

Green Mountain Unified School District Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 17, 2019
CTES Art Room
6:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER:

Board: Joseph Fromberger, Kathy Muther, Michael Studin, Marilyn Mahusky, Rick Alexander, Fred Marin Jeff Hance, Kate Lamphere, Erin Lamson, Doug McBride, Deb Brown (6:06 pm)

Staff: Meg Powden, Cheryl Hammond, Lauren Fierman, Katherine Fogg, Deb Beaupre, Wendy Schultz, Amy Hamblett, Amanda Tyrell

Student Reps:

Public: Shawn Cunningham, Sara Stowell, Jeannie Wade

Ms. Mahusky called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the agenda with the deletion of the executive session. Ms. Lamson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. MINUTES:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the minutes of the December 20, 2018 regular meeting. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comments

Ms. Schultz introduced herself as a Chester resident, GM parent, and GM Spanish teacher. She reminded the board that they approved a trip to Peru when they last met. However the trip will have to be canceled because the Rotarian with whom they have partnered will be unable to travel at that time. She hopes they could arrange something next year. Ms. Schultz also encouraged the board to support the increase in the World Languages program. She felt there is a pretty acute need for the full Spanish offering. She felt that if it were up to her, she would open up a Spanish II class as those classes get too big. She noted that there is also a need for HS Level I because they currently have to alternate offering HS Level I French and Spanish.

B. Board Comments

Ms. Lamson reported that she sits on the RVTC board and that board approved a 5% increase in the district assessment. She explained that the tuition is based on the number of fte students over the past 6 semesters. The assessment for GM is about ½ fte for the students because they split their time between GM and RVTC. They are being assessed at 20.75 (equaling almost 42 students). The number of students is up about 7 students, or about 3 fte this year. This results in an increase of \$5644 (\$272 per student). The hope is that this increase can help expand the industrial arts program as they had 30 students on a wait list this year, and only have a capacity of 16. The changes are to reconfigure that space (electrical, ventilation, etc.) to accommodate 8 more students.

Mr. Studin remarked on the TRSU budget and felt the next year the order be changed such that this board has a chance to finalize its budget before the TRSU locks in theirs. That will help give

this board more flexibility and more of a “say” on the TRSU budget. Ms. Lamphere noted that she had a similar thought in that there be more of a collaborative approach to the TRSU budget creation. She felt that being locked into the TRSU budget has been problematic for 2 years now. Ms. Mahusky reminded the members that the TRSU meetings are public, warned, and held at the same time each month. She reminded everyone that they are welcome to come to the SU meetings. She noted that it is a very transparent process. She believed that there is a statutory requirement for when the SU budget is adopted. Therefore that would mean that in order for this board to approve its budget before the SU budget, this board wouldn’t have the luxury of waiting until January to approve the budget. They would have to approve their budget in December. She reminded the board that the TRSU board is made up of 3 GM members and 3 LMH members, so it isn’t “they” it’s “us”. She invited the board members to serve on the TRSU board, or to come to the TRSU meetings to give their input and feedback. Mr. McBride suggested that this board could meet prior to the TRSU budget development to determine what this board will accept for TRSU budget increases. Ms. Mahusky noted that the TRSU board is obligated to consider the needs of all the students in the SU, not just the GM students for the GM representatives. She encouraged the board members to come to the TRSU meetings to begin to get an idea of what the role of the TRSU is. She noted that it is a legitimate complaint that the tax payers don’t get a vote on the TRSU budget, but that is a legislative requirement that they can do nothing about. She explained that as a tax payer, it has been a great learning experience to attend the TRSU meetings and learn the role of the SU, and the services they provide that directly impact the GM students. She acknowledged the request and suggested that the administration make a note that they would like to consider the budget early next year.

Mr. Cunningham suggested that if they wanted more people to attend they should have the meetings in a school rather than in a small space short on chairs. Ms. Fogg suggested that during budget season, it might be more beneficial if the board considered the budget as a full board, rather than as a committee first so that all the members have the full information about what has transpired during the development of the budget. Ms. Mahusky thanked the board members who are not on the committee but who still attended the finance meetings for just that reason.

V. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

Ms. Powden reported that January is school board recognition month and she distributed certificates to each board member and thanked them. She also reported that she received a letter of resignation from Jack Carroll for the end of this school year. She thanked him for his years of service to the schools. She noted that they have been approved for the 30% of up to \$100,000 of expenses not covered by insurance in emergency aid for CAES. On Wednesday she appeared before the state board of education to advocate that the TRSU be allowed to have alternates with voting ability on the TRSU board. The secretary of education advocated against approving the waiver, however the state board approved one alternate for each district. She also attended the all-member superintendents meeting recently. They heard from Mr. French, the Secretary of Education and Mr. Webb, the Chair of the House Education committee. The superintendents were very frank with them noting that the SU’s are having “initiative fatigue” due to all the major initiatives introduced in the last few years. They noted that they have to work on the already existing legislation and initiatives and do it well before getting hit with new initiatives. She also reported that she attended an RVTC board meeting, at which a presentation by Jay Ramsey, the state tech center director was. He spoke about tech center strategic visioning. She served on the steering committee for that work. She also noted that this information was in the board packet for their review. There is an opportunity for 4 CTE centers to participate in a pilot program, and RVTC is going forward with their application for this opportunity. She noted that one of the obstacles to implementing the flexible pathways initiative well is the funding, and the hope is that this program may help.

There was discussion about two agenda items missing. The board consensus was to add them to the agenda. They are an educational presentation by CTES and the GM graduation date. Ms. Beaupre noted that her administrator's report was distributed previously.

VI. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:

Ms. Beaupre noted that in recognition of School Board Appreciation Month she has enjoyed making this presentation for the board. The presentation was interviews of students over a few days asking them what they enjoyed about school. Ms. Beaupre thanked Ms. Lamphere for her donation of forks to the school. She was having difficulty with the audio on the presentation and determined to send the board members the presentation.

VII. ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORTS (continued):

Ms. Fogg reported that the CAES students and staff are happy to be back in their building. She noted that January 2nd, the staff prepped the building for the students' return. She advised that January 3rd was the best day ever since it had snowed and was a beautiful Vermont day to return to the school. She remarked how proud she was of her staff. There are many new staff who had never worked in the building, but that would be difficult to tell with all the teamwork of the staff. She gave a special thanks to Mr. Spaulding for his hard work. She shared a picture of a 2nd grade teacher's room to illustrate the beautiful space and the work that the students are doing in it. She reminded the board of the composting presentation last month and noted that CAES is participating and they are collecting the compostable scraps once a week. She shared information on a second grade science project. She also reported that there is a nursing recommendation tonight. Jennifer Crossman has already been subbing at the school and has been a school nurse before. Lindsay Howard is a new para-educator joining the staff in a few weeks. She is a CAES and GMUHS alumna. She thanked the Baptist church for providing coffee for the staff on their in-service day. She shared information on the upcoming book fair.

Ms. Fierman noted that her students and staff are happy to have their school back, though they miss the CAES students and staff. She shared a picture of the pre-K-12 students and noted that the 7-12 students made a tunnel for the elementary students to walk through and give high-fives. She noted that it was a great closing event. The ski Tuesdays have changed a little. The students were taken to Okemo for passes and photos due to the change. This was unexpected, but went well. She also reported on the Middle School presentation for the last day before break, explaining that they choreograph and lip sync for a music video and present it to each other. She reported that the January 2nd in-service day went well. They worked on the grading systems and the concern about the inability to get a quick view of how well they are doing. The new report cards will give that short synopsis. They are also discussing alternative ways to show when students excel since there is no longer a GPA. Ms. Brown questioned if there is a method to determine sports eligibility. Ms. Fierman noted that the teachers are educational professionals and are adept at determining if a student would be better served spending more time on school work than practices. The teachers are letting the AD know when that is the case. The result has been that they are seeing students in homework club usually the same day.

VIII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. FY20 Budget 5th Draft

Ms. Mahusky noted that the finance committee met 5 times in the last month. The committee consists of Ms. Brown, Ms. Fromberger, Mr. Marin, Ms. Mahusky, and Mr. Studin from the board and community members Sara Stowell (Cavendish), Jeannie Wade (Chester), and Wayne Wheelock (Baltimore). They began with a large budget. The administration gave the committee a "wants/needs" list. They also gave the committee a list of "must haves", the things they had no choice about. This included payment on the bond, the increased Baltimore

tuition for Springfield schools, the deficit that each school had from the prior year (GM: \$104,000, CAES: \$48,000, CTES \$15,000), contribution in the budget for the safety grant match, and the change in the transportation expense (due to the board's vote last month to purchase new buses rather than buyout the lease). She reported that the facilities committee also did a needs assessment of all the things needed in all the buildings and found that there were some things that needed repair/replacement/installation right away. This includes the CTES fuel oil tank, the CTES hot lunch tables, the CTES hot water heater, and the CTES safety fencing. The committee had several discussions about capital improvements. GMUHS and CAES both had money in their capital reserve funds prior to the merger. The committee agreed to recommend using the \$50,000 in transition funds (that must be spent by June 30) and part of the capital improvement fund to pay for these improvements.

She discussed the wants/needs list and explained that the administration has worked to winnow that list down to those things that will help provide the best educational outcomes for the kids. The finance committee met last night, but does not have a recommendation for the board at this time. There were some sticking points that the committee felt this board would have to make a decision about. Some of the outstanding issues are the request to add an assistant principal to CAES. She reported that last year was the same request, but the board was not in favor, and instead allowed a PBIS assistant. If the assistant principal is funded, the PBIS assistant would not be. Another consideration is the increase to the World Language program of .17 fte, to make the .83 fte position 1.0 fte. This would allow another section of foreign language to be taught. Another consideration is the after school program (ASP). Because there were so many iterations of the budget, the ASP funding was cut. CAES is the recipient of a grant to fund the ASP, so the administration felt they could cut the budget funding of the program this year and add it back in in years to come as the grant declines. Ms. White had explained that the grant was written expecting this \$20,000 in the budget. There are 140 students in the ASP between CTES and CAES. There are a lot of educational reasons for the ASP: enrichment, homework assistance, tutoring, activities, and food. This program helps to extend the school day. She also explained that the grant expects funding from 3 sources. Ms. White had explained that the CAES funding comes from the school budget and the parent fees and the grant, however with this cut the funding is only from the grant and the parents.

Ms. Hammond has prepared an options sheet for the board to consider. Ms. Mahusky noted that the biggest controversy is the assistant principal position. She noted that the principals all did presentations to the finance committee about their justifications for their wants/needs list. The finance committee was divided on the assistant principal. There was discussion about there being 3 board members on the committee opposed to the assistant principal position, and 1 in favor. There was unanimous consensus to add the Spanish increase back in (about \$10,000). Ms. Brown noted that the finance committee also discussed the cut to the capital reserve fund from the budget, but making a note to put a lot in beginning next year. She noted that GM used to put \$40,000 per year in the capital improvement, while CAES allotted \$25,000, but this year, they are putting nothing in. There was discussion about the capital improvements, and the deferral of the oil tank replacement (to accommodate an improvement on the parking lot, as well as to give time to discuss alternative energy sources). There was discussion about these projects not impacting the budget, but being provided to give people a full understanding of all the discussions that the finance committee had.

Ms. Stowell noted that the board still has to make the decision about the oil tank, and it does still need to come out of the ground regardless of if it is replaced with an alternative energy source or the same. She also noted that Ms. Powden reported that Mt. Holly is going through

the same discussions about their tank, so it may be possible to couple with them in a bulk deal.

Ms. Hammond noted that the lunch tables will have to go out to bid, so that will delay their installation. The fence will likely also have to go out to bid now that they will be paying someone to install it. Ms. Mahusky requested to defer the discussion about the capital improvements since they will likely have a long discussion about the budget. She noted that there will still be a capital reserve even if they vote to approve all the projects. There was discussion about this being a reminder that they need to fund the capital reserve fund next year. There was discussion about the 1.0 fte math interventionist that is in the budget. This is a certified 7-12 math teacher who will help students who aren't meeting their proficiencies. Ms. Brown noted that there was consensus to keep this position in the budget.

Ms. Mahusky noted that the areas to discuss are the \$32,000 difference between the PBIS assistant and the assistant principal, and the \$15,000 ASP cut. There was discussion about the two half time positions for math interventionists at the elementary schools still being in the budget, but those positions are yet unfilled.

Ms. Fogg wanted to express her thanks to Mr. Carroll for all his hard work. The board gave him a round of applause. She remarked that he worked very hard to bring in fresh foods as well as getting the children to try new things. They will miss him a lot.

When she came to CAES, she was aware that there had been a lot of turnover in the principal position. She was an assistant principal at Mill River for several years and before that in Bennington for several years and kept hearing about Chester. She worked with Penny Kraft for a few years who talked to her about Chester.

Ms. Fogg shared a presentation on the justification for an assistant principal. She noted that the principal's day varies quite a lot depending on what is happening in the school each day. She begins her day with a plan, but often the majority of her day evolves into dealing with behavior issues. She noted that her key responsibilities are creating a vision for academic success for all students, creating a climate hospitable to education, and cultivating leadership in others, improving instruction and managing people, data and processes. She noted that these priorities are a time management issues. She spends a lot of her day, however on managing the students' behavior and maintaining the climate. She knows this work well since she was an assistant principal for 10 years. But she feels that it shouldn't be the focus of her day.

Ms. Fogg reported that the school has been working on PBIS for 3 years and it is working. The students are learning the program. She would like to spend more of her day on continuous improvement. The staff is working on continuous improvement school-wide, proficiency based learning and the multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). They have a good behavior system now, and need to focus on the MTSS. They need to review data and make informed decisions about interventions.

She shared the enrollment numbers over the past 5 years. In 2006-2007, there were 255 students, with an assistant principal. In 2007-2008, there were 265 students and an assistant principal. In 2008-2009, there were 269 students and an assistant principal. In 2018-2019, there are 240 students. She noted that they were at 197 in 2015. She anticipates 250 next year, so they are growing. She felt that Chester is growing and the school and town are working well together to draw in families. People are "shopping" for schools now. She felt

that they need to focus on academics and achievement scores to make it a school of excellence.

She noted that in addition to an increased population, they are having a larger amount of students in the school with trauma in their background. The town of Chester has been hit hard with a lot of drug problems for a school this size. The staff spends a lot of time teaching students' social skills and verbal skills. Many of the students are being raised by grandparents and there is an economic stress on children and families. There is a high poverty rate and a number of homeless children.

Ms. Fogg discussed Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) and noted that she and the PBIS team spend a lot of time teaching and re-teaching behavior expectations. This is a team approach and the administration is part of it, but not the entire part. She works well as part of the team, but can't commit all her time to the team. She noted that they do have an assistant to the PBIS coordinator who is helping out a great deal, but she can't do all the necessary tasks since she does not have an education background and isn't an administrator.

She also gave a history of the principal turnover. The last principal that was here for a long time was Penny Kraft who served from 2001 to 2009 and she had an assistant principal from 2005 through 2009. She noted that some of what she had heard was that the single principal role was a lot of work which may have led to a lot of the turnover since the position was eliminated. She began mentioning the assistant principal position since she arrived since she was aware that there is a lot of need in this school.

Ms. Fogg shared information on each school in the district. She also shared the number of students in each building, noting that LES and Black River share administration. She also shared the Teacher: Student ratio, the Administrator:Student ratio. She also shared the number of the staff that she manages. It is an estimate based on shared positions and she didn't count bus drivers. She also shared the ratio of administrators to staff. She noted that managing the staff is part of the position. The data illustrated that the ratios of administrators to staff and administrators to students is very different at CAES than any of the other schools in the SU.

Ms. Fogg reported that currently she spends 60-75% of the day working on behavior and attending to student needs and she feels that she should be more focused on achievement and learning. While she enjoys working on the behavior piece, the focus of her job should be on achievement. Currently there is an assistant to the principal model and whenever she is out of the office on a training or meeting and a principal is needed, that teacher is pulled out of the classroom which isn't good for that teacher's students. That person also can't deal with suspensions or with staff issues. She noted that he does good work, but that model isn't the best for the students.

Ms. Fogg shared the proposed assistant principal duties, including following up on significant discipline and parent contact, de-escalating student behavior, suspension decisions and paperwork as well as re-entry meetings, bullying and harassment investigations, attendance follow up, facilitate educational support team meetings. The assistant principal has the ability to make all the decisions that a principal can. The assistant principal can also follow up on the food service bills. There was discussion about some of this work currently being done by an assistant, but not necessarily the most effective way, and not best practice. The assistant principal can also monitor lunch and recess.

Ms. Fogg reported that an assistant principal would free up some of her time for staff observation, teacher collaboration, IEP and team meetings, updated research and development of instructional strategies, new teacher support, new academic initiatives, MTSS work, intervention times, academic achievement and curriculum development. She notes that she needs to do 28 observations and to do them well takes time. Ms. Fogg noted that she is asking for \$32,000 and this is the only thing that they are adding to their budget this year. She felt that it would be a help school-wide. As to the long-term fears, she suggested setting the position as a 2-year trial and set parameters to determine if the position is working, and remove it if it isn't. There was discussion about the behavior issues at the core, and the feeling that perhaps a behavioral interventionist might be better equipped. Ms. Fogg noted that the administrators have extensive training in this area. Mr. McBride noted that there are other schools in the area of similar size who don't have an assistant principal. He questioned why CAES is different and they need one. Ms. Fogg noted that Mr. Studin asked that question of her. She called around to other area schools. She spoke with the principal at Union Street School. He is the 8th principal in 10 years. They are dealing with many of the same issues that CAES is. They did hire an assistant principal that is shared between the two elementary schools. Their principal feels they need a full time assistant principal, but this is a good first step. She called the Rutland Schools. They have 2 K-2 schools each with about 235 students in them. They don't have an assistant principal, but they do have a director of student services on-site who serves as their 2nd administrator. This is a similar shared position like Union Street. At Rutland's K-5 school, with 500 students, there is a principal and two associate principals.

She felt that CAES has unique demographics with many children with high needs and trauma. There was discussion about whether there are other models that would work better than the PBIS model and that wouldn't take as much of the principal's time. Ms. Fogg noted that the PBIS model is working well. They are not suspending children—the students who need their behavior addressed are often getting what they need and returning to class. There is data to back up the success of the program, however the program is run by para-educators, not administrators. She advised that there needs to be an administrator there when there is de-escalation happening and decisions to be made. Ms. Mahusky noted that a behavior interventionist would probably not be best suited for this work either, rather a board certified behavior analyst, who would likely cost about \$62,000. There was discussion about this being only \$12,000 difference from the assistant principal, and that person can serve other needs. There was discussion about whether a mental health clinician might help this need. There was discussion about whether the PBIS coordinator could also be the assistant principal. Ms. Fogg noted that the PBIS coordinator is a full time need, and the assistant principal won't only be dealing with behavior issues, they will be dealing with families and other issues.

Ms. Powden noted that the assistant principal position in just under \$75,000 and with the cut to the PBIS assistant position, that would be an increase of only \$32,300. Ms. Mahusky noted that Mr. McBride questioned if concern was if the need could be addressed by hiring a different professional, and the school has a PBIS assistant, but that isn't meeting the need. Mr. McBride suggested that it would be better if the problem could be addressed before it became a behavior problem. Ms. Fogg noted that that is the main goal of the PBIS program and it is working, but they have students with extreme needs, and more students with needs coming in each year. She noted that the goal of the assistant principal is to avoid her having to shift different people different places, including herself, depending on the need, like she would with the PBIS assistant, or with a behavior analyst. Rather the assistant principal can just go where the need is. Ms. Hamblett noted that she is a special educator at CAES. She

has been working on the PBE at the elementary level, trying to read up on all the techniques and strategies, but she doesn't have access to Ms. Fogg in order to review and discuss that work. She needs an instructional leader so she can do her job. Ms. Beaupre noted that the need is for the administrator who can lead the teachers, but Ms. Fogg is not available due to the other administrator requirements.

Ms. Wade noted that, as a tax payer, she sees the need and feels that the \$32,000 is not that much to cover the need. She also noted that early childhood trauma doesn't go away, but the support a child gets at a young age is critical to society. She also noted that the trauma is generally a chronic problem. There was discussion about the ratio of para-professionals to teachers.

Ms. Mahusky felt very frustrated for Ms. Fogg and the school. She came to the CAES board at the time of the Scott Gray turmoil and the Sherrie Nichols term. She advised that Linda Waite, the assistant superintendent at the time, spent a lot of time in the school in order to give the school the stability it needed and the teachers the support they needed. She felt that Ms. Fogg has brought stability to the school and has earned the trust of her teachers. Her sense is that the teachers trust her leadership. She has been an advocate for her teachers. The assistant principal issue has come up several times in the past. At one point in the past, probably before Ms. Fogg's time the board recognized the need for an assistant principal, but there wasn't the money for it. She didn't feel that the need isn't changing. What she feels frustrated by is that there are board members that are disrespectful and hostile to this request, and she doesn't understand why. She feel that the board has lost sight on their role to focus on the educational outcomes of the students. There is a corresponding need to balance providing the educational need at a reasonable price. Looking at this budget, she didn't see a reason not to move forward with this request. When the Act 46 work was being contemplated, they anticipated a tax rate this year with the merger of \$1.5369. With the assistant principal in the budget, and with the 6 cent merger incentive, the tax rate is \$1.42. This is still a lower tax rate with an assistant principal than they thought they would have in the merger. She felt that this board has been very disrespectful of that process and doesn't understand its role and she is uncomfortable being on this board. She felt that people are not focused on what their role is. She felt that there was more enthusiasm talking about the boilers at CAES, than she has on any educational issue or initiative that the administration has brought to the board. She felt that the community deserves better. She also noted that it is clear to her that people don't understand what PBIS is. She explained that it is an evidence based practice for dealing with challenging behaviors. She remembers Bruce Williams coming into meetings talking about one kindergarten class one year that had 5 children with such extreme behaviors that some of the kids had to be sent out of district due to their needs being so great. She felt that keeping the kids in school and having no suspensions is evidence that Ms. Fogg and her PBIS team are doing their job. She is upset as a board member, a tax payer, and a member of this community that Ms. Fogg is not able to focus on the educational leadership of the teachers.

Mr. Fromberger suggested that it isn't disrespectful that board members question the administration for their reasons for increasing the budget. He advised that they do represent not only the impulse to improve education, but also the means to do that. They need to do that with an eye on whether the public supports or approves what is being added. He felt that adding an administrative position while cutting classroom expenses isn't a viable alternative. Ms. Mahusky noted that they are not reducing any classroom instructions. The only position being reduced is the one that was added last year as a stopgap to attempt to address this

behavior need, and that the administration has determined is not actually meeting the need since it truly needs an administrator.

Ms. Beaupre noted that the rest of Ms. Fogg's job is getting done at night and on the weekend. She explained that when she herself was an AP at a school of 400, she had to stay until 6 making calls to parents about what happened. She noted that Ms. Fogg is doing that and then going home and doing her principal administrative work. She noted that there are many things in this building that Jenn Harper can do to help her and she relies on Ms. Harper, but there are also many things that Ms. Harper can't do because she is not an administrator. She noted that this is the same at CAES. Mr. Kelly can't evaluate Ms. Hamblett. If Ms. Fogg needs administrator help, she has to do it herself, or seek help from another building. She noted that the principal has a direct relation with student achievement because they build relationships. She felt that CAES has a good thing going with their relationships, particularly since they are so hard hit with the opioid crisis. She felt that everything that Ms. Fogg has built will unravel if she has to leave because of burnout.

Ms. Lamphere noted that her questioning was not meant out of disrespect, and she felt that Ms. Fogg's presentation was compelling. Her questioning is out of curiosity and wondered if an assistant principal is the best way to support a child displaying challenging behavior. She is curious about what else has been looked at for option that they landed at this one as the best one to present to the board. She hears that there is a need, and that what they are doing is taking them down the right path, but they need more. She also agreed with Ms. Mahusky that no suspensions is excellent. She just wanted to know what else was considered to help these kids with social and emotional issues and who are living in trauma.

Ms. Fogg noted that she is asking for an administrator because that person will have been a teacher, will have had a lot of training, and will have had a master's degree. She felt that this is the need and if she didn't feel it so passionately, she wouldn't have come to the meetings to make that request so many times. She advised that she can keep doing what she's doing, but she will burn out. She had said that she wanted to retire from this community and wanted to live in this community and wants to make an excellent school. She advised that they tried a behavior interventionist and while that person is doing a great job, that person can't do the things that require an administrator for.

Ms. Hamblett noted that she worked in the government in the past. Their organizational chart was outlined who one's boss was, who that person's boss was, and who that person's boss was, all the way to the top. In a school, there is one supervisor and evaluator and the rest of the chart is essentially flat. As the special educator, she directs the work of 4 para-educators. She sets their schedules, works with them daily, meets with them weekly, but she is not their supervisor or evaluator. She is not allowed to since she is not an administrator. She is in a tricky place because she needs Ms. Fogg to see what she sees. There was discussion that evaluating is not a once a year process. Ms. Lamphere asked if they have tried everything, including checking with every un-tapped administrator in the district. Ms. Fogg felt that they need someone in that building.

Ms. Tyrell noted that she is on the 5/6 team at CAES and the lack of a second administrator means that the teachers are stressed because they are having to do things that they aren't supposed to. Ms. Lamson noted that the other part of this conversation is that the students who don't have trauma also need good teachers with a good and present leader. Ms. Lamphere noted that it is important not to separate students like that, because the kids with

trauma need the same good teachers. Ms. Lamson noted that her point is they need to be focused on lifting everyone's academics.

Mr. Hance advised that for him, it wasn't about the \$30,000, it was about making sure that they have the right people in the right spots doing the right work. He had asked at a prior meeting what the teachers felt. So Ms. Fogg put out a survey monkey and sent it to 58 people. There were 36 responses with 70% in favor and the comments were included. He tried to speak with some of these teachers and was advised that they were under a "gag order" and "threatened with discipline if they spoke to a school board member." He said he has read all 93 pages of the policy manual and nowhere does it say that he can't speak with a teacher. Ms. Fogg advised that she would never say that to her staff. Ms. Powden noted that there is a chain of command, so if there is an employee who has a concern with another employee, that they go to that employee first and if it's not resolved, then to take the concern to the next level. She understood that he was trying to have a casual conversation, but wondered if there was some confusion. Ms. Lamphere suggested that there should be clarification. Ms. Mahusky noted that based on the school board member manual, if a teacher approaches the board member complaining about the principal, the board member's response should be, "Have you talked to the principal yet?" But if a board member is asking a teacher about what the climate in the school is and how things are going at the school, that shouldn't be a problem.

Mr. McBride felt this board is well-served by Ms. Mahusky and that it functions well because of her. He felt fortunate that she leads it. He felt that it is unfortunate that she felt the way she did. He also noted that sometimes if his passion about a topic gets too much, and it seems disrespectful, he apologized for it. He felt that most people on the board are passionate about getting the right answer.

Ms. Mahusky invited Ms. White to speak about the ASP. Mr. Studin requested to see the options sheet. Ms. Mahusky requested that they wait if possible so that they could really pay attention to what Ms. White had to say. Ms. White acknowledged that the ASP at CAES received a grant and she understands that some people might see that as a way to save money in the budget now that they have a grant. The other evening, they talked about grants and sustainability. She noted that grants are basically "start-up" funds. She explained that the grant application indicates sustainability from 3 funding sources—the grant, the SD budget and parent fees. Without the funds in the local budget, they are basically saying that they are relying on the parents and the feds. The grants are diminishing grants. In year 3 they lose 35%, in year 4, they lose another 10% and by year 5, the program has to be 51% sustainable. She noted that CTES will be entering its 4th year and as such losing \$21,000 in federal funding. Then the local funds are lessening by \$15,000, which means that they will be losing \$36,000. That is a lot when the ASP budget is \$225,000.

She noted that ASP is one of the major providers of opportunity. They are open 5 days a week, from the start of school to the end. They are open on school vacation days. They run 9 weeks of summer programming. They serve 130 kids on this side of the SU. At one point this district wanted a farm to school initiative, but that has diminished. However, the ASP still has a farm to school program with a farm to school coordinator coming in once a week. Last year, the board said they wanted a STEAM coordinator. That person comes to ASP to work with the kids. She noted that for \$25,000 per year, ASP is providing \$225,000 worth of opportunities. The total of tutoring costs in ASP is \$25,000. With this loss in funding, tutoring will be the first thing cut. She noted that ASP provides a valuable service to working families in these communities, as well as the additional opportunities for learning. She

understands why the cuts to the ASP were considered, but when they have to cut some of the things that make this a high quality program, they risk losing all their grant funding. They have to demonstrate that they are meeting the standard for grant funding, and currently they are well above the standard. She advised that every year there are 4 or 5 programs that lose their grant funding and she doesn't want to be one of them.

Ms. Lamphere noted that in addition to all the educational opportunities, many parents rely on the after-school care. She advised that when families are moving into this area they often ask what schools provide after school care. They will lose recruitment of new families in the area. Mr. McBride reported that he has 3 children in the ASP and it is vitally important as a working parent. As a board member, part of the problem is that people lose sight of the really high-value parts of a good education. He felt that ASP is one such high-value part. He felt that it is some of the cheapest money for a large return. He felt that it is difficult to determine which areas to cut money from, but felt it shouldn't be from a high-value area. He also asked the board to consider adding money to the before-school program. It is the exact same concern—an inexpensive, but high-value area.

Ms. White suggested that if they don't spend all the money earmarked for the program, they give it back. Ms. Dakin noted that all grants have a better chance of being re-funded with local monetary support to indicate that the board agrees with the program's value. She felt that this is one of the best programs for students, and they risk losing working families or having those families have to make difficult decisions and leave their children at home alone.

Ms. Hammond distributed the financial scenarios. Mr. Studin noted that the way he looks at his role is not just as a board member, but as a tax payer, parent and community member. He feels that when he asks his questions or makes a vote, particularly in regard to the budget, he takes all these roles into account and considers what the public will support. He feels that it is not about what he can support but what he feels the voters will support. Ms. Lamphere agreed but also noted that they were elected because they were entrusted to make decisions on behalf of the students. Ms. Mahusky noted that this board has not done any visioning, they've been focused on the money.

Ms. Hammond noted that the bottom line is the budget that they will be voting on. It is currently at 3.04%. She reported that they are currently on their 5th or 6th equalized pupil number from the state and it still isn't frozen. Currently it is 721.46 which gives them a per-pupil cost of \$15,904.59, which is well below the penalty threshold, and represents an increase in the per-pupil spending of 3.49%. The yield is still an estimate, but currently at \$10,666. That puts the tax rate at \$1.49, then the 6 cent tax cut for the merger incentive applies. There was discussion about last year's equalized pupils and per pupil costs.

Ms. Hammond noted that all the scenarios are based on the current equalized pupil count and the current yield. Scenario A includes the assistant principal and is adding back in the .17 fte for Spanish for \$9153, and the ASP funds for \$15,000. That would increase the general state support grant and result in an increase in an overall budget bottom-line increase of 3.23% and per pupil cost of \$15,938, an increase of 3.71%.

Ms. Hammond reported that scenario B is keeping the assistant principal, but just adding the Spanish .17 fte position. That scenario would result in a budget increase of 3.11, and the general state support grant increase of 3.58%. Scenario C is removing the assistant principal, adding back in the PBIS assistant, adding the .17 fte Spanish, but not adding in the ASP funds that had been cut. That would result in a 2.85% increase in the budget and a 3.28% increase

in the general state support grant. Scenario D is removing the assistant principal, adding back the PBIS assistant, adding back the Spanish and the ASP. This results in a bottom line increase of 2.97% and a general state support grant increase of 3.42%.

Mr. Cunningham noted that the 2nd budget vote last year showed a per pupil spending of \$15,637. Ms. Mahusky reminded the board that during the Act 46 discussions, if there was no merge the FY 20 tax rate was projected to be \$1.64 (Andover), \$1.69 (Baltimore), \$1.64 (Cavendish), \$1.80 (Chester). Under the merger, the proposed tax rate was projected to be \$1.54. She noted that the tax rates can still change a little because the state hasn't locked in its numbers yet. However the current budget proposal is showing a tax rate of \$1.49 without the 6 cent tax incentive for the merger. She reminded the board that any of the other scenarios are all below the \$1.54 that had been projected. Mr. McBride noted that this was surprising in a good way and that they must be doing something right. There was discussions about the things that were cut along the process with the finance committee. The principals have cut as much as they possibly could. Ms. Powden advised that the first draft of the budget was an increase of 4.34%. The finance committee asked for a proposal that fell within 2.5%-3.5% increase. The administration worked very hard to do that an intentionally protected 2 positions: the math interventionist and the assistant principal.

Ms. Powden noted that the administration wants to be respectful of the board members, but it is difficult when the administration fulfills the request to cut the budget to 2.5%-3.5% but it isn't seen as being in the right place. She reminded the board that they hire their administrators to determine what they need to move the schools forward and they did everything they could to protect those positions because they know that those positions are going to help the schools move forward. She hears that some board members are hearing that there isn't the community support, but the administrators are the ones with the expertise to say that this is what is needed to bring the schools from good to excellent. Ms. Brown appreciates that but advised that these are only a few of the people who will be voting on the budget. Ms. Muther suggested putting the question to the voters and if they voted down the budget, this board could reassess.

Ms. Hammond noted that the current budget proposal has a tax rate of \$1.4911. Scenario A is a tax rate of \$1.4928. Scenario B is \$1.49233. Scenario C is \$1.488. Scenario D is \$1.49. There was discussion about the tax rate difference between these scenarios being minimal. Ms. Lamphere noted that voters don't like to add administrators to the budget, therefore it is imperative that if an administrator is absolutely necessary, there has to be a good enough argument to sell it to the communities. She felt that the presentation is compelling, and if this is the way they go, they have to make sure that they inform the voters of it in advance of the vote. Ms. Mahusky noted that the board has put the administration through their paces with justifying the positions. If they approve the budget, it will be the board's job to go out to the community to show the voters why these things are important. Ms. Fogg noted that it is also the administration's job as well. It is also important to say that the tax rate is lower than they thought it would be. There was discussion about the CLA impacting the tax rates in each town.

Mr. McBride thanked the committee for their work on the budget. He recommended that they fund an elementary French teacher and ask the superintendent to determine a way to implement that role in the school day. He suggested adding money to the school supply budgets. He suggested adding money for capital reserve funds. He suggested adding funds for an early school program so that the schools can open at 7:00a.m. Ms. Mahusky suggested that they should research the demand for the early school program and then discuss

implementing for a future year. There was discussion about the language teacher being not necessarily French. There was discussion about the world language coordinator position. Ms. White noted that ASP funds can be used before school. She advised that Ludlow had looked into this but found that there were only a couple students who would be participating. Last year CTES surveyed parents and found only a couple students who would need these services. She advised that the ASP advisory board is always looking for people who are passionate about the program and invited Mr. McBride to join. There was discussion about there not being a funding issue, rather a case of there not being a need.

Ms. Beaupre advised that they just hired the World language coordinator who will be reviewing the elementary foreign language program. There was discussion about targeting the funding. There was also discussion about what the administration's feelings would be. Ms. Beaupre noted that she would need to collaborate with the foreign language coordinator before implementing foreign language. She would also need to talk with her teachers. She could definitely use additional funds on the art room and music instruments, but wasn't prepared to make specific decisions on how right now. She and the other administrators will be attending a scheduling conference next week so they can best set the schedules in a way that works best for children. She advised that this is why the ASP is so important. There are sometimes ways to share more education outside the school day.

Ms. Lamphere questioned the administrators about when Mr. McBride suggested adding an elementary world language teacher, did they say in their heads "Yes! That's exactly what we need" or "I would use that money in a different way" Ms. Fogg felt they were not ready to do that yet, but felt that with the new coordinator they can figure out ways to begin implementing foreign language at the elementary level without adding too much money. The administration can figure out how to do these initiatives with a little time. Ms. Beaupre felt that foreign language at the elementary level is invaluable. In her prior school, because students begin Spanish in 5th grade, they are in Spanish 2 by the time they get to high school. There was discussion about the foreign language being implemented sooner rather than later. Ms. Hammond noted that to add a teaching position to the budget would be about \$65,000 and would bring the general state support grant to 4.3% which is 1/10th percent less than what the finance committee said was too high a few weeks ago.

There was discussion about the new equipment being installed perhaps generating savings on maintenance that could later be moved into the capital reserve fund since the current budget proposal doesn't include a line item for that. The finance committee also has a plan with regard to future capital reserve contributions, in that they go through each building and determine an appropriate amount to put in next year.

Mr. McBride **moved** to add \$11,000 in school supplies back into the budget. There was discussion about the school supplies in various iterations of the budget proposal. There was also discussion about selecting a scenario to add the supplies into. Mr. McBride withdrew his motion until a scenario decision could be made.

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the budget scenario D, which is removing the assistant principal, adding back the PBIS assistant, adding back the Spanish and the ASP, and is a bottom line of \$12,904,847. Mr. Studin seconded. The motion failed with a vote of 5 in favor, 5 opposed, and one abstention.

Ms. Muther **moved** to approve budget scenario A, which includes the assistant principal and is adding back in the .17 fte for Spanish for \$9153, and the ASP funds for \$15,000, and is a

bottom line budget of \$12,937,250. Mr. Marin seconded. Ms. Muther noted that the board keeps comparing to Springfield, and there are more people there doing the work that this principal is doing. She has 2 people in her office to help while Springfield has 5 people in their planning room—a behavior interventionist and another position that calls the parents, plus 3 para-educators. Café Services deals with the hot lunch collections in Springfield, while Ms. Fogg’s office deals with that themselves. She felt that if the board is going to compare CAES to Springfield, they need to take into account the 5 other people helping out with that role, and they are still having suspensions in Springfield. Mr. McBride acknowledged that the assistant principal seems to be the dividing factor on the vote and felt that it may be due to the feeling that administration is too big. He questioned if this motion could be adjusted such that if it passes and the budget is approved by the voters, that a study could be done of all the administration looking to confirm that it is “right-sized”. Ms. Brown asked for clarification if he was referring to the SD administration or the administration in the entire SU. He advised just the SD. There was discussion about there currently being 4 administrators in the SD. He clarified that he meant the entire administrative structure.

Ms. Mahusky agreed with the need to right-size the administration. There was also discussion about the need to collect data and set benchmarks over the course of the next one or two years to determine if this position is successful and still necessary. Ms. Lamphere reminded the board that last year Ms. Powden shared information from the AOE that advised that in regards to administration to teacher ratios, CTES is right-sized, but CAES is not. They don’t have enough administrators based on the educational quality standards of 10 teachers to 1 administrator.

Ms. Brown questioned that if the board votes in favor and the voters also say yes, how will the board know that it is working. She didn’t just want to have Ms. Fogg say it was working, rather she wanted actual data to support that assessment. There was discussion about the feeling that once a position is created, it doesn’t go away, but a number of people disagreed because the assistant principal position went away before, and now, if approved, the PBIS assistant position (deemed to not be effective) is also going away. Ms. Lamson agreed with the idea of a two year minimum, and if Ms. Fogg is able to spend more time being an instructional leader, thus creating better teachers, then there should be resulting improved test scores. Ms. Mahusky suggested that the administration come back to the board once the budget passes and lay out a set of benchmarks to determine if the position is successful so that the board can hold them to it. They can look at it in a year and again in two years. There was discussion about what could sway any of those opposed to the assistant principal. Mr. McBride advised that the administration review could sway him. Ms. Mahusky questioned if the administration could meet and then present to the SU board and the SD boards about the size of the administrative structure and whether it is right sized. They also need to consider that BRHS is closing next year and that will change the administration needs. Ms. Lamphere also requested to look at the administrative structure at the SU.

Ms. Muther’s motion to approve scenario A, with a budget of \$12,937,250 and an overall increase of 3.23%, general state support grant increase of 3.71%, and a projected tax rate of \$1.4928 (before the 6 cent tax incentive) carried with a vote of 8 in favor and 3 opposed.

Ms. Mahusky thanked Ms. Wade, Ms. Stowell, and Mr. Wheelock, as well as the other finance committee members for serving and working on this budget.

The board recessed for a 5 minute break at 9:04 p.m.

IX. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Graduation Date

Ms. Powden suggested that after consultation with Ms. Fierman, the graduation date should be set at June 21. Ms. Brown suggested June 14, as GM graduation has typically been Father's Day weekend, usually around the end of school. There was a concern for snow days and finals, but teachers in the past have given the seniors their finals early to accommodate. She feared that families have already started planning for graduation on Father's Day weekend since that is when it has been held in the past. Ms. Fierman felt that philosophically students should have a certain number of school days and if they have extensive snow days, to tell the seniors that they don't need those educational days is a problem for her. At the moment, with the current 3 snow days, the last day of school will be 6/19, and there are sure to be additional snow days. The likely last day of school will be either just before the 6/21 proposed graduation date or just after. She also questioned if people thought that graduation might be on 6/14, why wasn't it on the calendar to plan. Ms. Brown noted that under the GMUHS board, they used to set the date in November or December, and she and Ms. Lamson realized it had been missed.

Ms. Brown **moved** to set the graduation date at June 14. Ms. Lamson seconded. Ms. Fierman reported that the seniors have already been told graduation was tentatively June 21, so they won't be disappointed with an earlier date. They were also told that decision is tentative. There was also discussion about the board setting the graduation date for this year's juniors in the fall.

B. Annual Warning

Ms. Mahusky read aloud the annual warning for the board. There was discussion about the warning referring to school districts that no longer exist. The warning should say the Green Mountain Unified School district consisting of the towns of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish and Chester.

C. Recommendation for Hire

Ms. Powden reported that they are recommending that the board approve hiring Jennifer Marie Crossman as a school nurse for the GMUSD. Ms. Brown **moved** to hire Jennifer Marie Crossman for the position of school nurse for the GMUSD with appropriate placement on the salary schedule. Ms. Muther seconded. Ms. Crossman is an RN and has been a school nurse before. She has been subbing at CAES presently. The motion carried unanimously.

D. Limited School Choice (Elementary & Middle School)

Ms. Powden reminded the board of the SU-wide agreement that has been in effect for the past several years. She also noted that this will be the last year for the middle school agreement. She advised of a language change under article 2D which states residential district, thus making this a transfer between the 2 districts rather than between the two middle schools or the 4 elementary schools. She advised that this was the only change to the documents. Ms. Brown felt that limiting the transfer to 6 students coming in isn't in this board's best interest. Ms. Powden advised that the LMH board won't allow more. There was discussion about this agreement not impacting the number of students who can come into this district whose towns or parents pay tuition. Ms. Mahusky explained the rationale for BRHS not wanting to lose too many students and have to pay for the operation of the school without sufficient students. Ms. Powden reminded the board members that this program has always had the 6 student limit.

Ms. Muther **moved** to approve the limited school transfer programs for the elementary and middle schools as presented with the language change referenced by Ms. Powden. Mr. Fromberger seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Annual Warning (continued)

Ms. Mahusky read aloud the corrected paragraph in the warning. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the warning as read. Ms. Lamson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Public High School Choice

Ms. Powden advised that the LMHUUSD board voted to allow 7 students out of BRHS through the state public high school choice program. They are including in that 7 the 4 that are already 8th graders at GM, so there will be a lottery for the other 3 slots. She advised that the GMUSD board needs to set the number of students they will let out and in. Ms. Fierman noted that they need to not set the number in so high as to cause the need to hire additional personnel. Ms. Powden reminded the board that no money follows the students in this program. There was discussion about the BRHS students having tuition funds that will follow them next year. There was also discussion about this program not impacting the number of tuition students the school can take. Ms. Fierman reported that there are 6 students in grade 9, 6 in grade 10, 5 in grade 11, and 7 seniors who are at GM through public high school choice, for a total of 24 total. She advised that they are getting about 5-10 applications per year. She also reported that there are 7 tuition student in grades 7-12, but that is separate from the public high school choice program. There was discussion about the minimum being 5% of the students, therefore 11 students. Ms. Brown **moved** to set the number of students allowed out at 20 students and the number in at 40. Mr. Fromberger seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

G. Current Year Financials

Ms. Hammond reported that the current year financials are in the packet for review. This is the full financials, with the summary having been given to the board in December. She advised that the only real big concerns at this point are the CAES expenses. She will begin looking at the support staff agreement to determine what savings will be realized due to the new contract. She also advised that the insurance company is still reviewing the claim on the water project. Ms. Mahusky requested to have updated financials after they get the final decision from the insurance company. There was discussion about the length of time the insurance company has been taking.

H. Financial Management

Ms. Hammond reported that the financial management document was in the board packet for their review. It outlines who does what financial tasks. She is required to share this information with the board annually as part of the audit process. She advised that it is required at the SU level, but she felt it was beneficial for the SD boards to be aware as well.

I. Transportation for Ludlow and Mt. Holly Students

Ms. Powden reminded the board that in August they had had preliminary discussions about providing transportation to LMH students beginning in August of 2020. There seemed to be general consensus to do that. She advised the board that Mill River took a specific action to provide transportation to LMH students beginning August 2020 from both Ludlow and Mt. Holly. There was discussion about not being able to be specific about the details of the transportation until they know how many students they will get from each area. Mr. Studin questioned if they have the capacity to offer transportation. Ms. Powden advised that they do. Ms. Mahusky advised that may end up having to purchase a bus, but if that's the case then it would be worth it financially to be able to secure that much tuition money. Ms. Powden recommended that before they provide specifics, they have the transportation director analyze the need and report back to the board about the details. However she recommended that since Mill River made a public decision to provide transportation, that GM do the same. Ms. Brown **moved** to provide transportation from Ludlow and Mt. Holly to GM beginning in August 2020. Ms. Lamson seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Powden noted that at a recent superintendent's meeting, there is a lot of interest in the BRHS students. Area schools, not just Mill River and GM, are thinking about how they will market their schools to the Ludlow and Mt. Holly students. There was discussion about Rutland, BBA, Long Trail, and Woodstock being among them. Ms. Fierman reported that in May, BRHS will be holding an information session for students to begin thinking about where they want to attend. They have invited area schools to come in. There will be a group of students who will go to that meeting to share information about the school.

X. NEXT MEETING AND AGENDA ITEMS:

The next meeting will be on February 11, 2019 at CAES. All the February meetings will be at CAES. The agenda will include conversation about what this board wants to do to entice students to come to GM. Part of that discussion is visioning and strategic planning. She advised that Mill River is about a year ahead of GM to try to attract the LMH students. The agenda will include CAES water project updates, updated financials, approval of negotiated agreements.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Brown **moved** to adjourn at 9:43 p.m. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary