

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Meeting
July 20, 2020
Fair Haven Union High School
6:30 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

Approved Minutes:

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Pati Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson	X
Becky Spears	Board Member	Benson	X
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	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Tanya Tolchin	Board Member	West Haven	X
Angela Charron	Board Member	West Haven	X
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: In Person: Phil Hall, Deb Infurna, Roy Newton virtually: Kim Prehoda, Patrick Walters, Jen Paquette, Kate Leathe, Bonnie Lenihan, Amy Roy, Margaret Hayward, Becky Armitage, #56, #91, #03, #09, #16, #53, #72, #73, #34, Mary Chamberlain, Melinda Rice, Meredith Fabian, Alexandra Foley-Bowen, Amy Munger, Kimberly St. Phillips, Laura Des Jardins, Lindsay Zeitler, Lindsay Marcy, Sarah Winter, Kim Ransom, Launee Salamin, Lynn Stack, Krista Glover, Gwen Alowitz-Rehm, Christian Nakamura, Tammy Abbey, Mrs. Hutchins, Karla Ramey, Pam Arel, Jan Jones, Mary Kearns, Judy Folmsbee, Loretta Lee, Andrea Tester, Amy Jackson, Sweet Stuff, Unknown #1, Unknown #2, Lisa LaFountain, Mark Cassidy, Jen Clement, Joe Mark, Nancy Mark, Beth Robertson, Ann Pierce, Amy Cotton, Tina Stevens, Maxine Saville, Michael Doran, Raegan Colburn, Elizabeth Eddy, Kathryn Lucia, Eliza Wilcox, Joe Donaldson, Jessica Thurston, Normandie Keeler, Maggie McGarry, tt, Briana Heller, Jayme Purdy, Melissa Coombs, Jep,

Pledge of Allegiance:

Tim Smith led the board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.: Tim Smith Board Chair called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the agenda with the following changes to the agenda: Move Community feedback and budget questions forward, add retirement package, discussion about absentee ballots, feedback on flyer; this was seconded by Julie Finnegan; motion carried by the full Board.

Approval of the SVUUSD Minutes - June 22, 2020: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the minutes of June 22, 2020 with no changes/corrections, this was seconded by Toni Lobdell.

Public Comment: Roy Newton asked 3 questions; 1. Will there be security cuts; none planned; 2. Asked about unfunded mandates-couldn't hear him: answered in Frequently asked questions handout; 3. Voting on budget if school will not be open. Additional attendees wanted to delay comments until after hearing the reopening of the school plan.

Correspondence

- **Thank You Letter:** Tim Smith read a thank you letter from Bonnie Condit, CES teacher that retired after 33 years at Castleton. She thanked the Board for the Slate Clock she received.

Feedback from Community Meetings on July 9, 2020:

- **Benson:** Attended by 6 people & 3 Board Members; Concerned with Teacher pay and benefits, handed out frequently asked questions materials about budget, found this helpful-viewed it as a great communication tool, discussed licensing of teachers and limitations of licensing, expressed concerns about deferred maintenance, would love Board Chair and Co-Chair to stand in front of Shaws to talk with people about the budget and hand out information. Board members noted full support of our community for our schools; curious as to why individual board meetings weren't consolidated.
- **Castleton:** Biggest concerns centered once again around communication and the fact that no one strategy works; hit them all; simplify communications. Concerned that the website for SVUVT is parent friendly and easy to access, but not so for the larger community members, suggest reworking this to address both audiences. Looking for Administration to take a pay freeze next year; Concerned about why we offer contracts to teachers and Administrators in January, February and March and don't plan the budget until the following fall. Julie mentioned that Admin contracts are offered as per state Statute at the time they have to be. Concerned about the many unfunded mandates; asked if PBL is still an unfunded mandate? Bill Canfield was there but did not speak much. They asked about the repurposing of buildings; at this point Julie felt they were very supportive, but cautioned the audience said they would not continue to be if they didn't get more information. Wanted to know if the budget doesn't pass, what comes next?
- **Fair Haven:** Echoed many of the concerns of other towns. Asked information regarding Maintenance Budgets and what they consist of; concerned about the years of deferred maintenance. Meeting was attended by one teacher and several retirees.
- **Hubbardton:** Per Josh, shared many of the other town's discussion points. Attendees were very concerned about the lack of deferred maintenance, concerned with busing. Very appreciative, seemed pro education, pro schools. Much of the conversation was Covid centered. Absentee ballots were already sent, worried more would want to take advantage of these. Frustrated with lack of representation on our behalf in Montpelier. For most part feeling included and excited about where the district is headed. Seemed understanding of district responsibility.
- **Orwell:** 15 People, teacher, parents, retirees, concerned about lack of information; encouraged Board to think outside of the box; suggest getting rid of transportation, wondering about the costs of schools and potential savings if schools were closed for remote learning-if no kids in the buildings this spring we must have saved money. The budget didn't pass because of lack of information on budgets; they feel that this is due to the fact that individual communities don't find enough information in the town report as they have in the past. don't get enough individual information as the budget is consolidated. Upset there is no longer an individual Principal report

in the Town Report. In am and pm when they go by the school, so many parents are dropping off their students, why do we need buses. What ever happened to the Audit of buses; never heard the results. Unanimously thought ½ days were a waste of time and inconvenient for parents. Funding for Covid and non covid expenses-are we applying for any grants? Think we should provide more resources for remote learning. Asked if as a Board we have a policy around attendance for remote learning: think we should prohibit video games and other distractions in home during remote learning, not sure how schools could impact this. They are supportive of many of our programs. Think the Pre-K program should be operated by the district and not Mary Johnson. Asked are we giving teachers instruction about what they post to social media?

- **West Haven:** Attended by 6 people; content very similar to last meeting, Want better communication with a lower readability status, concerned that 75% of the budget is made of teacher salaries and benefits, really need to look at reducing these costs; want teaching staff and Administration to take reduction in pay as most of the community members are not working due to Covid. They want to see a 0% increase to the budget per equalized pupil. They like the opportunity to speak in smaller groups within their town but would like the Board Chair to appear at these along with an Administrator.

Castleton Free Library Request: Chris Cole mentioned that Nancy Mark was present earlier at the Board meeting to address the Castleton Free Library Request, but was now on line but was having Microphone challenges. Chris Cole explained that the Town Library is asking CVS and Board to work with them to address boundary issues so that they might install a handicapped access to the library. They were looking for the Board to allow Chris Cole and Brooke permission to move forward to work with the town to address any boundary issues on the Boards behalf. Tara Buxton made a motion to allow Chris and Brooke to explore this, this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Discussion ensued, the library has already invested a lot in having the legals examined; Chris will bring back any final plans to the Board. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Budget Warning: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the budget warning as written and to bring forward Article 3 to have the voters approve the school board to expend a \$26,402,586.00 budget. This was seconded by Glen Cousineau; motion carried by the full Board.

W A R N I N G
SPECIAL MEETING
SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
(Towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell, West Haven)
August 3, 2020

The legal voters of the Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) consisting of the towns of Benson, Castleton, Fair Haven, Hubbardton, Orwell and West Haven are hereby warned and notified to meet virtually on Monday, August 3, 2020 at 6:30 P.M. to transact any of the following business not involving voting by Australian ballot. Please connect virtually by going to meet.google.com/xyb-itrv-dgu or by calling (US) +1 234-307-0704 PIN: 698 588 330#.

Upon the conclusion of the business not involving Australian ballot, the meeting is to be adjourned and reconvened in the respective polling places for each of the above-referenced towns on Tuesday, August 11, 2020 to transact any business involving voting by Australian ballot.

Article 1: To have the Board of Directors of the School District present the proposed school budget for the ensuing year. **Article 2:** To transact any other business that may come before the meeting.

AUGUST 11, 2020
BALLOT QUESTION

Article 3: Shall the voters of the School District approve the school board to expend \$26,402,586, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$16,393.68 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.99% higher than spending for the current year.

Said persons and voters are warned and notified that voter qualifications, registration, absentee voting, and voter procedures shall be in accordance with Chapters 43 and 51 of Title 17 Vermont Statutes Annotated.

Informational Hearing:

Said persons and voters are further notified and warned that the virtual meeting on Monday, August 3, 2020 at 6:30 P.M. also serves as an informational hearing to discuss Article 3 which will be voted on by Australian ballot on Tuesday, August 11, 2020.

Dated at Fair Haven, Vermont this 20th day of July, 2020.

Timothy Smith, Chair

Elisabeth MacKay, Clerk Slate Valley Unified Union School District

Received for record and recorded prior to posting this 20th day of July, 2020.

Elisabeth MacKay, Clerk Slate Valley Unified Union School District

Motion was made by Julie Finnegan to authorize the town clerks to send ballots for the school budget vote to any voter who requests a ballot for the August Primary this was seconded by Peter Stone; motion was carried by the full Board.

Letters of Intent: Tara Buxton made a motion to approve two letters of intent to hire the following: Steven Sommovigo-Special Educator for Castleton Elementary at a salary of \$53,391.00 and Amanda Keller-School Nurse-at a salary of \$43,520.00. This motion was seconded by Julie Finnegan; motion was carried by the full Board.

School Calendar: An updated School Calendar was presented by Brooke Olsen Farrell, which had the first student day to return to school on August 31, 2020. This change allows for additional days for staff to plan for opening, address IEP needs, provide time for staff to learn new protocols and procedures, set up their classroom environments; plan schedules since the school day has been reduced to allow for teacher prep and planning at end of day and for additional sanitization and cleaning that needs to happen each day prior to 4:30 p.m. Even with proposed calendar changes Administration will support getting Stafford students to Stafford based on their start day of August 26, 2020. Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the calendar as presented, this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Discussion ensued. It was asked if this change in calendar would impact Para Educator/Instructional Assistant Contracts. Brooke indicated it would not as we will be bringing them in on 8/21-8/28 with teaching staff; there will be no decrease in the number of IA days contract. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Re-Opening Plan: Tim Smith, Board Chair said he wanted to thank the Administration for their hard work on developing several Task Forces (district and building level) and their daily commitment to developing safe reopening plans as he understands the significant challenges with this process given the daily changes from the AOE. He wanted to hear from each Administrator at the building level to have them speak about challenges, opportunities, what will and won't work. He then asked to hear from Chris Cole, Director of Operations, Kris Benway, Director of Special Education about any Equity issues in Education and finally from Casey O'Meara about the proposed curriculum. Tim is asking the Board to make a motion to support the reopening plans once Principal's have given the information about their specific plans. He also acknowledged though the emphasis was on an in-person focus the Curriculum Director is also working simultaneously with faculty and staff to develop the ability to transition to remote learning should this become necessary. Tim then asked community members present or virtually to share their questions. Tina Stevens, virtual participant said she wanted to understand what the procedure is if a teacher or student should test positive, how would this be addressed. Laura Des Jardins asked whether or not the district would offer all virtual learning as an option to reopening, she asked if there was a digital survey. Tim heard from other virtual participants that it might make sense for Admin to explain their plans and then questions may be answered, or to then give the audience an opportunity to ask additional questions.

Deb Infurna, Fair Haven Grade School Principal started off. Deb started off by sharing all Administrator's belief that in-person learning is the optimal way to educate our students. She discussed that the Leadership team meets daily to make these reopening plans; She reiterated that there are both district and local task force committees made up of different stakeholders. She said that the Administration will follow local data and science and that when the data suggests to do something different and we need to change back to remote learning we will. Deb wanted to know if Brooke wanted to speak to the commonalities that all schools had been working on. Tim asked her to please continue talking about the specifics for her building. Deb talked about how kids would be welcomed to school at FHGS for busers, walkers and parent drop offs. Busers would have already been scanned

and answered health questions prior to boarding the bus so they will be dropped off from and enter the school from the ramp; Parent drop off will be out back of the school where the same health screening and questions would be conducted and temperatures taken. Similar procedure will take place at two front entrances for walkers. Seb spoke to the uniqueness of her 4 story building. Certain stair wells would be identified for going up while others are for down so as not to mix students. Schools are doing their best to optimize 6 foot recommendation in all classrooms but some are 4-6ft. All would be expected to follow CDC recommendations and to wear masks both students and staff. They are thinking outside of the box to develop outside classroom spaces. Cafeteria's and Gyms are closed per Governor's orders so we are adjusting to plan for lunches in classrooms or outside weather permitting. Seeking to develop outside coverings as there is not a lot of shade for outdoor classrooms.

Alexandra Foley Bowen, thanked Deb for the information provided and trusts that there will be further communication coming. Deb went on to share that they have moved many of their tables out and replaced them with desks PE classes will be held outside as much as possible. Deb noted that though this is a heavy lift all of her teacher's want to be back in school to meet the social/emotional and academic needs of all their students. There will be recess and specials, still working on the sanitization plan on the playground, staggered times for groups to access these areas.

Audience member asked if masks will be provided. Brooke said we will provide students masks if they don't have them but some may be more comfortable and if kids have some that they like they can bring them. Currently face shields are allowed though this may change. Brooke and Tim encouraged parents to call their Administrators with specific questions that they are available to discuss questions/concerns.

Amy Roy, Benson Village School; Reiterated what Deb Smith had said about how hard the Administrative team is working daily to ensure a safe reopening. She also shared the student arrival plan for the bus and parents and said initially the outside Pre-K door would be used for drop off of little ones. Because of their size at BVS they are able to operate students in pods; they have secured furniture desks with acrylic table dividers; they are looking at out of the box ways to use space; outdoor learning opportunities are also being created; individual umbrellas for shade for students. She discussed routines in building, and a banker's window was added to the main office to address safety. There is a lot of focus on social/emotional learning easing into academics; plan to minimize teacher workrooms. Amy feels they have a solid plan that covers all aspects. They are being flexible/nimble/ and sharing materials and scheduling ideasetc., we Administrators are all working towards ensuring the safety, health and well being of students and staff. Amy noted that they continue to follow all ALICE safety protocols. She said there was an adjustment to the U-Pre-K schedule at BVS. They will have two, five hour days on Monday and Thursdays.

Patrick Walters, Orwell Village School Principal shared his plans for reopening next. Patrick mentioned that all Administrators are adjusting arrival and dismissal times, all are performing screening temperature checks, as soon as they are in the parking area at Orwell. Classes are grouped and keeping to themselves each day staying with the same cohort. Recess times are staggered, physical distancing is practiced, maximizing social distancing as much as is allowed; change furniture, adjusted classroom layouts; developing protocols, students will not share high touch materials, like calculators, etc. We are taking steps to appropriately clean, disrupt and disinfect and sanitize daily. We are committed to providing clear and on-going communication as well as guidance on health and safety to ensure we can get feedback & keep all well informed. Also each school is gaining a separate isolation area with protocols on how we respond should someone present with symptoms.

Kim Prehoda, Principal of CES/ CVS: Kim has all of the same things in place that all of her previous colleagues have shared. She reminds all that these plans are based on the information we currently have and that daily guidance is being received and we will change as we need to, to address changing scenarios. Kim spent some time talking about the front office changes at CVS to have an earlier point of contact for those visitors to the building. CES/ CVS also have shortened days with staggered opening and dismissal times. We are taking precautions as outlined by all other schools. We are placing a lot of emphasis on the social/emotional well being of all.

Phil Hall, Principal of FHUHS: The 9-12 system has obvious differences, the largest one being that the older students will be experiencing an A/B schedule and certain grade levels will attend every other

day. The reason for considering this on a shortened day is that to check in a full body of 9-12 students would take the better part of a day and would also make social distancing much more challenging. We will have grades 9 & 10 attend one day, remote learning for them the following day and grades 11 & 12 would attend the opposite days for grades 9/10 followed by a day of remote learning following their school day schedule even though remote. We plan to start this way and hope that by weeks three and four everything is continuing to improve and we can resume a full day, five day a week schedule for all students. We will continue to balance safety and well being of all students and staff. We will continue to work with Stafford to ensure all students have transportation to and from Stafford regardless of the FHUHS schedule. Students are to remain and teachers will change. We too will have mask requirements. An audience member asked if online learning would be an option for parents that do not want their children in school. If there is a student with health impairment and a doctor's note that this is required we could accommodate that, but the plan is for in person learning. Will courses be limited with this schedule? All courses will be available over the course of the year; We will semesterise courses or make them 1/2/ year; available over the course of the year; but this schedule actually allows you to take 8 courses per year. Band and chorus will be available but may look differently, as per AOE we can't practice together.

Chris Cole, Director of Operations: Operations Department has developed a cleaning schedule for each building; schedule cleaning in between playground use, working with building Administrators on specifics. Isolation rooms are being built in each building within the nurse's office or right next to these rooms have ventilation systems being built in to vent to the outside of the building. We have contracted with a ventilation engineer to be sure our current buildings are efficient. We have set up hand sanitization systems at the point of entry for all buildings. We are using multiple vendors around the state to secure enough supplies and PPE equipment. Brooke is also working with the head nurse on protocols. We are confident we will be able to get enough supplies. We have many volunteers that are making masks and donating them.

Kris Benway, Director of Special Education/Student Services: In the spring with the forced closures of school, we had a population of students on IEP's that might have been underserved. We understand that in-person services provide the best outcomes for all students, but this is especially important for IEP students. We are meeting as an Administrative Leadership team daily and following each of those with a meeting of the Sped Administrative Team. Once General Ed has outlined their teaching plans and practices we will need to potentially amend all IEP's. We need time before school begins to make these changes as IEP's need to be in place to the greatest extent possible on the first day of school. Kris acknowledged how challenging it is to provide behavioral and social emotional support and specialized instruction remotely. We are excited to welcome students back to our schools. We have challenges in providing direct instruction if we can't mix groups of students who might have like needs. We are working creatively to figure out these service delivery options. Our Sped Administrator's will be reaching out to individual families to discuss transportation and other concerns as we re-open.

Casey O'Meara, Director of Curriculum: Casey was asked if Work Based Learning would still be available to students that had signed up for such at the high school. Yes it will be available and it involves about 25 students and will be handled on a case by case basis as we reach out to work sites to see if they are still able to take on our students given the Covid situation. Casey mentioned a survey that was completed when school was completed in June for feedback on remote learning, ¾ of the respondents wanted in-person learning as a first choice. This was followed by a combination of in person and out of person services and the last choice would be remote learning opportunity.

Casey said that in speaking with all educators around the district they feel their greatest skills lie in delivering in person instruction, this is where their greatest comfort lies. They want to be in the classroom with their students. We will continue working with teachers and with students as they return to hone their and further develop capabilities on the remote learning platforms from day one opening of school and beyond should we have to return to such. Grades K-2 will be learning to use Seesaw and Grades 3-12 will work on the Google Classroom Platform.

Casey spoke about the 6 areas he is considering as we reopen schools. Some of these would be addressed in a staff handbook and others in a student/parent handbook.

1. Advisory
2. Role of Student in Learning in and out of school (remote learning)
3. Role of the Teacher Role of Parent/Guardian

4. How we will assess learning
5. Attendance
6. Specials-how they will be handled

Parent/Audience Questions: May not have time to answer all this evening but we are taking them down from the Google Meeting Chat and each question will be answered.

1. Is only remote learning an option right now? Currently this is not an option, if there is a particular health impaired student with multiple documentation. We will gauge where parents are at as we make the individual calls.
2. Laura Des Jardins asks about Homeschooling, how does this impact schools? Brooke stated that a homeschool student is unenrolled from school rosters, and it does impact our average daily membership.
3. Someone asked if we should consider more remote learning so that we don't lose more kids to homeschooling and further impact the budget.
4. Brooke noted that a homeschool plan should be submitted if possible to the AOE by August 1, 2020. She later corrected this statement as homeschooling applications are accepted on a rolling basis.
5. Our Task Force Committees are working with teachers to develop remote learning skills should we have to return to this. We are building the opening school plans while simultaneously working on a Remote platform. Casey noted that we spent the in-service days in June to reflect on the remote learning we were thrust into from an emergent status and we identified the work we need to do to move forward.

Julie Finnegan made a motion to support the recommended draft reopening plans as presented by Administration for full reopening Pre-k-Grade 8, and 9-12 Alternate days as outlined by Administration, This was seconded by Peter Stone. Further discussion ensued. Those in favor of motion to support reopening plans were Tara Buxton, Julie Finnegan, Peter Stone, Glen Cousineau, John Wurzbacher, Rick Wilson, Toni Lobdell, Josh Hardt, Mike Bache and Pati Beaumont. Those opposed were Angie Charron, Tanya Tolchin, Becky Spears & Rebeckah St. Peter. Motion Carried.

Other Business: Kris Benway spoke and shared that for the second year in a row we were awarded a \$20,000.00 grant from the United Way to continue our Snack Pack program.

Feedback on Budget Flyer Needed: Brooke was seeking feedback on the flyer so that it could go to the printer on the morning of 7/21/2020. Discussion ensued, Brooke made some of the recommended changes.

Glen Cousineau asked if there had been any determinations yet about fall sports, there has not been per Brooke, it was expected last week and now we are told it may not be available from the AOE for another week.

Retirement Incentive Plan #2: Board members received a new Retirement Incentive Plan in their Board packets for staff to consider that might have compromised health systems and who are worried about returning to the job given the Covid situation. This was developed as some staff were asking for exemptions to teach remotely. Unfortunately this is not an available option now. The job is to provide in person instruction. Brooke noted if these folks were all to take sick leave the costs for long term subs if there were even available can be astronomical. Thus the offer of this one time plan. It is not precedent setting. As it is only being offered due to the Covid Pandemic. Peter Stone made a motion to approve the early retirement plan as presented (2 options); this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Discussion ensued. John asked why not just utilize the original Retirement Plan that we would have to look at whether those positions would need to be refilled at this time. Those in agreement with motion Tara Buxton, Josh Hardt, Peter Stone, Glen Cousineau, Toni Lobdell, Julie Finnegan, Tanya Tolchin, Angela Charron, Rick Wilson, Rebeckah St. Peter. Opposed: Mike Bache, John Wurzbacher, Becky Spears and Pati Beaumont. Motion carried.

Executive Session - If Needed: None required.

Agenda Building: Update on Reopening Plans, Budget Vote

Adjournment: Julie Finnegan made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m, this was seconded by peter Stone.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - August 10, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.
Finance Committee Meeting - August 10, 2020 - 5:30 p.m.