

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)
MEETING MINUTES
HIGHGATE SCHOOL LIBRARY
May 1, 2019
6:30 PM

Present: Transition Board members: Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Board Clerk, Meaghan Conly (Swanton), Don Collins (Swanton), Eric Beauregard (Franklin), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Steve Scott (Highgate)

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Becky Hart, Finance Manager, Tania Hayes, Director of Special Education, Robert Gervais, Director of Technology, School Administrators: Jay Hartman, Dan Palmer, Jen Desorgher, Pat Hartnett, Joyce Hakey, Dena St. Amour and Justina Jennett. Channel 15/16 cameraperson. Community Members: Denis Boucher

Call the Meeting to Order- Julie Regimbal called the meeting to order at 6:34pm.

Agenda Amendments- Julie has a revised agenda. She has added the pledge, annual motions, fiscal warrant process, municipal retirement plan, process for filling board seats, budget vote.

Board Organization Nomination for Board Chair

Julie requested nominations for the board chair. Don Collins nominated Chris Shepard, seconded by Devin Bachelder. The board approved 5-0 vote.

Nomination for Board Vice Chair

Chris requested nominations for the vice chair.

Steve Scott nominated Don Collins, seconded by Devin Bachelder. The Board approved 5-0 vote.

Nomination for Board Clerk

Don Collins nominated Devin Bachelder, seconded by Eric Beauregard. Steve Scott nominated Meaghan Conly, seconded by Devin Bachelder. Devin requested to remove his name if Meaghan will accept the position. Don Collins and Eric Beauregard rescinded their nomination of Devin Bachelder. The board approved Meaghan Conly on a 5-0 vote.

Authorization of Board Chair to sign contracts and grants.

Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to authorize the board chair to sign contracts and grants. The board approved 5-0 vote.

Set Date and time of regular board meetings

Julie recommended that they have two board meetings a month initially and perhaps as the business of the new merged district starts to diminish, we could go to one board meeting a month. There is a lot of policy work to do and organizational work. Franklin Northwest currently meets on the first Wednesday of the month. Don Collins stated that Wednesday was not a good night of the week

for him. After a short discussion, the board arrived on Tuesday as a good meeting evening. Devin Bachelder moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to meet on the first and third Tuesday of every month at 6:30pm. The board voted on a 5-0 vote.

Appoint a finance committee

Julie recommends that two people be on the finance committee. Lora explained that it would be a similar process to what we do now. Handling everything in a timely fashion. The finance committee will need to come in once a week or every two weeks to review the bills and approve for payment. The check warrants with the breakdown of the bills attached would be brought to the board meeting for their approval. There may be some other business functions. Steve asked if this could wait until the other three board members came on. Lora responded that they needed to get some business completed and would like the board to nominate a temporary committee until we have a full member board. Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Don Collins to nominate Devin Bachelder and Steve Scott as a temporary finance committee. The board approved on a 5-0 vote.

Appoint a Negotiations Committee

Julie stated that this can wait for the full 9 member board. They will need to exchange letters soon. They could table the negotiations committee for now but typically there is someone serving from each town.

Annual Motions for Consideration

Julie explained that the Supervisory Union board would approve some annual motions needed to process grants, some business functions and facilitate an efficient process to conduct business.

Motion:

1. *Don Collins moved , seconded by Eric Beaugard to authorize MVSD administration to seek grants on behalf of the district. Additionally, to be in compliance with IDEA-B regulations, the Board accepts the terms under federal law as outlined in LEAP (FY2020 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, Part B Basic and Preschool Flow-Through). The board voted 5-0.*

Discussion: The board wanted to authorize the vice chair in addition to the chair to sign contracts and grants if the chair was not available to do so. Motion:

2. *Steve Scott moved, seconded by Eric Beaugard to authorize the MVSD Vice Chair to sign contracts, federal, state and other grants. Approved 5-0*

Motion:

3. *Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to authorize the MVSD Finance Committee to approve bills, as needed, outside of a regularly scheduled board meeting and the Treasurer to sign checks following that approval. In the event that the committee is not available, authorize the MVSD administration to process expenditures to maintain timely payment of grant and budgetary expenditures. Approved 5-0*

4. Motion: *Don Collins moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard to authorize the MVSD administration to process recurring and/or contracted budgetary expenditures outside of MVSD board meetings to maintain timely payment of recurring and/or contracted expenditures. (electric, heating and fuel, internet and phone, transportation, food service, leases)* Lora explained that sometimes the district receives the utility or other recurring bills shortly after the board or committee approves the bill and this is an area that covers utility bills, food service leases, transportation for example that comes in monthly covered by already approved contract resulting in a late payment fee.

Motion Revised: Don changed his motion to omit the (examples of electric, heating, ...), seconded by Eric Beauregard so that the motion now reads to authorize the MVSD administration to process recurring and/or contracted budgetary expenditures outside of MVSD board meetings to maintain timely payment of recurring and/or contracted expenditures. Approved 5-0

5. Motion:

Steve Scott moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to authorize the MVSD administration to solicit interest rates and bank account information from banks for the new district operating account and other necessary bank accounts and authorize the administration to award the account in what is deemed as in the best interest of the school district. To Authorize the Board to sign the bank account documents when prepared. Approved 5-0

Correspondence and Public Comments

The board introduced themselves along with the principals and administration in attendance.

Public Comment

Denis Boucher congratulated everyone on the board on their recent elections and appreciates everyone stepping up to serve on the board.

Julie Regimbal reported to the board that she received correspondence from a Franklin citizen. Chris stated that a response was not needed at this time. Devin would like the whole board to hear the legal counsel's response.

Transition Framework Update

Julie Regimbal stated that there is a number of different tasks that have to be completed between now and July 1st. She showed the board a transition timeline that she has been working on that shows the business functions, Human Resource and Legal functions that have to be done to transition to a merged district. She will be breaking it down to what needs to be done immediately, in the next 30 day period, the next 60 day period and things that have to happen but can wait. For example, they have obtained a federal ID # but still need to obtain new State ID numbers, open a bank account. She will mark an X next to things that have been

done, put an IP for items in progress and will try to color code everything so that the board can see the updates and progress. Other items needed is the SAM number to obtain grants, Duns number, meet with the district clerk and treasurer, discuss with the Association regarding the union and non union employees, teachers' retirement along with ID's etc., process I 9's and W 4's for all employees, new domain name, temporary website, new emails etc. Julie stated that they are doing all this work and started right now. Don asked about summer pays. Julie said that they are working with the Association on this.

Fiscal

Lora McAllister and Becky Hart handed out the merged MVSD budget for the board's review. Lora reported that they merged the columns but it is the same total budget that the temporary transition board saw on April 20th. They isolated that school based and the MVSD based expenses. No one has made any changes from what the transition board saw to now. The tax rate impact will be the same per town prior to the CLA (Common Level Appraisal) adjustment. The tax rate for each town is 1.42 and then the CLA must be applied. The tax rate increase for each town is as follows: Franklin 9.3, Highgate 8.5, and Swanton 10.5. Julie stated that she thinks that June 4th may be too quick turn around so looking at a June 11th proposed budget vote date. She asked for direction if the board members are not comfortable with the tax rate. She could do something with the administration if the board wanted. She needed the board member's thoughts on the MVSD budget because only the transition board has seen it as a total package. Each board member expressed their comfort level with the budget but wanted to wait until their next scheduled meeting on Monday to approve it. If any board member wants to provide any input, please contact Lora prior to Monday evening.

New Business:

Municipal Retirement

Julie Regimbal explained that with merging into a new entity, Missisquoi Valley School District, effective July 1, 2019, we must make a determination on whether or not we wish to continue offering Municipal Retirement and if so, do we wish to offer Group A to all eligible employees. Most employees belong to Group A and if one wished to contribute more to retirement, all employees can participate in a 403 b plan. There is no employer match for a 403b contribution.

Does the MVSD School Board wish to participate in Vermont Municipal Retirement System? (VMERS) *Steve Scott moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard for MVSD to continue to participate in VMERS. Board voted 5-0*

If yes, does the board move to offer all eligible permanent employees hired on or after July 1, 2019, Group A Municipal Retirement Plan. All current employees on Group B and C will remain in their present group.

Motion: Don Collins moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to offer Group A Vermont Municipal Retirement Plan to all MVSD eligible permanent employees hired on or

after July 1, 2019 with all current employees on Group B and C remaining in their present group.

Discussion: Devin asked what is the difference between Group A, B and C. Pierrette explained the employee and employer contributions for each Group. Group B and C require a higher contribution not only from the employer but also for the employee. Some employees who are hired and belong to Group B and C have expressed concerns regarding the affordability of their contribution. Group B and C will receive a higher monthly income when they eventually retire.

Motion Approved: The board approved the motion to approve Group A on a 5-0 vote.

Process for Fill Board Member Seats

Julie asked how the board wanted to fill the board member seat for the three additional board members now that the articles have passed. There has been some push back on appointing the board seats. Eric Beauregard stated that the Articles of Agreement say that we will vote for them so he would like to see them elected and voted by the electorate. Don Collins said that he went to the polls as a candidate and thinks that they should go through the election process. Eric said that it is a brand new board with a fresh start and should put our best foot forward and we should vote for them. There will need to be at least one petition from each town. Meaghan Conly asked what will happen if no one submits a petition from one of the towns. Julie responded that a candidate could win via a write in campaign or the board could appoint someone because at this point it would be a vacancy. She will make the petitions available at our office, on Face book and at the Town Clerk's offices. They will vote for the school directors on the same date as the FY 20 budget.

Set Date of the FY20 Budget Vote

Julie stated that the target date for the FY 20 Budget is on June 11th. The board members were comfortable with this date.

Review items to be warned and possible Approval

Julie said that they will bring the Warning to the next board meeting on May 6th for the board's review and approval.

Legislative Update

Merger Delay: Julie reported that the merger delay is in conference committee and they are not agreeing on a compromise. They are dissolving the committees and reappointing a new committee. The legislature will need to put in place a default budget legislation. They are putting pressure on one another.

Next Meeting Date

The board decided to meet on May 6th at 6:30pm at MVU.

Anticipated Executive Session

None

Adjournment

Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Eric Beauregard to adjourn at 7:52pm.

The board approved 5-0 vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary