

**SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**September 14, 2020**  
**Fair Haven Union High School**  
**6:30 p.m.**

**PARTICIPATION WILL BE IN PERSON OR VIRTUALLY CONNECT BY GOING TO:**  
**meet.google.com/sed-pvzz-bsy**

**Or by calling (US)+1 317-961-0599 PIN: 177 396 689#**

**Unapproved Minutes:**

Name	Role/Term	Town Representing	In Attendance
Pati Beaumont	Board Member	Benson	X
Rebeckah St. Peter	Board Member	Benson	X-Virtual
Becky Spears	Board Member	Benson	X-Virtual
Toni Lobdell	Board Member	Castleton	X
Tim Smith	Board Chair	Castleton	X
Julie Finnegan	Board Member	Castleton	X
Christin Pouilliot	Board Member	Hubbardton	X
Joshua Hardt	Board Member	Hubbardton	X
Vacant	Board Member	Hubbardton	-
Tanya Tolchin	Board Member	West Haven	X - Virtual
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:** Kim Alexander, Ali Morgan, Phil Hall, Deb Infurna, Kate Leathe, Margaret Hayward, Theresa Nolan, Ann Pierce, Craig Pettis, Amy Roy,

**Pledge of Allegiance:** Tim Smith led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Call to Order-6:30 p.m.:** Tim Smith called the meeting to order at 6:43 p.m.

**Approval of Agenda:** Julie Finnegan made a motion to approve the agenda; Peter Stone seconded the motion. Motion Carried.

**Approval of SVUUSD Minutes - August 24, 2020:** Toni Lobdell made a motion to approve the minutes of August 24, 2020 with no changes; this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Motion carried by the full Board.

**Public Comments:** Virtually Craig Pettus joined the meeting to ask how the Athletic Committee was formed, and specifically about how his daughter could access sports from her Stafford placement. He also thanked Principal Hall for the letter he sent out regarding communication and how they are trying to resolve the Stafford busing troubles. Ali Morgan the Athletic Director answered some of the questions Mr. Pettis had.

**Correspondence:** None

**Committee Reports:**

- Finance Committee: Glen Cousineau gave a debrief on the Finance Committee meeting. He shared that Cheryl handed out three summaries on the End of the Year status. She also handed out an FY 22 Budget Timeline. She gave suggestions about adding monies to a reserve fund. She reviewed Covid funds that are available to apply for there are 3 different pots of monies. Brooke also said that originally the Legislature had spoken about working on a bill to hold districts harmless due to all of the students statewide that had chosen homeschool due to fears of the Pandemic. We have not had any recent updates on this. If they don't come up with something that would be detrimental to many districts in the state as ADM would be significantly impacted. Chris Cole also spoke about an increased water bill for FHUHS which was due to a water leak on the property behind the school which has since been fixed.
- Warrants: Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the total bills in the amount of \$1,712,312.38; this was seconded by Julie Finnegan. The motion carried. Glen Cousineau made a motion to pay the food service bills in the amount of \$40,160.38. This was seconded by Julie Finnegan. Motion was carried by the full Board. Glen Cousineau made a motion to approve the Grants in the amount of \$10,899.43. This was seconded by Toni Lobdell. Motion carried by the full Board.

**Athletic Update:** Ali Morgan, Athletic Director of FHUHS and Kim Alexander, Athletic Director K-8 at all the other schools came to give a sports update. Membership is down on most teams. Not allowed yet to hold games. Some teams are practicing. They have enough to field a track team and some soccer players. Ali Morgan handed out an Athletic handbook that identifies procedures and protocols for attending sports events and it describes screening procedures for players and spectators. Kim Alexander spoke about the players at the grade 7 & 8 level. She announced that tomorrow was the last day to register for fall sports and she was hoping for a few more participants. Kim mentioned that she felt lucky that Terry Perry was hired to go to each of the five schools to check students in with the Covid Protocols and to host training sessions with however many participants there were. Discussion ensued about limited attendees at home sporting events. Each player will be given two tickets. There is a maximum of 150 spectators at any event with the expectation of masks and social distancing. Each player will be given two tickets and beyond that tickets will be sold to reach a maximum of 150 attendees on a first come first serve basis. There was also discussion that if we successfully moved into Phase III that we could start holding actual games. Though Ali and Kim warned that many districts in VT are not fielding teams at all.

**Update on Reopening of Schools:** Brooke Olsen Farrell provided an update on the successful re-opening of schools. All Principals shared that it was a very smooth opening, and that all students, parents and staff reported being very thankful to be in school. Students were all adapting well to wearing masks. We are utilizing outdoor classrooms as new teaching environments. Each day the School Administration shave time off some required for the drop off and departure safety protocols and check ins. These protocols require many more staff to get all students checked in. We supply aides on all of the buses and this has helped immensely, not only with Covid duties but also there has been an overall decrease in any bus behavioral issues on buses. Students have overwhelmingly said how happy they are to be back. They have expressed that in-person learning is so much better than remote learning. There was further discussion about if we move into Phase III would we be considering

reopening the high school full time. Brooke said that yes, she and Phil Hall, Principal had been speaking about this, though she cautioned it would not happen for a couple of weeks into Phase III, minimally 14 days to be sure our status was staying the same. Tim Smith said how proud he was of our teachers, students, families and Administrators for being brave enough and for all the thoughtful planning that went into making this reopening happen.

**Communication with Community:** Brooke and Tim discuss ways that we can continue to increase community outreach and how we can work on keeping all in the community informed and engaged. A newsletter and reaching people through social media came up as a couple of suggestions to try. Also we discussed collecting email addresses to be able to send smaller email to community members that don't necessarily have kids in school to keep them informed on a more regular basis. They discussed restarting the community partner meetings. They asked other Board members to be thinking about ways to engage more people. The goal would be to answer the question of how do we stay in touch and communicate the mission and vision we have for our students to the larger community, and not just reach out at Budget times. Brooke and Tim were wondering if we should schedule the second board meeting of the month with a School gathering with the Principal's meeting with their community members, and not have Central Office staff there as this was a successful model for the previous community forums. Some of these could be held virtually at this point.

**Articles of Agreement:** As we are planning for the FY22 Budget we must start to think about the current Articles of Agreement and how we have limited options with these in place. Discussion ensued about whether or not this was time to begin a campaign to amend these to close a school or not. Given the fact we are just coming off two failed budgets there was a sentiment that this may not be the best time. We don't also want to consolidate more buildings as we are in the middle of the Pandemic and we need more social distancing as this pandemic and restrictions in place may be with us for the next year to year and a half. This will need to be discussed in greater detail at the Board Retreat.

**Board Retreat:** The Board Retreat needs to be scheduled and we need to get a facilitator that can join us and help us to understand the roles and responsibility of Board members as we have many new members that have never attended this class. Beyond that we need to discuss the direction we would like Slate Valley school district to be moving in, perhaps a five year plan. It was decided to hold this during the Board meeting slot in October, the 26th and to start at 5:30 p.m.

**Job Descriptions:** Julie Finnegan made a motion to approve the job descriptions for the positions of Student Services Coach and Social Emotional Interventionist. This was seconded by Glen Cousineau. Both of these positions are Grant funded per Brooke and Casey. Motion carried by the full Board.

## **Central Office Report:**

### Superintendent's Report

The first day of school has come and gone, overall it was a success! We really do have amazing staff, students and families in SV! There are protocols such as screening that we are attempting to streamline to the greatest extent possible and we are fully expecting this to smooth out in the coming days.

We are still struggling with some staff openings. We are looking for a High School Science Teacher and have not been able to find anyone to fill the position. In addition, we are short bus drivers. Currently one of our staff members is transporting the students that go to Stafford back to the school in the afternoons.

If everything goes well with the PreK-12 reopening across the state we expect to be told from the Agency of Education that we can move to Stage III Guidelines under the reopening plan. This would mean a loosening of some of the requirements placed on schools such as:

- Athletics- We would be allowed to play games across districts.
- Gyms and cafeterias can open for intended uses.
- We may consider not having bus monitors especially on the afternoon runs.

As we look towards the budgeting process for FY22 we are waiting for the legislature to take action on some items in order to determine our path forward. The legislature is considering ADM protection for

school districts this year for students that were lost to Home Study. This is an effort to allow districts to have a stable budgetary process in FY22.

The legislature is also considering lowering the number of required student days for school districts this year from 175 to 170. This would not have a significant impact on Slate Valley if everything else largely remains status quo in terms of our COVID plan.

#### Director of Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment

Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) is collaborating with Northeastern University to develop expertise in Experiential Learning (ExL), to later examine how the pedagogy manifests student motivation and engagement in learning. In pursuit of SVUUSD's vision where "All students are engaged in rigorous, authentic, experiential, individualized learning that is supported or accelerated to ensure that they meet or exceed standards", twenty-six educators have participated in one of Northeastern University professor Kelly Conn's self-paced ExL certificate program since the summer of 2019.

Northeastern University's Graduate School of Education is supporting SVUUSD's capacity to build a model for experiential teaching and learning PreK-12. Slate Valley's model for professional learning includes our Instructional Vision Team (INVITE) participating in coursework and sharing their learning through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs).

To build teacher capacity at each grade level/content area Slate Valley's Instructional Vision Team (INVITE) participated in Northeastern University's EDU 6004 *Leading Experiential Teaching and Learning* during the summer of 2020. This is the 4th module of a self-paced ExL certificate offered by Northeastern. As part of this summer experience, twenty-one educators attend Northeastern University's NExT Virtual Summer Bash as part of EDU 6004.

Educators created and shared artifacts during a "hackathon", as part of Northeastern University's EDU 6004, with building and district administrators on August 18th. The "hackathon" provided INVITE members with an opportunity to gain feedback on their experiential learning plans before the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

#### Director of Operations

During the last several weeks maintenance staff have been busy assisting staff as they worked to put together their classroom spaces as we prepared for our school reopening. We've also successfully filled a few part-time custodial positions to be able to regularly clean high touch surfaces and other public areas during the day. Additionally, prior to our reopening on September 8th all the work required to have operational isolation rooms in each of our school's nursing offices was completed. These spaces have their own dedicated HVAC systems to provide space to isolate members of our school students and staff should the need arise.

In the realm of technology, I am happy to announce that the district tech department was the recipient of this year's Slate Valley Special Services Award. This marks the second consecutive year the Operation's Department has been the recipient of this award as last year our maintenance staff was the recipient of the Special Services Award. The tech staff has nearly completed the distribution of student Chromebooks. So far the overall damage rate from the spring has been considerably lower than we had initially feared so we are in a good position with regards to the number of devices we have available in spite of the shortages being encountered by many school districts nationally as Chromebooks are in high demand but overall supply remains low.

#### Director of Special Services

We were thrilled to welcome back our students this week! Everyone has been working hard to prepare our buildings and our programs for the start of school. The special education personnel have been exceptionally busy as we begin the school year. We have new IEP forms required by the state and new Individual Education Plans to write for every student on an IEP. We are tasked with offering a program based on the schools current offering (in-person for preK-8 and hybrid at the high school level) and outlining the services that we will be offering to provide the eligible student access to their educational program. We must also anticipate how the general education program may change throughout the year and design programming as contingency plans if we are forced to change our current educational model. For example, at the high school level we are currently using a hybrid model so we have to design an IEP program that will allow kids access to access hybrid learning and also deliver any specialized instruction. We must also anticipate the needs and design IEP programming to reflect a possible future change to a fully in-person model as well as a possible change to a fully remote model.

The process of discussing, designing and making these determinations involves many staff, professionals and parents working together and it puts heavy reliance on the special services providers.

Thanks to all that have been dedicating great time and effort to these goals.

Our Universal Preschool Programs will begin the regular sessions the week of the 14th. UPK staff have been meeting individually with families and orienting them to the buildings and programs this week. They have also been supporting the transition of all students into school and the new routines, but especially those entering kindergarten.

Students and adults are adjusting to the new routines and requirements remarkably well! There is a learning curve for all of us but I am amazed by the flexibility of everyone and willingness to support one another.

#### Director of Finance

On June 30th we completed our first year as a fully merged school district and our first year on eFinancePlus. In 2018 Vermont School Finance legislation was passed that required all school districts in the State of Vermont to adopt the Shared School District Data Management System by implementing eFinancePlus. The eFinancePlus software was selected by the state through a competitive bid process. The software provides many benefits for the Agency of Education at the state level, however school districts have found that it has many shortcomings that require a significant amount of time and effort to deal with on a regular basis. That being said, Slate Valley is one of a handful of districts that has successfully implemented the system. The Business Office is glad to be through the first year on the system as we continue to look at ways to improve our processes districtwide. I wish to recognize and applaud the Business Office for all their hard work. It has been a team effort and I am grateful to have such a dedicated team to work with each and every day.

On July 1st the district implemented electronic timesheets using FrontLine Time and Attendance. The district already uses FrontLine for Absence Management to track employee leave and for substitute calling. Over the summer all calendar year full time employees began using electronic timesheets and in September we added all school year staff. The system offers a number of different options for employees to enter their time and allows timesheets to be approved electronically. We are still working out some of the kinks and are looking forward to seeing efficiencies in our operations.

#### **Other Business:**

- Contracts: Peter Stone made a motion to offer the following contracts:
- Jason Rasco as a Social Emotional Interventionist for Orwell - \$59,640 (prorated based on an annual salary of \$64,122).
- Kevin McCarthy - Science Teacher for FHUHS - \$43,773 (prorated based on annual salary of \$47,613). Toni Lobdell seconded the motion. Motion carried by the full Board,
- Update on Bus Contract- We were not able to get the 10 new buses for this year as the manufacturing plants had been shut down due to COVID. We are going to exist under the pricing for last year's contract plus CPI due to the inability of the bus company to implement the new contract requirements due to COVID.

**Executive Session - If Needed:** Not Needed

#### **Agenda Building:**

1. Title IX
2. Re-opening Updates/Covid Responses
3. Board Retreat - October 26, 2020
4. Policy Committee Updates

**Adjournment:** Julie Finnegan made a motion to adjourn at 8:17 p.m., this was seconded by Peter Stone. Motion carried.

SVUUSD Board Meeting - September 28, 2020 - 6:30 - FHUHS  
SV Policy and Building & Grounds Committee Mtgs. - September 28, 2020 - 5:30 p.m. - FHUHS