tim joined the Superintendent and took over facilitation of the Board Meeting.

Tim Smith asked for nominations of Vice Chair. Mike Bache nominated Peter Stone, this was seconded by Tara Buxton; No other nomination was made, Motion carried by full Board.

Tim Smith asked for nominations for Board Clerk: Mike Bache nominated Tara Buxton to continue in this role. This was seconded by Pati Beaumont. No other nomination was made. Motion carried by full Board.

Board members were asked to sign and turn in their code of ethics paper and acknowledged having read Board Responsibilities which were included in the packet.

- a) Board Responsibilities: See above
- b) Code of Ethics: See above
- c) Town Meeting Follow-up:

Tim Smith discussed the need to set the Board Meeting dates and times. There was discussion of going to one longer extended meeting per month or keeping it at 2 meetings per month. After lengthy discussion and because we have much work to do on the budget, the Board voted to keep the meeting at twice a month for the next four months and then to revisit the idea of moving to one time per month after the June meeting. Mike Bache made the motion to continue with two times a month for now, this was seconded by Angela Charron. Motion Carried.

Identify a Paper of Record. Peter Stone, Vice chair made a motion that the Rutland Herald and Addison Independent (position vacancies) continue as the papers of record; this was seconded by Mike Bache. Motion carried by the full Board.

Committee Development:

<u>Policy Committee</u>	<u>Teacher Negotiations</u>	<u>Finance</u>	<u>Building & Grounds</u>
Tim Smith	Tim Smith	Tim Smith	Tim Smith
Toni Lobdell	Glen Cousineau	Rebeckah St. Peter	Peter Stone
Josh Hardt	Rebeckah St. Peter	Tara Buxton	Pati Beaumont
Mike Bache	Rick Wilson	Angela Charron	John Wurzbacher
Tania Tolchin	Pati Beaumont	Glen Cousineau	Mike Bache
	Julie Finnegan	Rick Wilson	Tara Buxton
			Rebeckah St. Peter

<u>Stafford Advisory</u>	<u>Support Staff Negotiations</u>	<u>Executive Committee</u>	<u>Sick Bank</u>
Rick Wilson	Glen Cousineau	Tim Smith	Rebeckah St. Peter
	Mike Bache	Peter Stone	
	Rebeckah St. Peter	Rick Wilson	
	Toni Lobdell	Angela Charron	
	Rick Wilson	Josh Hardt	
	Tim Smith	Rebeckah St. Peterb	

Approval of Agenda: Pati Beaumont made a motion to approve the agenda with two additions: 1. Spanish Trip, 2. Bus Bids; this was seconded by Rebeckah St. Peter. Motion carried by the full Board.

Approval of Minutes - February 10, 2020: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2020; this was seconded by Josh Hardt. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Student Presentation - FHUHS: Presentation was held for the Board on a new class at FHUHS and was presented by two faculty members, Jen Clement and Kim Ransom and two students, Alyssa Thompson and Emily Rutherford. The presenters shared information about the Adulthood 101 Course and the success it is experiencing at FHUHS. A wide range of topics are covered within this class : Goal Setting which involves Identifying Strength skills and passions, Stress Management, and Overcoming Obstacles, Basic Home Skills such as Sewing, Laundry Care, Relationships; First Impressions-Resume writing, Interview Skills and Soft Skills, Interpersonal Skills/Workplace Success, Email Etiquette and the digital world, Food Preparations-Nutrition, Breakfast/Lunch and Dinner; Food Budgets, Grocery Store Skills and Finally Financial Literacy which covers such topics as Saving/Investing, Checking, Taxes, Budgeting and Credit. This class also brought 4 different types of cupcakes and asked the Board to judge the cupcakes for taste and presentation.

Spanish Trip: Faculty Member Steve Hudson, Spanish Teacher came to propose a trip to the Board for 2021. He gave the details of a proposed trip to Puerto Rico and the rationale for why this location was selected, the number of students that would be on the trip (no more than 20). He gave information that had been gathered to date regarding proposed costs and the money that would need to be raised for such a trip. The trip would have to have a minimum of 12 students attending. The cost is expected to be about \$1,700.00 per student and students would be trying to fund raise for the cost of the trip. This price includes airfare, 2 meals a day and accommodations. It does not include the travel expenses to Albany Airport. Mr. Hudson estimated the cost of a bus to Albany at approximately \$400.00. Mr. Hudson was seeking permission from the Board to go forward with planning and booking this trip. He had also explained a contingency plan of a trip to San Antonio if the Board did not support the original idea. Discussion ensued, many questions were asked, one in particular was whether or not this was accessible to all that wanted to attend. Peter Stone made a motion for the Board to allow Mr. Hudson to go forward with his planning, this was seconded by Mike Bache. Motion Carried, though there was one Nay, Pati Beaumont.

Public Comment: Sue DeCarolis, Resident had a few questions for the Board Regarding the Bond Vote. Tim Smith said we would be discussing this later in the agenda and her questions may be answered there, as the Board had not yet had an opportunity to discuss the failed bond vote. Sue wanted to continue. She wondered with regard to the Elementary Schools if it was the Board's intention to keep all Pre-k through Grade 5 schools in their own communities, or in essence if it was the intent to keep all elementary schools open? She asked how many kids currently are on location at FHUHS, currently enrolled here? She recollected a time that her own children attended there and the capacity was about 600 students. Brooke responded 310 students currently on campus and that many attended Stafford and some were enrolled in early college (these numbers are not included in the 310). She then asked what is the current capacity of the High School? Rebeckah St. Peter mentioned that much of the available class space at FHUHS had been reallocated for the Central Office, School Counseling, and Special Education. She then asked how can this community handle a bond? Have you looked at any other building in the district to hold the capacity of Middle School Students? Sue then next noted that there are a lot of Administrators for 1300 kids, basically 1 Administrator per 100 students. Next she asked if we seriously need a new roof in Orwell? She said she was happy to type her remaining questions and get them to Brooke so they can be fully addressed.

Correspondence: None

Committee Reports:

- Policy Committee
A2 Participation of Board Members - Approve to Adopt; It was pointed out that there was a typo in the A2 Policy; Peter made a motion to correct the mistake and rewarn to adopt at the next meeting; this was seconded by Glen Cousineau. Motion Carried.

Job Description: The Board packets included a revised job description for the Director of Curriculum with the added responsibility for oversight of the Educational Support Team Process. Mike Bache made a motion to approve the amended job description; this was seconded by Peter Stone, Motion Carried.

Authorization for Contracts: Angela Charron made a motion to allow the Superintendent, Director of Finance, Director of Operations, Director of Curriculum and Director of Special Services to sign non employee vendor contracts for FY 21; this was seconded by Glen Cousineau. Motion carried by the full Board.

By-Laws: Peter Stone made a motion to accept the By-Laws as amended (after clerical changes were made); this was seconded by Mike Bache. Motion carried by the Board.

Resignations: Tim Smith read a letter of resignation from FHGS Special Educator, Katie Flanigan; and letter of resignation from long time Employee of FHGS, Karen Jockell. Karen held multiple positions at FHGS over the course of many years. Angela Charron made a motion to accept these resignations effective June 30, 2020 with regrets, and thanked Karen Jockell for all of her dedicated service. She was thanked for the wonderful job she had done. This was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried by the full Board.

Reserve Fund Expenditure: There was a recent inspection of the vent hood at Benson Village School and it resulted in a major write up and the directive to immediately replace the vent hood. Cheryl and Chris Cole noted that Benson Village School had Reserve Funds in the amount of \$13,000-13,500.00 for Benson. Angela Charron made the motion to use the capital improvements for the stated expenditures, this was seconded by Rebeckah St. Peter. Motion carried by the full Board.

Budget and Bond Discussion: Board Chair and Superintendent discussed the most pressing issue before us is to pass the budget. We need to do a considerable amount of work before we discuss another bond vote. Brooke

had been working with the Administration to take another look at the budget and how we can adjust things without significantly impacting kids any further. Some of the things that would impact would be to consider reducing field trips to save money, eliminate LifeTime activities and the Orwell Ski Program, all of these suggestions further impact kids and no one feels good about these. We will be trying to recognize savings in the busing budget by creating other efficiencies. The Administrative team looked at how to increase local revenue in the budget. Brooke noted that we can not cut anymore staff without serious reconfigurations of buildings and by our own voter approved Articles of Agreement we can not close any schools in the district for four years without repurposing them for educational needs. We are also up against a deadline as Teacher Rifs would have to happen prior to March 15, 2020 by the teacher contract language.

Our first budget warning was at 3.63% increase in spending per equalized pupil and with Cheryl's recommendations we could put the budget back out at 2.99% increase in spending per equalized pupil. Tim Smith asked what it would take to get to a 2.0% increase for taxpayers and would have to cut an additional \$375,000 from the budget. That could only come from staff. Cheryl handed out a one page proposal.

Cheryl noted that there are only two ways to reduce education spending per equalized pupil

1. Reduce Expenditures, and/or
2. Increase Revenues.

When considering options that would have the least impact to students and programs, Cheryl is recommending to revise the amount of local revenue in the proposed FY 21 budget. When considering Special Education Intensive Reimbursement from the State of VT for FY 20 they were reimbursing at a rate of 56.25%, we were using a conservative figure of 55.53%, which results in an increase of \$63,000.00. Cheryl is recommending we use an additional \$100,000.00 from the prior year surplus to increase revenue, which will help us drop to 2.99% per equalized pupils from 3.63 in the first budget presented to taxpayers.

Pati Beaumont made a motion to accept the recommendation of the Administration to use 100,000.00 from prior year to increase revenue in FY 21 budget and to ask voters to expend \$26,623,041.00 on the next presentation of the budget to the community on April 21, 2020. This was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion was carried by the full Board. See attached warning for special meeting.

Central Office Report:

Superintendent's Report

As we look to rework our bond project we need to be thinking about how we carefully balance the needs of the students with declining enrollment and infrastructure needs. We have trimmed the budget over the past few years to the point of not being able to trim more in our current configuration without taking away student programming.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Digging into Deeper Learning:
How Schools and Districts in VT & NH are Pursuing Deeper Learning February 7, '20

Hosted by
Northeastern University's NExT – Network for Experiential Teaching and Learning At UVEI (Upper Valley Educators Institute) Lebanon, NH

Come hear how several schools and districts are pursuing more authentic, deeper learning and consider how you can do the same. This will be a *practice-based* conversation upon which you can take action!

Come learn from and with the following schools, districts, and partners who are "digging in" to deeper learning:

- Slate Valley Unified School District
- Kingdom East School District
- Pittsfield School District
- Randolph Union High School
- Frankestown Elementary School
- Upper Valley Educators Institute
- Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education
- Holmes Center for School Partnerships and Educator Preparation
- Northeastern University
- Lyndon Institute

Northeastern Graduate School of Education

Slate Valley participated in a unique opportunity to learn from, and with, a set of pioneering Vermont and New Hampshire school and district leaders, educators, and partners who are transforming their systems to offer students a deeper, more authentic, project-based, and experiential learning.

This event was to be held at the Upper Valley Educator Institute in Lebanon, NH February 7, 2020, but due to weather was rescheduled for March 6th.

The focus of this event is on each school and district's pursuit of deeper learning through specific practices with the intent of sharing so that others participating can begin to consider these

practices in their own efforts. [Here](#) is where you can find the itinerary for this event.

Director of Operations

Final preparation is underway for the oil tank replacements at the Castleton Elementary School and Fair Haven Grade School. Both of these projects will begin in the spring with an anticipated summer completion date. Work is underway to prepare our facilities for the upcoming spring athletic season now that winter appears to be coming to an end. Maintenance staff continues to regularly clean and disinfect high traffic areas in our schools in order to promote a healthy environment for both students and staff. Finally, over the February break, new interactive displays were installed in classrooms across the district to keep our scheduled technology replacement cycle on track.

Director of Special Services

We continue to move forward with the Vermont Youth Project Initiative with a community forum being hosted at Fair Haven Grade School on March 5, 2020. The focus of this project is to look at ways that our community can work together to support our youth and help them to thrive. If you are interested in obtaining information shared at the event or copies of the slides that include the data from Slate Valley youth, please let me know.

The Slate Valley Universal Preschool Program will be hosting Universal Preschool Screenings for ALL children ages 0-5 years old living in Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell or West Haven. The screenings will be held on April 1st at Fair Haven Grade School, April 3rd at Benson Village School and on April 9th and 10th at Castleton Elementary School. Parents may schedule a screening at any of the three sites by calling the school. The preschool screening involves activities that are both fun for young children and help us learn about a child's motor, cognitive, and language skills. We encourage ALL students (ages 0-5) to be screened if they are residents of the Slate Valley District.

Director of Finance

Failure of the budget and the bond are a disappointment. We will be discussing options going forward with the Board during our meeting on March 9th.

In March the Business Office is embarking on a new districtwide project. Currently timesheets for hourly staff in the district are done entirely on paper. This spring we will be implementing FrontLine Time and Attendance. We currently use FrontLine to track and manage absences for all school district employees. The absence management module is integrated with substitute management. When employees submit a request for leave (sick day, personal day, vacation day, bereavement day) the system submits the absence for approval and creates an opening that substitutes can see online and select to fill. The hours for substitutes are uploaded from the FrontLine Absence Management module into payroll. As part of FrontLine's Time and Attendance module we will be using our current employee badges with RFID readers to allow employees to swipe in and out each day. The information will feed into timesheets that will go through a workflow process for approval. Eventually the information will be uploaded into payroll. We will be starting with a small group of employees this spring (office staff and custodians) and add paraeducators at the beginning of the new school year in September.

Contracts:

Brooke Olsen Farrell shared with the Board that we recently had 14 candidates for the Assistant Principal position for Castleton Elementary and Castleton Village School. We interviewed 7 very highly qualified candidates. There was a unanimous recommendation to the Board. Ben Worthing, long term Science Teacher at FHUHS was recommended for hire as the Assistant Principal, with primary responsibilities at Castleton Village School. Peter Stone made a motion to offer a one year contract to Ben Worthing at a salary of \$76,000.00; this was seconded by Angela Charron. Motion was carried by the full Board. Congratulations and Welcome Ben.

Bus Bids: There was only one vendor that submitted a bus bid. Given the information Cheryl had and budgeting a 15% increase, Cheryl's best estimate for the budget was 1.459 million. The actual bus bid came in at an additional \$47,796.00. Brooke mentioned that she is asking all schools to conduct ridership surveys and she hopes to use this information to reduce the number of buses needed and to increase route efficiencies. It costs roughly \$63,000.00 to operate each bus to and from school. Peter Stone made a motion to allow Brooke to sign the contract for the next several years; this was seconded by Angela Charron. Motion carried by the full Board.

Executive Session - If Needed: Brooke noted that there would be need for an Executive Session to discuss a legal matter with no action expected to be taken. Peter Stone made a motion to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a legal matter with the Administration present at 9:20 p.m., this was seconded by Rebeckah St. Peter. Peter Stone made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 9:30 p.m., this was seconded by Josh Hardt.

Other Business:

Tim Smith Board Chair wanted to discuss Coronavirus Updates. Brooke shared that all of our buildings are engaged and diligent about extra cleaning efforts, and that later in the week we would be receiving and taking guidance from VT Dept of Health and the CDC. Tim asked if we would be doing computerized education for our students as some other districts had talked about. This is not a feasible option for us as many of our students do not have access to the internet. Brooke also mentioned that there may be other limitations to field trips. She said this is fluid and ever changing day to day. She will draft letters to parents and staff as events come up. Sue DeCarolis the Board should celebrate Community members coming to the meetings and that we should welcome those who think differently. She also said if the district has not changed and we have kids with great needs, we need to express what those needs represent such a need for more counselors, more interventionists to meet these needs. She suggested more explanation to the community would be helpful the next time we put the budget out so they understand that we are passionate about helping these students with great needs and it takes more to meet these needs.

Adjournment: Angela Charron made a motion to adjourn at 9:33 p.m., this was seconded by Rebeckah St. Peter. Motion carried by the full Board.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - TBD