

**Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District  
Regular Meeting Minutes**

October 10, 2018

Ludlow Elementary School, Band Room

6:00 p.m.

**I. CALL TO ORDER:**

**Board:** Paul Orzechowski, Dan Buckley, Brigid Faenza, Katie Hollebeek, Kelly Tarbell, Mariel Meringolo

**Staff:** Meg Powden, John Davis, Karen Trimboli, Cheryl Hammond, Craig Hutt Vater, Melissa Ryan

**Public:** Chris Miele, Lisa Schmidt, Nick Miele, Tony Valente, Chris Valente

Mr. Orzechowski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Ms. Meringolo **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of policies F11, F12 and F29 to the First Read. Ms. Hollebeek seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**A. September 12,, 2018**

Ms. Tarbell **moved** to approve the minutes of the September 12, 2018 meeting with the addition of the return from executive session time—7:33 p.m. Ms. Hollebeek seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**IV. COMMENTS:**

**A. Board Comments**

Mr. Buckley discussed the U39 board stipend. He read aloud the section of the minutes and the warning that the board approved regarding the stipend. He felt that this discussion in the minutes was intentionally showing that the board chose not to offer a stipend to the U39 board members during the partial year. There was discussion about the task that the board will need to do—be presented with the audit at the end of the year. Ms. Tarbell noted that she thought the stipend would be prorated and didn't believe that the stipend having been removed was intentional, rather an oversight. There was discussion about the stipend running from March to March. Mr. Orzechowski noted that it could be discussed at the next meeting.

Mr. Orzechowski noted that RVTC will hold their open house on 11/19 from 5-6:30 p.m. for board members.

**B. Student Rep**

Mr. Merrill reported that school started well. The new schedule took some time to adjust to but the students seem to like it. He reported that the soccer teams are 1-10 (girls) and 4-5 (boys). The students took PSAT's today as a local assessment. He reported that the students are doing spirit Fridays. They have done twin day and dress as your favorite baseball player. He noted that it is a competition between advisory classes. He explained that the advisory period is new this year and can be used for meetings. This Friday is pajama day.

**C. Public Comments**

None.

**V. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS:**

**A. Superintendent's Report**

Ms. Powden reported that the first TRSU wide in-service was held this week. They took some time to recognize teachers for their years of service. She noted that the elementary teachers are working on PBE. She also explained that the team has also participated in wellness programs. She reminded the board about the instructional practices that she introduced last meeting. These were developed with the administrative council. The principals have begun discussion about these practices with their teachers.

Ms. Powden discussed the continuous improvement plan that the schools are engaged in. She reported that Mr. Eppolito will be integral in that process. Ms. Tarbell questioned if the integrated field review was part of the continuous improvement plan. Ms. Powden noted that based on the IFR report, they need to work on curriculum, MTSS, and to improve achievement in math for the students in FRL to close the achievement gap.

**B. Principal Reports**

Ms. Trimboli reported that the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is at Keewaydin this week and it is going well. The high school students have been meeting with VSAC and some colleges. They have been working with the seniors on the transition to college during Senior Night. She also reported that the staff is working on being a Trauma Informed School. They are meeting multiple times per year. LES is housing the Autism Program for TRSU. She feels that this program will really serve TRSU students well. She and Mr. Davis have been discussing budgeting with the faculty. She noted that she has had a number of outside organizations looking to use the gym and she would like the board's guidance given the recent \$180,000 expense. She felt that the gym should be used, but should be done so in the right capacity.

Mr. Hutt Vater reported that the MHS school year has started well. The open house which is combined with the book fair was a great start. They began it with an all school meeting similar to what they do every Friday. Enrollment is up—they have 112 students this year. Act 1 training will be held tomorrow evening for their volunteers. The trainings are held at both campuses and people from either town can attend a training in either school. The schools have participated in hazing/harassment/bullying prevention training. The boilers have been serviced and the locks have been re-keyed. He also reported that the school participates in a therapeutic riding program.

**VI. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Sub-Dividing LES property**

Ms. Powden reminded the board that she had brought this to the board in the summer and some of the board members were going to talk to someone in the town office. She felt that this was a process that needed to be pushed forward. Ms. Meringolo noted that someone offered to talk to Ralph Michael. Mr. Orzechowski will contact him regarding the wastewater permit and other issues with the subdivision. Ms. Hammond noted that she has spoken with the town about the wastewater and the bill is based on the number of students in each building for the split. Ms. Powden will follow up with Rose Goings, the planning/zoning administrator.

Ms. Hammond noted that she had spoken with Howard Barton about splitting the electricity who advised that the school needs to hire an electrician. Mr. Tuomisto is currently consulting with an electrician for the split. Ms. Tarbell questioned if the TRSU is considering using the BRHS building for the TRSU offices. Ms. Powden noted that this board needs to decide if they will keep the building and then the question can be posed to the TRSU board. This would meet the

need to have an educational purpose. Ms. Tarbell noted that they haven't had an update from the BRIS committee in a while and wasn't sure if they were moving forward. There was discussion about whether having BRIS in the building would be an acceptable educational use of the building. There was discussion about Mr. Leopold's legal opinion on the matter and whether the board should get a 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion. There was discussion about other school districts being able to close the public school and open a private school. The board discussed how the district would have been able to accomplish this. The consensus was to have Ms. Powden seek a second legal opinion.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. Policies First Read**

Mr. Orzechowski reported that the policies have been through the policy committee and corrected for typos and other issues. Mr. Buckley noted that TRSU discussed the volunteer policy and the specific notation that volunteers must be directly supervised, but that policy was already approved by this board. It was noted that this would prevent the need for volunteers to be finger printed. There was discussion about the difficulty in ensuring that volunteers are directly supervised while on the mountain for the winter sports program. Ms. Trimboli noted that the district reviews the sex offender registry and requires Act 1 training.

### **B. Retirement of Wanda "Wendy" Garon-Ehlert**

Mr. Orzechowski read aloud Ms. Garon-Ehlert's letter of retirement. The request notes that her house closing is on 10/23 and if it falls through she would like to continue working beyond that date, but if it goes through she is determining her final date. The district already has an ad out for the anticipated opening, but a final offer wouldn't be made until they know the closing date. Ms. Meringolo **moved** to accept Ms. Garon-Ehlert's resignation letter contingent on the sale of her house. Ms. Hollebeek seconded. The board discussed whether waiting was detrimental to the district in any way. The motion passed with no opposition.

### **C. Ludlow Gym Use**

Ms. Trimboli reported that she has been getting requests to use the gym both from school personnel and outside organizations. In the past, the gym was able to be used by anyone who had access, but with the investment in the gym, she would like some board guidance on the appropriate use of the building. She noted that on the first day the gym was open, there were 10 students using the gym, but there was no supervision so she made them leave. She noted that no one had asked to use the gym. She noted that she would like to develop an equitable use of the gym from 2:30-5:00. For example girls one day, boys another day, MS girls, MS boys, and ASP. She noted that she wanted to make sure that everyone has access to it.

She noted that the concern for her is the weekend use. The custodians clean the gym on Friday. In the past entities would use the gym on the weekend and not clean up and the gym teachers on Monday were concerned about the mess. She suggested that whenever an organization wants to use the gym, they should have a custodian on staff, but those times are expensive (time and a half on Saturday, double time on Sunday). She explained that these times could be up to \$27-\$34/hour and the custodian would need to be here for at least an hour after the gym is done being used. Therefore a 3 hour event would be a 4 hour use of the custodian. She noted that many of the organizations that use the space have not paid a usage fee. She also noted that there are insurance liability concerns. Some of the organizations have their own liability insurance. She noted that she is looking for something consistent. Ms. Trimboli questioned if the use of the gym could be done through the town's rec department and then the rec department could also pay the school for some of the use. Ms. Trimboli suggested that if that is the case, there should be someone from the rec department in the building. She noted that the custodial staff is already in

the building until 5pm. There was discussion about once basketball season starts, it is difficult to find any time to use the gym. Ms. Tarbell noted that the community pays with their taxes and the town supplies bussing for the students so she would hate to make the town have to pay for use of the building.

There was discussion about how the room needs to be cleaned after use—not just dry mop, but also the floor cleaner. Mr. Valente noted that when they started using the building, there were no policies, but recently they have been using the building use form. He noted that in all the years, no sprinklers have been damaged and only about 3 things have been broken over those years. He noted that most of the group of indoor soccer players are alumni. There was discussion about the vandalism to the stage and kitchen because there wasn't supervision. Ms. Trimboli noted that it wasn't the soccer group, but she is trying to treat every group equally. There was discussion about how these groups get access to the building.

The board discussed the school having a resource that they would like to share with the town, but they need to be cognizant of liability. Ms. Hammond noted that the building use form includes an hourly use fee of \$70 per hour which will cover the custodian costs. Ms. Trimboli will review the form. Mr. Miele noted that the rec department gives the town \$18,000 to use the gym. The town also gives funds to the school for varsity sports. There was discussion about the rec department providing their liability insurance for rec use of the building. The board discussed what happens with non-rec associated organizations.

Mr. Buckley discussed the Ranger Solar installation and if the funds from that installation will come through to the school to help defray some of the costs of the gym renovation. The board members discussed this having been the plan, but the funds are ultimately the town's. There was discussion about the solar project providing \$75,000 for the bleacher project but due to the delays in the project the school completed the bleacher project and would like to put the \$75,000 to the floor as part of the same project. There was discussion about whether the select board has agreed to this.

The board discussed the organizations that use the gym—school events, PTG, Rec, Rotary. There was discussion about the gym being used for private events too. There was discussion about the custodial staff being on site during some events but not all and Ms. Trimboli felt it needed to be consistent. Mr. Miele noted that sometimes the students use the town hall and there are a few different things that might need to be discussed by a round table group made up of some school board members, some select board members, the rec director and town manager and they can develop a procedure that meets the community needs as well as the school district needs. Mr. Miele also noted that people from other towns come to play as well. Mr. Davis suggested that the forms need to outline who takes the supervisory role in the building use. He noted that even if the custodian is here while the gym is open, the custodian is not going to supervise the group. This person locks and unlocks the building and takes responsibility for the space and the people within it.

Ms. Powden suggested that this form and its revision begin at the B&G committee and invite other stake holders to the meeting. There was discussion about continuing as it was until a new process is developed. There was concern about hazing/harassment/bullying prevention during these events. There was discussion about grandfathering certain groups for now until this can be finalized. The soccer group doesn't begin until after Thanksgiving so there is some time for this group.

The B&G committee will meet on November 5 at 5:00 p.m. at LES. There was discussion about the special meetings normally being held in the school hosting for the month, but since this involves this building and the Ludlow select board, they will hold the meeting here. The meeting agenda will also include electing a chair. Mr. Merrill questioned winter carnival and whether the normal activities could be held. Ms. Trimboli noted that the students can't wear street shoes/cleats/boots or drink/eat in the gym. Ms. Trimboli will speak to this at the next student council meeting.

**D. Recommendations for Hire**

Ms. Powden noted that they are recommending Adam Pullinen as the part time PE teacher at BRHS. Ms. Trimboli noted that the previous long term sub was not able to complete the necessary steps for a provisional license. She and Mr. Davis interviewed the candidates and Ms. Powden conducted the final interview. He is a soccer coach. He doesn't currently have a PE endorsement, but they are confident that he will do a good job and has great resources. Mr. Merrill noted that he has also been a sub. There was discussion about the person who was hired for the PE teacher who then resigned at the last minute. Ms. Tarbell **moved** to hire Adam Pullinen as the .6 fte PE teacher. Mr. Buckley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**E. Increase Guidance Counselor Position**

Ms. Trimboli noted that when Ms. Garon-Ehlert submitted her resignation, she and Mr. Hutt Vater spoke about taking this time to have a guidance counselor in both schools if they offer the position as a 1.0 fte. They would look at candidates who fit within the budget constraints of the person vacating that position. There was discussion about it being easier to find someone to fill a 1.0 fte position. The board discussed the current person in that role is at a Masters plus 20 years. Ms. Meringolo **moved** to increase the guidance position to 1.0 fte for the new candidate to be hired into as discussed and shared between the two elementary schools.

**F. Revising the Vision**

Ms. Powden noted that Ms. Mahusky, the GMUSD chair, was hoping to be at this meeting but she was unable to make it. She explained that they have been looking at the current vision and the work that has been done in the last 5 years and there is the feeling that the vision needs to be revised. The TRSU board has discussed holding an all board retreat to discuss developing a new vision. Ms. Trimboli felt that the current vision statement covers all the work that the boards have done as well as the work that they are continuing to do. She felt that a retreat would be valuable, but not for changing the vision. She reminded the board of the vision statement development included teachers, faculty, administrators and students. Ms. Powden suggested that the vision can include certain phrases like a brand. There was discussion about where the vision statement is used—as a guide for budget development. Ms. Meringolo suggested that a retreat that focuses on how the SU is doing at living the vision, and then possibly change the vision if necessary. There was discussion about the development process to get the current vision statement.

Mr. Davis suggested that it is difficult to ask the BRHS community to get on board with developing a vision for the future during this time.

**G. Current Financials**

Ms. Hammond reported that the full version of the financials is 17 pages long but she has consolidated it to 10 pages. The TRSU board has asked for monthly summary financials and quarterly full financial reports. She explained how the GL account number is developed. She is going to go through some various versions of the summary to get the board the information that

they need so the board can determine which way works for them. She reported that it is early in the year so the budget is going well, aside from the gym floor overage.

**H. End of FY18 Fund Balance**

Ms. Hammond described the spreadsheet included in the board packet, noting that they are starting LMHUUSD with a \$317K surplus, and they have \$127K committed to the current budget. She explained how the deficits happened in each individual budget which brought them to the current fund balance. She reported that this is the information that they will begin the current budgeting process with. The board discussed the Title I and math coach positions. Ms. Hammond will look at this number again based on where and how the math coach expense is detailed.

**I. Budget Development**

Ms. Hammond noted that the gym floor was over budget \$18K and the paving was over budget about \$19K, but the staff changes will result in a savings of about \$89K. She will meet with Ms. Trimboli and Mr. Hutt Vater to begin the budget preparations. The initial budget discussion can begin at the next meeting and then if they need a special budget meeting they can hold one. Ms. Hammond asked if the board wanted to focus on certain things. Ms. Trimboli noted that they need to budget for the legal costs and the subdivision costs. She explained that the following year, they may need to look at storage areas for student records and equipment, some of which may need climate control. This budget will be for the 2019-2020 year which will include the school closure.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Powden distributed the tentative meeting schedule outlining the locations for each meeting.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**A. Black River Teachers and Staff Jobs Ending 2020 (1 VSA \$313 (A)(1)(b))**

Ms. Tarbell **moved** to enter executive session at 7:51 p.m. to discuss Black River Teachers and Staff jobs ending in 2020 after determining that discussion in open session would put the board at a disadvantage. They invited Ms. Trimboli, Ms. Powden, Mr. Hutt Vater, Mr. Davis and Ms. Hammond. Mr. Buckley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 8:11 p.m. No action taken.

**X. NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA:**

The next meeting will be on November 14 at Mt. Holly at 6:00.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Faenza **moved** to adjourn at 8:11 p.m. Ms. Hollebeek seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson  
Board Recording Secretary