

SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
Regular Meeting
August 10, 2020 - 6:30 p.m.
Fair Haven Union High School

Participation will be in person or virtually by going to:
meet.google.com/byx-rraf-eyy or by calling (US) +1 315-754-3575 PIN: 593 950 213#

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: Deb Infurna, Amy Roy, Patrick Walters, Phil Hall, Bonnie Lenihan, Kate Leathe, Rebecca Armitage, Margaret Hayward, Russell Young, Jessica Thursdton, Sarah Winter, Michelle Eagan, Lynn Stack, Alexandra Foley Bowen, Katie Crowley, Raegan Colburn, Molly Clarke, Donna Fabricius, Jen Clement, Amy Jackson, Kim Ransom, Lindsay Zeitler, Beth Robertson, Abigail Ward, #802-*64, #518-*62, #410-*62,

Pledge of Allegiance: Tim Smith, Board Chair led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Call to Order - 6:30 p.m.: Tim Smith called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

Approval of Agenda: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the agenda with one addition- Substitute Rate of Pay, this was seconded by Mike Bache. Motion carried by the full Board.

Approval of SVUUSD Minutes - July 20, 2020: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the July 20, 2020 meeting minutes with no changes: this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Motion was carried by the full Board.

Public Comment: None

Correspondence: None

Committee Reports:

- **Policy Committee**

Warn A25 - Delegation of Authority During State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Pandemic- Warn: Brooke recommended that we Warn Policy A25 so as not to have to write and adopt a number of policies around COVID 19. Pati Beaumont made motion to Warn Policy A25 tonight; this was seconded by Toni Lobdell; Discussion happened, there was clarification that this was only due to emergency situations created by COVID-19 and did not open this up to all emergencies. Motion Carried by the Full Board.

Hubbardton Board Seat: There have been a couple of vacancies on the board for Hubbardton representation. A Hubbardton Community member, Christine Pouliot submitted a letter of interest in being appointed to the Board for the remainder of the term to March 2021. Mike Bache made a motion to appoint Christine Pouliot to the vacant Hubbardton Board seat, this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Motion was carried by the full Board. Board members welcome Christine and she can take a seat at the next board meeting.

Master Agreement: Pati Beaumont was Chairwoman of the Teacher Negotiating Contract. She thanked all participants for their hard work on this two-year agreement. Major findings/changes included a 2.25% on new money year #1, year #2 to be negotiated. Health Insurance will remain the same through 12/31/2020 and starting January 1, 2021 based on the benefit negotiated at the state level; there was a decrease in teacher days from 188 to 186, with 180 days being student days and 6 being in-service days for teachers. Discussion ensued, someone asked how much does a 2.25% increase relate to in the budget. Cheryl replied approximately \$192,242.00.

New Hires/Resignations/Retirement:

2020-2021 School Year Letter of Intent: Peter Stone made a motion to approve the letter of intent and accept the resignation or voiding of the following: Julie Finnegan seconded the motion; Motion was carried by the full Board.

- Wendy Foran - Special Education -\$64,210
- VOID Steven Sommovigo - Special Education - \$53,391

2020-2021 School Year Retirements/Resignations: Peter Stone made a motion to accept the retirement and resignations as listed; this was seconded by Glen Cousineau. Motion was carried by the full Board.

- Shaun Ketcham - Science - Retiring 6/30/21
- Merrill Fenton - Music- Resigning 6/30/2020

Reopening of Schools Update: Brooke started the meeting by explaining some of the work being completed by the Administrative Leadership Team. She noted that we have been waiting for updated guidance from the AOE since August 1st and it still has not come. We expect that guidance will change the social distancing requirements for Grades K-5 from 6ft social distancing to between 3-6 feet. We are moving forward with our plans for reopening and are still using the 6 ft guidance. We are expecting

changes with regard to facial coverings and what will be accepted. We are waiting for the broadening questions from AOE for morning screening checks. These will, once finalized, be put on to cards for families to answer daily. Brooke noted that teachers started back into the building for their two floating days to start setting up and reorganizing their classrooms. We received the Engineers ventilation report. The report indicates we are well within the acceptable parameters in all of our buildings. We are also working on each of the isolation rooms created in each of the nurses offices and the corresponding ventilation room for each. It will be tight but hope to have each up and running by September 8, 2020 for the opening day of schools. We are working with families that have submitted medical exemptions for their students to create a remote option for these documented cases. We have hired long term subs for the month of September to cover any leave time for staff. We do not want to have subs traveling from building to building so we had each school hire specific staff.

Tanya-looking and hoping for options. She is not interested in homeschooling but has done some investigations of VT VTDLC. She stated that perhaps the cost would go down if more express interest over the next few weeks.

The decision is too stark and rigid. We need to have more options vs 5 days per week, in person. She wants to stay on "team school" while still advocating for another option.

Angela - Are there other schools that are doing only 5 days, in-person?

Brooke - Yes

Patti - Rutland City has in school and a remote option.

Brooke noted there would likely not be a hard and fast number until the first days of school of parents that would like to homeschool.

John W - If we can provide a remote option for a medical reason, why can't we do it across the boards.

Brooke - it's a capacity issue...staff would have to teach remote and in-person simultaneously; there are some great inequities that are emerging. It is an extremely heavy lift for teachers and will dilute the in person and remote experience. Also, the remote option would be synchronous and require adult support at home.

Angela Charron spoke to express the desire to have remote learning options. She has many questions that she still needs answers too. This person was advocating for additional options including sending students only a few days per week. Pati Beaumont shared that the reason her district looked at services only a few days a week, at alternate days was to make classrooms have less kids, not that it was recommended for any other reason, but was to achieve needed space in the classroom. Only allows them to educate students ½ of the time.

Brooke shared that the remote learning that was completed in the spring was based on an emergency situation; we were thrust into this and it was the best we could do for our students at that moment, it is not the standard we want to replicate. Brooke shared the belief that it is in students' best interest to receive direct instruction in person 5 days per week for the K-5 level. While we will be working to increase the skills of staff and students on the platforms needed should we go into remote learning again it is an incredibly hard lift for our teachers to do full time direct instruction and also remote learning at the same time. Remote learning creates huge inequities for students whose parents are working. Remote learning will not look like it did in the spring and the expectations for online or remote learning is significantly greater and creates additional responsibilities for families to support the implementation of.

Casey spoke to the changes that the teachers are making with regard to the modalities and how in-person teaching needs to also change to be delivered in this way. The teachers have been working hard and this is a huge task. It takes a different mindset to create these experiences, in a socially distant way, in person and remotely. Robust, remote learning experiences cannot just be created on the fly. Those with medical exemptions will have synchronous learning experiences that will require a great deal of external support from the home.

Becky Spears - expressed concern over the screening questions and process and the impact that it has on regular school attendance of the students. How do we keep them on par and on track with their learning? The administrators acknowledge that there is an increase expected in the absences of both students and teachers. Brooke responded that we are waiting for more guidance on attendance, truancy, etc.

Peter Stone said that he has spoken with a number of kids of many ages and kids want to be back in school 5 days a week. He was interrupted by someone and asked that he be allowed to finish his statement. He spoke about the majority of families that he has spoken to and they also want their children back in school.

Josh Hardt spoke about this being a super difficult conversation. He said he understood how emotional this decision was. He noted that there are risks around all the time. He said he understood Brooke saying that this was an incredibly heavy lift for educators to do both in person and remote learning as an educator. Josh - the public school cannot adhere to every parent's personal situation. He thanked Angela for taking the risk and sharing her needs. He did express the concern about having to return to a remote situation that is directed, for situations out of our control. He expressed concern over the future of public education. He is encouraged by hearing of those teachers that are working to break the mold. Josh encourages the school district to explore now with families, what worked and did not work so that things could be more successful than in the spring.

Rebeckah St. Peter said she is very much looking forward to the return to school; her kids need to be there.

John Wurzbacher from the audience asked about if homeschool numbers would hurt our budget cycle going forward. Brooke said we are still unsure how many are homeschooling as each day Principals are contacted by families and changing their mind once they realize what homeschooling entails. She also noted that the legislature may be looking at holding schools harmless with regard to homeschooling as it is caused by the Covid Pandemic. The question was asked if homeschoolers can change their minds after a few weeks if they see that schools are having success. Yes, they can re-enroll at any time.

Deb Infurna, Principal of FHGS got up and spoke about a trial run last week with the running of a Humanities camp at FHGS where approximately 14 students attended. On the first day students were polled about how anxious/nervous they were. Most said on a scale they were feeling very nervous at two. By the end of the week students and staff scored themselves much more comfortable and at a 7-9. They adjusted to wearing the masks and were happy to be having fun and working in groups on projects following all the social guidelines. Deb said they are starting a second camp this week and expected similar results. She mentioned as Casey and Brooke did how hard teachers are working this summer to complete mindful planning even during their summer vacation time to figure out ways to engage kids while adhering to all the safety guidance. She mentioned that Administrators are always weighing safety concerns. She is less worried about COVID-19 and has fielded less calls that she did from parents that worried about their children being online and unsupervised or showing significant signs of depression refusing to leave their rooms this summer because they are depressed about not seeing their families. Deb mentioned that we are equally concerned about the Social Emotional needs of our students and believes wholeheartedly that children are better served in school full time. Many do not have the necessary support at home due to working parents.

Amy Roy, Principal of BVS, also spoke about the outstanding work being completed by her teacher's and the collaboration they have been doing. She talked about the creative ways they are planning outdoor classrooms. She spoke of an Art teacher that came in and set up 58 individual Art packets today so students do not share materials. Amy also articulated that teachers were working so hard to ensure the student's safe return. They are so excited to see their students. Amy mentioned that she has kids driving into the parking lot to show off their new masks. Parents are expressing thanks that their kids will get to return to school. She recalled similar conversations supporting parents that were

worried about how detached their children were seeming. She has teacher's thinking about how to show expression and excitement with their eyes as kids can't necessarily see it through staff's masks. Amy sees Covid as providing us with an opportunity to change Education in our buildings. After 23 years of teaching and 3 years in Administration she is excited about the work her staff is doing to think about how to engage students in their learning as we return.

Phil Hall, Principal of FHUHS got up and spoke about the fact that every decision Administrators are making is based on the scientific data and recommendations of the expert medical personnel. We are going to extreme measures to ensure that all kids are safe, even creating elaborate schedules for locker and bathroom visits safely where students do not come in contact with others. He could give over 300 examples of the minute details and planning being done to work on safety concerns. He also noted that every student that is granted a medical exemption requires additional planning time beyond the classroom work for all those getting in person learning. He noted that if remote was an option for all students in addition to in person that most certainly the quality of that education would suffer for all as it is challenging to provide both. He said that he is quite sure that is why many schools around us are going right to remote as they know you can't do both well. He wanted people to know that we are all working doubly hard to follow all the guidance and still create positive learning experiences for all.

Tanya Tolchin asked if there was another solution? She wondered if there were still classrooms where social distancing was challenging and having remote options might help that. She also wondered for those deciding to homeschool whether or not schools could send weekly emails to those families to tell them what is happening in school to keep them informed. She thought it might encourage them to come back to school.

Peter - some folks in Orwell have gathered to build and create outdoor spaces that are safe and shaded for students to be able to work outside.

Tim Smith thanked all Administrators and teachers for the hard work they are doing to ensure the successful opening of our schools and also understands that there are a lot of emotions tied to these individual family decisions.

FY21 Calendar: Brooke mentioned that we had to prepare a new school calendar since the Governor announced that schools will not open until 9/8/2020. Peter Stone made a motion to approve the amended calendar. Julie Finnegan seconded the motion. Motion carried by the full Board.

FY21 Meal Prices: Julie Finnegan made a motion to approve the recommended meal prices as listed in Cheryl's notice to the Board. Breakfast for Elementary Students at a rate of \$1.70, and a rate of \$1.95 for HS student Breakfast. Adult breakfast \$2.85. Lunch rate for students is \$3.00 and Adult lunches are \$4.10. Milk is listed as \$.60. Even though we have Provision 2 which provides for one free breakfast and lunch, Cheryl said we need to establish meal prices for adults and for students that would want to potentially purchase another (second) meal. Peter Stone seconded the motion. Motion carried by the full Board.

Warrants:

- Total Payments in the amount of \$2,594,892.89: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the payments as listed; this was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion carried by the full Board. Glen had several questions about the payments:
 1. He had a question about the GMP invoice for the OVS town Hall.
 - a. Cheryl followed up with a response and explained that the warrant report pulls the last line description from checks that include payments for multiple invoices. Since OVS is the last of our schools alphabetically, the invoice description for OVS appears on the warrant report.
 2. He had a question about the lawn mowing bill for Orwell.
 - a. Cheryl followed up with a response and explained that the warrant report pulls the last line description from checks that include payments for multiple invoices.

Since OVS is the last of our schools alphabetically, the invoice description for OVS appears on the warrant report.

3. He had a question about a check in July to Black River Design.
 - a. The invoice is for engineering services to remodel ventilation in the nurses' offices and isolation rooms throughout the district. This expenditure will be charged to COVID Relief Funds that will be available to the school district.
 4. He had a question about the payment to VEHI.
 - a. Cheryl confirmed that the July invoice for the cost of the full premium for all employees enrolled in health insurance is \$566,683.10.
 - b. This reflects more than a \$6 million cost for health insurance for the district.
- Food Service bills in the amount of \$35,973.29: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the Food Service Bills as listed; this was seconded by Julie Finnegan; Motion was carried by the full Board.
 - Grants in the amount of \$25,524.85: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the Food Service Bills as listed; this was seconded by Peter Stone; Motion was carried by the full Board

Other Business: Brooke sent out a recommendation for Substitute Pay for the upcoming year to move to an hourly rate as opposed to \$100 per day. The proposal includes an hourly rate of \$15 per hour with a minimum of 3 hours. So for a 6 hour day this equates to \$90.00 per day. Rick Wilson brought up that it was hard to get subs and wondered if such a reduction would make it more difficult. Cheryl said it is not a reduction in pay as the school day was reduced by an hour and a half each day. Peter Stone made a motion to approve the hourly rate for substitutes and Julie Finnegan seconded the motion. Motion carried by the full Board.

Tim Smith reminded people of the Budget Vote tomorrow and asked all to participate. He noted that we appreciate your support. Tim next mentioned that he is anxious for the Guidance on School Sports to be released. Brooke noted that we will need to make some decisions in particular on Middle School sports as these teams are typically a mixture of school teams.

Executive Session - if Needed: Brooke shared that an Executive session was needed for a Personnel issue and Board members were sent a separate google meet invite for this. She said no action was expected to be taken. Peter Stone made a motion to go into Executive Session for Personnel, this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Julie Finnegan made a motion to come out of Executive Session at 8:33 p.m. with no action taken, this was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried by the full Board.

Agenda Building: To be determined based on Guidance received from the AOE and the Budget Vote results.

Adjournment: Julie Finnegan made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m., this was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - August 24, 2020 - 6:30 p.m. - FHUHS
SV Building & Grounds and Policy Committee Meetings - August 24, 2020 - 5:30 p.m. - FHUHS