

Green Mountain Unified School District Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, December 20, 2018
GMUSD Library Learning Commons
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

Staff: Meg Powden, Cheryl Hammond, Lauren Fierman, Katherine Fogg, Julie Parah, Theresa DiLorenzo

Student Reps: Rileigh Thomas, Laurel King

Public: Shawn Cunningham, Grace Johnson, Olivia Wright, Wayne Wheelock, Claudia Shropshire, Sara Stowell

Ms. Mahusky called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

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

III. MINUTES:

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2018 regular meeting. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:

Ms. Fierman introduced Ms. Johnson and Ms. Wright, members of the environmental club. They shared information on what the environmental club is up to this year. They reported that the club was founded in 2017 and they have installed hand dryers in the bathrooms as well as began a “no plastic” policy. As a school community they hoped to help the school take the next big step toward being environmentally friendly and educating the youth of our communities. She explained some of the obstacles and some of the ways that they are trying to remediate those problems. She noted that they are focusing on composting. It will become law in 2020. She is focused on this due to her trip to Germany recently. Germans are very focused on recycling and composting.

Ms. Johnson reported on Act 148 and the requirement for many businesses to compost. The hope is that all residences will be composting by then as well. She showed the composting bins in the library and noted that the club has a schedule for collecting the bins and taking them to the main bin. The club works to regulate the students in the lunch room to ensure proper disposal of their waste. The club has a group chat that helps them remain organized. She noted that Mr. Carroll has helped with this process. They have a lot of school support, and have received grants for this work.

The board congratulated them for getting this club up and off the ground. Ms. Mahusky questioned if the club has talked about recruiting new members to take the place of the graduating seniors. Ms. Johnson noted that she is the only senior, and most of the students are sophomores and freshmen. There was discussion about how the elementary school can participate in a similar process once they go back to the CAES building. Ms. Fogg noted that Ms. Johnson is a great role model and the elementary school will be looking into a junior environmental club. Ms. Fierman noted that currently there isn't a community service graduation requirement, but she would like to look at that as a

possibility in the future and this could be a great task for someone. She noted that this club is student centered and student created. There was discussion about the regional planning commission having some additional resources.

There was discussion about how to do the composting onsite, but this is difficult with the small numbers in the club. They plan to have the wood shop help build a structure they can use for this. The board thanked them for their commitment and work.

V. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comments

A CAES parent questioned the nurse situation. Ms. Powden noted that they are still looking for a CAES nurse. They are still looking for a school nurse and held an interview today. In the short term, they are having substitute nurses. Ms. Fierman and Ms. Fogg noted that they are feeling positive about the interview. Mr. Cunningham noted that he didn't see the school spring advertisement. There was discussion about it being on indeed.com and they have reached out to hospitals, and the Vermont School Nursing association.

Claudia Shropshire questioned if there would be a full time nurse at CAES or if they were looking for a nursing assistant with a nurse supervisor.

B. Board Comments

Mr. Studin noted that they are still trying to get some clarity on the conduit issue and the decision about not laying conduit the first time. Ms. Powden reported that she called Naomi Johnson about the conduit issue. Ms. Johnson called Ms. Powden to advise that GMP had advised her that they couldn't put the electrical conduit in the same trench as the water pipe as it needed a 10 foot difference. She had asked about a 10 foot trench, but that wasn't an option. She spoke with Ms. Mahusky about this. She then later emailed the whole board about that requirement.

C. Student Representatives Comments

Ms. King noted that this week they held the musical auditions for the spring play, Beauty and the Beast. Ms. Fierman helped with the process including callbacks. Tomorrow the cast will be announced. Both of the basketball teams are involved in the holiday tournament today. The track team went to the Burlington track meet. Ms. King noted that the students are glad that they are getting all the classrooms back. The winter concert was held recently and went well. Ms. King noted that the Interact club has been meeting and went to Kurn Hattin last week and gave the students gifts and sang carols. They delivered the gifts from "Santa". Ms. Thomas spoke about the visit and the cookies that the students baked them. She reported that they have received some comments from students about advisory. Many students feel that holding the advisory session every day is not the most productive use of student time. Ms. Fierman noted that the staff has heard that feedback as well. Part of the January 2 in-service will be spent determining how best to manage this time. Ms. King spoke about some of the benefits of advisory, but noted that limiting it to a few days a week might be better. There was discussion about the SET period being shorter than in the past, but it is a very important part of the day.

VI. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

Ms. Powden reported that they are now in phase 2 of the continuous improvement process. The plan is based on the educational quality standards. Their goal is to close the achievement gap for FRL students. She explained what phase 2 includes. The schools will be working on their own plan along with the SU-wide plan. The staff also participated in a training with David Melnick regarding trauma

informed schools. They will be meeting 3 times. One of the topics is the stress continuum—when the students are in a high-stressed state, there are certain characteristics they will see in the students. This training helps the teachers to be informed so they can meet the students’ social and emotional needs in order to make sure that they are getting the best education.

Ms. Powden noted that the administrative team is working hard on the budget. More information will follow under committee updates. Ms. Mahusky questioned how the administration will measure their progress on the achievement plan. Ms. Powden noted that the plan will be assessed in short term increments so it can be tweaked as necessary. Ms. Fierman spoke about how some of these tweaks will occur and noted that they are currently setting the goals and measurements.

Ms. Fogg noted that the CAES students and staff are happy that they are going back to their school. They will miss their high school friends. She noted that tomorrow there will be a whole school photo K-12 at 10am with ugly sweaters. The younger students will hand bookmarks with “thank you” to the high school students. She also thanked Zoe Lirakis for hosting ASP at CTES. This has been a difficult process for families, but it was good to have this resource. She thanked Sue Willis for getting her school bus license to transport the students. She thanked Mr. Marin for taping the student’s concert last week. She thanked the music teachers for their work on the concert. She thanked Sarah Rushford for her work as a para, since she has taken a different job. Ms. Fogg noted that she has received feedback from her staff indicating that they felt much supported during this traumatic period.

Ms. Fierman noted that her report includes information about the rock climbing team and the student reps reported on most of the “goings on” at GMUHS. She noted that though the CAES students will go back to their own school, the GMUHS staff will be taking their time to move back to their classrooms, and will be using their January 2 in-service for teacher training. She noted that some of the teachers will be staying where they have moved to.

Ms. Beaupre’s report was distributed this evening. Ms. Stowell questioned if there would be any decisions made tonight given that there are a number of Cavendish board members not at this meeting. Ms. Mahusky noted that they polled the board and another night would have fewer representatives at it. They have a quorum tonight, but have taken the feedback to not make a final decision about the budget this evening.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Policies, Second Read-G04-H04

Mr. Marin reported that the policy committee recommends adoption of these policies. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to adopt the policies as presented. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Breakdown of Transition Funds

There was discussion about the breakdown of the transition funds. Originally there were \$150,000 in funds. Because of the merger, some of the funds have already been expended, such as for the consultant, legal fees, business office software and minute taking. The remaining funds were split in half between the LMHUUSD and GMUSD boards and each will receive \$50,325. The finance committee has been looking at how to spend the funds and they are looking at capital improvement.

C. Committee Updates

Ms. Mahusky reported that the finance committee has been meeting recently and they have gone through the budget. The facilities committee met last night and looked at the facilities needs around the district.

They have recommended that they use some of the \$137,000 (primarily set aside by GMUHS and CAES before the merger) and the \$50,325 for transition funds be used for capital improvement for the removal and remediation of the CTES oil tank that is almost 60 years old. This is about \$75,000. They recommend also replacing the CTES lunch tables, installing a safety fence at CTES and replacing the hot water heater at CTES. They need to re-do the roof at the White House at CAES, but it is in the CAES budget. This will leave a balance in the capital improvement fund of about \$90,000 if they maintain the \$30,000 in the draft budget to go back into the fund. The finance committee is also looking at what level to set the annual contribution into the capital reserve fund. There was discussion about the prior estimate for the oil tank being about \$46,000, but when they received actual estimates—3 of them—they all came in higher.

Ms. Mahusky noted that the facilities committee would like to include the three maintenance supervisors are all included in the facilities committee to ensure transparency and continuity. Ms. Stowell questioned if the finance or facilities committees are looking into the grants that she suggested at a prior meeting. There was discussion about there not being a TRSU grant writer currently. Ms. Mahusky noted that they hoped that the administration will look into the grants. They have some time given the work schedule for each of the projects. Ms. Stowell spoke about the infrastructure money that might be available from the Department of Agriculture for Farm to School initiatives. Ms. Powden would be the person to whom to direct these suggestions until they have a grant writer. Ms. Mahusky thought that without a grant writer, it might be a bit difficult for the administration to follow up on. Ms. Powden suggested that Ms. Lirakis is the Farm to School coordinator so she might be a good point of contact.

Ms. Mahusky noted that the CAES potential “uncovered” list of items is about \$109,000. Because VSBIT has recommended that they submit everything, the facilities committee has recommended not earmarking funds to cover these expenses yet until they have a decision from VSBIT and then the committee will make a recommendation at that time.

Mr. Fromberger reported on the transportation committee meeting and noted that currently the school has a \$380,000 balloon payment due in August unless they end the lease. They have received 5 different options. The one that the committee recommends is to return the leased buses to the lender and buy 8 new Thomas buses through Cressy & Sons (one of which includes an accessibility lift). The total cost is \$684,000 with an annual payment of \$147,000 for 5 years. He noted that the current contract has an annual payment of \$55,000. This new plan has the advantage of no balloon payment and the school will own the buses after 5 years. The committee considered all 5 proposals, including one full service proposal. The disadvantage of the full service plan is that at the end of the 5 years, the school has no buses or employees and would only have the option of re-entering a new full service contract. There was discussion about the maintenance expense and the replacement schedule for the buses. There was discussion about setting aside money each year to replace the buses. Mr. Parah noted that the buses they are looking at should last well over the 5 years. He suggested that the replacement schedule would need to be about 2 buses per year. Mr. Studin questioned if they anticipate using some money from the maintenance budget for the bus reserve since they anticipate saving the first year. There was discussion about the condition that the current buses must be in for return, including mileage. There was discussion about the timing to get the buses in the fleet in time for the next school year. Ms. Hammond noted that the interest rate may change between the initial quote and when they give the go-ahead. She will also look into local lending options. Mr. Parah noted that they had requested the bus specs to be identical so they could compare apples to apples.

Mr. Studin **moved** to adopt the transportation committee recommendation to purchase 8 new Thomas buses (one with an accessibility lift) through WC Cressy and work with the current vendor to return the current buses. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Recommendation for Hire

Ms. Powden noted that they recommend Katrina Boissonault as the school nurse for GMUHS. She is currently working as a substitute. Ms. Fierman reported on the interview process with the three candidates. The hiring committee made a recommendation for Ms. Powden to interview two of the candidates. Ms. Fierman reported on Ms. Boissonault's history and education, and noted that her references were very strong. She has been shadowing Ms. Simmons for the last two weeks to see what the job is like and for the administration to observe her "on the job". The administration feels very positive about her. She noted that the other candidate withdrew her resume. The third candidate also felt that her 90 minute drive was too much. The salary will be \$45,506 for a full year. Ms. Powden recommended that the board approve hiring Ms. Boissonault. Ms. Powden confirmed that Ms. Boissonault is an RN.

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to hire Ms. Boissonault as presented with salary placed on the salary schedule. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Powden noted that Ms. Beaupre served on the world language coordinator hire committee. They are recommending hiring Jessica McClain as the world language coordinator. She described the .2 fte position and the work that this person would be doing. She noted that she is familiar with the CTES family and has provided some world language teaching. The position is in the budget as a .2 fte position and will be paid at \$4952 for a salary. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to hire Ms. McClain as presented. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Scope of Superintendent Report

Discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

C. Current Year Financials

The current year financials were included in the board packet for their review. There was discussion about the \$264,000 expense for the CAES work. To date, they have paid about \$355,000 and have submitted these expenses to VSBIT for coverage. There are some expenses that will not be covered. The state has confirmed that they will receive about \$33,000 from the state for emergency funds. They also have a deductible of \$5000. There was discussion about the approximately \$109,000 that may not be covered, but this number may change once VSBIT has reviewed the expenses. Ms. Hammond explained the summary sheet to the board. The board talked about the TRSU assessment for transportation, special education and central office. Ms. Hammond noted that year to date they are \$2M "to the good" currently. The board discussed what would be included in the line that also includes the SU assessment. Ms. Hammond will share the 42 page detailed summary with the board via email next week.

D. FY20 Budget 4th Draft

Ms. Hammond distributed the breakdown of the budget in a pie graph, noting that salaries and benefits account for 63.75% of the budget, while SU assessments account for 12.7% of the budget. This includes special education, central office, transportation and EEE. There was discussion about the proposed TRSU assessment still being in flux because the TRSU board hasn't approved the budget yet. The breakdown will be brought to the next finance committee meeting. Ms. Mahusky noted that even though the budget has been updated since the draft that created this pie chart, it is a good reminder that there is a very small aspect of the budget that the

board has control over. Ms. Mahusky encouraged all board members to attend the finance committee meetings even if they aren't on the committee so they are up to speed with the budget.

Ms. Hammond distributed the current budget proposal. Ms. Mahusky reported that the administration learned late last night that the support staff agreement has been settled. They need time to review that agreement with the attorney. They will revise the budget with this new information based on the finance committee request and present a new draft at the finance committee meeting scheduled for January 8. The board discussed conflicts and shifted the committee meeting to 5:30 on January 7 at CTES. That still gives them time to review the budget before the deadline of January 17.

E. FY20 Announced Tuition

Ms. Hammond noted that each year, they have to announce tuition to the AOE. Last year, GMUSD chose \$15,000 for elementary and \$16,000 for secondary. She noted that based on the budget, this year she would recommend \$13,820 for elementary and \$16,690 for secondary. There was discussion about setting the tuition at a district level, but that might generate less revenue. There was discussion about how the tuition recommendation is calculated. Ms. Hammond reported on the "allowable tuition". If the actual expense is more than 3% difference there would need to be pay-backs or there could be bill-backs. There was discussion about there being about 14 high school tuition students. Ms. Hammond reported on the tuition jump for Baltimore students attending Springfield schools.

Ms. Hammond recommended \$15,000 for elementary students and \$17,000 for high school students. Mr. Studin **moved** to set the announced tuition at \$15,000 for elementary students and \$17,000 for secondary students for FY20. Ms. Muther seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IX. NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on January 17, 2019 at CTES. The agenda will include the limited school transfer agreement, the teacher agreement ratification, the support staff agreement ratification and the FY20 budget.

All the January meetings will be in Cavendish.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to adjourn at 7:48 p.m. Mr. Studin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary