

Green Mountain Unified School District
Board
Tuesday, May 8, 2018
GMUHS Library Learning Common
6:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER:

Board: Joseph Fromberger, Kate Lamphere, Fred Marin, Marilyn Mahusky, Jeff Hance, Doug McBride
Staff: Meg Powden, George Thomson, Mike Ripley, Mary Barton, Leigh Dakin, Peggy Roberts, Kathryn Fogg,
Jenn Harper, Michael Eppolito, Laurie Birmingham
Public: Wayne Wheelock, Lee Gustafson

Ms. Mahusky called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of discussion of the public informational hearing on May 16 and discussion of budget review. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion to approve the agenda carried with no opposition.

III. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. April 17, 2018 Regular Meeting

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the minutes of the April 17, 2018 minutes with corrections. Ms. Lamphere seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

B. April 30, 2018 Special Meeting

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2018 meeting. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comments

None.

B. Board Comments

Ms. Mahusky reported that Ms. Fleming has resigned her position from the board effective immediately due to her other personal commitments. The board will need to notify the town and post the vacancy on the GMUSD board for a Chester resident. Ms. Powden will notify the VT Journal and the Telegraph. Ms. Mahusky will send Julie Hance a letter advising the town. They can then appoint a replacement at the June meeting.

The board thanked her for her many years of service on the CAES and GMUSD boards as well as many committees. The board requested that Ms. Mahusky send her a letter thanking her for her service. Mr. McBride noted that having people on the board who have the historical knowledge of the schools and boards has great value.

Mr. Fromberger questioned where the transportation study stands at this point and where the written legal opinion stands. Ms. Powden noted that she has requested both and has yet to receive them. They were added to the next agenda.

Mr. McBride noted that he didn't feel that the board is doing a great job publicizing the upcoming events, such as the budget vote.

V. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Public Relations Update re: Budget

Ms. Lamphere noted that Ms. Fleming was planning to draft a letter to the editor about the upcoming vote. Ms. Mahusky noted that she had done that, but it is still in draft format. She reported that Ms. Fleming had also created the flier to be sent out. There was a question about whether this flier would be sent home with every family or how they would be distributed, such as mailing or posting in the various news outlets. Ms. Mahusky read the press release aloud to the audience (present and television). She noted that the educational

spending is a slightly higher amount than the CAES and GMUHS educational spending for the current year, but reflects a savings compared to the CTES educational spending for the current year.

Ms. Lamphere suggested some corrections to the flier—CTE should be CTES, and 3/4 teacher should be clarified as a grade 3 and 4 teacher. Ms. Fogg noted that this position will actually be a 3rd grade teacher. There was discussion about these fliers being corrected before being sent out. Mr. Fromberger also suggested clarifying what PBIS stands for. There was discussion about what STEAM stands for. Ms. Lamphere requested that the fliers be corrected before getting sent out. Ms. Harper also suggested that the part time positions be listed as such. Ms. Mahusky suggested approaching Ms. Baker and Ms. Fleming to get the highlights of the PR meeting to update the form. There was discussion about the manner in which school notifications are sent to families (electronic or paper), and seeking a preference from individuals.

Mr. McBride suggested that all registered voters need to see this information. Ms. Mahusky suggested that they mail the flier which references where to get the budget—online or call for a copy to be mailed. There was discussion about sending out robocalls, twitter, and Facebook in addition to the fliers being sent to the Chester Telegraph and VT Journal, and mailing all of the fliers to all the voters. Mr. McBride suggested comparing the internal cost of folding, stuffing and mailing to outsourcing it. Ms. Powden noted that there is a lot turn out of voters in Ludlow and Mt. Holly even though they mailed out the entire budget to all the registered voters in those two towns. Mr. Fromberger discussed the ways that the Andover board has gotten information out to the voters in the past. Mr. Thomson felt that the fliers should be mailed out because Cavendish has always gotten notifications in the mail and the town of Cavendish might feel that this is another change that “the new board” is forcing on them. He suggested waiting a year or two to make the change. He also suggested that if they truly want to get the budget passed, they shouldn’t make such drastic changes. He clarified that he felt that the full budget should be mailed. There was discussion about Chester having only mailed out postcards to say that the budget is available.

There was discussion about the number of registered voters in town to mail the documents to. There was also discussion about mailing the entire packet to the towns that are used to receiving the full packet and keep Chester the same as it has been. Mr. McBride noted that the post office has a service that will just mail to every mailbox. The board discussed whether or not to spend extra funds to mail out a 2nd round of the budget to try to get it passed.

The board consensus was to make the changes to the flier and disseminate the flier and make the budget available at various locations around the towns, as well as posting it in various news outlets and social media formats.

B. Committee Updates

The transportation study will be discussed at the next meeting when the report is received. The facilities committee hasn’t yet had a formal meeting, but Mr. Fromberger, and Mr. Marin will make appointments to visit the 3 schools. They will also notify Mr. Hance and Mr. DesLauriers know these times.

When Ms. Fleming resigned, she offered to continue to be on the finance committee in the future as a public member. The finance committee has not met since the special meeting with the vision committee, who also hasn’t met since that meeting. The committees discussed having a retreat to discuss some future planning with the rest of the TRSU. Ms. Powden noted that Ms. Schmidt requested to re-seat the Innovations in Learning (IIL) committee and she had hoped that they could merge the vision committee into the IIL committee. Ms. Mahusky noted that when Act 46 work started, the IIL committee was put on hold, but a lot of their work went toward the Act 46 study report. Ms. Schmidt is not on the LMH board, but would like to continue to serve on the IIL committee. Ms. Mahusky requested to have a vision committee prior to the next GMUSD meeting on June 12 at CTES.

Ms. Mahusky reported that the food service committee has encountered an issue with the after school program (ASP) food service. They will hold a meeting soon. The policy committee has met and they will be discussing the policies later in the meeting. The bargaining councils have met and will be meeting again soon. Ms. Mahusky requested that Ms. Barr update the committee member list and re-distribute it.

C. Budget Review

Mr. McBride noted that the governor is proposing student:staff ratios and he emailed Ms. Powden to find out if TRSU could get ahead of this and see how they stack up. Mr. McBride noted that the SU office got back to him quickly, but there are still some unknowns with regard to the tech center students and how that feeds into the student:staff ratio. He would like to propose to continue the process of determining the student:staff ratio so if the law comes to be, they know where they are at. He also noted that there are some changes being

proposed with regard to high cost special education needs. He suggested that at some point in the future they could do an analysis of what that would mean to the SU before it actually happens. Ms. Mahusky noted that this change is part of a larger change regarding how special education services are provided. There would then be a block grant to the SU, instead of a reimbursement rate. It is still unclear how the AOE would build in weighting factors, such as poverty and other factors. Part of this change would be to also focus more energy on the multi-tiered system of support and provide interventions earlier in a student's education. Mr. McBride noted that he just wanted the district to stay on top of it so they don't get a large budget surprise. Ms. Mahusky suggested holding a legislative breakfast to stay up on these topics.

Mr. McBride also questioned the special education section of the budget, and if the assessment is the pro-rata share of the special educators and other related services, while the para-educators are actually in the district budget. Ms. Powden confirmed. Mr. McBride noted that there is \$3.4million at the SU level and about 65% of that is assessed to GMUSD (approximately \$2.2 million). Ms. Powden noted that the special education assessment is actually the \$3.4million less the reimbursement revenue, then the district is assessed approximately 65% of that portion. There was also discussion about the intensive reimbursement. Ms. Barton explained that the school receives approximately 58% reimbursement up to \$50,000, then 90% of expenses beyond that. Mr. McBride noted that the way the budget is presented makes it look like the special education expenses are lower than they actually are. Ms. Powden reminded the board about the change that Mr. Adams had explained to the boards about a year or two ago due to the changes in the way that the special education revenue is accounted. Ms. Lamphere noted that the budget is only asking the voters to pay for a certain amount, not the full amount because there are offsetting revenues. Ms. Powden noted that this way of accounting is federally required (or AOE required) and noted that the grants are shown in the same way.

There was discussion about how much is being spent on educating the students and the way that the budget is being presented doesn't necessarily reflect it. Ms. Mahusky suggested that Mr. McBride come to a finance meeting and they can have Ms. Hammond and Ms. Barton explained the funding and budgeting process. Ms. Mahusky noted that none of the special education piece can be cut as they are federally required as part of the students' IEP's. Mr. McBride noted that he is not questioning how much is being spent, but how they are accounting for what is being spent. Mr. McBride felt that he didn't want a tax payer to read the budgets and leave a voter with the impression that less is being spent than what is actually being spent. Mr. McBride questioned if every board member knew how the SU expenses are netted out to the district budgets. Ms. Powden felt that it is an important distinction to make in the budgeting process.

Ms. Mahusky felt that it is important for all board members to feel free to ask questions, particularly of those board members who have the historical knowledge of many years of service. Mr. McBride felt that board members need to be allowed to ask questions. He also asked the board to refrain from calling names or laughing at people when they ask questions so that everyone can get their questions answered. Mr. Gustafson noted that it would be important for him as a tax payer to know how much of the budget is out of the board's (and subsequently the voters') control. Ms. Mahusky suggested that when they begin the budgeting process in the fall, they can begin to address those concerns, and be more proactive and educational. Mr. Gustafson also requested that the tax payers be allowed to attend the legislative breakfast if they hold one

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Student Services

Ms. Barton reported that there are 236 students age 3-21 plus 3 home schooled students. There are 16.6 fte special educators. There are 14.8 1:1 paras, small group 31.2, total paras 46. There are 3 behavior interventionists. She reported on the SLP's in the SU, as well as the occupational therapists. The OT services are paid for by the Idea B grant. There is one .8 fte physical therapist. They consult with various organizations for blind and hearing impaired students. She reported on the early childhood essential educators.

Ms. Barton noted that 7 special education students who are transported by their parents and 9 being transported by a transportation service. IF they had a small bus, with a para, that would cut down on some of the transportation expenses. There are students who attend ODP in Springfield, and those students ride the GM bus. There are resource rooms and programs in all schools, in addition to the learning center at BRHS and Opportunities in Learning at GM. There is also a school to work liaison shared between GM and BRHS. They are also hoping to get a reading interventionist to serve the middle school students. The executive committee also approved holding an Autism Program at LES which will be able to be accessed by all autism students in TRSU so they can be educated in their community. She also noted that the out of district placements tuition range from \$26, 000 to \$77,000. She highlighted some of the programs that TRSU students are sent to in order to meet their needs, such as Kimble Farm and Sheldon Place and others. She reported that based on child count, there are 6 students receiving some form of special education services

from Andover, 9 from Baltimore, 46 from Cavendish, 81 from Chester, 37 from Ludlow, and 44 from Mt. Holly.

The cost drivers causing special education costs to increase over the years are more children with needs and those needs are more complex. She reported on the average state and local expenditures for special education, noting that they have increased by over \$1000 over the last 3 years. Ms. Barton reported on the number of students with each type of disability, including autism, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, blindness, deafness and hearing impaired.

She also reported that based on a report of special educators' time studies throughout the state, the amount of time the special educators spend with the students is about 54% of their time. The rest of the time is spent on collaboration, preparations, meetings, parent communication, travel and paperwork. Ms. Barton reported that twice per year, they have to do time studies and compare them to the IEP's to determine if the activities are allowable under special education. Then that time is reconciled against what the IEP's and reimbursements indicates it should be. She reported on the many tasks that the student services and special educators need to do to remain compliant.

There was discussion about whether the special education transportation was being included in the transportation study. There was discussion about the unpredictability of special education transportation. Ms. Barton noted that they are establishing a committee to try to bring students back from out of district LEAs where possible.

B. Calendar, 2018-2019 Professional Development

Mr. Eppolito reported that he was going to update the board about PBE and Personalized Learning and ask for professional development (PD) time for next year. Mr. Eppolito distributed a PD report and a timeline of the recent professional learning. He discussed the elementary teachers who have been focusing on establishing the basic structures of PBE. They have analyzed 23 performance indicators, and evaluated 21 sets of student work against common criteria. He reported that by May 29, the elementary teachers will have common expectations in argument and explanatory writing. He reported on some of the work that the teachers have done to achieve these goals.

Mr. Eppolito also reported that the high school teachers have been focus on backward design and personalization. They have written 33 modules and 83% of the HS and MS teachers are trained in personalized learning plans. He reported that the high school PBE leadership team has written the proficiency based graduation requirements for the class of 2020, including a capstone project, a portfolio and having met 86 proficiencies throughout their high school career.

Mr. Eppolito shared the timeline for the last 3 years regarding PBE and projected on the professional learning for the upcoming year. He reported they will soon be focusing on aligning a social studies curriculum. There was discussion about when the PBE was due to be completely implemented. Mr. Eppolito noted that at the high school, the major components are defined, the standards are in place. The underlying learning that teachers need to undergo is not yet complete. There was discussion about PBE being the primary focus next year. It will need to be part of daily practice. Mr. Fromberger questioned if the district or the SU will have to report to the state when they have "achieved implementation". Mr. Eppolito reported that the SU has gone through an education quality review and currently that is how the state believes it will track implementation.

Mr. Eppolito presented his proposal on PBE professional learning for the 2018-2019 school year. He explained the broad goals of implementing PLP in LiFT through an advisory program and building a comprehensive curriculum using TRSU's backward design module process. For grades k-5, the teachers will be working on writing and aligning proficiency based social studies curriculum in a curriculum management system. The teachers will cultivate a proficiency mindset through reflection, assessment, feedback, flexibility, backward design and problem solving. He explained the process as it connects to the vision, including nurturing a learning environment that enhances cognitive engagement, providing meaningful feedback so all can achieve, collaborating to assess the impact of our practices on learning, and teaching/modeling empathy compassion, responsibility and respect.

Mr. Eppolito proposed that all the schools have a half day on the first Tuesday of every month, plus the in-service time already on the schedule, one ski day in January, February and March, three days at teacher/team discretion and have additional times for PBE with a July 16-18 conference and a March conference. There was discussion about how this time compares to the current schedule. This proposal will be the third year of

the 1st Tuesdays of the month. There was discussion about not having additional money in the budget for extra time for the teachers.

Mr. Gustafson questioned how many other states are doing PLP's and PBE. Mr. Eppolito reported that it is happening at many schools, such as charter schools. Some states are doing this in their own unique ways, but Vermont is the only state that has written it into the law. Mr. Eppolito noted that the law states that parents must be involved in the process. He explained that the LiFT program helps to facilitate that participation. Mr. Eppolito also outlined some of the ways that the LiFT program shows students what they can do in the future and what would be needed for that. There was discussion about this schedule being challenging for working parents, but there are great after school programs that can connect well with the learning in classrooms. There was discussion about how this time frame compares to years prior to the PBE years. Mr. Eppolito reported that this proposal only adds 5 half days to what the pre-PBE professional learning calendar used to be. Mr. Ripley noted that these days are actually early release days and the students are in the school for over 2/3 of the day.

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to continue with the early release Tuesdays as they have been for the past 2 years as presented by Mr. Eppolito. Mr. Marin seconded. Mr. Marin questioned if there were enough ski days to use those to cover all the professional learning. Ms. Fogg noted that they did that this current year, but didn't have time to work on their own building-based professional learning. Ms. Powden noted that some schools have moved to a delayed start to give the staff some professional development time. Mr. Eppolito reported that if they just look at the time of the ski days, it is the same, but there are considerations for the teachers to do work between the sessions, therefore spreading out the work over the course of the year. Mr. McBride questioned how they make up the time for the students. Ms. Mahusky suggested encouraging the students to attend ASP so they don't lose instructional time and can participate in an enrichment program. Ms. Lamphere also felt that the board wants the schools to do PBE well.

Ms. Harper noted that some of the conversations at LES surround the ASP opportunity coming at a cost to the parents. She suggested that the school could find the adults to provide the enrichment opportunities for all the students during these early release days. She suggested the support staff could stay and work with the students on the early release days. There was discussion about the subsidy for the program. Ms. Mahusky suggested that they could talk to the ASP about the possibilities to continue to provide enrichment to the students during the early release. There was discussion about the cost of the ASP as supported by the budget but that support doesn't cover all the costs, hence parent fees. Ms. Fogg reported that next year they will try to get the costs supported by the 21C grant. Mr. McBride felt that teacher time with students is so important and he didn't want to dismiss it out of hand. He acknowledged that the ASP is better than nothing, but it doesn't necessarily make up for the loss of teacher time.

Mr. Eppolito noted that in order for the teachers to be more effective with the students, they need to have the time to learn these new processes. He reported that nations around the world with successful students and high performing systems around the US, are spending more time collaborating with their colleagues that this. Ms. Mahusky felt that this work is so important and they should not need this level of intensity forever. She suggested that they need to re-think how to provide this time the following year. Ms. Roberts noted her concern with Chester and GM having their ski days on Tuesdays, while Cavendish has theirs on Thursdays. Mr. Ripley noted that the school is already exceeding the state mandated number of student days. He also noted that the different ski days can be spent on building based projects and the early release Tuesdays would be just the PBE work.

C. Policy, First Read

Mr. Marin noted that the policies are basically the same as they have been in the past with some changes for relevance and correcting language. There are two issues that need board input. The first is to discuss the issues in the social media policy, specifically if employees who post an opinion have to make a specific disclaimer that the opinion is theirs alone and doesn't necessarily reflect the views of the school district or the board. The second issue is about whether volunteers and work study students need to be fingerprinted. Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

D. Cavendish Town Principal Search

Ms. Powden noted that at the last board meeting only one board member had volunteered on the principal search committee—Mr. McBride. Ms. Mahusky joined the committee this evening. There are several community members who want to serve on the committee and Ms. Powden will be holding a drawing for the community member on the committee. They are also seeking teacher participation. They hope to begin having meetings around May 16 which is the last day for applications to be submitted. There are currently 17 applications, 4 of which were re-applicants from the last search.

E. Health Services

Ms. Powden noted that the principals and nurses have been meeting with VT Department of Health and AOE representatives to determine the best practices and the best model to provide health services. Ms. Roberts and Ms. Simmons would be the lead nurses who would supervise an LPN who will work primarily at CTES. Ms. Dakin reported that the scope of practice and the education level is less for an LPN than an RN. The other option they have could be an unlicensed assistant which is not as good as an LPN. This would allow an increase in time to .5 fte. There was discussion about how the .5 fte would work out. Ms. Powden noted that she hoped that they were able to find a person willing to do 5 half days, rather than 3 partial days. There was discussion about the current amount of time for the nurse at CTES (approximately 17 ½ hours versus the proposed approximately 20 hours per week). This position would still be supervised by RN's and there are times where the RN's might go to CTES.

Ms. Powden noted that she was hoping to post for the position pending the board's approval of the model. Ms. Mahusky noted that she was pleased that the administration and nursing staff has worked with the VT State School Nurses' Association and the Department of Health to look at the students' needs. This model allows for more time coverage and RN supervision and possible RN assistance if necessary. The school nurses noted that they would like to see a .85 fte and/or an RN, but they are aware of the financial constraints. Ms. Lamphere noted her concern with the reduction in qualification in order to get 2 ½ more hours of coverage. Ms. Powden noted that this is exactly why they worked through the analysis with the various agencies to come up with a good model. Ms. Powden noted that the GMUSD has more health services available to the students than other districts this size. Ms. Dakin suggested that because this amount is what is budgeted, that is the best model to meet the budget. She suggested that the board could look at the model for the next budget. She also noted that it is a better model than what they have currently with 3 days RN coverage and 2 days of unlicensed assistive personnel. There was discussion about the RN being able to be included in an IEP team or 504 conference even for CTES students. There was also discussion about the LPN and RN both being included so that there is RN oversight, but LPN on-site familiarity. The nursing team noted that they are still developing the protocols to meet the requirements. Ms. Dakin noted that school nurses also need to be licensed by the AOE as well as by the Secretary of State. There was discussion about whether the LPN can be licensed by the AOE as an RN would be. Ms. Dakin noted that the nursing team can do more research.

There was discussion about a delay in the decision delaying the search process. Ms. Mahusky noted that if through the search process they aren't able to find someone willing to work 5 four hour days, the board can re-assess. Ms. Roberts questioned if they should wait to see if an LPN can get an educational license. Ms. Mahusky noted that they can come back to that point if they need to.

Mr. Marin **moved** to allow the administration to move forward with the model as proposed and post the .5 fte LPN position pending the ability of an LPN to meet the licensing requirements. Mr. Fromberger seconded. The motion carried unanimously. Mr. McBride felt that Mr. Thomson and Ms. McNamara do a great job to cover the position when Ms. Dakin is not at CTES. The board thanked Ms. Dakin for her many years of service to the district and wished her well on her retirement.

VII. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS:

A. Principals

Ms. Fogg reported that this time of year is busy with testing and this is teacher appreciation week and she thanked the teachers for their hard work. Mr. Ripley apologized for the issues with the bussing. He reported on his communications with parents and on Mr. Parah's work in trying to get reliable bus drivers hired on. Mr. Ripley noted that he is at GMUHS by 6:30 a.m. if parents need to drop their students off early. He reported that Mr. Kelley is at CAES by that time as well.

B. Superintendent

i. Executive Sessions

Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

VIII. NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be Tuesday June 12, 2018 at 6:00 at CTES. The vision committee will meet at 5 prior to that meeting. There was discussion about every meeting in May being held at GMUHS and every meeting in June being at CTES.

IX. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary