

**Missisquoi Valley School District
Board Meeting Minutes
Franklin Central School Library
February 20, 2024 6pm**

Location: The MVSD Board and Administration participated at the Franklin Central School Library for this meeting. The meeting was held hybrid with remote access for the community and other interested persons

Date: February 20, 2024

Board Members Present

Jen Chevalier, Chair, Renick Darnell-Martin, Vice Chair, Don Collins, Joanne Johnston, Peter Magnant, Kelly Badeau, Devin Bachelder, Meaghan Conly, Tobias Maguire.

Absent Board Members

Administration and Visitors Present

Julie Regimbal, Superintendent, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, School Principal Joyce Hakey with School Principals Chris Dodge, Justina Jennett, and Yeshua Pastina participating remotely. Franklin Teachers Krista Birkheimer and Brianna Mercy along with Franklin Students. Rusty Gregory, Technology along with the School Board Secretary and Northwest Access Cameraperson. Visitor Chevon Cooper

Call the Meeting to Order 6:00PM

Jen Chevalier, School Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence, Visitors, and Public Comments

Public Comments

None

Agenda Review None

Approval of February 2024 Board meeting minutes

Don Collins moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to approve the February 6th, 2024 board minutes. The board approved a 9:0 vote.

Elementary Principal Reports

[Franklin Principal's Report](#)

[Highgate Principal's Report](#)

[Swanton Principal's Report](#)

Jen Chevalier asked if there are questions regarding the elementary school reports starting with Franklin. Don Collins commented that the Franklin School is incorporating fun with learning. Jen Chevalier stated that she appreciates that Highgate students are able to enjoy the learning experience and field trips by going to ECHO. Renick Darnell-Martin asked if he could hand out diplomas for grade 6 graduation? Yeshua Pastina responded that he will work on the request. Don Collins inquired about the skiing participating in Swanton. Chris Dodge

responded that students can ski or snowboard and students choosing not to participate are offered learning opportunities in another classroom. Chris commented that Starbase is a five-day, hands-on, experiential learning program that is housed on the Vermont Air National Guard base in Burlington. Students explore science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) activities such as robotics programming, 3D computer-aided design, flight simulation, and other hands-on activities. The program culminates in a rocket launch during which each student launches a handmade rocket. He invited anyone who is interested to a rocket launch taking place in the Swanton Recreation Field.

Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Student Writing Engagement

Joyce Hakey introduced teachers Krista Birkheimer and Brianna Mercy presenting on Student Writing Engagement and Voice in Writing. Students were present to share how they prepared for Biography Museum Choice and Voice in Writing. They shared their writing with a wider audience and how it motivated them to write. The students also shared how they participated in the state fair, and how it helped them to improve their student writing skills. *(The teachers and students left at 6:38pm)*

Cyber Security Update (none)

Act 127 Update

Julie Regimbal updated the board on the revisions being made to Act 127 through a proposed H850 bill. The bill repeals section 7 of Act 127 providing the homestead property tax increase five percent cap. They have included a section in the new bill that a school district would receive a penny decrease on the equalized homestead tax rate equal to the decrease of their share of the state's pupils from FY 2024 to FY 2025, rounded to the nearest whole cent. A district with a relative percent increase, as determined by the calculations in subsections of the H850 bill, shall not receive a decrease in homestead property tax rate under this section. Districts being negatively affected by this bill will have an opportunity to cancel the district's vote and move the date of the vote for any articles for which a vote was canceled to a date on or before April 15, 2024. It is a multi prong approach with the consideration of increasing the yield thereby decreasing the homestead property tax rate. The board discussed the news reports that school districts are moving the school budget vote to a later date. Chevon Cooper commented that she liked and understood the layout that Colchester had sent out better. She added that community members have heard the postponement of school budgets and are confused on whether MVSD is delaying the vote or not. Tobias thought a motion should be made to affirm the board's intention but expressed concern that it was not on the agenda. He felt that the board needed to clarify their position so he made the following motion.

Tobias Maguire moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder that the MVSD Board postpone the FY25 Budget vote until April 15th in accordance with H850 if it passes and becomes law.

Devin Bachelder stated that school districts postponing their budget have had a massive change and are making changes because the board no longer supports their budget. Devin stated that the budget is a little higher but they anticipate the property yield will go up after H850 passes and it will adjust everyone's taxes, lowering the tax. Additional funds will go into the education fund along with the penny decrease on the LTW ADM share of the state's pupils will mean a decrease in the tax rate with almost a zero percent change in tax rate from the previous year. If our tax rate is close to zero percent, why would we change the budget vote? Meaghan Conly added that the school districts will not have any more certainty on the yield by April so there is no advantage to postponing the vote. She thinks the budget is sound. Don Collins agreed that there will not be any additional information so there is no advantage to waiting. Renick Darnell-Martin pointed out that there are actually negatives to waiting because

the district will need to move forward on some of the facility projects in order to complete them over the course of the summer. He believes that the budget is responsible and solid and there is no benefit to delaying. Tobias appreciates that the board is having this discussion and it is important for the people in the community to know the budget is not postponed. Chevon commented that this information provided this evening clarifies the reasons for voting on Town Meeting Day as planned and would like the board to put up videos and other additional information to the public for those not seeing this meeting. Jen Chevalier stated that the board is having a February 27th budget information meeting plus additional videos coming out. Chevon offered to share this date on her Facebook Page and encourage community members to attend the meeting. Don Collins suggested that the board have a special meeting confirming this vote to move forward with the budget vote on Town Meeting Day. Renick Darnell-Martin thinks it will create uncertainty to have this hang out for another week and the focus of the informational meeting should be on the budget. Other board members agreed that the board should affirm the budget vote this evening.

Jen Chevalier called the vote on the MVSD Board to postpone the FY25 Budget vote until April 15th in accordance with H850 if it passes and becomes law. The board voted 0-9 to vote down the motion on delaying the budget vote and the motion failed.

Board members felt it is important to put out the message that they are NOT postponing the budget. Peter Magnant felt that this motion provides public reassurance on what the board is doing.

[F26 Security Camera recommended Policy](#)

Julie Regimbal stated that the board had the first reading of this policy at the last meeting and recommended that the board adopt this policy.

Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to adopt the FY26 Security Camera Policy. The board voted 9-0 to approve the policy.

MVU & Swanton Stormwater Grant Agreement

Lora McAllister presented a grant agreement with Fresh Coast Capital dba GreenPrint Partners whereas the MVSD District will have a contribution of 10% of the construction costs and the grant providing the balance. MVU's 10% share of the total cost of \$146,450 is \$14,645 and Swanton's share of the total cost of \$271,600 is \$27,160.

Don Collins moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to approve the Stormwater Agreement as presented. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

Acknowledgement and Thank You for Service

Jen Chevalier presented Tobias Maguire, Devin Bachelder, and Kelly Badeau with a thank you certificate in appreciation for their services on the school board.

To hear the full presentation or more details, please follow the link below:

[MVSD Board Meetings on Northwest Access TV](#)

Future Agenda Items

List of topics at the next board meeting

Future Board Meeting

Next MVSD Board Informational Meeting will be held on February 27th, 2024 at the MVU Library at 7pm. The next school board meeting will be held on March 12th at 6pm at the MVU Library. The next Facilities Meeting is scheduled for March 7th at the MVSD Central Office.

Other

Peter Magnant thanked all the outgoing board members for their time serving on the board. Don Collins thanked the Principal and the teachers for arranging the presentation, he thought they did a super job.

Meeting Adjournment

*Devin Bachelder moved to adjourn the meeting; Tobias Maguire seconded. Motion carried 9:0.
The meeting adjourned at 7:32pm.*