

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
Special Meeting  
June 8, 2020  
Virtual Meeting  
7:00 p.m.

Approved Minutes:

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Pati Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson	X
Vacant	Board Member	Benson	--
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	X
Tim Smith	Board Chair	Castleton	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Member	Castleton	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Joshua Hardt	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Tanya Tolchin	Board Member	West Haven	X
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	-
Vacant	Board Member	West Haven	-
Tara Buxton	Board Member - Clerk of Board	Fair Haven	X
Mike Bache	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Rick Wilson	Board Member	Fair Haven	X
Peter Stone	Board Vice Chair	Orwell	X
Glen Cousineau	Board Member	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
Kris Benway	Director of Special Services	Slate Valley UUSD	X

**Audience Attending:** Barb and Rick Buxton, Glen Traverse, Jason Rasco, Jessica Thurston, Kate Leathe, KC, Kim Alexander, Maryanne Munger, Nedra Boutwell, Pam Arel, Patrick Walters, Phil Hall, Kim Lucci, Deb Infurana, Amy Roy, Kim Prehoda, Several Unidentified Guests

**Pledge of Allegiance:**

**Call to Order - 7:00 PM:** Tim Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Tara Buxton made a motion to approve the agenda, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell with no changes. Motion carried by the full Board.

**Approval of SVUUSD Minutes - May 18, 2020:** Julie Finnegan made a motion to approve the minutes of May 18, 2020 with the following corrections: Toni L had a follow up question regarding top of page 3 and Non-union Fringe Benefits. Tim asked Brooke to clarify this in the minutes. This was seconded by John Wurzbacher. Motion carried by the full Board.

**Public Comment:** None

**Correspondence:** None

**Finance Committee:**

- Warrants Angela Charron made a motion to approve total payments in the amount of \$2,637,821.20; this was seconded by Peter Stone. Angela Charron made a motion to approve the Food Service warrant in the amount of \$142,160.41, this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Angela Charron made a motion to pay the Grants warrants in the amount of \$35,854.20. This was seconded by Julie Finnegan and the Motion was carried by the full Board.

**Middle School Athletics:** Brooke Olsen-Farrell mentioned that a month ago the Administration got together to develop some recommendations around 5-8 teams for the entire SU. Kim Alexander was here to talk about their recommendations. They are recommending combining FHGS and BVS on all Middle School sports and Castleton Village School and Orwell on all middle school sporting events. Transportation was identified as the biggest concerning factor. The Admin teams are concerned that the kids be transported to and from practices so as not to burden parents.

**Letter of Intent/Contracts - New Hires: 2020-2021 School Year Letter of Intent:**

- Jane Russell-Elementary Teacher in the amount of \$43,520.00 (CES-Gr. K)
- Dana Smith-Elementary Teacher in the amount of \$46,577.00. (OVS-Gr2)
- Melissa Rosato-Elementary Teacher in the amount of \$45,039.00 (OVS-Gr3)
- Grace Redding-elementary Teacher in the amount of \$43,520(CES-Gr. K)

Peter Stone made a motion to approve the Letters of intent as presented; this was seconded by Julie Finnegan.

**Central Office Report:** No questions from the Board regarding reports.

Superintendent's Report

As we wind down this school year we are beginning to look to next year and what the reopening of school will look like in the fall. We are expecting to receive Guidance from the Agency of Education this month. The one thing we know is that school will not be normal in the fall. The most important Guidance in terms of planning will be the health Guidance. Once we have that Guidance will be able to move forward in the planning for the return of students. The priority will be to bring back primary age students first.

We are aiming to reopen school offices on July 1st and are busy developing a plan for this. Social distancing will still be required, additional cleaning, masks, flexible scheduling, etc...

We continue to hire staff for next year. So far we have 21 new hires for various positions around the district. We are still looking for Special Educators, as there is a very small pool of applicants in this area.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Given the uncertainty of the current COVID-19 pandemic, educators in Slate Valley must be ready for a number of scenarios going into the fall of 2020. Ultimately, our instructional plans must be flexible enough to be useful in a completely remote environment or in some sort of hybrid situation that involves some student interaction via distance learning. Furthermore, coherence and continuity of student expectations and experiences will be critical. The use of "*flexible learning*" (in-person and remote) is meant to provide a teaching and learning framework for an uncertain future. Simply put, "*flexible learning*" will result in planning documents for students & parents. These documents will be public

facing and represent a small chunk of learning (1-2 weeks) that allows for a student-centered and self-paced learning experience. Much of what goes into these “learning chunks” can be pulled from educators current instructional materials.

### Director of Operations

As we continue to follow the evolving guidance from the state regarding the COVID-19 pandemic maintenance staff have been working to accomplish a variety of tasks. First and foremost they have remained committed to ensuring the buildings are regularly cleaned and disinfected in order to allow staff to safely access the buildings as needed to support the district’s students on a number of fronts. Flooring work is underway in several of the schools as the variety of contractors able to return to work expands in accordance with Governor Scott’s directive. Work is continuing at the high school to reroute a main electrical service line that previously had made it difficult to look to undertake needed maintenance on the steam heat system based on how it was routed through one of the school’s access tunnels. Once the service line has been completely rerouted contractors will be able to look to address issues with the high school’s steam lines. Initial planning steps are also underway to update the layout of the schools’ nursing offices to provide more effective ways to isolate students when/if needed. Lastly, we have been looking to identify what the building needs would be to support the various in-person school reopening scenarios being discussed both at the local and state level in regards to cleaning supplies, physical supports for social distancing, etc.

In the realm of technology and communications, the tech integrationists have been working with Casey and the district’s instructional coaches to develop a variety of tech related professional development opportunities for the staff inservice days following the last student day. Staff have also been providing feedback on a variety of software platforms that we will more thoroughly examine in the coming weeks and months as we work to identify tools that would be able to support student learning in a variety of different potential formats starting in the fall. Finally, Josh has been working closely with a number of the district schools to help develop materials to support our upcoming remote graduation ceremonies.

### Director of Special Services

In March, we noted that in facing the challenges of this health pandemic, we were not running a sprint, but rather a marathon. And, so we continue to forge ahead, closing in on the end of the regular school year but rounding another corner to plan for the provision of Extended School Year Services for those IEP students who are eligible. We are also busy planning for the delivery of social emotional supports, counseling and check-ins to take place while schools are dismissed for summer. This is something that we have made available to specific students and families in the past and we will continue to do so this summer. At this time, we are planning to provide any necessary services, remotely, through the months of June and July. If possible, we hope to engage in transition services in August and will have to wait and see if the manner of delivery can change. Of course, our hope and goal is to provide services in-person to all of our kids! Did you ever think you would hear so many kids, teachers and parents claim that they MISS SCHOOL?!?! We are all anxious to return as soon as it is determined to be a safe and viable option.

Please stay tuned for further updates on our preschool schedules for the fall. We are re-assessing our options in light of the CDC, AOE and AHS childcare guidance and will have more information to share in the next few weeks.

I also anticipate that I will be able to share news about our United Way Grant application soon.

### Director of Finance

On June 3rd the House Ways and Means Committee (HWM) passed H.959 which set the property dollar equivalent yield for fiscal year 2021 at \$10,998, the income yield at \$13,535 and the non-homestead rate at \$1.628. The first paragraph of the bill states that “the bill proposes to allow the Education Fund to incur a deficit.” The bill includes language about the repayment of the Education Fund deficit and the various means by which it will be addressed. It also allows the state to make interfund loans and to borrow from the General Fund to address a deficit in the Education Fund. The yield proposed by HWM is higher than the yield proposed by the Tax Commissioner in December. Education spending for budgets

that were approved in March came in at about 4.6% increase. Slate Valley is proposing an education spending decrease. By setting the rate higher than recommended by the Tax Commissioner, the committee wished to send the message that taxpayers would not bear the issues in the Education Fund created by the closure of so many businesses during the COVID19 State of Emergency. The FY21 budget presentation on the Slate Valley website uses the yield recommended by HWM to project tax rates. The increase in the equalized tax rate is \$0.0173. The estimated tax rate for each town, after the town's common level of appraisal is applied, also appears in the presentation. The Senate will be acting on the yield next week, but it will not be until after our budget vote.

You may have recently received some emails or communications regarding student activity accounts. The student activity accounts for the elementary schools and the high school are maintained in the school district's financial system in two separate funds with corresponding separate bank accounts for the high school and elementary schools. The activity accounts are separately identified within the system based on the purpose of the account. School student activity funds are designated to account for funds held by the school in a trustee capacity or as an agent for students, and club organizations of the school. The basic purpose for the collecting or raising and expending of activity funds are for the benefit of students and are supplemental to the educational curriculum of the school. It is important to note that since these funds are different from funds that a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) might have. A PTO can apply to the IRS for status as a 501(c)(3) entity. A PTO has a board of directors that has complete control of its accounts. The funds held in the school district's student activity accounts are controlled by the school district for the benefit of students for the purpose for which the funds were raised.

**Other Business:**

- We still have 4 open seats on the Board; Brooke is out of options.

**Executive Session - If Needed:** No need for one.

**Agenda Building:**

1. Hopeful that we will have health guidance
2. Hopeful that we will have a passed FY 21 Budget
3. Cheryl will have a TAN or Loan document to share with the Board; if the budget doesn't pass we will be seeking a loan of up to 87% of the last approved budget.
4. Julie asks to hear about the focus on the fall for faculty and staff. A letter/survey is going out to parents to get feedback.
5. School calendar that was approved may be adjusted in terms of start day
6. Angela Charron asks if we have had any feedback about the letter we sent out about the George Floyd situation and how we are going to handle this moving forward. We will have to work to develop further sensitivities. Brooke has had only one response from a parent. Deb Smith mentioned that Jen Paquestte is doing a lot of work around equity and we will continue our work on this with staff and students and addressing our own biases. Angela asks if we will review our practices with our SRO's with regards to handling any situations. Brooke noted that we have great restorative justice practices in schools. Pati asked if teachers have been trained in Implicit Bias Training. Brooke answered that some had and some had not.

**Adjournment:** Glen Cousineau made a motion to adjourn at 7:44 p.m. This was seconded by Angela Charron.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - June 22, 2020 - Virtual Meeting - 6:30 p.m.  
Building and Grounds/Policy Committee Meetings - June 22, 2020 - Virtual Meetings - 5:30 p.m.