

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)

Remotely VIA Google Meet

September 15, 2020

6:30 PM

Present: Board members joining the meeting remotely, Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard, Highgate, Don Collins (Swanton) Scott, (Highgate), Peter Magnant (Franklin), Joanne Johnston, (Franklin), Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Jen Chevalier (Highgate), and Devin Bachelder (Franklin); *Meaghan Conly was absent from the meeting.*

Others Joining Remotely: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Jay Hartman, MVU Principal, Joyce Hakey, Franklin Principal, Yeshua Pastina, Highgate Principal, Dena St. Amour, Swanton Principal, Justina Jennett, Swanton Assistant Principal, Bonnie Moulton, Human Resources Coordinator, and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:33pm.

Agenda Review- None

Public Comments None

Correspondence None

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: Devin Bachelder moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to approve the September 1, 2020 board minutes as presented. The board approved the minutes on an 8-0 vote.

Presentations (Information)

Elementary Administrative Updates

Joyce Hakey reported that they had 20 students in their summer enrichment program which is more than they have had in the past. The professional development programs that teachers participated in over the summer was excellent and will continue to have them in order to move us forward. The all-day in-service with Sarah Ward provided the staff with such good strategies. The Kindergarten orientation held on August 21st went well. It was great to have the kids back to school. The transition activities that they had in June was successful and helped with the transition back to school. All the families of the 14 new

students visited the school prior to coming on the first day of school. The teachers had contacted all their students on a one to one basis explaining to them about masking and keeping their distance. The kids understood about the changes and why. The school staff will try to keep as many things as possible "normal" with the usual routines and traditions when possible. She commented how responsible and flexible all the kids have been. The kids have been doing well with their remote learning and feels like they have been well prepared. The opening of school went very smoothly, despite all the changes. Their local in-service went well including the review in detail of the re-opening plan, re-occupancy plan, re-opening framework and all the Strong and Healthy Start guidelines. The support from the community members was noteworthy. They received a wonderful donation from the Franklin Telephone company so that the teachers could purchase additional things for the kids that they would not ordinarily get. She thanked the students, staff and families for their incredible flexibility, cooperation, teamwork, and patience.

Dena St. Amour thanked everyone so much and was very appreciative of the time to gather with the Administration team and the support of the Central Office Team as well as the school board. The staff was glad to have extra time to set up and be ready for the kids. The staff was very excited and felt supported by the school board when they announced the air purifiers for the classroom. She thanked Lora McAllister and the Directors of Buildings and Grounds on getting them purchased and delivered so quickly. They have four very full days of professional development. They have reviewed the Re-occupancy plan, safety plan and the re-opening framework. Joelle Van Lent joined them to talk about trauma and taking care of the adults. The teachers were so glad to have the extra time to prepare for the opening of school. She thanked Justina Jennett for spending countless hours organizing the dismissal plan including a new car tag system that went beautifully and was very efficient. The non-classroom teachers are screening students when they arrive or are involved with the dismissal on top of their teaching schedule. Dena thanked them for the collegueship and camaraderie amongst the staff. Having the students return to school has been good. There is a structured recess and grids where kids have to stay and play in their "recess squares". The staff is feeling very good in the midst of this uncertainty with smaller classes and lots of support in place. Justina Jennett stated that teachers are feeling really safe with the hybrid model. We are doing well with this model. Dena thanked Kosha Patel and Jen Desorghers for all their work with the virtual academy.

Yeshua Pastina reported Highgate had Kindergarten screening, greeted all the families and walk the Kindergarteners to their classrooms. It was a great feeling having the kids

back. They also made a couple of fun videos for the community and students with the first one being a movie trailer using Bitmoji avatars to get the kids excited about coming back to school. He put them on up on You Tube with the kids calling the principal a "you tuber". The in-service days went well. The staff made great suggestions and were flexible with all the changes. Craig Aylward and he are doing temperature checks and so far, all of that has gone smoothly. They had a virtual Highgate Town Hall on September 2nd inviting all the parents to review the remote learning expectations, parent communication, hybrid model schedule, arrival and dismissal procedures, and school meals for remote day pickup. They also had over 140 parents sign up for an August parent conference done via video conference. Chris Palmer has organized trainings for the paraeducators on COVID-friendly organized games at recess. Things have gone very well for opening of school.

Terri O'Shea commented that she read all the principals' reports and they have been so positive and optimistic. Jen Chevrier thought the You Tube Videos was wonderful. She added that an MVU teacher stated that they were so thankful for the air purifiers and that they felt safer in their classroom.

New Business

HRA Addendum

Lora McAllister reported that the current HRA contract had to be updated due to COVID. There was an amendment that needed to be made to the cafeteria plan as a result of the CARES Act and joinder agreements for each school needed to be added to the Missisquoi Valley School District Cafeteria Plan/HRA contract. Although it is under one contract, it applies to all the schools.

Action: Don Collins moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to approve the addendums to the HRA District cafeteria plan authorizing the board chairperson to sign it. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Third Party Administration RFP

Julie reported that they went out to bid for a third-party administrator (TPA) company to administer the HRA and FSA, payment to health care providers for the employees' out of pocket medical expenses. The State bargained the health insurance plan for all school employees and effective January 1st, a third-party administrator will be needed to administer it. Bonnie Moulton explained that they had to have a TPA to manage the HRA, FSA, and HSA for the out of pocket medical expenses. The district has been using Healthy Dollars for the last two years to manage the plan. This year VEHI sent out an RFP and are backing a company by the name of Further to manage the accounts.

When they sent out this out to bid, they received a bid from CSOne, Health Dollars and Further. Datapath did not submit a bid. CSOne did not follow the TPA bid process so although they submitted an amount, they can not be considered. The district has been very happy with Healthy Dollars and their great customer service. Further has submitted a very competitive bid and they have a good reputation. They have been in business for 30 years and they are based out of Minnesota. They have partnered with Blue Cross/Blue Shield to upload directly into their system. Healthy Dollars has a \$6.00 per participant monthly fee whereas Further will charge up to \$2.40 per participant. Healthy Dollars has expensive set up/renewal fees totaling \$2,040, and an annual discrimination testing fee of \$1,370.00 when you add all the extra charges for each employee while Further has a non-discrimination annual fee of \$250.00. Bonnie said that Further had great references and based on their lower fees, their ability to upload directly into the system, the Human Resources team recommends transitioning to Further.

Action: Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to approve the bid from Further as the third-party administrator (TPA) for the district.

Discussion: Devin inquired if Blue Cross Blue Shield have been a part of these discussions? Bonnie said that Further is partnering with Blue Cross Blue Shield and they have been meeting with them. Bonnie said they also have good customer service. Don Collins expressed concerns about an increase of fees after one year and asked if we could enter into a three-year agreement? Bonnie responded that perhaps it is possible, but the RFP was for a one-year agreement. She also stated that she would prefer a one-year agreement to ensure we are satisfied with their service. Peter felt that if Further did do a bait and switch, our agreement is for one year and the district would have the option to re-bid it again.

Decision on Motion: The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

VSBA Regional Meeting 9/22

Julie Regimbal reported that the VSBA Regional Meeting is scheduled for September 22 will be held virtually. The business meeting begins at 5:00pm. Julie, Chris and Jen Gagne have been invited to participate on the panel portion of the meeting starting at 5:30pm. Don Collin encourages everyone to participate and would appreciate it if board members wanted to. Everyone should have received a link to participate in an email from Kerri Lamb.

VSBIT Annual Meeting 10/22

The VSBIT and VEHI annual meetings used to take place during the VSBA/VSA Conferences. As they will be held remotely, the VSBIT annual meeting will take place on October 22nd at 3:30pm. The board can name an authorized representative to vote in

their behalf. This year, the vote will be largely to accept the minutes and to participate in the meeting. Julie is willing to serve as this representative. VEHI is also holding their annual meeting on October 19th at 4pm and Julie is willing to be the authorized representative of the board for this meeting as well.

Action: Don Collins moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to appoint Julie Regimbal, Superintendent as their authorized representative. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Old Business

Free Student meal availability

Lora McAllister reported that the USDA is extending the summer food waivers. MVSD is now able to continue offering free meals to all children under 18 and at school. They need to get information out as much as possible. They are still encouraging parents to fill out the applications as this impact other programs such as Title I funds and other funding. Multiple meals can be picked up in one day Monday through Friday from 4-6pm. The children do not have to be present when picking up the meals. The school district will be reimbursed for all the meals. She thanked Jen Wright in Franklin and Tina Bushey at the Abbey about how quickly they had to get this process completed so quickly. Julie thanked Marnie and Lora for all the work completed so we can get food for kids. All of this can be subject to change if the interpretation changes.

Superintendent Job Description (Update)

Terri O'Shea reviewed the Superintendent's and the School Board members' job description for the board's review and approval.

Action: Devin Bachelder moved, seconded by Don Collins to approve the Superintendent's job description. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Action: Joanne Johnston moved, seconded by Steve Scott to approve the School Board's job description. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Don commended the committee for all their hard work. He suggested reviewing the job descriptions of the administration in Central Office. Terri suggested that they work on their mission and performance appraisal process next. Julie stated that they do have job descriptions on file for the Central Office Administration and they will review them. Terri suggested that we develop a process for onboarding new board members.

Financial Update

Lora McAllister has updated the expenditures through today. She stated that it is still a work in process. They recently received new business rules to apply to a new chart of accounts. Included in the financial report are all the Covid expenses. The Administrators and principals are working hard to get the teachers what they need and still being conservative due to the uncertainty of this year. They have encumbered the salary and benefit lines along with the known contracted services. Here is a lot of discussion around COVID related expenses related to the CARES Act on when we will receive the money. This is a difficult time to manage finances in the State of Vermont. Julie thanked Lora and the business office for their incredible work. Lora is a wonderful steward of the district's finances as the State is struggling on how to release the funds. She pays close attention to ensure that the district is in good financial standing. Lora thanked the building and grounds directors for their hard work as well. Lora reported that she attended a day long FEMA presentation only to find out that the school district may not qualify for FEMA funds.

Employee Leave Request

Julie Regimbal stated that there is a leave request in the board folder. She has allowed the employee the leave until the board could take action. She feels that it is in the best interest to allow the leave.

Action: Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Don Collins to approve the employee's leave request. The board approved on an 8-0 vote.

Tour of Agricultural Building

Peter Magnant had mentioned at a meeting that he would be interested in touring the Ag Building. Dan Palmer and Jay Hartman tried to arrange something, but Peter wanted to know if other board members were interested. Jay commented that MVU had one of the best openings for the start of school in recent memory. He commented that the Ag Building hasn't changed from last year's tour and the primary change maybe that they have younger animals. He is open to hearing what the board had in mind. Julie reminded everyone that at this time, outside of the staff and students going into the building as part of the COVID plan, they have been limiting as to who is going into the schools. Joanne asked if the board could do an outside walk through? Don Collins was looking more for presentations from the teachers and students possibly providing a virtual tour. Julie said that last year they did a tour because there was a connection of the J building to the main building as part of a huge project. Don would like to hear from students and teacher about their priorities without actually seeing the building. Peter thought it was important when they approve these projects that they look at the finished project. Terri suggested that it perhaps should be done as a community

project involvement. She thinks that the board needs to focus on what their role is and not what is a nice thing to do. Chris suggested that perhaps tours of buildings should be held until the COVID pandemic is over.

Future Meeting Dates

The next school board meeting is scheduled for October 6, 2020 at 6:30pm to be held virtually.

Adjournment

Action

Peter Magnant moved to adjourn, seconded by Joanne Johnston. Motion passed 8-0 vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary