

TRSU BOARD

Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, September 9, 2019

6:00 p.m.

TRSU, The Roost

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Board: Dan Buckley, Wayne Wheelock, Mary Alberty, Joe Fromberger, Paul Orzechowski

Staff: Meg Powden

Other Board Members: Rick Alexander, Mike Studin

Public: Shawn Cunningham, Sharon Huntley, Margo Caufield

Mr. Orzechowski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He invited the board members to introduce themselves.

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Buckley **moved** to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

IV. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Open Meeting Law-Correction of Errors

Mr. Orzechowski noted that there were allegations of open meeting law violations on December 6, 2018, February 7, 2019 and March 27, 2019.

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** that the TRSU Board acknowledges an inadvertent violation entering into Executive Session on December 6, 2018 to discuss three items, (1) Compensation for Sick Days, (2) A Retirement Request, (3) Teacher and Support Staff Negotiations, with the understanding the board cured the violation at a previous board meeting held on June 6, 2019 by participating in a training provided by Sue Ceglowski of the Vermont School Boards' Association. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** that the TRSU Board acknowledges an inadvertent violation entering into Executive Session on February 7, 2019 to discuss the Superintendent's contract with the understanding the board cured the violation at a previous board meeting held on June 6, 2019 by participating in a training provided by Sue Ceglowski of the Vermont School Boards' Association. There was discussion that this motion acknowledges the error made by entering the executive session in an improper way. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** to ratify the action of the Board on February 7, 2019 to approve offering a 2-year contract to Ms. Powden. There was discussion about whether that contract is valid since the board entered into executive session illegally. Mr. Fromberger noted that the contract is in force since the board agreed to offer the contract in open session and has since been signed. The issue is with how the board entered executive session, not the legality of the contract. There was discussion about the action having been taken in open session and they need to correct the format in which they took the action, not the action itself.

Mr. Studin questioned if there is an option to modify the contract. Mr. Fromberger noted that this board can ratify the action, rescind it or adopt it in a modified form. He felt that he was not inclined to void a contract that was in force. Mr. Orzechowski noted that that title 1 section 314 section 4(A) indicates that they can ratify or void the action, but if they void it, they would want to make a substitution. Mr. Buckley noted that he objects to the two-year contract because they now have a job description and evaluation process. The two-year contract essentially nullifies the evaluation process for the next year because they can't change it. He felt that if they have a one-year contract, they can use the evaluation procedure prior to the 2nd year. They didn't have the evaluation process in place prior to approving the 2-year contract. There was discussion about the board still being able to use the evaluation process even with a 2-year contract. Mr. Studin noted that there was a lot of angst with the approval because it was approved prior to the evaluation process being approved. He felt that they now have the opportunity to implement the evaluation process and felt they should use it. He noted that they can act on the results of the evaluation process. He felt that if, after doing the evaluation, they felt that this is a relationship that they didn't want to continue, they can't do anything until the 2nd year is up. Mr. Orzechowski noted that he felt that the two-year contract was approved because this is the first time that they really have to evaluate her position as a superintendent, whereas her time prior to this contract has been spent primarily on Act 46 work. There was discussion about not speaking about information discussed in executive session.

Mr. Alexander suggested that as a manager, this board should consider evaluating any employee year over year. Mr. Fromberger noted that that is the intent of the evaluation tool—to evaluate each year. Mr. Studin noted that he is frustrated by the administration, especially as a board member. He felt that the SU is in disarray and advised that there are several lawsuits going on with the GMUSD; they are \$73,000 over-budget with the hot lunch budget; there have been errors with the bus contracts; and he felt that this starts at the top and they have the opportunity to evaluate year over year. Mr. Orzechowski noted that the LMH board is not currently having any issues with the administration. Ms. Alberty noted that LMH has a school closure coming up and Ms. Powden has helped tremendously.

Ms. Powden noted that she is offended by Mr. Studin's comments and felt that the SU is not in disarray. She is proud of the work done by the SU.

The motion carried with 3 votes in favor, 2 opposed with Mr. Fromberger and Mr. Buckley opposing.

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** that the TRSU Board acknowledges an inadvertent violation entering into Executive Session on March 27, 2019 to discuss Negotiations for non-Bargaining staff including staff and administrator salaries with the understanding the board cured the violation at a previous board meeting held on June 6, 2019 by participating in a training provided by Sue Ceglowski of the Vermont School Boards' Association. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** to ratify the action of the Board on March 27, 2019 to increase non-bargaining staff salary by 2.75%, to increase Ms. Baker's salary to \$63,376.00 and Ms. Powden's salary to \$134,194.00. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orzechowski noted that going forward there will be information stated on the agenda and the board will do what they are being trained to do. The public will also know what the reason is for entering executive session. Mr. Buckley suggested that they not use executive session as much as they have in the past unless absolutely necessary. Ms. Powden noted that these were all valid

reasons for entering executive session. The board members discussed making sure that they are doing it correctly in the future.

V. NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting will be Thursday, October 3, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at Mt. Holly School.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Orzechowski **moved** to adjourn at 6:21 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary