

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)

Remotely VIA Google Meet

June 16, 2020

6:30 PM

Present: Board members joining the meeting remotely, Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard, Highgate, Don Collins (Swanton) Vice Chair Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Steve Scott, (Highgate), Peter Magnant (Franklin), Joanne Johnston, (Franklin), Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Meaghan Conly (Swanton) and Jen Chevalier (Highgate)

Others Joining Remotely: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Jay Hartman, MVU Principal, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Justina Jennett, Assistant Principal of Swanton, Joyce Hakey, Principal of Franklin, Patrick Hartnett, Highgate Principal, Yeshua Pastina, Incoming Highgate Principal, Carol Lizotte, Director of After School Programs, and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Agenda Review-Julie Regimbal requested adding school choice to the agenda.

Correspondence

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: Steve Scott moved, seconded by Don Collins to approve the June 2nd, 2020 board minutes as presented. The board approved the minutes on a 9-0 vote.

Presentations

Recognition

Chris Shepard presented a plaque to Patrick Hartnett for his five years of service as the Principal of Highgate as he leaves his position. Chris also presented a plaque to Carol Lizotte as she is retiring from her 15 years of service as the Director of After School and Summer Programs for the Missisquoi Valley School District.

Administrative Updates

Justina Jennett reported that on Tuesday evening they had the sixth grade recognition evening. They started a car parade of the sixth grade teachers and 30 staff members with the Grand Avenue Busing Transportation delivering diplomas and other materials to approximately 70 families from 5 PM and returning at 9:30 PM. She thanked Grand Avenue Enterprises for organizing the route and the bus drivers for donating their time.

They celebrated Joan Lumbrá's retirement from her Math Leadership position in Swanton this evening with a very nice parade with cards and a special send off. It was fantastic.

Joyce Hakey reported that they had a "float" in the Memorial Day Vehicle Parade. They had transition activities for kids with next year's teachers. They had their last "drop" off night Friday and sent home a new book, and a summer reading program log for every student for the summer. She thanked Sarah Bouvier for all the extra work she did to make this evening a special "goodbye".

Franklin spent a great deal of time preparing for and recording a grade 6 virtual graduation with class awards, gifts and a graduation movie. On Saturday, they had an in person graduation with families driving in and allowing students to receive their certificates, their virtual ceremony program, and their diploma. They went to the arch and took pictures of their graduate and the family. The student was allowed to "ring" the school bell as a finale to the graduation. Everyone was respectful of everyone's time and it was the best graduation they could do considering the times.

They started In-Service this week spending time on Fact Fluency and Independent Reading Assessment Complete Comprehension. The teachers will be meeting for grade level student transition and preparing programs for students who will be receiving summer tutoring services. They have 20 students signed up for summer tutoring.

Pat Hartnett thanked Chris Palmer for putting together the Principals' Report. He recognized the retirement of "Ernie" Hemingway after 30 years of teaching in Highgate. Her presence and her spirit will be missed at the school. They began the June In-Service with Math and Literacy professional development and training. They will spend the next two days on Mind the Gaps protocol which focuses on addressing student skill gaps in the fall. It will be very important timing when the students return in the Fall after being away from the building for six months. They had their sixth-grade promotion on Thursday evening where students arrived at the school at a scheduled time receiving promotion certificates, and goodie bags. Thanks to the teachers for making it very special. He thanked the Tyler Place for their generous contributions to the Highgate School. Every year they donate \$1,600 to be given to students in grades 4, 5 and 6. This year, they used the data to choose their top performing students. Pat will be completing another week of work prior to leaving the school.

MVSD Re-Opening Presentation

Julie Regimbal shared with the board the presentation that she provided for the MVSD Professional and Support Staff in the morning. She went over the celebrations of what we accomplished by moving to remote learning quickly, serving over 174,000 meals to our families, collaboration of the school district teams

effectively. The tech team provided support for all who needed it and covered. The guided values are safety for all students, public education is a key lever in economic recovery, in person education is the preferred delivery, equity of access must be front and center of any plans, systems must be flexible and communication with a variety of voices. There are five key challenges to reopening successfully in Fall 2020 with the public health challenge, lack of agreement, lack of time, decisions will be scrutinized and we will have to adjust to shifting circumstances.

We will need to plan for three phases of education with Step 1 being fully remote instruction, Step 2 Students educated with strict screenings, social distancing and hygiene guidelines. Step 3 will be most students educated in person with significant screening and precautions in place.

The five domains are safe and healthy environments, leadership policy and funding, maintaining operations, continuity of learning and social emotional health of students. The task force teams will consist of Teaching & Learning, Logistics, Facilities and Health Task Force. She described in more depth what these task forces would need to complete for an in-depth planning. Some of the challenges will be getting the cleaning supplies needed that is already in short supply.

They will need to assemble these task teams and complete the work needed to put together the required plan and submit to the Agency of Education by around mid July. They are working hard on the specifics on what will be needed for the opening of school. They will communicate the plan to the state and then they will need to communicate to staff and families.

Don Collins asked if there are parents who don't want to send their kids. Julie responded that some parents have expressed concerns about sending the children to schools and so parents will have the option of home-schooling their children as they do currently. She is unsure about the school providing remote learning when they are already doing in person learning. They will support families with concerns. Jen Chevalier asked about the busing and not putting all kids on the bus due to distancing/sanitizing etc. Julie said that they may have to alter routes, take a poll of families who can transport their kids and encourage them to drive them to school. Meaghan asked if there was an increased number of cases, do we have control over school closure? Julie responded that this will be a decision from the State Board and Secretary of Education and the Department of Health based on the information we provide them and what is happening in our area/region at the time.

New Business

Use of Fields and Facilities

Julie Regimbal reported that the fields on the school grounds have been closed and with the guidance from the Governor's office the fields are opened with social distance guidelines. Jay Hartman explained that low contact sports such as soccer

and baseball can begin. There have been groups who have asked to use the fields. They are not allowed to use the gym nor the facilities. They have port-o-lets for the groups to use. Each group receives a four-page document where they must follow all the points with a signature page attesting to this and signing a liability waiver. If they don't adhere to the document points, they will receive one warning. If it occurs a second time, they will lose privilege to use of the fields for the summer. Peter Magnant inquired about the use of the school playgrounds. Julie said that some of the playgrounds are also the community playgrounds and the guidelines is that the playground structure still be closed. Schools are putting up signs that the structures are not being sanitized and they should follow health guidelines. This is what other school districts are doing.

Teacher Negotiations

Julie Regimbal stated that the Association is voting to ratify the agreement today. The details of the agreement is a possible finding for executive session. Don Collins stated that the negotiation process went very well. Chris Shepard and Joanne Johnston were very excellent committee board members. He thanked for the great support from Julie Regimbal, Lora McAllister and Pierrette Bouchard in Central Office. He thought that the tone and the action was very professional. Julie thought it was a good agreement for the board and the Association with having 4 or 5 separate agreements within the document and they consolidated separate school language into one agreement for all teachers. Don appreciated the principals help with the language issues.

Use of Leave Time

Julie Regimbal explained that this issue is about the governor's and the secretary of Education exceptions to report to work is ending on June 30th and now if someone has a health condition, they will need to go to their physician for a qualified exemption.

Side Letter of Agreement

Julie explained that as a result of the school closure due to COVID, some full time Union employees eligible for vacation have not been able to take their vacation leave and would like to roll over up to five vacation days in the next school year. The full side letter details regarding the contract is for executive session.

School Choice

Julie explained that there is a property that is evenly split between two towns. The old standard is wherever you lay your head at night is your residency. Is there a defining way to determine this? Julie suggested adding to the procedures that when a residence has a boundary between two towns within the three towns of the district, Franklin, Highgate or Swanton, that the residence will complete an application to apply for the school they would like to attend. This situation is very few and would not apply to someone who has land in both towns such as 75 acres in one town and 50 acres in another town. It will apply to the home of residence only that is located in both towns and pay taxes to both towns. Don pointed out that this applies to the

house only. Julie will bring language back to the board to see what they think about the procedure she has drafted.

Old Business

Tax Anticipation Line of Credit Award

Lora McAllister presented the bids for the tax anticipation line of credit. The following banks submitted the following interest credit: Peoples United Bank 1.29%, The Union Bank 1.19% and the Peoples Trust Bank at .75%. Lora recommended the bid be awarded to Peoples Trust Bank. Even though the district does their banking with Peoples United Bank, they could make it work in obtaining a line of credit with Peoples Trust because of the low interest rate.

Action

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to award the line of credit to Peoples Trust Bank at .75% interest. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

SRO for Elementary Schools

Julie Regimbal reported that the Swanton Police Department received two community officer grants. Chief Stell came to the administrators' meeting and to the board meeting in Franklin last Fall to talk about the logistics of sharing an SRO with all three of the elementary schools. The grant will pay for three years of the expenses to have an officer in the elementary schools and the district will be responsible for paying for the fourth year. Duties will be shaped by the principal of the school but will include: General Education experiences such as reading to students and supporting classrooms and law enforcement specific education, substance and abuse education prevention along with support Coordinated Service planning for students with complex needs. They will also participate and be a member of school safety teams as well as support principals with emergencies. The officer's calendar will be shared between the three principals. Meetings will take place regularly with both SROs and principals. Annually there will be a meeting with Swanton Police Department and administration to plan and address any issues. The Principals will be involved in the selection of the officer. She believes that there may be a retirement with the SRO at MVU and the second grant will support a replacement for a new person at MVU. They would like to look at using the position differently. The SRO will likely begin in October.

New Hires

MVU hired a new math interventionist and Swanton has just filled a one year long term substitute teacher in Special Education. They have almost completed filling all the open positions except for a couple of Special Education Teacher openings at MVU. Don Collins asked about a list of new hires that were provided in the past and the board would approve the list. Julie explained that she usually does provide the list of new teachers and apologized that it was not uploaded in the board drive.

Other Business

Carryover Use Discussion

Lora McAllister reported that they have a similar carryover from last month of around two million dollars. The latest report on the education fund is that the deficit has fallen from 150 million to 106 million. The yield bill is set at \$10,998 as projected previously and the State is not anticipated to adjust the yield so as not to transfer the burden on to taxpayers. They have been advised to record ESSER funds as a receivable. There is a more flexible use of these funds. There are Tier I Coronavirus funds of about 25 million that are available for FY20. Tier II funds for FY21 are all based on grants and are more strictly regulated. Lora still does not know if we can use the carryover next year for expenses. She proposes that the district prefunds the HRA plans. Currently MVU is on a different cycle than the Elementary schools. They are paying the health insurance from September to June and are two months behind in collecting the employee contribution. As the district is heading into the Statewide health insurance cycle, they would like to catch up and use some of the money in the carryover to pay the July and August health insurance premiums and the August premium of the dental insurance (because the dental insurance company waived the premium for July due to dental offices not performing the work during Covid). They have been wanting to have the elementary and the high school administratively align for a long time. The auditors have recommended that the health and dental insurance be in the same cycle.

Action

Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to allow use of the current carryover to prefund the HRA. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

Don Collins moved, seconded by Steve Scott to allow the carryover to pay the Blue Cross Blue Shield health insurance premiums for July and August and the dental insurance premium in August. The Board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

Retreat Planning

Julie reported that the board retreat is planned for June 20th from 9 Am to 1 PM at the MVU Commons. This will be an in-person retreat with virtual available to those who are not comfortable. Chris said that this is an opportunity for the board and the Superintendent to work together on the evaluation process, how do they want to shape their governing and functions of the board. Don suggested that they come up with a system that is similar to what the Superintendent is using with principals and administrative evaluations. Mike Dewese, the retreat facilitator, will share his knowledge of the evaluation process of the board and the superintendent. Julie has been conferring with Mike Dewese and will provide a plan and tool for evaluations as well as steps for the board to set goals.

Future Meeting Dates

The school board retreat has been scheduled for June 20th at MVU Commons from 9 AM to 1 PM. The next school board meeting has been scheduled for July 7th at 6:30pm. The board discussed the possibility of meeting in person or virtually and whether or not to have a second meeting in July. Don Collins suggested that we meet virtually in July, cancel the second meeting in July and meet in person in August. Other board members appeared to be in agreement with the suggestion.

Other Business

Chris Shepard provided an update on the parking lot in Highgate. They are on schedule to begin the project. Lora mentioned that they have pushed the project back one week because the Stormwater Grant must have a fourteen-day comment opportunity. The start date is June 24th.

It was suggested that an update on the property line issue at the Swanton School be provided at the next meeting.

Jen Chevalier requested an update on the food service program at the next meeting. Lora provided a quick update and since they have gone to the meal pick up at MVU, only 150 meals were distributed the other evening. The pick-up times may have to be adjusted to comply with the state requirements. They will provide another update at the next meeting.

Chris stated that he meets with the Superintendent on Tuesday morning the week before the school board meeting so if board members would like something to be added to the agenda, they are welcome to email him prior to that meeting.

Executive Session

Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Don Collins to enter executive session for professional negotiated contract and side letter and invite Julie Regimbal and Lora McAllister into executive session. The board approved the motion on a 8-0 vote to enter executive session at 8:37pm. *(Steve Scott left the board meeting)*

The board exited executive session at 8:48pm.

Action after Executive Session

Terri O'Shea moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to authorize the board chair to sign the side letter of agreement with the ESP Association regarding vacation use. Motion passes 7-0 vote. (Meaghan Conly had left the meeting)

Joanne Johnston made a motion, seconded by Terri O'Shea, to ratify the 2020-2022 master agreement with the professional staff. Motion passed 6-0-1 vote with Devin Bachelder abstaining from the vote.

Adjournment

Action

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to adjourn at 8:51 PM. The board approved on a 7-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary