

MISSISQUOI VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD (MVSD)
MEETING MINUTES
MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION MIDDLE/HIGH
SCHOOL LIBRARY
November 5, 2019
6:30 PM

Present: Board members: Board Chairperson, Chris Shepard (Highgate), Vice Chair, Don Collins (Swanton), Terri O'Shea (Swanton), Meaghan Conly Board Clerk, (Swanton), Steve Scott (Highgate), Jen Chevalier (Highgate), Devin Bachelder, (Franklin), Eric Beauregard, (Franklin) (Absent from the meeting: Peter Magnant (Franklin))

Others Present: Julie Regimbal, Superintendent of Schools, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, Dena St. Amour, Principal of Swanton, Jay Hartman, Principal of MVU, Dan Palmer, Principal of MVU Middle School, Jen Desorgher, MVU Curriculum Coordinator, Michael Cain, Jamie Ste Marie, Nate Poore, Roberta Franolich, Joe Franolich, Christopher Beaulieu, John Lumsden, Wendy Cunningham, Kosha Patel, Tania Hayes, Tyler Meigs, Jay Denault, Channel 15/16 Cameraperson and Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary

Call the Meeting to Order- Chris Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:31pm.

Agenda Amendments- Chris Shepard added the financial report to Old Business

Correspondence and Public Comments

Chris Shepard stated that they received a letter from Tobias Maguire regarding administration to student ratio. Julie Regimbal will be reporting that she will have a student enrollment report this evening.

Consent Agenda

Approval of the Minutes

Action: *Devin Bachelder moved, seconded by Steve Scott to approve the October 15, 2019 meeting minutes as revised with a first name spelling change to a letter received from a former student. The board approved the minutes on an 8-0 vote.*

MVU Field Studies Presentation

Jeff Benay explained that the MVU Field Studies Program started about six years ago as an experiential outdoor program. Nate Poore and Jamie Ste Marie are co-teachers in the field studies program. Christopher Beaulieu, a student of the MVU Field Studies Program, reported on the positive impact participating in the program had on him. Michael Cain, a consultant to the outdoor education program, reported

that 15 students have graduated from this program. These students were at risk of not graduating and these hands on adventure-based outdoor education program students focus on learning by doing. Nate and Jamie explained some of the activities that they have done with the program such as electro sampling trout, community service activities such as creating the Swanton Elementary Outdoor Classroom. Academics are incorporated into the experience.

MVU Administrative Reports

Early College

Tyler Meigs, MVU Director of Guidance, reported on the Early College Program. They partner with six colleges/universities. When a student applies and has been accepted, they are dis-enrolled from the high school, and are enrolled as a full time student at the college. The Agency of Education covers the college tuition. All other college costs such room and board, applicable fees and textbook costs are the student's responsibility. The MVU students hear about the program through individual appointments with guidance counselors, T-Bird Time sessions, Parent/Student Information Nights, presentations in Career Exploration class, available handouts in Guidance and parent/teacher conferences and word of mouth. The students enrolled in the Early College program are eligible to apply for any scholarships available to MVU students except for the Tyler Place Award based on ranking/GPA calculation. There is a difference in enrolling in Early College Programs that is funded through the Agency of Education and attending or taking college classes early. A student can enroll in a continuing education program such as at UVM which is a fee based program with tuition at half the cost. Some students have explored and participated in this option.

Athletic Director Report

John Lumsden, MVU Athletic Director, reported that there were 301 athletes that participated in the MVU Fall Athletic Program compared to 313 last fall season. John started the season with a BBQ in August. Rick Farnham, retired UVM Athletic Director, presented a hazing, harassment and bullying presentation to the students and parents. Rick returned later in August to present to the Middle School Athletes. I discussed the expectations of academics and behavior prior to the first day of practice. Several events were organized such as a Jay Peak Jamboree, Cross Country Meet at Hard'ack and homecoming week that involved several night games, a parade down Canada Street culminating with a dance and fireworks. Both the high school and middle school participated in fall sports award nights with several athletes being recognized as "Athlete in the Week". We have a new athletic trainer who has performed 102 evaluations including cuts, sprains and strains. Winter signup has begun. There is a winter coaches meeting tomorrow where Rick Farnham and John will cover questions such as what is a coach, why do I coach, why do I coach they way I do, what does it feel like to be coached by me, and how do I define success? Steve Messier will present Legal and Ethical responsibilities of coaching. Coaches will participate in CPR/AED training. The football program has been moved to a JV status with 11 freshman, 11 sophomores, 3 juniors and 4 seniors on the team. They are

recommending continuing at a JV status for another year. They did some fundraisers to purchase shirts and warm up clothing for the football players. The Middle School Baseball field has greatly improved by adding 44 yards of ball field mixture on the infield, rebuilding of the pitcher's mound and home plate area. Eight MVU Student athletes, Dan Palmer and John participated in the Vermont Leadership Sports Conference in Burlington. John thanked everyone for their continued support of MVU Athletics and Activities Program.

Central Office Updates

Julie Regimbal shared the October enrollment data for each school. She explained that in Franklin County, the student enrollment has been holding to increasing by 10 percent as families move to the area because it is within Chittenden County commute and more affordable. Meaghan wants to make sure that staffing equity continues amongst schools.

Abenaki Flag Raising

Jeff Benay explained that a few years ago, the Abenaki Flag was raised at MVU and it meant so much. Jeff has approached the Elementary School Principals to raise the flag at their schools and it was well received. They are planning to raise the flag at all three elementary schools on November 18th with the Circle of Courage students drumming and then raising the flag. November is Native American Month and everyone is invited to attend. They will start in Swanton, move on to Highgate and then to Franklin. The times have not been set yet. Jeff went on to report that the Circle of Courage has 52 kids coming from 3 to 5:30pm three days a week to attend their program. This is a fantastic program experience and all students are invited to attend.

Action: Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to support the Abenaki Flag being raised at the Elementary Schools. The board approved the motion on an 8-0 vote.

Early Childhood Program Update

Wendy Cunningham thanked the Early Childhood Program teacher in Franklin for putting together a slide presentation for the board. At the end of the presentation, it shows that play is purposeful. The Vermont Early Childhood learning standards shows intentional play provides learning opportunities for young children.

Tania Hayes reported that the Special Education student numbers are pretty consistent as compared to last year.

New Business

School Choice

Julie Regimbal went over the changes that she made in the policy regarding the siblings and transportation based on input. Julie sent out a survey to board members and administrators. Suggestions were made to change offer students the option to enroll change to request the option to enroll in a school of their choice within the

District. It was clarified that the Superintendent has the final say however, if the Superintendent misapplies the policy, then an appeal can be made to the school board. Eric Beauregard asked about the needs of the student and looking at factors beyond the numbers in the classroom but also looking at the capacity due to needs of students in the room. It was suggested that transportation will be provided for students attending school within one's town of residence outside of the village limits (where transportation is not currently being provided for any student.)

Transportation will be decided by the administration. She changed the siblings entering school will be given priority in the school choice process. The board discussed the pros and cons and possibly changing priority to consideration. Board members discussed the hardship of having siblings in different schools especially with different schedules, establishing relationships with school staff, siblings looking out for one another, older siblings caring for the younger sibling should school be dismissed early or school closure. Other board members discussed other students who may have left and want to return, if they want school choice, they should move in the town of residence of the school they want to attend. Don Collins stated that it is important to have a policy so that requests for attending other schools can be responded with a process. Chris Shepard asked for a straw poll of those who want to keep siblings given priority in the school choice process or not. The poll was tied at 3 to 3. Terri O'Shea would like to leave it to administration to decide about the siblings. Clarification was provided that the school choice does not apply to nonresident students. This policy does not apply to pre-school students because there is already a provision in the law. The procedure will be available on the website and families must apply by March 1st. Terri O'Shea requested that they add siblings will be given priority when feasible. Chris asked for another straw poll. Siblings be given priority received 4 board members raised their hand, siblings be given priority when feasible received 3 board members raised their hand and striking out the sentence entirely from the policy, 1 board member raised their hand. Jay Denault commented that this policy will serve its purpose for now but it the goal of Act 46/49 is to create specialized schools such as a K-6 pathway, then it will not work indefinitely.

Julie explained that the decisions will be made by blind applications so that the student/family will not be known until after the decision has been made. She said that if any part of the policy becomes problematic after adoption, she can come back to the board for revisions.

Warrants

Steve Scott reported that the following check warrants were made for the month of October 2019: Accounts Payable \$665,692.44, Payroll Checks \$72,229.67, Payroll other disbursements \$1,458,063.27 and payroll deductions \$366,478.34 for a total of \$2,562,463.72. Meaghan Conly moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve check warrants totaling \$2,562,463.72. The board approved on an 8-0 vote.

Financial Reports

Lora McAllister distributed a financial report to the board. She has to had to shift lines to coincide with object codes. They are charging less to Special Education such as supplies because they are considered general education expenses. Julie explained that they are dis-allowing supplies, teachers' computers etc during Special Education audits as they are not specific to a Special Education expense as we spend on these items for general education students. This results in less Special Education revenues which will affect our bottom line. Lora has been asking administrators to encumber as much as they can on what they are anticipating to spend in their schools so that we can determine our expenses within the budget. Don asked who is making the decisions if a line is overspent and where the money will come from. Julie explained that administrators and Central Office are making these decisions. You are allowed to move line item dollars amount as long as you are staying within the budget. Don stated if something significant should happen, he feels the board should be involved. Lora said that at this time, they have not had to make those tough decisions. Her biggest concern right now is less Special Education revenue than what was anticipated.

Highgate Plowing and Snow Removal Bids

Lora followed up with all the contractors who bid on the Highgate School plowing and snow removal requesting a list of equipment, list of references and their numbers for a salt only bid versus a salt/sand mix. There was no change with the CCR bid, Dick's Construction salt/sand mix is \$13,500/salt only \$21,000, RM Property \$14,000 salt/sand mix and \$15,000 for salt only, Poor Boys bid pure salt at \$15,000.

Action: Don Collins moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to award the bid to RM Property Maintenance for the Highgate School. The board voted 8-0 vote.

Budget Update

Lora has started the budget process with meeting with the principals individually She is approaching the budget differently by discussing staffing; facility needs especially the high ticket items. She and Julie are meeting with the facility directors to discuss short and long term plans, identifying maintenance items and funding them differently than the past. Not looking for line by line budgeting but looking at other models. She will have the Performance Contracting presentation at the next meeting. The schools are part of the Buyers Group and looking for potential savings by buying things together.

Old Business

Negotiations Update

Julie reported that the board committee has had a professional and support staff negotiations committee meetings. She is looking at beginning with support staff in January. The professional negotiations committee has scheduled sessions for December 10th, January 14th, January 28th and February 11th at 6:30pm at MVU.

Other

Dan Palmer expressed his concern regarding truancy. The courts will not try anyone over the age of twelve; it is up to the schools to manage truancy. This will make it more challenging to prevent truancy. Jeff Benay will hopefully update the board in January on truancy.

Jay Hartman stated that the NHS Art is looking to change their New York City trip to May 22nd, 23rd, and 24th.

Future Agenda Items

Truancy, Policies

Next Meeting Date

The board's next meeting is on November 19th at Franklin School Library at 6:30pm.

Anticipated Executive Session:

None

Adjournment

Action: Steve Scott made the motion, seconded by Eric Beauregard to adjourn at 9:27pm. The board approved the vote unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Meaghan Conly, Board Clerk

Submitted by Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary