

GMUSD
Special Meeting
CAES Library
Monday, April 30, 2018
6:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Board: Doug McBride, Kate Lamphere, Joe Fromberger, Fred Marin, Jeff Hance, Marilyn Mahusky, Kathy Muther, Erin Lamson
Staff: Meg Powden, Mike Ripley, Wendy Schultz, Katherine Fogg, Zoe Lirakis, Jenn Harper, Ellen Cameron, Sue Willis, Robin Bebo-Long
Public: Shawn Cunningham, Kathy Goodell, Gene Bont, Catherine Balch, Wayne Wheelock, Sharon Huntley, Bill Dakin, Barbara Dickey, Margo Caulfield, Sara Stowell, Leigh Dakin, Lisa Marks, Denise Hughes, Trevor Barlow, Denise Hughes, Christine Balch

Ms. Mahusky called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the agenda. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comments:

Ms. Denise Hughes presented some information on the hiring process. She noted that there were a group of people who met after the interview process, and compiled a petition asking residents if they would like to have a full time principal instead of an interim principal. They have had over 300 people in support of a full time permanent position. She felt that the names and the volume of response will make it clear what the community wants. Her petition showed a breakdown of the signatures. She also read aloud a letter from a Chester community member. She asked the board to consider voting on changing the position. Ms. Kathy Goodell a former teacher and a current substitute noted her concerns with an interim principal not having a vested interest in the community. She has worked for both full time and interim principals and there is a difference. Mr. Trevor Barlow echoed the sentiments of the online survey and felt that a strong school starts with a committed leader. Ms. Susan Willis noted her concern that the candidates are hearing the public, but the board is not. She felt that the candidates declined the positions because they understood that the community didn't want them. Ms. Mahusky noted that only one candidate was offered the position and declined.

Ms. Sara Stowell noted that they were able to garner the representatives from Windsor county and Cavendish in addition to community members.

IV. NEW BUSINESS:

Ms. Mahusky noted that an email was sent to Ms. Powden that she consider changing the position to a permanent full time position. There was also a CTES meeting where the CTES members voted to recommend to the GMUUSD board that they change the position to a permanent full time position. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to consider the options. She recalled the members of the search committee presented candidate to the community. They asked for feedback from the community forum and this board interviewed the one candidate that remained at that point and many of the comments were favorable to the remaining candidate. The board, after deliberation, offered the position to a candidate who declined the position the next day.

At this point the board has 3 options—they can consider internal candidates, they can post the position as a permanent full time position, or they can repost as an interim position.

Ms. McBride felt that it is magnificent that the community has voiced their opinions. He noted that currently the AOE is putting together forums to encourage community involvement and this is a great sign for the district to have community members sharing their opinions.

Mr. Fromberger read from Article 12 from the GMUSD Articles of Agreement. It says, in part, that this board will have the authority to plan for the education, provided that the exercise of the board shall not be construed to limit the authority of the existing school districts. He felt that it means that the petition is misdirected. It should be directed to the CTES board as they are the authority that decides what type of principal position they will decide on. He felt that it is this board's position to support the current board's authority.

Ms. Mahusky noted that after the CTES board voted to recommend to this board to reconsider this board's decision, Ms. Powden conferred with legal counsel and they advised that this board has the authority to hire for this position. Ms. Mahusky felt that this board should be consistent and make the decision in consideration of the request.

Ms. Lisa Marks noted that the longer this board waits, the fewer candidates there will be. There was discussion about the CTES board giving its opinion, but not asserting its authority. Mr. McBride noted that he felt that if this board were to approve posting a position for a full time principal, would be affirmed by the CTES board, but he acknowledged that he can't speak for the board. Mr. Marin felt that it became an issue because it wasn't clear who made the decision to post the position as an interim position. Because the GMUSD board handled the interview, it appeared that that board also would be responsible for the position.

Mr. Marin also noted that even if they did hire a full time permanent principal, the contract is still only for one year, so if the person is not ideal for CTES, this board can

choose not to offer another contract to that person. Ms. Mahusky noted that during the budget discussions, there had been a discussion about the two elementary schools having one principal who would focus on the academic leadership, with 2 deans who would be responsible for the daily operations of the school. That plan didn't make it past budget discussions. The next plan was to hire an interim principal to give this board time to consider the administrative structure.

Ms. Lamson **moved** to hire a full time permanent principal. Ms. Lamphere seconded. Mr. McBride felt that the board could encourage internal candidates to apply for the position. There was clarification that the dean of students' positions were already removed from the budget process. If this motion passes, there would be 3 principals—one at each school. Ms. Lamphere noted that this is a time of flux and having highly qualified leadership at each school is helpful. The motion carried with one vote in opposition.

Ms. Mahusky requested that the position be posted in School Spring as soon as possible and reconvene the hiring committee. Mr. Barlow questioned if the legal position should be shared before the vote. Ms. Powden noted that it was clarified via a telephone call, but Mr. Fromberger had requested a written legal opinion. There was discussion about where to post the position—School Spring, Linked In, and other online sources. Ms. Balch questioned the motion being a permanent position. Ms. Powden clarified that it was a permanent position in the motion but the person is issued a one year contract.

Ms. Willis noted that the board needs to consider that the budget was voted down because of the allocation of the funds. There was discussion about timeframe for the committee, beginning with the resume consideration, initial interviews, community forum, and then final interviews. Mr. McBride will serve if needed. Ms. Mahusky noted that she will add this committee to the next agenda to get board members.

Ms. Robin Bebo-Long questioned if the budgeted principal salary is the mean VT principal salary. Ms. Powden noted that they looked at an average beginning principal salary but noted that adjustments can be made in the budget. Ms. Powden noted that the qualified candidates are able to be seen by the search committee, but she weeds out the unqualified candidates.

Ms. Stowell noted that the hiring committee should have their responsibilities outlined to them and the process should be clear that the hiring committee can choose not to make a recommendation if they didn't feel they didn't have the proper candidates. Ms. Powden noted that prior to the search committee being seated she sent an email to the committee members letting them know that their goal was to bring 2 equally qualified candidates to the board for consideration.

Ms. Leigh Dakin questioned if the search committee ever includes a vested community member. Ms. Mahusky noted that some search committees have community members and some do not. Ms. Powden invited interested community members to let her know if they want to serve.

Ms. Christine Balch felt uneasy that the members of the search committee don't always have the access to the initial round of candidates. Ms. Mahusky noted that there are a lot of candidates who apply who aren't qualified and lack the necessary credentials. She noted that they are relying on the administration's expertise which is what they hire them for.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. TRSU Board Representatives

Ms. Mahusky noted that the board had had discussions about the TRSU membership but hadn't actually held a vote. Ms. Powden needs this in order to apply for a waiver with the state board of education to be able to form the new TRSU board. There was discussion about the representation given that the districts are different sizes. Ms. Powden noted that the statute states that the TRSU board is made up of 3 members from each operating district. Mr. Fromberger noted that this state law is the same one that gave the current TRSU board 22 board members. He offered a suggestion that this board appoint alternates in case one of the 3 votes they have can't be present. He suggested that the LMH board do the same thing. He suggested that the board authorize the alternates to exercise a vote. Mr. Fromberger noted that this has to be agreed upon by both districts. Ms. Powden will double check this information and report on this at the beginning of the next meeting. If an alternate is allowed, this board can appoint one at the next meeting.

Ms. Stowell noted that since there is representation on the board from each town, but this doesn't necessarily speak for the voice of the community. She asked if the board will be appointing someone who will vote in a unified manner or who will vote their conscience. She asked if the community members could ask the GMUSD board to make a collective decision and have their representatives share that decision.

Ms. Mahusky noted that she has served on the TRSU board and has never made a decision based on serving on the CAES board. She felt that they are making decisions for all of the children of all the communities. She noted that if the community members want to influence the decisions they can speak at the meetings as has been done here tonight and in recent months. The board has been responsive to the feedback they have received from the community, and they try to represent their communities as best they can for the good of the community. Ms. Stowell noted that this still means that the community doesn't have the voice on the TRSU board. Ms. Mahusky noted that everyone is welcome to attend the TRSU meetings. She felt that the feedback at the TRSU meetings was critical. She suggested that if the community wanted the TRSU budget process changed, they could approach their representatives and senators.

Mr. McBride questioned if there is a background check performed and who/when is it done. Ms. Powden noted that the HR director, Ms. Hudkins performs these after the position is offered to a candidate.

Mr. McBride noted that the legislature is discussing imposing a student:staff ratio and discussing possible changes to the special education reimbursement process. He suggested that this board should plan in advance for those possible changes. He felt that the board should be paying attention to those items.

Mr. Marin, Mr. McBride, Mr. Fromberger and Ms. Mahusky are all willing to serve and Ms. Lamphere is willing to serve as an alternate. Mr. Fromberger felt that he, Mr. Marin and Ms. Mahusky should serve on the TRSU board. Mr. McBride suggested that the chair person should definitely be on the board. Ms. Lamson **moved** to appoint 4 people for consideration to the TRSU board, with one of those four people to be named as the alternate who would be voted on by paper ballot. Ms. Lamphere seconded. Mr. McBride will be the alternate. Ms. Lamson **nominated** Ms. Mahusky, Mr. Fromberger, and Mr. Marin as the TRSU board members. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried without opposition.

VI. NEXT MEETING DATES/AGENDA ITEMS:

The next meeting and all other May special meetings will be held at GMUHS. The next meeting will be held on May 8, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Marin **moved** to adjourn at 7:33 p.m. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary