



**DRAFT**

**Highgate Elementary School  
Board of Director's Meeting Minutes  
January 11, 2018**

**1.0 CALL TO ORDER:** A meeting of the Highgate Elementary School Board of Directors was called to order on Thursday January 11, 2018 at 6:33 pm by Connie Beyor, School Board Chair. Those in attendance included:

- Connie Beyor, Board Chair
- Chris Shepard, Board Secretary
- David Roddy, Board Member
- Nola Gilbert, Board Member
- Patrick Hartnett, School Principal
- Chris Palmer, Assistant Principal
- Lora McAllister, Business Manager
- Winton Goodrich, Superintendent
- A Channel 15 representative (taping for public access television)

**2.0. AGENDA AMMENDMENTS:** None

**Time Keeper:** David Roddy was assigned the role of time keeper.

**3.0. COMMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE PUBLIC:**

The following point was discussed as part of public correspondence:

- The school district overwhelming voted against an Act 46 Merger. As part of this, a proposal for an alternative governance structure had to be submitted to the State by a certain deadline. The proposal was submitted after the deadline, and there is a concern that this could have a negative impact on the State's decision. It was noted that the proposal was submitted after the deadline; however before it was submitted there was a conversation with AOE before the proposal was submitted and they stated that missing the deadline would not have a negative effect.

**4.0. MEET NEW 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE TEACHER – JORDAN MASCETTI**

The Board welcomed new 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher, Jordan Mascetti. Jordan is from Williamstown, VT and is recent graduate of UVM. She just completed student teaching in the first grade at Edmonds Elementary School, and is excited to join the team at Highgate.

**5.0. EARLY EDUCATION PRESENTATION – TANIA HAYES**

Tania Hayes discussed with the Board a proposal to shift next year's 4<sup>th</sup> grade class to a co-teaching model. This co-teaching model would consist of two general educators, one special educator, and one paraeducator in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. One benefit to the co-teaching model is that kids would be able to spend more time in class receiving direct instruction, and less time out of class. Additionally, it would provide more opportunities to more students within that grade level. A concern was raised about setting this standard in only one grade level, and whether or not that would be proving

**DRAFT**

consistent opportunities for all students at Highgate. It was noted that the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> grade class was identified as a starting point as it has a higher proportion of students on IEPs than any other grade at the school (25% in this grade level vs. 15% school wide). Additionally, it was noted that when implementing this type of change, it is recommended that the change is implemented slowly, and then branched out. It was discussed the long term goal of this is not to place a special educator in a co-teaching relationship for each grade level, but instead to start laying the ground work that would help afford opportunities to pick and choose which grade levels or subjects could benefit from a co-teaching relationship in the future. A concern was raised about how lunch time and recess time would be managed with the number of paraeducators reduced in that grade level. It was discussed that there will still be two paraeducators in that grade level providing adequate coverage for lunch/recess. Lastly, it was noted that this shift would produce cost savings as it would eliminate one classroom teacher.

## 6.0. BUSINESS REPORT:

**VSBA Act 68 Funding Video:** A short video outlining Act 68 funding and calculation was viewed. The video can be found here: <http://www.vtvsba.org/copy-of-reorganization-video-1>

**Finalize Budget:** Lora McAlister presented the final draft of the budget.

- The FY18 anticipated spending is almost the same as the F19 proposed spending. This is due, in part, to staffing changes and negotiated agreements.
- The Assessments (early childhood, special education admin, special ED expenditures etc) have all been updated to what was approved at the SU Board meeting; most have been reduced since the last draft.
- Municipal retirement rates have changed in this draft from 4% to 4.125%. Plan B is increasing from 5.55% to 5.625%
- Overall, the general fund is increased by 2.86% over last year. Revenues are projected to be up about \$50,000 from last year. The Equalized per pupil spending increased about \$51 from last year (0.37% increase). The final school budget is \$5,125,240.

After reviewing this draft of the budget, the following inquiries were made:

- There was an inquiry into what "tutor services" included. This line includes tutors that help during the school year and over the summer
- There was an inquiry into what ESL purchased services include. ESL services are provided to students who speak English as a second language. Services include monitoring continued student progress, working with teachers to adapt curriculum for ESL students, etc. There has been ongoing discussion about how to use time more efficiently as one teacher is providing ESL services to the entire district, yet there is not a lot of flexibility in how these services are provided to students.
- Under instructional supplies – we are discontinuing the math program and switching to Engage NY. The goal is to have all grade levels receiving the same instruction
- School wide technology – there is an additional lease included in this line. This is a three year lease that is increasing our 1:1 devices to all grade levels.

**Action:** A motion was raised by Nola Gilbert to approve the budget as presented tonight at \$5,125,240. The motion was seconded by David Roddy.

**Vote:** 4:0

**DRAFT**

In addition to the budget, the following articles were presented for review:

**Article 1:** Shall the voters of the Highgate School District approve the School Directors to expend \$5,125,240, which is the amount the School Directors have determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$13,757 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is .37% higher than spending for the current

*Action:* A motion was raised by Nola Gilbert to approve Article 1 presented tonight, the motion was seconded by David Roddy.

*Vote:* 4:0

**Article 2:** Will the voters of the Highgate School District authorize the School Directors to borrow money in anticipation of taxes?

*Action:* A motion was raised by Nola Gilbert to approve Article 2 presented tonight, the motion was seconded by Chris Shepard.

*Vote:* 4:0

It was noted that Article 2 references borrowing money at a very low interest rate in anticipation of tax revenue.

#### 7.0. **CONSENT AGENDA**

##### **Adopt December 14, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes:**

The minutes of the December 14, 2017 Board Meeting were presented for review as part of the consent agenda. The following edits were requested:

1. Add "Richard Flint" to the list of attendees
2. Under Principals Report (Section 4), "Principal Martin" should be replaced with "Principal Hartnett"

*Action:* A motion was raised by Nola Gilbert to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2017 Board Meeting as corrected. The motion was seconded by Chris Shepard.

*Vote:* 4:0

##### **Check Warrants**

Check Warrants totaling \$787,851.52 were presented for review and approval.

*Action:* A motion as raised by Nola Gilbert to approve the check warrants totaling \$787,851.52; the motion was seconded by David Roddy.

*Vote:* 4:0

#### 8.0. **PRINCIPAL'S REPORT**

Assistant Principal Palmer reported that the school has started an anti-bullying alliance. It is still in the very beginning stages with only two student participants, but there is optimism that it will grown into something larger. This idea grew out of the Puppets in Education / Kids on the Block Vermont educational workshops that took place on 12/14/17.

Principal Hartnett reported the following:

- Office discipline referrals have stabilized to around 7 referrals per day
- Students have started taking a more active role in community gatherings
- Professional Development Days

**DRAFT**

- 1/10/18: Visitors from Swanton Elementary School shared their work in improving the ways in which Professional learning communities and Response to intervention are used to help improve instruction and learning.
- 1/15/18: will be split between Restorative Circles training and using Swvil Technology
- 1/15/18: Teachers will be taking the SBAC practice test as part of a deep dive into test results

## 9.0. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

**Governor's Education Summit:** This was a well-attended full day event. The governor stayed for the entire day and listened to the people and their concerns. It was a well-run and worthwhile event.

### Legislative Update

- **Act 166:** There will no longer be duplication in background checks for early education providers. AOE will be responsible for background check for all school employees, and AHS will do background checks on all private providers and daycare centers
- **Retirement Funds:** contribution to teacher retirement funds was previously taken out of the ED fund and did not impact tax rate. This is no longer the case, due in part to the hole in the Ed fund this year. This is a cost of about \$200,000.
- **Marijuana legalization:** The bill to legalizing possession and cultivation of marijuana is on the move. This may be signed before the commission looking at the impact on children and highway safety concludes. If passed, the law will go into effect July 1, 2018.

**China Trip:** the Superintendents and representatives from our district are taking an all-expense paid trip to China to further investigate the idea of bringing Chinese students into the school system as tuition paying students. This is to help address declining enrollments in the State, as well as diversity. Other schools in the state have had success following this model.

## 10.0. OLD BUSINESS

**Generator:** The Board continues to investigate options for a generator to run the White building. . A purchase of a new generator could run around \$30,000 with the electrical connection costing roughly the same. David Roddy has been working with Heidi on possible grant options to purchase a generator, but there are none available at this time. A suggestion was made to investigate military surplus sites for possible generators, and to discuss the use of fire department generators in the event of an emergency.

**Roof Bid Update:** Bids are currently being accepted for the roof project. Terri arranged a meeting with two contractors this week however only one showed up. There will be additional bids presented at the next Board Meeting.

**Parking Lot Update:** We continue to investigate possible solution to the water problem in the parking lot. We have applied for a couple of grants to help cover the expense of this project; however we have not been awarded any at this time. One alternative solution would be to pump water out of the parking lot to the other side of the railroad tracks into a retention pond.

**Action:** *David Roddy will connect with the land owner to further discuss this possibility.*

**DRAFT**

**Board Vacancies:** Nola Gilbert and David Roddy's terms are up this year, and Connie Beyor is resigning the day after Town Meeting Day with two years remaining on her term.

**11.0. NEW BUSINESS**

**Teacher Professional Leave during School Hours:** Tabled until February meeting.

**Schedule Budget Information Meeting:** The option of combining the Select Board meeting and the School Budget information meeting was discussed and it was decided that considering there are some hot items on each agenda that it would make more sense to have the meetings separate this year. It was decided that Highgate School will hold their budget information meeting on Thursday February 22, 2018 at 7:00 PM.

**12.0. FUTURE BOARD MEETING DATES**

Future Board Meeting Dates

- Highgate Board Meeting – February 8<sup>th</sup>, at 6:30 PM
- FNWSU Board Meeting – February 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:30 at MVU Library (final interviews for new superintendent will take place at this meeting).

**13.0. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

*Action: A motion to move to executive session was made by David Roddy and seconded by Chris Shepard. The Board entered executive session at 9:47 PM to answer the Executive Session Compliance Question "Where premature public knowledge would clearly place the Board or other party at a substantial disadvantage"*

*Vote: 4:0*

Executive session ended at 10:10 PM

The Highgate School Board Meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM

Recorded by: Rebecca Fenn, School Board Secretary  
Submitted in behalf Chris Shepard: School Board Clerk