

# Green Mountain Unified School District Board

## Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, June 20, 2019

Cavendish Town Elementary School, Art Room

6:00 p.m.

### I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER:

**Board:** Fred Marin, Jeff Hance, Joe Fromberger, Deb Brown, Michael Studin, Rick Alexander, Wayne Wheelock, Lois Perlah, Kate Lamphere, Doug McBride

**Staff:** Lauren Fierman, Deb Beaupre, Carol Neff, Sue Willis, Cheryl Hammond, Meg Powden, Cindy Austin, Amy Hamblett, Karla Waite

**Student Reps:**

**Public:** Shawn Cunningham, Cynthia Prairie, Sharon Huntley, Sara Stowell, Magali Stowell-Aleman, Felista Sutherland, Solomon Murphy, Katie Murphy

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

### II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Ms. Brown **moved** to approve the agenda as printed. Mr. McBride requested that the agenda include discussion of certain additional items. Mr. Fromberger requested that they be added to the end of the meeting. Mr. McBride suggested that one of the items he feels is mandatory for this meeting—being the discussion of establishment of a policy regarding the prevention of future violations of open meeting law. Mr. Fromberger noted that there is proper procedure for policy adoption and it can't happen at this meeting. Mr. McBride noted that perhaps he is calling it a policy in error. Mr. Fromberger noted that the second step is to reopen the motion that was adopted after the erroneous executive session. Mr. McBride noted that that is correct, but there is also another step, including adopting specific measures to prevent future open meeting law violations. Mr. Fromberger noted that the board is following the law. Mr. McBride noted that it is mandated in the statute. They have to do two things—one is in the agenda, and the second element is in the law that they have to adopt specific measures to prevent future violations and there is nothing specifically in the agenda that mentions that part. Mr. McBride **moved** to amend the agenda to include adoption of specific procedures that prevents future violations of open meeting laws. Ms. Lamphere seconded the amendment. The motion to approve the agenda as amended carried without opposition.

### III. MINUTES:

#### A. May 16, 2019 Regular Meeting;

Mr. Hance **moved** to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2019 regular meeting. Mr. Alexander seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

#### B. June 13, 2019 Special Meeting

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the minutes of June 13, 2019 meeting. Ms. Brown seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### IV. GMUSD FIELD TRIP:

#### A. Presentation

Ms. Austin distributed information to the board regarding a school and community trip to New York City from 2/28/20 to 3/1/20. The trip is offered for students in grades 7-12. In the past parents and grandparents have also joined. They need at least 40 participants in order to keep the price at \$702. It is a 2-night stay with a full itinerary. She explained some of the things that the group will be doing, including a Broadway show and a visit to the Statue of Liberty. There was discussion about the security of the hotel. Ms. Austin noted that Ms. Fierman advised that fingerprinting would be necessary for any adult attending the trip. The group will be staying in New Jersey, close to the city, but less expensive than the city. Ms. Austin noted that they will attempt to do fundraising to help reduce the costs for the students, and make it more likely for more students to be able to attend. She noted that the company provides financing.

Mr. Studin **moved** to approve the trip to NYC as presented by Ms. Austin. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**V. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Correction of Errors in Open Meeting-After the Board returned from Executive session Ms. Lamphere moved that we approve 2.75% increase for non-bargaining staff and a one-time sick leave donation for the Green Mountain Staff Association member and the motions carried.**

There was discussion about the board having taken the first corrective action at the last meeting by acknowledging and error in going into executive session improperly. These motions are now subject to ratification or voiding.

Mr. Studin **moved** to ratify the motion to approve the 2.75% increase for non-bargaining staff. Ms. Perlah seconded. Ms. Powden noted that they should have a motion to have had a specific finding that having entered executive session without making the specific finding that premature public knowledge of the discussion would put the board or an individual at a disadvantage. Mr. Fromberger noted that they made the corrective action at the last meeting, and today's action is to ratify or void the decision made after that executive session.

Mr. McBride noted that he and perhaps many board members apologized, that by following the statute, it left some people not knowing what would happen for a week. He noted that their intention was not to cause concern, but rather follow the law. He apologized accordingly. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Marin **moved** to ratify the decision to make a one-time sick leave donation for the Green Mountain Staff Association member. Mr. Alexander seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**B. Adopt Specific Procedures**

Mr. McBride **moved** that in accordance with Vermont Statutes Section 314 (b)(B) the board adopts specific measures that actually prevent future violations. The board's specific measures *may* include:

- a. A provision requiring Board Directors to attend training in person or online on compliance with Vermont open meetings and executive sessions (but this is only required for Directors that have not recently attended such training); and
- b. A provision requiring that a copy of the Vermont Statutes on executive sessions be present at any meeting at which an executive session is held: and
- c. A provision requiring that all future agenda that warn executive sessions contain more accurate, detailed and specific information regarding the reasons for the executive session.

Mr. Wheelock seconded. Mr. Studin suggested adding “but are not limited to” after “may include”. Mr. Fromberger noted that he learned at the recent VSBA training that the recommended procedure is to enter executive session in two steps—the first being to make a specific finding that the discussion in open session would put an individual or a board at a disadvantage. Ms. Brown noted that part of the discussion also included the board members being made aware of the details of the potential executive session ahead of the meeting. Mr. Fromberger will share the information with the board. Mr. McBride **revised his motion** to state: “in accordance with Vermont Statutes Section 314 (b)(B) the board adopts specific measures that actually prevent future violations. The board’s specific measures *may* include but not be limited to:

- a. A provision requiring Board Directors to attend training in person or online on compliance with Vermont open meetings and executive sessions (but this is only required for Directors that have not recently attended such training); and
- b. A provision requiring that a copy of the Vermont Statutes on executive sessions be present at any meeting at which an executive session is held; and
- c. A provision requiring that all future agenda that warn executive sessions contain more accurate, detailed and specific information regarding the reasons for the executive session.
- d. A provision requiring that the board be made aware of details of planned executive sessions ahead of the meeting where an executive session is warned.

Ms. Brown seconded the revised motion and it carried unanimously.

### C. Superintendent Report-Format

Ms. Powden noted that Mr. McBride suggested a standing format for the superintendent’s report. Ms. Powden noted that some of the suggestions would be more appropriate for the principals’ report, such as physical plant, student and staff matter. She will give updates on projects and priorities that she is working on, as well as updates in legislation. She felt that the over/under budget items should come under the business manager’s report. Mr. McBride agreed that the right person to speak on a topic is correct. Ms. Lamphere noted that it is necessary to hear of those topics, but it is acceptable that they are delegated to the appropriate personnel. Mr. McBride suggested that there needs to be one central person to delegate that information, but the board needs to hear all of these items.

Mr. McBride noted that the board should also be hearing about any pending litigation or arbitration that would or could impact their budget. This includes litigation involving the GMUSD or any of the former districts that make up the GMUSD, as well as the TRSU since their budget impacts the GMUSD budget. He also suggested that the retention of a lawyer should be brought to the board’s attention. She doesn’t necessarily need approval, but the board needs to be aware of it. He also suggested that any insurance claims information should be shared with the board. He noted that teacher/student issues may be superintendent related or principal related, but the board should be aware. Mr. McBride noted that smaller matters that are the ordinary course of business don’t need to come to the board, but there is an idea of materiality and importance in issues that need to come to the board, including those things that may result in litigation.

Mr. McBride noted that there is a statutory provision that requires boards to always have their buildings and grounds in good repair, have suitable equipment, ensure that they are insured, and are in safe and sanitary condition. He felt that because the board is not in the buildings every day, they need to be told that this is true by those that they have hired to be.

Mr. McBride **moved** to adopt the format for the Superintendent Report such that *the Superintendent shall report to the Board on the matters set forth below each month as part of the*

*Superintendent's monthly report to the Board. The Superintendent shall add to the Standing report as she / he deems appropriate. The Board at its discretion shall amend, add or delete items on the Standing Report as it deems appropriate.*

*Standing Report*

- *Claims, threats of lawsuits, lawsuits, arbitrations, other alternative dispute systems, and union grievances affecting or involving GMUSD or TRSU*
- *Retention of a lawyer or giving a new matter to a lawyer*
- *Submitting a claim to an insurance company*
- *Non-Budgeted and under-budgeted expenses and liabilities, not reflected in the budget, that are greater than \$5,000*
- *TRSU employee terminations, departures, and new hires during the previous month*
- *Teachers:*
  - o *Terminations, resignations, notices of departure, and non-renewals during the previous month*
  - o *Issues and concerns raised by teachers and staff during the previous month*
- *Student Matters:*
  - o *Number of student withdrawals from our schools and the reason therefor in the previous month and School YTD*
  - o *Number of students suspended or expelled in the previous month and School YTD*
- *Issues and concerns raised by parents and community members that has been brought to the attention of the Superintendent*
- *Status and issues with GMUSD physical plants and financial magnitude of any such issues and whether all school buildings and grounds are in good repair, have suitable equipment, are insured, and are in safe and sanitary condition as required by Vermont Statutes Section 563(5)*
- *Overview of new legislation and proposed legislation and how such legislation does or may affect GMUSD*
- *Disclosure or update on any non-compliance with:*
  - o *Vermont Agency of Education rules, regulations, or directives*
  - o *Federal laws and regulations*
  - o *Any other law or regulation*
- *Superintendent's progress on the projects and priorities given to the Superintendent by the Board*

Ms. Powden suggested that he specify on the document, teacher/student matters, concerns of parents and community members, only those that are raised to the superintendent level. Mr. McBride revised his motion accordingly: Mr. Studin suggested that hiring/terminations of personnel within the SU also be included in the report, not just those within the schools. There was discussion about this change having a significant impact on what the superintendent is expected to do. Mr. Studin noted that this document is a living document and may need edits in

the future. Mr. McBride noted that if they found that the superintendent was spending more time preparing this information than anticipated, the board could pare it back. Mr. Studin seconded Mr. McBride's revised motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Neff asked for clarification regarding the superintendent when there are things that aren't resolved or if there are issues that have made it to the superintendent. She noted that sometimes there are issues that are unresolved that are brought to Ms. Powden, rather than having been given time to resolve the issues first. She suggested changing the language to say unresolved. There was discussion about this not being the process to get a resolution, rather just increase communication between the board and the superintendent. Mr. Studin noted that this isn't the board jumping in to make a decision, but rather just to have more transparency and an open line of communication. Ms. Powden reassured the members of the public that there are practices in place to contact the principals to see if the person has addressed the concern with the principal and then refer them back to the principal. There was discussion about information brought to the executive level should be brought to the board.

#### **D. Options for Old Bus Lease**

Ms. Hammond shared options for the lease payout for the DATTCO/Sun Trust bus lease. She advised that the new buses are arriving soon. She outlined the options.

Option 1 is to invoke the non-appropriation clause which would require the board to vote not to appropriate the funds to cover the balloon payment and then return the buses at the district's expense. She advised that legal counsel advises not to do option 1 as they are risking litigation.

Option 2 is to pay SunTrust the balloon payment of \$387,730.72, get the titles and then sell the buses to DATTCO per the agreement for \$318,500.00. This would be a difference of \$68,230.72 which would come out of the reserve account. This would honor the agreement that the GMUHS board entered into in 2014.

Option 3 is that SunTrust is willing to reassign the lease to DATTCO. This would mean that the district will pay DATTCO \$68,230.72 (the difference between the balloon and the buyback agreement) from the Transportation reserve and DATTCO will pay the balloon to SunTrust and then SunTrust will send the titles to DATTCO. This too will honor the agreements entered into in 2014.

Option 4 is the same as option 2, but the district would finance the \$68,230.70 with the new buses. This will increase the annual payment by about \$14,375 and the interest to do so would be about \$3,640 over the course of the 5 years. The other concern is that this finance company (Daimler) would increase the value of the buses by \$8500 to make this work.

Ms. Hammond recommended option 3 which alleviates the cash flow issues they were concerned about. This will reduce the reserve fund down to \$37,800. There was discussion about with option 3 and 4 the district would not have to pay the balloon payment.

Mr. Studin questioned if they had looked into buying the buses out and selling them themselves. Ms. Hammond noted that the buses are not worth what they owe. Ms. Brown questioned if they would be in this same position in 5 years. Ms. Hammond reported that the new agreement is not a lease, but rather a purchase via a loan. Mr. Fromberger noted that he worked on the transportation committee and has reviewed the purchase options moving forward and also agreed that option 3 is the best option for getting out of the current lease.

Mr. Wheelock **moved** to approve option 3 as presented. Mr. Alexander seconded. Mr. McBride questioned the old GMUHS budget which included a transportation reserve as well as the bus payoff delta. Ms. Hammond noted that there was a line item for a bus payment. Mr. McBride noted that there were two items—one called transportation and another line item. There was discussion about the reserve fund always having been around \$50,000. He questioned how the net \$68,000 is arrived on and whether it should be booked as an expense and revenue, or as a net expense. He noted that the netting of the expense is not best practice. He questioned why the auditor didn't support that action of booking the expense and the revenue on both sides of the balance sheet. He also noted that the auditor suggested that the district could walk away from the lease based on the non-appropriations clause, but there are liens on the buses. He noted that the recommendation by the auditor was very challenging to accept. Ms. Hammond agreed and felt that she wouldn't recommend that.

There was discussion about the current balance on the reserve account. Ms. Hammond explained the math of appropriating funds from the reserve and putting money into the reserve as well as paying off the lease. The motion carried unanimously.

## **VI. COMMUNICATION:**

### **A. Student Representatives**

Ms. Fierman noted that the last day of school was yesterday so there won't be student reps until school begins again in the fall.

### **B. Board Comments**

Mr. McBride noted that the board is clearly saving for executive session anything about the litigation that could harm the board, whether it be strategy or confidential information. He noted that right now the public is getting all of its information from the Chester Telegraph and the board needs to be aware of it. There was discussion about the public nature of some court documents.

Mr. McBride also reminded the board that an executive session is not the place for an overview or an explanation—that is for the public. The content of the executive session should limit the conversation to only those things that are private.

Mr. McBride thought that at the last meeting the board was promised to get a presentation of the over-budget legal bills. Ms. Powden advised that this will be part of the administrator's report.

## **VII. ADMINISTRATORS' REPORTS:**

Ms. Powden reported that school is almost completely closed with CAES having a half day tomorrow. There have been celebrations and graduations, including 2 HS graduations and 4 elementary graduations throughout the SU. The business office has launched a TRSU blog and they will be posting regularly about highlights in the SU. The board had requested a way to honor Dr. Bont. They have looked at planting an Oak Tree next to the bench that the CTES board installed last year. She also suggested developing a history of Dr. Bont's involvement with the town and school district. She will be engaging Margo Caulfield's help. Mr. McBride thanked her and the SU for taking this task on and restated that Dr. Bont was a pivotal personality in the school system for decades. He always was active in every aspect of the school district and highly respected by board members and principals.

Mr. McBride noted that having attended today's CTES graduation, the focus was on the students, but they need to also focus on the teachers and their impact on the students. He felt that the board should honor them in the future.

Ms. Powden noted that the world language coordinator position was filled earlier in the year, but she resigned so they are still looking for a replacement. She also reported that Ms. Baker and the technology team are working on technology upgrades, including the 2012 GMUHS technology reserve fund to install projectors in 4 classrooms at GMUHS. She explained some of the work that Ms. Baker is doing on renegotiating the technology lease. At the time the plan was to replace all the teacher laptops, but many of the teachers were able to wait another year. Ms. Hammond noted that Ms. Barton was able to fund some of the technology pieces in the Idea B grant. Ms. Powden noted that they were able to save about \$25,000 from the lease line items, and another \$9000 in other areas. Some of the savings has been used to replace some of the teacher laptops and can report back to the board the exact figure next meeting.

Ms. Hammond reported that in the legal line items, some of the money—about \$12,219 is for the insurance claims, which is the deductible. \$11,494 of the \$34,810 in legal fees was for negotiations. She noted that the support staff negotiations expense was split 3 ways, but should have only been split between TRSU and GMUSD. The remaining \$3271 will go to the GM expenses. There was discussion about the deductible and the insurance legal bills. There was discussion about the board getting information on all the legal bills. Ms. Hammond noted that she doesn't have the legal bills that the insurance company is paying, apart from the deductible. Mr. McBride noted that this board needs to understand the amount of the legal bills that the entity is being billed regardless of if they are being paid for by insurance or by the district. Ms. Hammond will ask for that information. There was discussion about what legal bills will impact this district either directly or indirectly. Mr. Studin noted that in addition to the dollar amount, a description of the reason for the expense. The board discussed this being something that the insurance company should be able to provide Ms. Hammond.

Mr. Studin also suggested that if they are aware of anything on the horizon, the board should also be aware of that since that is a pending expense. Ms. Willis questioned the \$11,494 that was spent on negotiations and felt that this is an unnecessary expense during the negotiations process. She acknowledged that at the end of the discussion the attorneys are necessary, but for every meeting, she didn't feel it was necessary. Mr. Fromberger noted that the board has a legal obligation to do the best they can to negotiate the best contract and felt it was irresponsible to negotiate without legal counsel.

Felista Sutherland was concerned that the district may not be able to get the attorney bills. She felt that this is a transparency issue and felt that the district needs to get this information and share it publicly. She also felt that the deductible was \$12,000 so she wondered what the actual claim and fees were. Ms. Sutherland questioned if the next board meeting in August would be reasonable to have that information. Mr. Fromberger noted that they will have some information by then, either numbers or a reason. Mr. Cunningham reviewed the bills and found that the legal bills for negotiations came to about \$50,000, not the \$11,494. The board asked for clarification. Ms. Hammond noted that the numbers she reported was just for TRSU and Mr. Cunningham's numbers were from all the districts and the SU.

Mr. McBride suggested that the board be given information about all the insurance coverages, including legal and property, and including coverages and expenses. Ms. Powden advised that she would be happy to provide that information but requested to get back on track with the administrator's report. There was discussion about having a presentation from VSBIT. Mr. McBride **moved** to direct the superintendent to find someone to provide the board with an overview of the GMUSD insurances, including presentation of the coverages. There was discussion about the statutory obligation that board members ensure that the school district is properly insured. Ms. Brown seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Beaupre noted that today was the last day of school at CTES. She shared information regarding the safety concerns and the blinking light. The light will blink starting at 7:30 am, including in the summer because of summer camp. The brush in front has been trimmed back. The town manager has been in conversation with the VT AOT about the crosswalk lines.

Ms. Beaupre reported on the graduating students and upcoming kindergarten students which will likely make an enrollment of about 80 students. She reported on the lake trip and various fun activities that the students have been able to participate in, including pajama day and a reading experience. Mr. Thomson visited the school as well. She reported on the Memorial Day parade as well as the non-binary student parent dance. She reported that there are 3 staff members leaving CTES, including Ms. D'Abbraccio, Mr. Reilly and Ms. MacNamara. She shared information on the SBAC testing including improvements in several grades in Math and ELA. The board gave the students and staff a round of applause.

Ms. Beaupre noted that the administrative team has met with emergency management and have developed a crisis team. They are working on plans for emergencies. The Cavendish Town stakeholder group meets twice monthly and are looking into alternative fundraising sources. There was discussion about the staff that the school is using.

Ms. Fogg reported that CAES has had a lot of celebrations at the end of the year. She reported that the board is aware of all the staff leaving except the newest, Courtney Slobodnjak, a TRSU employee. They have advertised the position and have some candidates so far. The ribbon cutting for the playground was held recently along with the field day. The fire department came and cooked for the kids. She reported on the Memorial Day parade and the alumni day parade that the students participate in. They graduated about 30 students last night, and anticipate about 38 kindergartners next year. She thanked Ms. Powden and Mr. Studin for coming to the ceremony and Mr. Studin for speaking at the graduation. She shared information about the crisis planning and the drills that the students need to practice. She noted that it is challenging and they need to be flexible as the situation may change. They also need to start talking to parents and families about the drills because they are so different. They will hold a parent night to share that information.

Ms. Fogg reported that some educators from Mt. Holly came to CTES to share information about intervention programs on reading and math. The science fair was held last week. She noted that she will share the graduation group photo at the next meeting. There was discussion about the playground and some of the damage that has already happened. Mr. Studin suggested that there needs to be police checks to prevent vandalism and there should be changes to supervision to ensure no additional damage. Ms. Fogg reported that some of the pieces were damaged on or shortly after installation and the company is replacing those. Katie Murphy questioned the impact of the police in their full swat gear which is very different from how the police officers normally look when they visit the school. Ms. Fogg shared those concerns and this was discussed in the crisis meeting. Ms. Lamphere suggested that they work with experts in child development before making that decision. Ms. Willis noted that during the high school evacuation, many of the students were not where they should be. There was discussion about the language used to communicate with the students. Ms. Beaupre noted that CTES is having those conversations as well. She noted that they are practicing for something they hope never happens. She noted that even in this one district, each school is in different places. They are working to get more advanced in the crisis planning.

There was discussion about the principals contacting people who have experienced a real crisis to speak with the students. Ms. Fogg reported that the PBIS team will be going to training in Killington and the new assistant principal will be attending in her place. He also has met all the students.



Ms. Fierman reported that there were Junior and Senior awards on June 7. Between the awards at the awards night and graduation, over \$250,000 in scholarships were given to the students. The graduation was last Friday evening. The graduating class gift was their funds to be given to the school to be used in whatever way the school felt it needed. She reported on the Memorial Day parade and event. She also shared information on the alumni day parade. She reported that the girls' track team was the Division IV state champion. She reported on the end of year field trips and activities. She also reported on the end of year celebrations for leaving staff—Amy Jones who is moving and Jack Carroll who is retiring and Theresa DeLorenzo who is retiring and Marianne Bastian who is also retiring. She reported on the professional development that the teachers and staff participated in, including review of the Core Instructional Practices and compared them from where the teachers were at the beginning of the school year. The teachers also reviewed student performance by department. Ms. Fierman reported that they have developed a capstone committee to create a capstone project to be implemented for the 2020-2021 school year. They will also begin requiring community service for graduation.

Ms. Brown suggested that the principal's reports should be shared online. Ms. Fierman noted that each of her reports are posted on her principal's page. Ms. Brown suggested that they be added to the TRSU page. Ms. Powden will follow up on that.

Ms. Stowell-Aleman reported that the flexible pathways program has helped her. She explained some of the opportunities that she has been able to realize with this program. Ms. Stowell sang Shannon Parker's praises for her help with these opportunities. She discussed the benefits of the programs for trades bound kids and college bound kids.

Ms. Hammond reported on the elevator issues at GMUHS. It is 50 years old and needs a hydraulic part. The motor is "shot". They have to go out to bid because it is estimated to be about \$20,000. She advised that they are on a tight timeline in order to get it repaired before school begins. They may need to hold a special meeting in July to discuss. Ms. Fierman noted that if the board takes until late July or August to approve a bid, they won't get it repaired by the time school begins. There was discussion about the various companies that Mr. Parah has contacted for the repair. Ms. Hammond noted that they will need to make a provision to approve a bid. Mr. Fromberger suggested that the board authorized the board chair to approve a bid with a limit of spending. The board discussed having a special meeting in July. The RFP is due back around the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of July. The board discussed potentially needing a July meeting due to the content that they will have. The board will plan to meet on July 18. Ms. Hammond suggested having the meeting on the night the bids are due, but the board kept the date with the 18<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Studin questioned the prior board discussion about the administration trying to recruit Black River students. Ms. Powden noted that she and Ms. Fierman have begun discussions and will continue to flesh them out of the summer. Ms. Fierman reported that they have given some presentations to the students and will be expanding on it to highlight the opportunities at GMUHS. She reported that BRHS had a school fair and GMUHS attended. Mr. McBride questioned when students decide what school they will attend. Ms. Powden noted that they hope that students will decide this fall. Some of the receiving schools will be providing transportation for the students. The students can change their minds throughout the school year, but the information is important for budgeting purposes.

## **VIII. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. Recommendations for Hire**

Ms. Powden noted that the board has received the resumes for the recommendations. She noted that Audrey Block is being recommended for the Math position at GMUHS, Andria Donohue as a

GMUSD nurse, and Andrew Malaby as a GMUHS biology teacher. They also recommend Michael Kennedy as the director of food service. They also recommend Holly Gauding for the CTES Kindergarten position. She requested a separate motion for Ms. Gauding contingent on Ms. Powden completing her reference checks. There was discussion about their placement on the salary schedule. Ms. Block would have a salary of \$46,735; Ms. Donohue's would be \$59,135, Mr. Malaby's would be \$51,735; Mr. Kennedy's would be \$50,000. Ms. Gauding would be on step 3 of the schedule with a salary of approximately \$44,335 based on the salary schedule. There was discussion about Mr. Malaby's endorsements versus how it was listed on the application.

Ms. Lamphere **moved** to hire Holly Gauding as the CTES kindergarten teacher contingent upon reference checks to be completed by Ms. Powden. Ms. Perlah seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wheelock **moved** to hire Andrew Malaby as the high school biology teacher. Mr. Hance seconded. There was discussion about his interview. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lamphere **moved** to hire Andria Donohue as the CAES nurse for \$59,135. Ms. Perlah seconded. Ms. Powden clarified that she is a nurse for the whole GMUSD with the primary site being CAES, but could be used in any of the three schools. Ms. Murphy questioned what schools she would be serving. Ms. Powden noted that she would primarily serve CAES, but if there is a need, each nurse could be moved to a different school. She advised that there are 2.5 fte in school nurses. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lamphere **moved** to hire Audrey Block as a high school math teacher for \$46,735. Mr. Alexander seconded. There was discussion about the superintendent recommendation. The motion carried unanimously.

There was discussion about Mr. Kennedy's interviews. There was discussion about his having been an owner of a restaurant in Chester. Ms. Fierman noted that he submitted updated information to the committee. There was discussion about the accuracy of the resume. There was a suggestion to defer on this decision until the board has the ability to review the updated resume as well as an explanation of the inaccurate resume. The board consensus was to defer a decision until the next meeting. Ms. Powden thanked the staff and board members for having participated in the interview and hiring process.

## **B. Personnel Handbook**

Ms. Hammond reported that the goal of this process was to make the benefits of employees doing the same job in the district to be the same. The biggest issue is the sick days and time off. This began as a TRSU handbook and they developed classes of employees including certified staff, specialized staff, etc. They also have school year staff and full year staff. She illustrated some of the equity calculations. She reported that TRSU approved this handbook at their last meeting with the school year sick day accumulation to be limited at 30 days. Ms. Lamphere suggested that the board needs to have the marked-up version. Ms. Powden will send out the version at the next meeting. Ms. Sutherland noted that there are so many documents that the board has not had access to. She felt that it is a huge waste of time for the board and an issue with transparency. She suggested having google folders to accommodate these needs. Ms. Perlah noted that the document is in the email from Ms. Moeykens. There was discussion about the GMUSD only needing to see one change as suggested by Mr. Fromberger because the GMUSD board hasn't seen this document. Ms. Lamphere noted that there have been many changes that have been made from the original document last year that this board hasn't seen. The board requested to see the

document with tracked changes from the last year's version. Mr. McBride noted that the attachment to the email wasn't listed on the email, just attached.

### **C. Loan for Bus Purchase**

Ms. Hammond distributed information regarding the bus purchase and the necessary loan. She reminded the board that they had agreed to purchase the buses from WC Cressy. Additionally, Mr. Parah has spoken with WC Cressy to install cameras on the buses for \$24,641. The total for the loan will be \$708,862.50. They have worked with Daimler to get the best rate, which is \$150,827.36 over a 5-year period. She also went to Community Bank to get their rate. Their rate was about \$17,000 more. Ms. Hammond explained that Daimler expects the first payment in July of 2019 so that reduces the balance and therefore the interest. She approached Community Bank for the same request and they were able to come in about \$2660 less than Daimler, but they will have a fluctuating payment over the next 5 years. There was discussion about the quality of the lender and ease of working with them. Ms. Hammond suggested getting a legal opinion to enter into an agreement with Daimler, where Community Bank would take care of the loan piece. She also discussed Community being the bank the district banks with currently. Ms. Hammond recommended Community Bank. Ms. Hammond reported on the amount that was budgeted for the first-year pricing. Mr. Studin suggested earning some money on the \$5375 left from the proposed first payment and the budgeted amount by moving it to the transportation reserve.

Ms. Brown **moved** to follow Ms. Hammond's recommendation and secure the loan for \$708,862.50 through Community Bank. Mr. Alexander seconded. Mr. Murphy questioned the Mercedes reference. Ms. Hammond noted that Mercedes is a partner with Daimler one of the proposed lenders. Mr. Alexander suggested sharing the information with the public about the process the transportation director, the transportation committee and the board followed to decide on the buses. The buses are Thomas buses to be purchased through WC Cressy & Son. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wheelock questioned if the bus cameras are only inside the bus or also outside. Ms. Hammond noted that she would need to ask Mr. Parah. Ms. Willis described where she understood the bus cameras to be located. They will show out the front window.

### **D. Tax Anticipation Note**

Ms. Hammond noted that this year she is seeking \$1.8 million dollars at 2.6%. They don't pay interest unless they take the money out. She reminded the board of their practice of approving this note in the past to cover expenses until taxes are received. She also suggested that the board authorize the board chair to sign the paperwork on their behalf.

Mr. Wheelock **moved** to approve the tax anticipation note as presented in the amount of \$1,800,000 at 2.6%. Mr. Marin seconded. There was discussion about this year likely not ending in a deficit, but this need is just to carry them to the date when taxes are received. There was discussion about having to pay interest on this, when instead they could budget funds to cover this gap. There was discussion about how this was handled in the past. Ms. Sutherland suggested that they seek gap loans through Kiva with no interest. They wouldn't be able to do that this year, but could research for next year. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Brown **moved** to authorize the board chair to sign the loan paperwork on the board's behalf when it becomes available. Mr. Alexander seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

## **IX. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Sutherland reported that her children don't currently attend this school system. She has contacted the superintendent's office with no return calls. She has contacted an investigator with the AOE. She questioned why the petition that was presented to the board with over 50% of CTES students represented by the adults not discussed publicly. Mr. Fromberger noted that as he recalled, the discussion was held on April 21 about the petition and there was public discussion in the meeting. She felt that the minutes reflected that the parent that raised the concern was shut down, and the AOE investigator felt the same. Mr. Fromberger noted that there was a large crowd and the board listened to their concerns and many people spoke. Mr. McBride thanked her for her comments. Mr. McBride noted that there were many people who voiced concerns, but also many who came in support of the situation. Ms. Sutherland noted that with more than 50% of the population represented on the petition. Mr. Studin noted that the board discussed the time that the board spent discussing and considering the petition. There was discussion about the board not having been formally presented with the petition. Ms. Powden reported that she has never received the petition. Ms. Sutherland also questioned the superintendent contract and the negotiations for her contract and the evaluation of her in her position. Mr. Fromberger noted that the TRSU board is responsible for that. The 6 members of the TRSU board are made up of 3 members from GMUSD and 3 from LMHUUSD. Mr. Fromberger noted that the prior board made up of 22 members, had an executive committee of approximately 7 members who began the process of creating the superintendent's job description. Ms. Sutherland questioned if the evaluation of the superintendent is available to the public or at least the highlights of what information the board used to justify their decision. Mr. Fromberger noted that if she makes a formal request of the board, they will run the request by the SU's attorney. Mr. McBride suggested that these are absolutely appropriate questions, but better addressed to the TRSU board.

Ms. Sutherland questioned whether the board has followed up with the legal issues surrounding the reported administrator having stopped a school bus. Ms. Powden suggested getting Ms. Sutherland's contact information and she will reach out to her to address her concerns. Stacy questioned if the board is aware of more legal issues and pending litigation beyond the three that she is aware of. Mr. Fromberger noted that under this agenda, the board will be discussing one pending law suit.

Mr. Murphy questioned what is happening with the ski program at each school. Ms. Fogg noted that as far as she was aware the program will continue, but they don't have the specifics from Okemo yet. She also reported that they have thought about approaching other ski areas if Okemo comes back too high. The board feeling is that they want the students to be able to participate.

Margo Caulfield noted that as part of the Act 250 permit, Okemo is required to offer ski programs, but there are caveats that may still allow the program to be made too pricey for the students. She noted that there are many community members who are willing to help out with that. There was discussion about the conditions following the property, not the owner.

## **X. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

### **A. Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(B)**

Mr. Fromberger noted that there are two issues to be discussed—the first is a labor relations issue concerning an agreement with the district and the Green Mountain Staff Association. The GMSA has requested that the board consider a sick leave donation request. The board would discuss that under Title I V.S.A. (a)(1)(B).

Mr. Marin **moved** to find that discussion about this topic with premature public knowledge would put the board and an individual at a disadvantage. Ms. Perlah seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Marin **moved** to enter executive session at 9:18 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the Green Mountain Staff Association's request for a sick leave donation for an employee. Mr. Studin seconded. Ms. Powden suggested that Ms. Waite, Ms. Willis, Ms. Powden and Ms. Hammond should be invited. Mr. Studin seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 9:37 p.m.

Mr. Studin **moved** to allow a one-time allotment of sick days to a support staff member of the GMUSD of up to 32 days sick leave to be donated by support staff employees only to a single support staff member and cap the amount of days that each support staff employee can donate at 5 sick days. Ms. Brown seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Title I V.S.A. §313 (a)(1)(E)**

Mr. Studin **moved** to find that premature general public knowledge of discussion relating to pending litigation regarding terminating an employee because it would put the board at a disadvantage because it would reveal defense strategies. Ms. Brown seconded. Mr. McBride requested that this discussion be expanded to include other pending litigation, including arbitration and mediation. Mr. Fromberger noted that only the one pending litigation was warned. Mr. McBride noted that he circulated a proposed agenda that included other pending litigation. Mr. Fromberger noted that they could move to discuss that in a separate executive session, but the reasons would need to be specifically cited. Mr. Studin questioned if they could table his motion and then follow Mr. McBride's suggestion. Mr. Fromberger noted that they would have to be very specific in the things that they would be discussing in executive session. Mr. Studin withdrew his motion. Ms. Brown withdrew her second.

Mr. McBride **moved** to find that premature general public knowledge regarding the Board's initial discussion and review of the pending litigation regarding an employee disability issue, dog bite litigation, and unresolved arbitration with a former principal would place the board at a substantial disadvantage because it would reveal defense strategies. Mr. Alexander seconded. There was discussion about the Chester Telegraph article. Ms. Caulfield noted that the public needs to know what the topic is and this is the first that the public is hearing about what the topics are. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. McBride **moved** to enter executive session at 10:00 p.m. inviting Ms. Powden for the purpose of discussing pending or probable litigation regarding an employee disability issue, dog bite litigation, and unresolved arbitration with a former principal under V.S.A. Title 1, § 313(a)(1)(C) arbitration or mediation and V.S.A. Title 1, § 313(a)(1)(E) pending or probable civil litigation or a prosecution to which the public body is or may be a party pending a probable. Mr. Alexander seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 10:38 p.m. No action was taken

**XI. NEXT MEETING AND AGENDA ITEMS:**

The next regular meeting will be held on July 18, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at GMUHS.

**XII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Brown **moved** to adjourn at 10:39 p.m. Mr. Studin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson  
Board Recording Secretary