

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)

MEETING MINUTES

SWANTON SCHOOL LIBRARY

October 15, 2019

6:30 PM

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

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Jay Hartman, Principal of MVU, Dan Palmer, Principal of MVU Middle School, Pat Hartnett, Principal of Highgate, Joyce Hakey, Principal of Franklin. Ashley Bowen and Lindsay Didia, Teachers from MVU, Community Members: Katie Rushlow from Dicks' Construction, Sharae Hodgdon, Tobias Maguire, Adam Helfrich, Channel 15/16 Cameraperson and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:40pm.

Agenda Amendments- Don Collins requested the addition of discussion of sidewalk in Swanton and School District Attendance

Correspondence and Public Comments

Adam Helfrich expressed his concerns regarding all gender bathrooms and no longer based on boy/girl bathrooms. He believes that there are security concerns with no policy in place to handle the problems. Julie Regimbal responded that there is a procedure and that the administration has been discussing this issue.

Chris Shepard read a letter from Eadoin Murphy who graduated in 2018. He expressed his concern that the MVU Guidance Department has not voluntarily recommended early college program attendance. He feels that this option should be provided to students while they are juniors so that they can make a decision on whether or not they wish to participate in their senior year. He also explained that if one does enroll, they are no longer included in the student ranking in their graduating class. He did a survey of middle and high schools students with the majority of students not in favor of the grading system of 1-4 scale. Julie Regimbal explained that the dual enrollment is part of the Pathways law and if you do not attend on campus, you are not included in the student ranking. This is an important conversation that the Admin Team and the Director of Guidance about

this practice. Julie will have MVU Guidance present the grading system and the student ranking at a future board meeting.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: Steven Scott moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to approve the October 1, 2019 meeting minutes as presented. The board approved the minutes on a 9-0 vote.

MVU National Arts Honor Society Trip

Ashley Bowen, MVU Art Teacher explained to the board that they would like bring the National Arts Honor Society students on a field trip to New York City. The purpose of a field trip is to help students expand their view and provide first-hand experience of the classroom lesson. They are planning to go during the Feb. 24-27th break. They are planning to go to Radio City Music Hall guided tour, a Broadway show, China Town, Lower Manhattan, Metropolitan Museum of Art Visit and McMa visit. They will have about 38 students from the program. The cost is \$870 per student and the student will be responsible only for their daily lunch and souvenirs. There will be fundraising so as to reduce the costs for students and to ensure that it is affordable for all students. Don Collins expressed his concern regarding a student doesn't have the money and are unable to go. Ashley explained that Lindsay Didio does a great job of fundraising and wants to make sure that every student who wants to go will be able to attend.

Action

Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Jen Chevalier to allow the National Arts Honor Society to go on a trip to New York City on February 24th to 27th 2020. The board approved the vote on a 9-0 vote.

Update from Swanton Administration

Justina Jennett reported that Swanton School has been selected by the VTPBIS Acknowledgements Review Committee to receive a VTPBIS Exemplar award for the 2018-2019 school year! This recognition is the result of a significant commitment on the part of all of the teachers and staff in implementing PBIS with fidelity over time. In order to achieve the VTPBIS Exemplar School status, the school has demonstrated:

- Fidelity of PBIS implementation over two years based on the School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET) and/or the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI);
- Use of data in decision making and problem solving around behavior;
- Completion of the annual Self-Assessment Survey (SAS); and
- Evidence that sustained implementation has had a positive impact on academic and behavioral outcomes.

Dena congratulated Justina for her leadership in this work.

Dena St. Amour congratulated Swanton Grade 6 Science Teacher, Christine Depatie, for receiving Presidential award of excellence in Science representing Vermont for her hard, passionate work in science locally, regionally and at the state level and for promoting STEM education across the district. She will travel to Washington D.C. to attend a series of professional development workshops.

Dena reported that members of the Abenaki and Swanton communities joined together Monday to celebrate Vermont's inaugural Indigenous Peoples' Day with the unveiling of a totem pole in the outdoor classroom of the Swanton School. Thanks to Dick Menard for carving the totem pole and for the Circles of Courage for their drumming ceremony.

Update from Elementary Principals

Franklin Principal, Joyce Hakey, briefly highlighted a few of the items on her written report. She discussed the school's Back-to-School Night which begins with a whole school presentation with information on the school's goals for the year, parent involvement, state assessments, and a video of the previous school year. The biggest message that they want parents to get on Back-To-School Night is that "we not only want them to be involved but that we need them to be". She said that her belief is that *all* children will be most successful when home and school are working closely together. Following the whole school presentation, teachers do 20 minute presentations on what the new school year will look like for students and how parents can support their learning. She also congratulated all of the students who participated in the District Spelling Bee. and the students at Franklin recognized for participating in the summer reading program. She said September was very busy with assessments that will be reviewed for strengths, needs, and next steps for individuals, classes, and trends for the school. They have finished the review and update of their action plan which will guide their work for the year. Joyce congratulated school volunteer, Nancy Magnant, for receiving the Vermont Historical Society Lifetime Achievement Award. There were two letters of support from the school that were included in her nomination. The award is given in honor of a person's work and commitment to collect, preserve, and share local history over an extended period of time. She also mentioned two upcoming events. The Franklin Volunteer Fire Dept. will be doing Fire Safety presentations next week and there will be a Safety Fun Party at the school.

Chris Palmer, Highgate Assistant Principal, reported that they had a great First Responders Day on Friday, October 11. They celebrated the contributions of the police, fire, rescue, fish & game, and border patrol officers to the Franklin County Community. Our Community Gathering included a presentation about the important work of our first responders, and students were able to interact with members of each of these forces later in the day in the Highgate Arena parking lot. Thank you to Lieutenant Wetherby of the St. Albans Police Department and Craig Aylward, our Restorative Practices and PBIS Coordinator, for organizing this day. Patrick

Hartnett thanked Scott Martin, our Director of Buildings and Grounds, and the teachers for their next phase of composting in the classrooms.

Patrick Hartnett, Highgate Principal, informed the board that this is his last year as Principal in Highgate. He wanted to provide enough notice so that they could have enough time to put a process in place to find a replacement. Highgate has a wonderful staff and a good culture and climate within the school but he now feels it is time for him to move on. Don Collins thanked Patrick for the early notification.

New Business

Update on Sidewalk

Don Collins stated that Swanton received a grant totaling \$632,000 and some of it in part is to construct a sidewalk from McDonald's on Route 78 to the Missisquoi Valley Union High School for students to walk to school. May to June 2020 will be the design phase of the project and they estimate the cost at \$10,000. Peter Magnant said that he did not think this amount will not be enough to cover the cost of the sidewalk and we will probably need to look at other grant opportunities to cover the balance.

Plowing and Snow Removal Bids

Lora provided the board with a breakdown of the plowing and removal bids received for each location. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was written so that the bids could be broken down by location including language based on the bid award based on the best interest of the school district. The public bid was due on October 11th and opened at 1pm with the business manager and Paul Gregoire in attendance along with some of the bidders. Paul Gregoire recommended Dick's Construction for the plowing and snow removal from MVU. Lora recommended Dick's Construction for the plowing and snow removal at Central Office. Both entities have been happy with the work in the past year. There was no recommendation from Highgate because the Director of Facilities had not had the opportunity to work with any of these parties. Highgate stated in their walk through that they did not want a salt/sand mixture which may have resulted in the bids coming in at higher costs. Dick's Construction has plenty of equipment to handle all three parking lots including Highgate, Central Office and MVU.

Action: *Don Collins moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard to award the MVU Middle/High School two year plowing and snow removal bid to Dick's Construction at \$12,100 and \$130/ton salt. After a short discussion, Don and Eric amended the motion to award at \$19,600 OR \$12,100 and \$130/ton salt at the discretion of the MVU Director of the Buildings and Grounds. The board voted 9-0 to approve the bid. Don Collins moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to offer the Highgate School two year bid to RM Property Maintenance as low bidder contingent upon providing the equipment list to the satisfaction of the Highgate Director of Buildings and Grounds and the board chair. Some board members expressed concern that this bid may not be an only salt mix as requested in the walk through. Lora stated that all bidders*

were in attendance at the site visit and everyone heard this during the walk through. The board voted down the motion 2-6 with one absentee. Meaghan Conly moved to award the Highgate two year bid to Dick's Construction. The motion failed for a lack of a second. Jen Chevalier suggested that they table the Highgate bid award until they can get the information needed for the equipment list, if this is a salt or salt/sand price and have each bidder's references checked.

Action: Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to table the plowing contract. The board voted 9-0 to table until the next meeting.

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to offer Dick's Construction the two year bid for Central Office. The board approved 9-0 vote.

Franklin Plowing and Snow Removal

Peter Magnant reported that the Town of Franklin has been plowing the Franklin School parking lot and are interested in continuing this practice. They are requesting that the school district covers their cost. They estimated that they plowed, sanded and salted fifty times last year at an estimated cost of \$5080. There were a lot of weather events last year and thinks that they would charge the school district \$100 for each plowing so that it covers the town's cost and the school district will be charged in accordance to actual number of events. Peter will re-cuse himself if the school district would find this acceptable or not.

Action: Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Don Collins to pay the Town of Franklin \$100 for each plowing for plowing the parking lot of the Franklin Elementary School for 2019-2020 school year. The board approved 8-0 vote with Peter Magnant abstaining from the vote.

VEHI and VSBIT Proxy for Annual Meeting

Julie reported that VSBIT, VEHI Health and Dental hold an annual meeting at Lake Morey during the VSA/VSBA Conference. In order for Julie to represent the board, the board must appoint the Superintendent as their proxy. Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to authorize Julie Regimbal as the Missisquoi Valley School District proxy for VSBIT, VEHI Health and Dental votes. The board voted 9-0 vote.

Old Business

Negotiations Update and Side Letter

Julie explained that when the schools merged on July 1, 2019, some of our non union positions in our schools became union positions. The NEA Association and the school administration agreed that during the transition, the benefits that they currently have that are not in the master agreement will be grandfathered. Five Employees have a FSA (Flexible Savings Arrangement) that is not offered in the master agreement. The Association has agreed to sign a side letter with the school board for all five individuals to have this benefit for the calendar year.

Action: *Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to allow the board chair to sign the side letter to continue the FSA for the 2020 calendar year for the five employees. The board approved 9-0 vote.*

Julie reported that school board professional negotiations committee met to go over the process on October 8th. The Association is proposing a pot luck to take place with the professional and support staff school board negotiations committee either on October 23rd or 29th. The board agreed on October 23rd for the potluck. The board support staff negotiations committee will meet on October 22nd. The proposed date of November 12th to exchange proposals will not work for the board so the administration will reschedule another date.

VSBA Membership Discussion

Action: *Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to renew our membership with the Vermont School Board's Association. Devin Bachelder reported that he went to the Regional Meeting held on October 7th in Enosburg. Don facilitated the meet and a second representative from Fletcher was elected to represent Franklin County. He thought that it was good that we have a second representative and that the VSBA is the only resource for school boards in the State of Vermont. He feels that all board members need to be more active in shaping what our positions are and our best option is to express our interests to the Vermont School Board's Association. Chris Shepard feels that we can be heard more and will have more voice if we join the Association. Meaghan expressed her concern on how do we fill the void received from the trainings, the legislative updates, negotiations etc. if there is no other viable option. Don is optimistic that there is a new executive director and that the tide has turned. Eric Beauregard feels that if we choose to move forward in maintaining membership that we should utilize the VSBA more. It will be important for board members to be in there with our voice. The board voted 6-2-1 to approve the motion to join the VSBA. (with Don Collins abstaining from the vote.)*

Other

Don Collins expressed his concern for truancy in the schools. He mentioned an article he read where a school hired a school attendance specialist. Julie said that she will have Jeff Benay report on truancy at a future board meeting.

Future Agenda Items

Truancy, Policies, Negotiations planning

Next Meeting Date

The board's next meeting is on November 5th at MVU School Library at 6:30pm. The MVSD ESP Board Negotiations committee will meet on October 22nd at 6:30pm at the MVSD Central Office Conference Room.

Recess

The MVSD Board took a recess at 8:40pm to tour the Swanton School Building.

Anticipated Executive Session:

None

Adjournment

Action: Eric Beauregard made the motion, seconded by Devin Bachelder to adjourn at 9:27pm. The board approved the vote unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary