

# Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District

## Regular Meeting Minutes

May 08, 2019, 6:00 p.m.

Mt. Holly School, Gymnasium

### I. CALL TO ORDER:

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

**Student Representatives:** Ryan Boyle, Aaron Merrill

**Staff:** Cheryl Hammond, Meg Powden, Craig Hutt Vater, Karen Trimboli, John Davis, Deb Harrison

**Public:** Morgan Skiathitis, Heather Graham

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

### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Powden asked to have a recommendation for hire added under new business. Mr. Orzechowski suggested moving the senior class trip discussion up to the student representative and comments section. Ms. Alberty suggested adding transition process for closing of BRHS under old business.

Ms. Alberty **moved** to approve the agenda with the additions and changes discussed. Mr. Buckley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Alberty **moved** to approve the minutes of the March 13, 2019 meeting with the addition of Ms. Hollebeek in attendance. Ms. Faenza seconded.

### IV. COMMUNICATIONS:

#### A. Board Comments

Mr. Orzechowski apologized to the board and the public for canceling the meeting last month at the last minute with little notice.

#### B. Student Rep

Heather Graham, the senior class president, distributed information about the proposed senior class trip to the board for their review. They had planned the trip for May 23-24 to the Great Escape and Fun Spot in Lake George, NY. She outlined some of the itinerary and advised that the bus and driver are being provided by the town. Ms. Tarbell questioned if there was a requirement that the class provide lifeguards for the pools and kayaking activities. Ms. Powden advised that typically that is the case for younger students, but not for high schoolers. Ms. Trimboli advised that they haven't in the past for other trips of this type. There was discussion about 23 of the 28 students in the class attending. There will be 4 chaperones. Ms. Alberty **moved** to approve the senior class trip to Lake George as presented. Mr. Buckley seconded. Ms. Tarbell requested that the class be sure to follow kayak life preserver rules. The motion carried without opposition.

#### C. Public Comments

Mr. Orzechowski reported that he has two letters from the public regarding the closure of BRHS, but he will wait to present those until Old Business during the BRHS transition discussion.

Morgan Skiathitis, a parent of a 6<sup>th</sup> grader at MHS spoke to the board about her concerns about the coming year at BRHS. She has heard some troubling rumors about the school for the next year. She has tried to be positive with her daughter about the next year, but her daughter is afraid about attending BRHS next year, particularly based on comments by her peers and upperclassmen. She noted that she has heard these same concerns from other parents across the board. Mr. Orzechowski noted that these comments (and the letters he received) are the first he's heard of it. Ms. Alberty advised that she has heard from a number of people in town these concerns and she has encouraged them to come to the board meetings so they can address the concerns and be transparent about it. Ms. Trimboli noted that to date, no parents have come to her to discuss their concerns with BRHS. Ms. Meringolo noted that without knowing what the concerns are, the board would be limited in how it could help until they knew more. Ms. Trimboli noted that on May 16, the 6<sup>th</sup> graders from LES and MHS will come to BRHS to experience activities related to transition to the high school. She advised that that same evening is a parent orientation meeting to help the parents know about BRHS. Ms. Powden encouraged parents who are concerned with a specific teacher to begin with that teacher, but if there are overall concerns about the school, they should bring them to Ms. Trimboli or Mr. Davis. The board thanked Ms. Skiathitis for raising her concerns.

## **V. ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS:**

### **A. Superintendent Report**

Ms. Powden reported that annually they work on a continuous improvement plan. Previously they had 5 goals but have since narrowed that focus down to three goals. One is aimed at closing the achievement gap in math between students who live in poverty and those that don't. To address that goal, they are building a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS). This looks at the academic needs as well as the behavioral needs to add interventions to support the students. They will be looking at what is successful in each of the schools to then roll those ideas and programming out to the rest of the schools. Another goal is to become a trauma informed school. They have had an in-service on this topic last year and this year, they have two cohorts of educators and administration working on this. They will be planning their work for next year on this topic. The third goal is to continue to work on data analysis to drive programming and instruction and make changes accordingly.

Today there was an audit of the after-school program (ASP). They have been looking primarily at the newest grant at CAES, but there is ASP at all four elementary schools so they are looking forward to feedback on each of the programs. Ms. Powden reported that the ASP summer program will be done a little differently this year. All of the students will go to their home school in the morning for breakfast and then bus to Ludlow for the program. This will be more of a camp-like opportunity and give them a chance to meet children of their age from other schools.

Ms. Powden reported that Ms. Trimboli and Mr. Hutt Vater have been interviewing for a few positions and will be making a recommendation later in this meeting.

### **B. Principal's Report**

Mr. Hutt Vater reported that at MHS they have wanted to have a music room, but they have had to hold it on the stage in the gym. He is looking into other opportunities to create a music room space. He noted that there is some enthusiasm among the PTSA organization and hoped that there would be similar support from the board. They are looking at various fundraising opportunities for this, as well as doing fact-finding for the space. Preliminarily the figures to build the foundation for the space is \$7000 for the concrete and \$6000 for the labor and \$2500

for the excavation. The space would be just off the gym and would be 20' x40' room. There was discussion about the quotes for the project. Mr. Hutt Vater noted that they would seek competitive bids, but he had just sought some basic quotes to get a ballpark idea of cost. Mr. Buckley questioned how this would come from any existing funding given that they have already gone over budget on the paving and on the gymnasium. Ms. Hammond noted that Mr. Hutt Vater was suggesting using some of the transition funds for this expense. Mr. Hutt Vater suggested that if they could get the foundation built, more people would be enthusiastic for the space and the fundraising for the rest of the space would be easier. There was discussion about the transition funds needing to be spent by June 30 and there have only been \$1200 of the \$50,000 spent thus far.

Ms. Hammond has researched putting the funds into escrow since they are anticipating additional transition costs, such as subdivision costs. There was discussion about Ms. Trimboli's request for \$10,000 of transition funds to be used for wellness and career transitioning for the staff. There was discussion about the electric separation and the subdivision work planned for the summer. There was discussion about the elementary report card work for the teachers to come in after the school year to work on that. This is anticipated to be about \$5000-\$8000. Ms. Meringolo noted that if money could be used to help solve any of the concerns that will be raised about the transition next year. The estimate for completing the music space would be about \$26,000 using mostly volunteer labor. There was discussion about making sure that the space is covered for the winter. Mr. Hutt Vater noted that the structure would be similar to the art room as far as the heat and electricity are concerned. Mr. Hutt Vater suggested waiting until next month to finish discussion about this, but with the board generally in favor of pursuing this further, he will see competitive quotes to be more informed for the next meeting. Ms. Trimboli noted that this space will be helpful for the music program for the students. She described the shared staff and the need for space for the success of the program.

Ms. Trimboli noted that the school held the school fair this past week and the schools that came to recruit the students were impressed with the students—with their questions and their eye contact and she felt that it was due to the teachers having prepped the students well for the fair. They have worked with the students to determine the things that are important for them. They invited 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to the fair and there were definitely elementary parents at the fair. Black River Academy (B.R.A.), Long Trail, Mill River and Green Mountain all had a lot of “buzz” around them. She thanked Jess Russ for her work on the fair.

Ms. Trimboli noted that LES has been working on their continuous improvement plan parallel to what Ms. Powden described for the entire SU. They have been working on a Plan Do Study Act process. The principals met recently to view a safety and security presentation. She noted that a group from Springfield Tactical Response team came and presented many things for them to consider. They looked at different things that the teachers and students should be doing. There was discussion about some changes that would need to be made at BRHS if it was going to stay in existence. She noted that she has Mr. Tuomisto looking into emergency exits on the intermediate side of the building since currently the only exits are into the hallway. There was discussion about an emergency exit for the administrative assistant office. Ms. Tarbell suggested having them tour the school to give suggestions for solutions.

Ms. Trimboli reported that the schools are finishing MAP's testing and SBAC testing. Mr. Hutt Vater thanked Ms. Trimboli for inviting the MHS students to the Yo-Yo Man assembly. Ms. Trimboli noted that she and Mr. Hutt Vater are often working together for various activities like the Yo-Yo Man and the VT Symphony Orchestra presentations.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS:**

### **A. Policies, Second Read/Approval**

Mr. Orzechowski noted that the procedure included in the packet was just that—a procedure and the board only approves policies. He noted that the TRSU concern was that the policy didn't accompany the procedure when they were asked to review it, but also that they don't approve procedures.

### **B. Subdivision of Ludlow Elementary School Property**

Mr. Orzechowski advised that he attended a recent select board meeting two months ago and there was discussion about selling the property to the Town of Ludlow. He noted that the concern was that the original thought was to just sell the high school building and the lawn out front. He noted that the feeling was that for the town to consider it, they would want all of the property except the elementary school building, parking lot and play ground—all 40 acres. He asked the board members for their opinion on that option. He felt that including the ball field wasn't necessarily bad since the rec program uses the field, but he wasn't sure how he felt about the rest of the property. There was discussion about including in the purchase and sales agreement that mandates that the woods could continue to be used for elementary school purposes. Mr. Buckley noted that he will be serving on the community committee seated by the select board as a representative of the school district. They will be discussing this information. He noted that selling the town all the property puts LES at a disadvantage. There was discussion about including all the students in the school district being able to use the property, including the Mt. Holly students. Mr. Buckley noted that if the property all remained with the LMHUUSD and the entire SD closed, all of the property would be transferred to the town for \$1, therefore this is not a power play by the school district, rather they are just trying to ensure that they will still be able to use the land as they have been.

Ms. Alberty felt that she was very disappointed in the Ludlow select board. She offered to be part of that committee as a school board member, but they denied her since she was from Mt. Holly. She noted that Mt. Holly has invested decades of their dollars into that school, so it makes sense for them to be able to offer some insight, particularly since the school district is unified. She is against giving them any property, other than that which is right around the building. Part of her reason is the fear of development for condos and other things in that close proximity to the elementary school. She was also concerned with the flow of traffic around the building. Ms. Trimboli noted that the LMH board should make sure that the LES building, the playground and parking lot remains with the LMH district. She felt that if the town wanted to take over the rest of the property, that is less cost on the LMH budget for maintaining the property. She noted that the property is landlocked on the upper boundary of the property, and it is pretty steep. She felt that the property is great for a ropes course, hiking and outdoor learning, but building residences on that hill would likely have to be a significant distance up the hill past the power lines and they would need to negotiate for rights of way to do so. She felt that this transition could be beneficial to the district. She advised that the high school baseball team has not had a home game on the field yet this year due to it being too wet to maintain. She felt that that is another good reason to let the town have that property to maintain. There was discussion about the possibility of stipulating in the sales agreement that it can't be developed without approval of the school board.

There was discussion about agreeing to outdoor learning development or recreation development. There was also discussion about the town being able to sell the property to a developer. Ms. Meringolo suggested getting a good real estate attorney to include certain development stipulations in the deed. There was discussion about where the current nature trail is in relation to the ball field and whether that property could stay with the elementary school. Mr. Orzechowski noted that there was a mention of affordable housing at the select board meeting. Mr. Orzechowski

noted that the select board is not currently planning to make a decision until September. The first committee meeting is May 23 with plans to give the town a proposal in September and a town vote in November. Mr. Orzechowski noted that the select board is aware of the academy's interest in the building and is considering their needs in their timeline. There was discussion about someone from the B.R.A. committee (Joann Wilson) serving on the select board committee.

Ms. Hammond questioned how this impacted the paperwork she needed to submit for the subdivision. There was discussion about the current subdivision plans being in the center of the parking area between the two buildings. There was also discussion about the surveyor charging additional fees in order to place the subdivision boundaries in a different area. There was discussion about the paperwork needing to be submitted to the DRB by Friday to be placed on their June agenda. There was discussion about amending the submission at a future date. Ms. Hammond noted that one of the concerns of the subdivision was to maintain the right of way from the road to LES because that is where the water and electric runs.

The board consensus was to hold off further subdivision paper work, specifically submission to the DRB, until the select board makes their decision. Mr. Hutt Vater suggested explaining this discussion to the person completing the subdivision so that he is aware of the discussions and can give a timeline of how much time he will need after a decision is made to be able to present to the DRB. Mr. Garvey suggested retaining a good real estate attorney so that they aren't scrambling to find an attorney once the decision is made.

### **C. Transition Process of Closing Black River**

Ms. Powden read aloud a letter from Amber Taylor, a resident of Mt. Holly, regarding her concerns about the closing of BRHS. She voiced concerns for the class of 2025, next year's 7<sup>th</sup> graders, as they will have to transition into a new school only to transition again the following year at a difficult time in life. She also voiced concerns for the class of 2021, who will have only one year at their new school. She offered suggestions such as a single classroom, similar to elementary school or a traditional middle school, for next year's 7<sup>th</sup> graders. She also suggested that the class of 2021 be allowed to have school choice for next year to allow them to grow roots in their new schools.

She also read aloud a letter from Chris Devereux, a resident of Mt. Holly, regarding his feelings regarding the pending closure of BRHS. He felt that there may be a feeling of "giving up" on the BRHS students, as they are allowed to play board games for multiple days in a row, rather than school work, and there also seem to be no consequences for misbehavior. He felt that one BRHS student was bringing home elementary school level work because her teacher had "given up". He felt that if this continues into next year, the students will be overwhelmed and behind as they transition to another school because they aren't being challenged as they should be. He advised that he had spoken to a few parents who would pull their students out of BRHS at the end of this year if they could afford to pay tuition at other schools. The purpose of Act 46 was to give the students more opportunities, but that doesn't seem to be happening this year. He felt that there is no incentive to do well and making them stay in this negative environment for another year will be detrimental.

Mr. Buckley noted that he believed that there are two staffing changes that will be taking place at the end of this year that may address this issue. There was discussion about the students enrolled in high school choice and limited school transfer, but there is no way to know for sure until a student has enrolled in the new school. There was discussion about there being a deadline for school choice and limited school transfer, but students who are getting their tuition waived or paying privately for tuition may be unknown to the school until later in the year when their final

decision is made. Ms. Powden will follow up with the receiving schools to see when their preferred enrollment deadline is, but felt that they likely wouldn't enforce a "drop dead" date because schools almost always welcome new students into their school. Ms. Meringolo noted that most independent schools have a deadline for enrollment.

Ms. Tarbell commented on Ms. Taylor's letter and felt the two options suggested might be difficult to implement. She felt that the bigger concern was the letter from Mr. and Mrs. Devereux regarding the alleged apathy of the teachers. She suggested that the administration needs to investigate and address these concerns. Ms. Trimboli noted that not one of these parent concerns has been brought to her or Mr. Davis to address directly. Mr. Davis noted that he is in every classroom each week and he hasn't witnessed this activity. Ms. Trimboli noted that there are situations in classrooms that she can't speak to in open session because they involve the confidentiality of students, but she advised that any situation a parent has raised in the past has been dealt with and documented appropriately. Ms. Trimboli felt that the teachers are there for the students every day, even despite the stress of the school closure.

Ms. Trimboli reported that the teachers have polled the students and asked for their feedback about what they want and need for next year. The faculty is organizing the responses into categories and using data to develop proficiencies and to develop the schedule. There was discussion about holding school fair for the parents since it is ultimately their decision. Ms. Trimboli noted that they will be holding one, but likely next school year. They will also be holding student visits at many of the schools. There was discussion about one of the main issues being proficiencies. Ms. Trimboli noted that when there were grades and class ranking, many students tried harder to be competitive. Mr. Buckley suggested that if the student can get a "P" without doing a whole lot of work, why would he try as hard as he did before with trying to get an "A". There was discussion about students trying to get a "PD".

There was discussion about the parental concerns and the students' comments. Ms. Trimboli reported that she would absolutely address concerns individually when they are brought to her, but other than the two parents' letters and Ms. Skiathitis' comments, all of which were raised in open session of a board meeting, she has not heard of any concerns prior to now. She invited the parents to come in and talk to her. She felt sympathetic to all of the students having to make two transitions, however the law is the law and policy is policy and she must follow them. Ms. Meringolo recommended that parents seek to speak with Ms. Trimboli or Mr. Davis so they can be more candid and speak more openly behind closed doors. She appreciated the suggestions that Ms. Taylor discussed. She noted that the suggestion about allowing the class of 2021 to have school choice couldn't be done legally because they can either offer a school or school choice at the secondary level, not both. She suggested that the administration could respond to the suggestion raised for the class of 2025 to help ease their transition.

There was discussion about the benefits of holding a school fair evening next school year. There was also discussion about using transition funds to facilitate school visits.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS:**

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

- i. **C09** Board Goal Setting and Evaluation
- ii. **F33** Student Medication

Mr. Orzechowski noted that policy C09 was referred back to the policy committee for review. That committee met yesterday. The board will review their revisions at the next meeting. The board will review the policies and consider them for the next meeting. There was discussion about

the policy having been reviewed by the nursing staff and also recommended by the policy committee.

## **B. Professional Development**

Ms. Powden advised that Mr. Eppolito had planned to attend this meeting to give a presentation about professional development but something came up and he is unable to attend. She advised that this is the annual request to ask for 5 additional early release days for the students to allow for professional development of the teachers for proficiency-based education work, trauma-informed school work, and developing modules and content area. This will be the first Tuesday of each month, except for the ski day early release days which tend to be more for building based PD. Ms. Alberty **moved** to approve the 5 early release days for professional development as requested. Ms. Hollebeek noted that, as Mr. Garvey had suggested last year, the early release days are a hardship to working parents. There was discussion about the availability of after school program (ASP) during this time because many of the teachers who run ASP are involved in the PD. Ms. Trimboli noted that Mr. Eppolito uses 2 of the 8 ski days for PD, but in Mt. Holly, the teachers participate in the ski days. There was discussion about how the PD days are organized and how they are used in each school. Ms. Powden advised that there are 3 building in-service days and 4 SU-wide in-service days.

Ms. Ryan reported on some of the complaints that she had heard regarding early release days. She advised that she would rather be in class with her students but acknowledged that there was a need for PD. The board discussed the early release days being about 10% of the school days between the parent teacher conferences, in-service days, ski days, the early release days before February and April breaks and the PD early release days. There was discussion about parents having to make a choice between taking time off from work or determining if their child is old enough to stay home alone. Ms. Trimboli and Mr. Hutt Vater advised that for the ski day half days all but 5 students participate in a school-based program. Ms. Hollebeek noted that she has to take a full day off, and can't take a partial day, as is the case for many parents.

Ms. Alberty suggested that perhaps the administration can come up with another alternative for parents. Ms. Trimboli advised that they are trying to settle the school year calendar and they can't send the students to Cavendish since there wouldn't be enough adults for the number of students. Mr. Orzechowski suggested that he could speak with Ms. White to see if there are any alternatives she could suggest. He also advised that she had given an ASP presentation to the TRSU and felt that it would be a good presentation to give to this board next month. Mr. Hutt Vater noted that they understand the difficulties for parents, but aside from altering the teachers' contract, they have no other way to provide the type of time needed for these PBE goals. There was discussion about holding fewer of these days by holding a full day PD, rather than 5 half days, however those wouldn't count as student days for the state as an early release day does.

Ms. Trimboli noted that the PD time is extremely important because there are mandates that come from the state and the teachers need the time to learn them. They feel like it is a double-edged sword because they don't want to lose the teaching time with the students. She noted that the 8 ski days take a big piece of the teaching time, but make that choice because this gives them opportunities that they wouldn't get elsewhere. Mr. Hutt Vater felt that ski days teach perseverance which can be transferred to other academic learning. Ms. Tarbell seconded Ms. Alberty's motion. Ms. Powden advised that in the new teacher agreement, there are 2 more instructional days for the LMHUUSD schools. There was discussion about the master agreement obligating them to provide a certain amount of professional development, but this would be in addition. Mr. Hutt Vater advised that GMUSD has already approved the 5 early release days and he felt that in order to effectively get the PD work done across all the schools it needs to be

common time between the schools. Ms. Alberty suggested that there might be opportunities for transporting students between ASP programs.

Ms. Alberty's motion carried with one opposed.

**C. Joint School Districts Meeting in May**

Ms. Powden noted that she would like to hold a joint district meeting on May 23, for an audit meeting. The former districts were seated until December 31, 2018 in order to complete the audit process, but the audits weren't completed until recently. The plan is to ask the current boards to come together, review the audit presentation with the auditor, then separate to deal with their individual audits. The meeting will be at 6:00 p.m. at CTES.

**D. MRUUSD/LMHUUSD Limited School Transfer Program**

Ms. Powden advised that the transfer program documents are in the board packet and they have approved the transfer last year, and it has been on-going with Mt. Holly for years. There was discussion about no LES students having taken advantage of this program last year. Ms. Hollebeek **moved** to approve the MRUUSD/LMHUUSD Limited School Transfer Program as presented. Ms. Meringolo seconded. The deadlines for this program are coming soon (May 15), but Ms. Powden advised the parents who have been interested in this program to apply pending board approval. There was discussion about this agreement being only for elementary school children. The board discussed the lottery process if more students apply for the program than there are available spots. There was also discussion about students being able to return to their home school anytime. Ms. Meringolo questioned if there is a wait list for students who aren't chosen for the lottery. The motion carried unanimously.

**E. Current Year Financials**

Ms. Hammond reported that the budget is relatively on track. She reported on the overages that they have discussed in the past: MHS paving, LES gym floor, the additional para-educators needed to meet student need, and legal fees associated with negotiations. Ms. Hammond explained that BRHS is over budget on their professional development. She explained that because the prior teachers' contract had listed PD by school and now does it by district, there were more teachers that took advantage of the PD than what was budgeted. She reported on changes in the library staffing, municipal retirement contributions, and changes in insurance coverage. She reported on some savings—school choice (fewer students left LES than originally anticipated); guidance (due to staffing changes). Ms. Hammond reported on the equipment leases versus purchases. She also discussed the purchased service expense that is for salaries and benefits paid out of the TRSU, rather than out of LMHUUSD. Ms. Hammond advised that hot lunch is a concern, as always. She is seeing about half the revenue that she was anticipating. She reported that the requirement for price-per-meal is a new one, therefore this year is a bit of a "wild card". She explained that in the past the ala carte menu was a money maker that allowed them to not lose so much, but with the per-plate pricing, the numbers are calculated differently and they aren't able to absorb the lose in the ala carte funds. Ms. Hammond reported that the \$75,000 from Ranger Solar has been deposited.

**F. Letters of Resignation**

Ms. Trimboli read aloud a letter of resignation from Lauren Gerber who is currently at LES. She then read aloud a letter of resignation from Lauren Seiber, a first-grade teacher at LES. She advised that both of these individuals are moving out of the area for personal reasons. She also read aloud a letter of resignation from Eric Snay, the world language teacher, who indicated that he intended to remain at BRHS through next year, but was offered a full-time position at Rutland High School. She also read aloud a letter of resignation from Katie Hurley, the BRHS/MS music



teacher. She also read aloud a letter of resignation from Adam Pullinen as the PE teacher at BRHS effective immediately. She also read a letter of resignation from soccer coach Kathleen Thompson.

Ms. Tarbell **moved** to accept the resignation of Ms. Gerber, Ms. Seiber, Mr. Snay, Ms. Hurley, Mr. Pullinen and Ms. Thompson as read with regrets. Ms. Alberty seconded. Ms. Meringolo thanked them for their service.

#### **G. Transportation**

Mr. Orzechowski advised that he had approached the TRSU to see if they could partner their transportation with GMUSD's since the town of Ludlow will no longer be offering transportation after next school year. He had suggested seeing if the GMUSD transportation director would consider an SU-wide director position in addition to trying to see what could be done for transportation for LMHUUSD. Ms. Powden reported that she had met with Mr. Parah, the GMUSD transportation director yesterday to discuss these issues and options. He has already begun looking at transportation routes, including one that will run from Mt. Holly to GMUHS with two stops in Mt. Holly and two stops in Ludlow, depending on where there is the greatest concentration of students. They are also anticipating a bus route for students within Mt. Holly to MHS, as well as two routes within Ludlow to LES. She advised that he would be happy to come to the board meeting next month to talk with them about potential plans. Mr. Orzechowski noted that his thoughts were that they could save money on a transportation director by just paying an additional stipend to Mr. Parah to add to the work load, or essentially make it a SU-wide position. Ms. Powden advised that the LMH district would need to purchase some buses and hire drivers. Ms. Meringolo clarified that TRSU would be doing this and then assessing back those expenses to the LMH budget. This would also allow for state transportation reimbursement which the district is currently only receiving for Mt. Holly.

Ms. Alberty advised that she spoke with someone from Proctor High School and they have eliminated transportation to their schools and their children don't have a problem making it to school. She's heard from a number of Mt. Holly residents who feel that it is unnecessary to run a school bus for so few students. She noted that Proctor leases out buses for field trips. Ms. Trimboli noted that there is an obligation to provide transportation for any special education student, so they would need to look into how many students in special education are using the school transportation. Ms. Alberty suggested purchasing a 12-passenger van which wouldn't require a CDL to operate. Ms. Hammond advised that the district's insurance company doesn't allow this. Ms. Alberty suggested looking into all the other possible options to save money. Mr. Orzechowski advised that according to the Ludlow Town Hall, on average 10-12 students ride each of the two Ludlow buses. Ms. Trimboli advised that there are about 25-30 students who ride the buses in the morning and a little more in the afternoon. She advised that there is a check sheet filled each day.

Mr. Buckley questioned if TRSU is offering transportation to GMUHS, are they also obligated to provide transportation to Mill River. Ms. Powden was not sure of what the law requires, but will check into it but felt that if the TRSU is providing transportation to one high school, they should also provide it to the other high school. There was discussion about the current transportation costs being assessed by actual usage because Ludlow doesn't provide transportation, but when all the towns are included in it, the costs will be assessed to the districts by equalized pupils.

#### **H. Recommendation for Hire**

Ms. Powden reported that the search committee found several qualified candidates for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade position. She and Mr. Hutt Vater interviewed the finalist today and are recommending hiring Darcy Gibney for the MHS 3<sup>rd</sup> grade position. She was a unanimous selection of the hiring

committee. She has been teaching at the Dorset School, and previously worked at CAES. Ms. Powden confirmed that Ms. Gibney's references have been checked. Ms. Meringolo **moved** to hire Darcy Gibney for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade position at MHS as recommended. Mr. Buckley seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

Ms. Trimboli distributed information on and reported on the recent notification regarding a percentage of the Google Chromebooks won't be supported by the Google Updates. She reported that Mr. DeLisle has submitted an explanation as well as a timeline of which devices will be out of date and when. She reported that the devices will work for research and typing, but if the SBAC tests do an update, the devices will not support the update, so they would have to get new machines for testing. Mr. DeLisle and Mr. Ahonen are researching options and getting details and will report back. She anticipates that they will have information around October.

**IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

**A. Academic Records or Suspension or Discipline of Students-Title I V.S.A. § 313 (7)**

Ms. Meringolo **moved** to enter executive session at 8:12 p.m. to discuss academic records or suspension or discipline of students inviting the administration and Ms. Weigers. Ms. Alberty seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 8:59 p.m. Ms. Meringolo **moved** to approve the parental request discussed during executive session due to the extenuating circumstances presented. Ms. Alberty seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**B. Negotiations for Non-Bargaining Staff-Title I V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(b)**

After finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, Ms. Meringolo **moved** to enter executive session at 9:02 p.m. to discuss negotiations for non-bargaining staff inviting Ms. Powden. Ms. Alberty seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 9:05 p.m. Ms. Tarbell **moved** to correct the motion made at the last meeting regarding non-bargaining staff raises to be at 2.75% versus the 2.5% that was stated for principals. The motion failed due to not having a second. Ms. Hollebeek **moved** to amend the previous salary increase of 2.5% to 2.75% to keep in line with the teachers' negotiated salary increase. Ms. Faenza seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

The next meeting will be the joint audit meeting on May 23, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. at CTES. The next regular meeting will be on June 12, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. LES.

**XI. ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Meringolo **moved** to adjourn at 9:12 p.m. Ms. Faenza seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson  
Board Recording Secretary