



**Highgate Elementary School
Special Board of Director's Meeting
August 9, 2018**

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: A meeting of the Highgate Elementary School Board of Directors was called to order on Thursday August 9, 2018 at 6:30 p.m. by Chris Sheppard, School Board Chair. Those in attendance included:

- Chris Shepard, Board Chair
- Lisa Wells, Vice-Chair
- Ryan Young, Board Clerk
- Stephen Scott
- Richard Flint
- Lora McAllister, Business Manager
- Patrick Hartnett, School Principal
- Chris Palmer, Assistant Principal
- Julie Regimbal, Superintendent
- A Channel 15 representative (taping for public access television)

2.0. COMMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC:

Election Day: There was discussion about either hiring an Officer to be at the school on Election Day in November, or planning ahead to cancel school on that day. While canceling school is always a possibility, it was thought to be an extreme measure especially if Highgate is the only school in the district not in session on that day. The cost of hiring an officer is around \$650 and the Select Board would be willing to pay half the cost.

Channel 15 Subscription: A concern was raised about the Channel 15 subscription that will allow the community to view Board meetings online as it is taking longer than anticipated for the link to be available online.

Action: Julie Regimbal will follow up with Channel 15 on this.

SeeSaw: A request was made to create a universal QR code for the front desk – the intent is that all students would have this code and any school wide announcements would come from the front desk code. It was noted that the school purchased a license for SeeSaw and there may be new functionality available with that license. The school is working towards SeeSaw being the primary school to home communication platform.

Possible Topics for Future Meetings: Any topics for future meetings can be communicated to Chris Shepard in advance of the next meeting.

- VELCO: Easements for power lines
- Bond Vote

3.0. CONSENT AGENDA

Adopt the July 12 Board Meeting Minutes: The July 12, 2018 Board meeting minutes were presented for review. The following correction was recommended:

- Under "Roof Update" minutes should reflect that the leaking roof is due to poor craftsmanship and not due to the roof pitch.

Action: A motion was raised by Richard Flint to approve the minutes of the July 12, 2018 meeting with the change outlined above; the motion was seconded by Lisa Wells.

Vote: 5:0

4.0. BUSINESS REPORT

Warrants:

Check warrants for the month of June totaling \$544,770.83 were presented for review.

Action: a motion was made by Lisa Wells to approve the check warrants for the month of June totaling \$544,770.83; the motion was seconded by Ryan Young.

Vote: 5:0

Check warrants for the month of July totaling \$246,716.82 were presented for review.

Action: A motion was made by Ryan Young to approve the check warrants for the month of July totaling \$246,716.83; the motion was seconded by Richard Flint.

Vote: 5:0

Financial Report: The final (un-audited) Financial Report of FY18 was presented for review. The report shows a savings of around \$100,000 in the area of teacher salaries and insurance. Contracted services, offsite tuition, and SU assessment lines were overextended mostly due to the Special Education Assessment which is hard to project. Overall, the budget carryover for FY18 is \$79,276. The first report of FY19 will be presented next month, and the audited FY18 report will be available at a later date.

Food Services Contract: The food service contract went out to bid this year under a fixed price contract rather than a cost reimbursable contract the State of Vermont. Under the fixed price contract, the state will reimburse a flat rate per meal. The RFP was posted on the school website, on a state level website, in the newspaper and one bid came in from the Abbey with a fixed price of \$1.16 per breakfast, and \$3.21 per lunch with an admin fee of \$0.15 per meal. It was discussed that with the fixed price contract, the school lunch program should still cash flow however it may be tighter than before with less surplus. It was noted that this first year is a pilot and as such it may change at the end of the pilot. This contract will be awarded as a one year contract.

Action: A motion was made by Lisa wells to award the Food Management Contract (upon State Approval) to The Abbey and to authorize the Board Chair to sign the contract. The motion was seconded by Steven Scott.

Vote: 5:0

Discussion:

- It was discussed that the success of the school lunch program relies heavily on participation in the Free/Reduced lunch program and a suggestion was made to market that program to students and families.
- It was noted that since offering free breakfast to all students, the school has seen improvements in behavior and academics among students.
- It was noted that HES currently does not qualify for the Community Eligibility Provision which would provide free meals to all students (requires 40% or more of students to be directly certified for free meals) however Lora will continue to monitor for eligibility. We cannot offer free meals to all students at this time without supplementing the cost from another funding source.
- A question was raised about offering an in-house school lunch program vs. hiring a food service management company and it was noted that in-house programs are typically not successful do the amount of time and oversight required.
- It was suggested that if the food management contract was awarded by the SU vs. individual schools, it may attract more bids as it would be a larger contract.
- It was noted that per state requirement, the food management company has to hold at least one community forum to discuss the food program and the community is encouraged to attend this meeting to provide feedback.

Paid meal prices for FY19: The paid meal price for FY19 will increase from \$2.45 per lunch to \$2.55 per lunch based on a paid lunch equity calculation required by the State. While it is at the discretion of the Board to set the paid meal price, if the price is not increased per the equity calculation the Board has to identify a funding source to pay the difference.

Action: A motion was made by Lisa Wells to increase the paid meal price to \$2.55 for lunch; the motion was seconded by Steven Scott.

Vote: 4:0 (Richard Flint abstained).

Student/Staff Chromebook Transition: The FY19 school budget included allowance for lease to purchase additional Chromebooks from the company Top Floor so that grades 5-6 would have 1:1 access to laptops. Since then, a recommendation as made to purchase different units that would be in use for a longer period of time than what was originally suggested (5 years vs. 3 years). This would increase the authorized purchase price by \$2,900 to a total of \$22,848 with a lease rate of 4.75% over three years and an annual payment of \$79.71. Under the agreement, teacher units are \$499 each and student units are \$199 each. It was noted that all schools in the district are converting to Chromebooks and we are working on getting all schools under one contract.

Action: A motion was made by Lisa Wells to approve the purchase from Top Floor in the amount of \$22,847, and to lease from Municipal Leasing Company for the full amount at an interest rate of 4.75% for three years; the motion was seconded by Steven Scott.

Vote: 5:0

Cassidy Property: At a previous meeting, a question was raised about where the liability would fall should an injury occur on the Cassidy property. Per the SU attorney, there should be no issues with pasturing animals on that property provided proper fencing is in place, and steps are

taken to protect neighboring properties. The current liability coverage would cover the school, but not the individual haying the property unless there was an indication of wrongdoing or negligence on behalf of the school.

5.0. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Starting this month the Principal's report will be aligning with the three goals of HES's continuous improvement plan: Academic Proficiency, High Quality Staffing, and Positive Climate for Learning.

The following was reported as part of the Principal's report:

- A more in-depth presentation of SBAC scores will be provided at a future Board meeting
- The Summer Program (consisting of tutoring and STEM focused activities) was very well attended.
- There was an unexpected opening for a Front Desk position but there is a good candidate being vetted. The third/fourth grade interventionist is in place. All new staff have been invited to the September Board meeting for a meet and greet.
- The school emergency plan has been updated to reflect ALICE principles. Chris Palmer will be providing ALICE training to all staff and will be conducting drills. It was noted that there is also an E-Learning component to ALICE training, but as of yet the SU has not participated in this. It was also noted that the school will be 9-11 compliant when it opens at the end of August.

6.0. OLD BUSINESS:

Roof Update: The insurance claim that was submitted to our insurance carrier to cover the damage incurred by poor craftsmanship when the roof was repaired ten years ago was denied. It was discussed that there are a couple of ways to approach the roof repair. One option discussed is to start converting the roof over to a rubberized roofing membrane (TPO). This transition can be done in sections, TPO repair easily with heat weld patches, can be painted to match the existing roof, has the same warranty as metal, and is easier to clean snow off. It was noted that the Board previously authorized \$59,000 for the roof repair from the Capital Reserve Fund and that there is an additional \$83,239 available in that fund that can also be used for this repair. It was noted that the repair may exceed the funding available in the Capital Reserve Fund.

Action: *The Board scheduled a Special Board Meeting to take place on Tuesday August 14, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in the Library to review roof quotes and to award a contract.*

Storm water Grant Update: It was noted that HES received the storm water grant that will cover the costs of a study and design of a storm water management system. There will be a meeting with the Grant Administrator in September to discuss the scope of the project, and to review various storm water management options. These options will be presented to the Board for review and approval when available.

Select-Board Machia Property Request: At the last meeting it was noted that a section of land on the Machia Property belonged to Highgate Elementary School, where previously it was though the Town owned the entire plot. At that meeting, the Select Board requested that School Board relinquish that section of land to the Town. It was determined that this is not something the School Board can do, that instead the electorate has to make this decision.

Action: *It was decided that the two Boards will work together to draft terms of agreement that can be presented to the electorate for a vote.*

Follow-up: *Next meeting*

Act 46 Update: A group of Franklin County Residents attended the State Board of Education's meeting in Newark, VT in July to advocate for the school's proposed Alternate Governance Structure (AGS). Schools requesting to remain in AGS vs. merging will not hear a final determination until October. There is an Act 46 Committee meeting on 8/13/18 at 7:00 p.m. in the MVU library. Additionally:

- Several schools are in opposition of Act 46, as are Franklin County Legislators. The community is encouraged to reach out to legislators to discuss Act 46.
- There is general concern that despite public comment and opposition, AOE will move forward with the proposed mergers outlined in the Secretary of Education's proposal.
- The community (including the Select Board) is recommending that the Board start working on a Plan B.
- Members of the Select Board would like to work with the School Board on developing a plan B sooner than later. One proposal includes handing school assets (building and Cassidy property) over to the Town. The Town would then lease the school building back to the school. It was noted that there may be several unanticipated consequences to this and several unknowns including: who would insure the building, what would happen to state funding, which will be responsible for inspections, who would incur brick/mortar expenses etc.
- It was noted that the School Board is looking into funding options should the town decide to open an independent school. It is anticipated that this avenue would come with a significant tax burden.
- It was suggested that the community is not aware of what is going on with Act 46, and that information about Act 46 should be communicated more widely than on the school's Facebook page and webpage. Suggestions included sending out a mailing, or utilizing the schools emergency notification system. A suggestion was made to hold an additional Act 46 information meeting for the community after the Act 46 Committee comes up with a plan.

7.0. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

The Superintendent's report provided by Julie Regimbal included the following:

- MVU held a Summer Theater Camp this year that was attended by kids in grades 2-12 from Swanton, Highgate, and Sheldon.
- Dan French has been appointed by the Governor as the Secretary of Education. Dan is a Vermont educator who has experience as a teacher, principal, and superintendent.

8.0. NEW BUSINESS:

Update on Summer Services Gap for incoming 7th Grade Students: The summer services gap for incoming 7th grade students identified at the last Board meeting was discussed with the FNWSU Special Education Director and she is working to resolve this problem.

Parent Tuition Request: The Board received a letter from a family whose child has attended Swanton Elementary School for his/her entire academic career. The family has since moved from Swanton to Highgate and requested that Swanton make an allowance for that student to continue attending school in Swanton. The Swanton Elementary School Board noted that FNWSU has a policy in place that allows non-resident students to attend other schools; however, the family is responsible for paying the tuition for attendance. That family has since submitted a request to the Highgate School Board asking the Board to pay tuition to Swanton Elementary School on behalf of the family.

Action: A motion was made by Richard Flint to enter executive session to discuss this request further as it was determined that premature public knowledge of this may place the board or other party at substantial disadvantage. The motion was seconded by Ryan Young. Julie Regimbal, Lora McAllister, and Patrick Hartnett were invited into executive session.

Vote: 5:0

The Board entered executive session at 9:11 p.m.

The Board left executive session at 10:30 p.m.

Action: A motion was made by Richard Flint to approve the tuition request submitted by a resident family for Highgate to pay the non-resident tuition to another school in the amount of \$12,264. The motion was seconded by Ryan Young.

Vote: 0-5 (motion failed)

9.0. FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES

Future Board Meeting Dates

- Highgate Board Meeting – September 13, 2018 , at 6:30 PM
- FNWSU Board Meeting – August 15, 2019, 6:30 at MVU Library

10.0. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Richard Flint to adjourn the Highgate Elementary School Special Board of Directors Meeting; the motion was second by Lisa Wells. The meeting adjourned at 10:21 p.m.

Recorded by: Rebecca Fenn, School Board Secretary
Submitted on behalf of Ryan Young, Board Clerk