

Green Mountain Unified School District Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 15, 2018
GMUSD Library Learning Commons
6:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER:

Board: Joseph Fromberger, Michael Studin, Marilyn Mahusky, Doug McBride, Rick Alexander, Fred Marin, Kate Lamphere, Jeff Hance, Erin Lamson

Staff: Meg Powden, Cheryl Hammond, Lauren Fierman, Deb Beaupre, Katherine Fogg, Todd Parah, Amanda Tyrrell, Michelle Farrar, Jim Spaulding, Wendy Schultz, Amy Hamblett, Courtney Slobodnjak, Jonathan Beamon

Student Reps: Rileigh Thomas, Laurel King

Public: Shawn Cunningham, Jeannie Wade, Sharon Huntley

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

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of discussion of the CAES update, committee updates, and move the educational presentation to the beginning of the meeting, as well as add discussion about a request from a Baltimore parent. Mr. Alexander seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. MINUTES:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2018 regular meeting with the correction to the location of CTES. Ms. Lamphere seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:

Ms. Farrar presented information on the Collaborative Writing project that her 9th grade students are doing with the elementary students. Ms. Farrar gave a background on the history of this memoir poetry project. She discussed the stereotypes associated with a single story about a group of people. They then move to craft a memoir poem, in the likeness of model texts that tells their story and conveys who they are. The project shows the commitment to the writing process, and their ability to engage in self-directed learning. She reported on the learning, including transferable skills and enduring understanding. Ms. Farrar shared excerpts of this work. She then reported that the students wanted to include the little people in the school. 57 9th graders and 10 elementary classrooms participated. She described the process, including interviews, anthropological observations, 9th grade crafting/drafting, peer-editing and feedback, then CAES feedback culminating with a presentation of their work. She reported that the end result is that the students can't stop talking about it and connections have been built between the older and younger students. She noted that while it will be good for the elementary school students to go back to their school, it is a positive result of being in the same space. Ms. Fogg questioned if the high school students could continue this process even when they are back in their own building.

The board discussed this challenging situation turning into a positive situation.

V. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comments

Ms. Wade reported that this was a great experience for her children.

B. Board Comments

Mr. Studin noted that during the last 2 special meetings, the conduit installation in the ground was discussed and it was questioned why the conduit installation was decided not to be included in phase 1 as original decided. Discussion was deferred until the CAES update.

Mr. McBride noted that the status of the transition funds is still open. He reminded the board that there was confusion about whether the \$150,000 transition funds would be earmarked only for GMUSD that did the merger as prescribed in the legislation. He reported that he and Mr. Fromberger feel that it should go to GMUSD, not be shared with LMUUSD. Ms. Powden reported that they received a legal opinion that the money must be shared between the districts in accordance of section 15 of Act 156. He requested a copy of that written opinion. There was discussion about the breakdown not having been determined for the disposition of the remaining \$92,000. There was discussion about having the TRSU discuss the breakdown at the next TRSU meeting.

Mr. McBride noted that one of the considerations to make is to allow parent drop off earlier in the day and coverage of transition to after school activities, which would help accommodate working parents. Ms. Powden suggested that the principals can look at their school's processes and potential needs. Mr. McBride suggested that it is important to just be mindful of this issue during scheduling. Ms. Fogg noted that at CAES they have allowed 7:00a.m. drop-off and they have ASP to help with those needs. He also suggested open gym on Saturdays for activities. There was discussion about late buses, as well as keeping in mind that moving practices might impact other parents, as well as activities volunteers. There was discussion about coordinating with the ASP. Ms. Wade suggested that this is a community problem and they might open this discussion up to other areas of the community, such as the rec departments.

Mr. McBride questioned the cell phone policy at the schools. There was discussion that there isn't a policy, but a practice. Ms. Beaupre noted that CTES has a practice in their handbook and shared the gist of it. Ms. Fierman noted that each classroom has their own rules about the cell phone use. The cell phones are used as tools as well. There was discussion about referring it to the policy committee along with a best practice. Ms. Tyrrell noted that it is not an issue at CAES.

Ms. Mahusky noted that that the VSBA webinar on budgeting by Brad James and Emily Burn is available on their website. There is an RVTC open house on 11/19 from 5:00-6:30. There will be an opportunity to view presentations. She also reported that the TRSU has a superintendent evaluation committee that is working with a VSBA consultant on job description and evaluation tool. The next meeting is 11/27. The next Innovations in Learning meeting is at CTES on 12/4 at 6:00 p.m. The TRSU board meets next on 12/6 at 6:00pm at the Roost.

C. Student Representatives Comments

Ms. Thomas reported that the school play Dracula was held recently. They had a haunted trail before the show put on by student government. Both the soccer teams made it to the 2nd round of playoffs. The rock climbing team had their first competition yesterday and they tied for 3rd. Winter track and basketball will start soon. Ms. King noted that the elementary students are blending well with the high school students. Ms. Thomas noted that many of the students at GM dance at the Dance Factory and will be holding a dance presentation on Saturday and will compete on choreography.

VI. ADMINISTRATORS REPORT:

Ms. Fogg reported that the CAES staff hosted a breakfast for the GM staff this past Wednesday to show their gratitude for their help. She reported that she is very impressed with the young adults and how respectful and kind the young adults are to the small children. She reported that Ms. Hamblett, Ms. Tyrrell and Ms. Slobodnjak attended the school reform initiative fall conference. She also attended the VT State Safety Conference in Burlington with Chief Rick Cloud and Mr. Ripley. They have received updated information about preventing school violence and assessing threats and securing buildings. She is holding a coffee hour with the community monthly.

Mr. McBride questioned if general lighting and crosswalk safety was discussed. There was discussion about this being the focus of the principal and facilities committee. Ms. Slobodnjak reported that there is a district wide crisis team that works on safety. Ms. Fogg clarified that the protocols are to use the same practices at each school.

Ms. Fierman reported that Halloween was busy including students dressing in costume. There was a MS dance where many 7th graders dressed in costume. The fall concert was held recently. She also reported that the fall play was great, even with the power interruption that postponed Saturday's performance to Monday. She reported that the Boston field trip was held this week and the 8th graders walked the Freedom Trail. She reported that the parent teacher conferences were held 2 weeks ago and were successful.

Ms. Fierman reported that the teachers are working on professional development on collaborative work and transitioning to PBE. She also reported on the various conferences that teachers have attended, including the Rowland Conference on achieving equity. She explained that advisory is designed for students to build relationships and work on their PLP's. They also have a SET period to help with additional work.

Ms. Beaupre reported that CTES had a Halloween party. Tomorrow evening they will hold Turkey Bingo. They had a thanksgiving lunch and Mr. Thomson came to the school to cut the turkey. She also reported that the staff is working on becoming more trauma informed, including vicarious trauma. She reported that every Tuesday is a half day for professional development. She also held a meeting with the town manager, the fire chief and John. They had discussions about the physical plant, the evacuation route and fire drills. She also reported that she is including para-educators in several teacher discussions because they often do the teachers work when the teachers leave the room. She reported on the shift in social studies toward proficiency based education and gave information about the paradigm shift.

Ms. Powden reminded the board of the core instructional practices that she had shared in the spring. She distributed the snap shot tool that the administrative team developed with teacher leaders. This tool will help them be mindful that practices are being followed. It is not an evaluation tool and is anonymous. The principals are using the forms currently. Ms. Fierman noted that it is not about specific teachers, it is about school-wide information. Ms. Beaupre reported that she shared with her team the tool and noted that it wasn't an evaluation.

Ms. Powden noted that they are trying to be more intentional about using data to inform their practices. She discussed today's administrative team meeting. She also reported that the board is in negotiations with teachers and have begun small group bargaining in order to move negotiations forward. The support staff negotiations are heading toward mediation. She recognized the CAES staff. They were hoping to be able to move before Thanksgiving, but regrettably they can't, and she wanted to thank them for handling this news well. Ms. Mahusky reported that she took a tour of the "elementary school" and commended the staff for working in these small spaces. Ms. Slobodnjak asked that the board consider a day for the staff to move into the building without children to build

their classrooms when it is time to move back to the CAES building. Ms. Powden noted that they are required to have 175 school days so they would have to add on to the end of the school year. Ms. Fogg noted that the PTG is working on ways to accommodate this request without losing a school day.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Policies, Fourth Read

Mr. Marin noted that the policy committee was supposed to meet last week to discuss policy D7, but that meeting was postponed. He reminded the board about the discussion regarding the volunteers and the background checks. He reported that he has reviewed policies from a variety of schools and none of them have in their policy an exception that there would be unsupervised time for volunteers. Some of them have procedures that basically say that at the discretion of the principal, a more extensive background check can be done for volunteers who have unsupervised time with students. The policy committee will meet before the next GMUSD meeting. Ms. Powden noted that Ms. Waite has a concern that currently there is no policy for the district, and they can continue to review and re-work the language in the future. She noted that they have been operating under the former policy. There was discussion about adopting this policy as is with the caveat to re-assess. Mr. Studin **moved** to adopt the policy D7 as is with the caveat that it is reviewed and have the language adjusted. Ms. Lamson seconded. Ms. Fogg requested that they develop similar procedures between the schools. The motion carried with all in favor except Ms. Lamphere who was opposed.

B. Policies, Second Read

Mr. Marin reported that the policies are recommended by the policy committee. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the policies as presented. Mr. Marin seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. CAES Update

Ms. Powden reported that there is a brief reference to the phases at the September meeting. Phase 1 was discussed as being the “summer work” and the conduits were going to be installed in the same trench as the water line. Mr. Studin reported that the GMP representative advised that the conduit needed to be at least 10 feet from the water and someone made the decision to not install the conduit. It was clear that it was not made by the board. Mr. Spaulding reported that when the discovery was made, M&M added another \$20,000 to the bid to expand the trench to include the conduit at the distance necessary, so the decision was made to abandon the conduit. The board questioned who made that decision. Mr. Fromberger reported that the board had a meeting on 9/27 at which time the board discussed the ditch and it was decided to install the conduit in the ditch. The next day he was questioned why the conduit was not put in the ditch so he wrote an email to Ms. Mahusky and Ms. Powden with that question. He received a response that the conduit was not installed and it was not reported at the meeting. Ms. Mahusky questioned what the concern was. Mr. Studin noted that this has added time to the schedule. Mr. Studin suggested asking Ms. Johnson. Ms. Powden reminded the board that at the time the board originally discussed this, this was work that could have waited. It is now a necessity because of the failed Megger test. Mr. Spaulding noted that the conduit is in and GMP should be done by the end of next week. They are currently waiting the other pieces of the electrical work.

There was discussion about whether this would be covered by the insurance. Mr. Spaulding reported that they are waiting on the written Megger report to make that decision. The board will review the SAPA recording to determine what was decided.

Mr. Spaulding reported that HB Energy and ARC will likely be ready to connect one boiler in the middle of next week. He noted that they fell behind because of weather and tomorrow may delay them further. There was discussion about there not being heat yet. Tomorrow the transfer switch and generator will be delivered. As soon as they are ready to fire up a boiler, they can rent the generator with 24 hours' notice. He reported that today the lowest temperature was in the kitchen at 35 degrees. He is checking the building daily for temperature. They anticipate getting the boiler fired up during the middle of next week.

Mr. Alexander questioned how the generator will be filled. Mr. Spaulding will be having HB do a daily run to fill the generator. Ms. Tyrrell questioned if Ms. Powden has requested a waiver from the AOE for the missed days. She has requested that waiver and they are waiting on the decision until next month. They did advise her that they may not waive those days because they can be made up later in the year. Ms. Tyrrell questioned if there is a plan to compensate the teachers for their work done on extra days, if the days aren't waived. Ms. Powden noted that the waiver is requesting 2 days. They can waive 3 of the 5 days missed because they were over the 175 required days. There was discussion about including teacher letters and parent letters with the waiver request. Ms. Huntley questioned what the estimate is to get students back in the building. It is as yet unknown.

D. Committee updates

The board reviewed the committee assignments. Mr. McBride discussed the audit belongs to the board and it is their responsibility to review and understand them. It is common for the board to have a subcommittee to be more active in the audit process, including meeting the auditor and being aware of questions raised by the auditor. He reported that the committee would also read the entire audit and report back to the board. While the board is responsible for reading the audit, the committee would read it more thoroughly. He felt that most well-functioning boards and non-profit organizations would have an audit committee. Mr. McBride and Mr. Alexander will serve on this committee.

Ms. Mahusky noted that there could be financial implications relating to the facilities committee. Mr. Fromberger reported that there is a report pending completion from Mr. Marin and him to present to the facilities committee for them to consider in order to make a recommendation to the finance committee. The board added Mr. Alexander to the facilities, food service, transportation and audit committees.

Ms. Powden reported that the PR committee will be meeting during the first week in December. The facilities committee will meet on 11/29 at 6:30 at GMUHS following the finance committee. The transportation committee will meet sometime soon.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Preschool Programming

The discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

B. Policies First Read (G04-H04)

Mr. Marin reported that these policies are the same as in the past, with no major modifications. The CTES library has a separate policy because it is owned by the town. The policy committee recommends adoption by the board. The policies will be returned at the next meeting for adoption.

C. Recommendation for Hire

There are no recommendations at this time.

D. Education Travel Proposal

Ms. Schultz introduced herself. She noted that she is the Spanish teacher as well as the Interact advisor. She has requested assistance from the Rotary to help with the trip to Peru that is open to Interact students and Spanish students. She has chaperoned 2 international trips to GM, has lived abroad, taught Spanish and ESL. She asked the board to consider her recommendation that the high school includes an opportunity for juniors or seniors to travel with the school in the program of studies. She noted that there has been an exchange program with students from France. GM hosted 10 students in February and 10 GM French students attended the trip to France. The trip is expected to be 2 weeks in April, beginning 4/9 and ending 4/23. They will miss about 5 school days during this 2 week period. The students travel at their own expense. She reported on the clean water initiative that the students will see during the visit. The students will be staying in a town 18 hours from Lima and traveling via public transportation to get a full immersive experience. The students will be witnessing poverty and helping build latrines. They will also help with their water purification.

She requested board action so that students can begin financial planning for air fares. There was discussion about Mr. Montgomery, the rotary chaperone, undergoing a background check. There was discussion about accessibility for students who can't afford to pay. Ms. Schultz reported that they will do fundraising to help fund the trip. She reported that the maximum cost is \$3000 per person. The trip to Spain was 9 days and \$2300, but this trip is 14 days. She noted that Chester Rotary often helps with this. They also will need to purchase supplies while in Peru. This is educational travel and the students can do a project.

There was discussion about the lodging situation once they get to Peru. Ms. Schultz reported that the trip is coordinated with a host rotary club and the stay will be with Rotary-vetted families. She reported that for the Nicaragua trip they stayed in hotels, but she would like to avoid this in order to be more immersive. The students who traveled to France stayed with host families. There was discussion about the parents being informed of the process and the vetting process. There was discussion about the time being treated as an excused absence since it is educational travel, but away from the school. There was discussion about this process being standard with many Rotary trips, just a different itinerary. Ms. Schultz reported that she felt that this trip is safe. She reported that they review travel advisories and the state department is aware that they are there.

Ms. Fogg noted that this is an exciting program and a great opportunity for the GM students. She suggested that they open this trip to BRHS students if they don't get 10 GM students. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the trip to Peru as Ms. Schultz presented. Mr. Studin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

E. Letter of Resignation

Ms. Powden reported that they have received a letter of resignation from Christine Simmons, the GM nurse. Ms. Simmons is not comfortable with the lead nurse position or the district model. She has given 45 days' notice. There was discussion about the current nursing situation. Ms. Fierman has been conducting nursing searches and interviews. There are 2 candidates being considered. The positions are currently being staffed by substitutes. There was discussion about being mindful of the situation in considering candidates. The board thanked her for her service to the school and community.

F. Transportation Bids

Mr. Fromberger reported that they have received the bids. There are 5 different versions. They will hold a transportation committee meeting to make a recommendation to the board. It was discussed that they need to make a recommendation given that it is budget impacting.

G. Current Year Financials

Ms. Hammond reported that the financial are in the budget. She noted that the impact of these additional CAES unanticipated expenses won't be known for a few months.

H. Request from a Baltimore Parent

Ms. Powden noted that they have been requested to pay an invoice for approximately \$4000 for a Baltimore home schooled student to access programming. The articles of agreement allow for the grandfathering of Baltimore students to be tuitioned at their current school system until they graduate, but there is nothing listed about home schooled students. There was discussion about the district's legal obligation to home schooled children and about home schooled children accessing programming at the schools. The student can access the programs available at the school. There was discussion about this setting a precedent. There was also discussion about not hearing about the home schooled students in the Act 46 discussions. The consensus of the board was to take no action on this item.

IX. NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will be on December 20 at 6:00 p.m. at CTES.

The agenda will include preschool programming, scope of superintendent report, budget and committee updates.

X. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to adjourn at 8:32 p.m. Mr. Studin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary