

Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District

Special Meeting Minutes

November 29, 2018

Mount Holly School, Library

6:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Board: Paul Orzechowski, Brigid Faenza, Kelly Tarbell, Mary Alberty, Dan Buckley, Chris Garvey

Staff: Karen Trimboli, Craig Hutt Vater, Cheryl Hammond (via phone)

Student Rep:

Public:

Mr. Orzechowski called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Ms. Faenza **moved** to approve the agenda. Ms. Tarbell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Appropriations Proposal for Ludlow Select Board

Mr. Orzechowski reported that he went to the Ludlow Select board meeting on Monday and they pretty much advised the LMH board to bring back a proposal to the Ludlow Select board for the things they would like to keep subsidized by the town (or towns) because the Select board would like to pull the full \$60,000 support at once. There was discussion about how this subsidy started during the Act 60 and 68 era. The Select board at that time moved some funds for the school into the town budget in order to share the expenses across a wider tax base. There was discussion about the \$60,000 being the treasurer, the rubbish removal, the crossing guard, annual booklets, building use, Fletcher Library and athletics.

There was discussion about whether Mt. Holly subsidizes any of these expenses. There was also discussion about the Select board feeling that the LMH board has a sizable surplus and the \$60,000 won't impact them much. Ms. Hammond noted that after the portion of that is committed to the current budget, that leaves approximately \$190,000 in surplus. Ms. Trimboli noted that if the town opts to not support the school for the use of the LCC building, the school will bill back the town for what the town uses the school building and property for the rec department. There was discussion about Mt. Holly allowing the Ludlow Rec to use their gym as well. The \$18,000 support is to offset the use of the building for the Rec program and other options like indoor soccer and other adult and pick-up town recreation activities.

There was discussion about cutting the uniform support and then prioritizing the rest. They can negotiate the reciprocal building use. There was discussion about the crossing guard primarily benefiting Ludlow Elementary children, not any students from Mt. Holly, so it seems reasonable that they could keep supporting that piece. Mr. Garvey suggested bringing up to the Select board that they could avoid "nickel & diming" each other for building use if they keep the building support the same. The board also noted that anything moved into the LMH budget will impact the Ludlow residents more than it is currently because they will only be able to share that tax expense with other Ludlow residents, not the second home owners. There was also discussion about this change possibly putting them over the penalty threshold.

Ms. Trimboli had suggested to the select board chair in the past that they have a collaborative conversation with the Mt. Holly select board to see if they could both agree to subsidize the school system in a way that would benefit the residents of both towns without putting the burden on just one. There was discussion about how the board would go about asking the Mt. Holly select board for their support. Mr. Buckley suggested that this \$60,000 could be split between the towns based on equalized pupils, which would put Ludlow at approximately \$36,000 and Mt. Holly at approximately \$24,000. Ms. Tarbell suggested that they would gain more ground if the school district made some sacrifices on this \$60,000. For example if they were willing to cut the \$13,000 and then split the remainder by the approximate 60/40 split. There was also the added argument of the penalty threshold impacting tax payers in both towns.

Ms. Trimboli noted that some of the portions of the \$60,000 shouldn't be split with Mt. Holly because they only benefit Ludlow residents and students. For example the building usage is for Ludlow activities. The crossing guard is for Ludlow Elementary students. They can cut out the \$16,000 for athletics. She suggested that Mt. Holly could "kick in" for the treasurer, trash removal and the annual booklet. Those amount to about \$10,000. There was discussion about the Fletcher Library split. They could cut that expense to about \$2500 (eliminating the high school portion) which would be for Ludlow Elementary students and therefore a Ludlow expense. They could cut the \$60,000 down by about \$19,000 for the athletics and HS Fletcher Library, then pull off the Ludlow only expenses, like the crossing guard, the Fletcher library, etc. and then ask the Mt. Holly select board for their portion of the remaining balance. They can also remind both select boards that students from the rec program also use the Mt. Holly facility. This leaves Mt. Holly with approximately \$9,000 as their portion which covers the trash removal, treasurer and the annual booklets. Ms. Hammond reported that it doesn't include the trash from the cafeteria. There was discussion about this being the education operations in the town budget in the amount of about \$22,000. Mr. Hutt Vater reported that the Mt. Holly select board used to cover the rubbish removal and the mowing for the Mt. Holly School, but they are no longer covering that. This accounts for a couple thousand dollars that Mt. Holly is already supporting the LMH district.

Ms. Trimboli reminded the board that they can pull \$19,000 right off the top for the uniforms and the high school's portion of the Library expense. Mr. Buckley noted that the Ludlow select board feels that they are subsidizing the Mt. Holly students.

Mr. Orzechowski will go to the next Ludlow select board meeting and will also attend the Mt. Holly select board meeting to give them their proposal. There was discussion about not all the select board members being on-board with the idea of fully cutting the \$60,000. There was also discussion about the penalty threshold and the select board being aware of it. Ms. Hammond noted that the prediction for the penalty threshold is approximately \$18,300 currently, but they don't have the equalized pupil counts yet so they don't know where the budget is in relation to the penalty threshold.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Trimboli questioned if the board was going to make a decision on the disposition of the BRHS building and what it would cost if they were going to keep the building and/or subdivide it. Ms. Hammond noted that this analysis is on her list to present to the board for the next meeting. There was discussion about the cost of maintaining the building versus what they could get for rent of the building.

Mr. Orzechowski noted that the select board feels that they will automatically receive the building and they are expecting to accept it.

V. NEXT MEETING DATE AND AGENDA:

The next meeting will be on December 12 at BRHS at 6:00. The agenda will include the BR building. The B&G committee needs to meet before then.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Alberty **moved** to adjourn at 7:05 p.m. Ms. Tarbell seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary