

**MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)
MEETING MINUTES
FRANKLIN SCHOOL LIBRARY
August 20, 2019
6:30 PM**

Present: Board members: Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Vice Chair, Don Collins (Swanton), Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Steve Scott (Highgate), Jen Chevalier (Highgate), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Eric Beauregard, (Franklin), Peter Magnant (Franklin) Absent from the Meeting: Meaghan Conley, Board Clerk (Swanton)

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Joyce Hakey, Principal of Franklin, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Justina Jennett, Assistant Principal of Swanton, Jay Hartman, Principal of MVU, Dan Palmer, Principal of MVU, Lt. Commanding Officer David Kachajian, Officer Kevin Cleary and Officer Dean Scott from Swanton Police Department, Community Members: Jim Sullivan, Kim Gates-Maynard, David Bennion, Brooks Sturtevant, Yvon Dandurand, Channel 15/16 Cameraperson and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Agenda Amendments- Chris Shepard stated that they would have the school tour at the end of the board meeting instead of the beginning.

Correspondence and Public Comments

None

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: *Steve Scott moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve the August 6, 2019 meeting minutes. Peter Magnant suggested several revisions. The board approved the revised board minutes on a 7-0-1 vote. Terri O'Shea abstained from the vote.*

Presentation

SRO (School Resource Officer) Presentation

Julie Regimbal introduced Lt. David Kachajian, the commanding officer of the SRO Program. He thanked the school board for the opportunity to present regarding the SRO Program. He would like to propose one School Resource Officer to cover

the Highgate, Swanton and Franklin Elementary Schools. He would like the schools and the students to have as much coverage and exposure as possible. He introduced Officer Cleary who has been the SRO at MVU for over 10 years. Officer Cleary explained that the mission is to protect the school and student community and prevent threats that may present themselves. He stated that policing is not what they do but instead they try to get ahead of the issues, via collaborating with the staff and administration to prevent escalation of behavior and violence. The SRO builds trusting relationships with students and hope to improve the climate so that it becomes a calm learning environment. They introduced Officer Dean Scott who recently graduated from school to become a School Resource Officer. He has 16-17 years of experience, has 20 years of EMS experience and would like to work with the little kids. Julie Regimbal asked what the timeline is? There has been a legal challenge on the funding and so it could be another two months before the grant opens up again and then will still have to wait for the grant process and for it to be awarded. It may be January or so before we can move forward. It is at the discretion of the schools when they want to start the SRO. The officer will be dedicated to all three elementary schools. *The officers left at 7:15pm.*

SRO (School Resource Officer) Grant Opportunity Discussion with Principals

Dena St. Amour stated that last year, they called Swanton Police Dept. several times to come to the school. She stated that the police did all the right things, and they were wonderful. She thinks that having an SRO in Swanton would be advantageous for the police officer/student relationship, for students to be familiar with the presence of a police officer and the colleague-ship with students, teachers and the police would be good. Dan Palmer stated that having the SRO at MVU has been beneficial. When you have the partnership with the SRO, students and the staff, it is great. The students go to Officer Cleary about other concerns about other kids because they have built a relationship with the SRO. Justina Jennett hopes that the SRO will participate in their safety plan meetings and help with other drills/evacuation procedures. Joyce Hakey felt that having an SRO in the building is proactive instead of reactive. It sometimes takes a long time to get response from the police, and it will be nice to have a shared resource. Building a relationship with a police officer is valuable. Board members asked if the officer coordinates with guidance counselors so that they can step in as well? Dan responded that the SRO at MVU coordinates and communicates with guidance counselors, teachers and administration. Joyce foresees that the SRO will be on each of the teams. Dan added that the SRO is involved with ALIS evacuation drills as a normal part of the job description. Don Collins stated if this moves forward,

he wants to hear what they SRO Officer traditionally does and to make sure it is in the job description. Julie Regimbal said they will look carefully at the job description and bring it to the board. She added that the SRO is a full-time position for four years including salary and benefits. The first three years are fully funded by the grant and in the fourth year, as a condition of the grant, the school will be obligated to fund it. The administrative team will work closely with the department on what would be the best way to share the SRO. Dena added that the colleagues work well together and sharing will not be an issue. Joyce felt that for safety purposes, it is best if not everyone knows exactly where the SRO is located in a shared model. Devin Bachelder stated that he would like a cost estimate before making a decision on the SRO. Chris asked if the board would allow the police department to move forward with the grant when it becomes open again.

Action: Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to authorize the Swanton Police Department to move forward with the grant application process. They added a friendly amendment to move forward with the grant application and report back to the board with SRO details about his/her job description and the cost of the program. The motion was approved on an 8-0 vote.

Franklin School Presentation

Joyce Hakey showed a video presentation to help everyone to get to know the school. She has pictures from Back to School Night to the end of the school year revisiting the memories from last year. She explained that Franklin is a community school and how much the community does for the school.

Policy for Adoption

Julie Regimbal explained that she put out a survey response on the C20 Student and Discipline Policy. Every school has student discipline procedures in each of their buildings. Julie said that going forward, all the policies will be reviewed by the administration leadership prior to going to the board. This policy is included in all the student handbooks and so she felt it was important to get this adopted prior to the start of school.

Action: Don Collins moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard to approve the C20 Student Conduct and Discipline Policy. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

VSBIT Unemployment Insurance Documents

Lora McAllister handed out information on VSBIT Unemployment Insurance vs our current straight reimbursable model costs. Based on historical gross wage and

unemployment claim information, VSBIT assigned MVSD a 6/6 rating. Lora was able to negotiate that down to a .88% rate instead of 1.06% as was quoted.

Unfortunately, this rating was higher than anticipated and the annual costs would be approximately \$5,000 more than was paid in FY19 and \$2,000 more than was paid in FY18. Lora shared the advantages of belonging to VSBIT and purchasing insurance over a straight reimbursable model. She explained that VSBIT supports the school district legally and administratively with these associated processes and potential claims. They will help dispute unemployment claims and have a high success rate winning these disputes. It is hard to budget for an unknown amount of claims with the current model. The pooling with other school districts is attractive, their success rate in combating claims and limiting our exposure are good reasons to move forward with VSBIT. The board wondered if it would come in less for next year? Lora said that she believes the rate is set at this same rate for next year but she would follow up. There is a premium to pay for predictability.

Action: Don Collins moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea moved to go forward with VSBIT for unemployment insurance. The board voted down the motion on a 3-4 vote with 1 abstention by Jen Chevalier. Some board members thought they could revisit it next year as rates may go down depending on claim experience. The board asked Lora to bring another quote from VSBIT next April or May for the 2020-2021 school year.

New Business

Hiring Update

Julie Regimbal reported that they have hired Amber Fitzgerald as a Middle School Special Educator and Peter Beers as the Agri Business Mechanics Teacher. She presented two teaching contracts for the board's approval and signature.

Action: Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to authorize the board chair to sign these two teaching contracts. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Highgate Bond Project

Lora McAllister distributed a proposed Highgate Bond Project List and timeline to the board. The approved Bond has a 20 year term with Vermont Municipal Bond Bank (VMBB). Lora and Julie recently met with Scott Martin and Paul Gregoire regarding the project. Julie Regimbal, Lora and Paul Gregoire will be meeting tomorrow as part of an information gathering meeting. Scott Martin will be meeting with Tyler Mumley to get more information about the completed facility condition assessment. Chris Shepard would like Scott Martin to be included in the information gathering meeting. Lora will make sure he is in attendance. Lora is exploring financing strategies on how the district can best maximize next year's projects. Lora stated that the municipal bond bank offers winter series bonds.

Following the advice of bond counsel and the VMBB, they did not apply for summer series bonds because of the uncertainty of the merger and the impact that could have had on the borrowing approval. There is another planning meeting on Monday. She asked the board if they would authorize launching the request for proposal (RFP) for construction management or engineering services once decided upon? Don Collins thought the board should wait until the September 3rd meeting when they would have more information.

Other Business

Superintendent's Other Updates

Julie reported that the In-service Days are taking place this week. She is travelling to the different schools. Today Julie went to Highgate to see the PBIS Restorative Practices and to Franklin during their potluck. Tomorrow, there is a district wide in-service at MVU Theater for all schools. There will be a welcome back for our staff, and all board members are invited to come. The Keynote Speaker, Eric Twadell, a Superintendent from Stevenson High School in Illinois, will focus on the great work that is happening in Missisquoi Valley School District as a Professional Learning Community (PLC) focusing on Social and Emotional Learning. (SEL). SEL is most effective when it is an integral part of the school curriculum. The speaker will provide a morning and afternoon session exploring SEL competencies and develop strategies and best practices for teaching and learning.

Future Agenda Items

VSBA, Truancy Policies

The Lease for the Superintendent's Office is not ready. Julie will send a memo to extend the current lease until there is an agreement on the future lease.

Kim Gates Maynard suggested an update on the high school math and science programs and the impact on all kids. She would like to hear a report back on advanced opportunities for students.

Next Meeting Date

The board's next meeting is on September 3rd at MVU at 6:30pm.

The board left the room in the library for the Franklin School Building tour with Joyce Hakey, Principal at 8:30pm.

Anticipated Executive Session: None

Adjournment

The board returned to the library to adjourn the meeting.

*Action: Steve Scott moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to adjourn at 9:00pm.
The board approved 8-0 vote.*

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary