

TRSU BOARD

Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, February 13, 2020

6:00 p.m.

Ludlow Elementary School, Band Room

I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Board: Wayne Wheelock, Paul Orzechowski, Joe Fromberger, Dan Buckley, Jeff Hance

Staff: Meg Powden, Cheryl Hammond, Katherine Fogg, Lauren Fierman, Mary Barton, Karen Trimboli

Other Board Members:

Public: Shawn Cunningham

Mr. Orzechowski called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. He invited those present to introduce themselves.

II. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Buckley **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of new business: letter from the LMH Parent Teacher Student Association asking for assistance and an executive session under Title I V.S.A. § 313(a)(1)(F) Confidential attorney-client communications made for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body. The motion carried unanimously.

III. APPROVE MINUTES:

A. January 16, 2020 Special Meeting

Mr. Fromberger **moved** to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2020 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There was discussion about the snow.

V. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:

Ms. Powden reported that the LMH board decided to purchase a new bus at their meeting last night. Mr. Buckley corrected to say that they were going out for a bid for a new bus. Because transportation falls under the TRSU, she wanted this board to be aware. There was discussion about the improvements that would need to be made to the Ludlow municipal bus, along with the maintenance for approximately the same annual cost as purchasing a new bus complete with the necessary pieces (cameras, etc.). Ms. Powden advised that the transition teams have been meeting to discuss the closure of the BRHS building.

Ms. Powden advised that the administration went on a winter leadership retreat with the teacher leaders and the work was great. Beth Reed recently provided education support team training to that team and the administrators. She discussed the multi-tiered system of support and aligning the training. She recently attended a Cavendish Town Library board meeting and discussions have been had about the safety of the school with the public building attached to the school. She noted that there are difficult decisions that have to be made. She discussed the potential concerns for safety for the school with the public open hours. She and Ms. Hammond recorded an Okemo Valley TV (OVTV) program to discuss the budgets. The video will be available on February 17. Ms. Powden reported

that she attended a meeting with the regional superintendents. They are discussing collaboratives with SU's with the purpose of providing special education services regionally. The goal would be to work together to educate students who are currently educated out of district.

VI. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Policies, Second Read/Approval (C7.V2)

There was discussion about the district boards having approved this policy. Mr. Buckley **moved** to approve the policy. The motion carried unanimously.

VII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. Policies, First Read (F32)

The board reviewed the policy. They will bring it back at the next meeting. There was discussion about the definition of cisgender. There was discussion about the suggested language.

B. Superintendent Search

Mr. Orzechowski advised that they will need to establish a superintendent search committee. Mr. Fromberger advised that he felt that the committee needs to know what its job is—specifically to make a recommendation to the board on 2-3 candidates for the board to conduct a final interview and decide upon. He felt that the committee should have co-chairs since the work load will be heavy. He suggested that the number of people on the committee will be important. He proposed 2 board members from each SD board, 2 members from central office staff, one principal from each district and one teacher from each district. This would be a total of 10 people. It was clarified that the two co-chairs would be elected from the members of the committee. There was discussion about whether or not to have alternates. There would be a continuity problem with alternates. Ms. Trimboli suggested that there was a high school student on the committee as a student voice. There was discussion about whether members of the public should be included. There was discussion about opening this up to high school students in each high school. Mr. Hance noted his concern with some of the employees being able to select their boss. Mr. Fromberger clarified that the committee will only make recommendations to the board, but the board will make the final decision. Mr. Buckley noted that even the winnowing down of candidates is a decision. There was discussion about the AOE reviewing the resumes of the final candidates to vet them. They will also give a final approval on the board's final decision.

Mr. Fromberger suggested that they could make an invitation for the staff currently employed to apply if they qualify. They should be advised that they are free to apply if they are qualified. He felt it important to look inside before looking outside. There was a request to share the job description that was posted on school spring. There was discussion about how to decide which teachers, which staff members, which principals will serve on the committees. There is another issue because there are elections coming up and board members may change.

The board consensus was to support Mr. Fromberger's suggestion with the addition of a high school student from each school. There was discussion about the principals consulting with their staff to determine which teachers will serve on the committee. The GMUSD board meets next week and will decide about their members to serve on the selection committee.

Ms. Powden noted that in the past the central office has presented a flier for the superintendent candidates and she asked if the board would like to follow the same process with updated flier information. She distributed a draft flier that is aimed at being informative, while also "selling" the SU. The board members will review the flier and make suggestions for changes. There is an

ambitious timeline. There are currently 12 superintendent openings in the state, so they need to move quickly in order to have a great pool. The LMH board members serving on the committee will be Ms. Tarbell and Mr. Buckley. Ms. Powden suggested that waiting for the new people to be elected to the board will put the committee behind the proposed timeline. There was discussion about the position being advertised on School Spring and it has been posted at every school in the TRSU.

C. FY19 Audits

Ms. Hammond advised that the audit information was shared online with the board members. She shared the management letter with the board. The purpose of this letter is to point out anything that needs to be changed or approved. She noted that this year the audit's federal program they did a deep dive on were the food services fresh fruits and vegetables program. She noted that the suggestions have been addressed and corrected.

She also reported that the audit also identified student activities as an area that needs improvement. They are working on those improvements. The audit also suggested separating out fundraising moneys that are not raised by the students being separate from the student activities funds. An audit was performed for all three entities (2 SD's and the SU), but one management letter for the business office. There was discussion about this being separate from Booster club funds. Ms. Hammond advised that they just need to document the funds better, it is not a case of inappropriate handling, they just need better documentation. She will be setting up a meeting with Ron Smith to talk to the boards about the audit.

D. FY20 Financial Update

Ms. Hammond shared the financial report for FY20, including the central office, transportation and special education. She noted that there is an overage at the central office due to the decision not to move forward with the e-finance software. There was discussion about the MHS bus bills that should have been done under warranty. They will get this finalized soon. She reported that special education still has issues with students with needs coming in and out. There was discussion about the salary for the Medicaid clerk and the shift from the district budgets to the SU budget. She anticipates some savings since the CAES mental health person didn't start at the beginning of the year. There was discussion about the para-educator positions that are working with out of district students. She noted that only salaries and benefits that can be billed back. She had done this previously as a purchased service.

Mr. Fromberger questioned what transportation functions are in the TRSU budget. Ms. Hammond advised that every transportation expense is in this budget. This is an "in and out" and the "out" is based on actual costs to each district.

Ms. Hammond reported on the over budget items, noting that the VSTRS Assessment for ELL and Radio services and advertising for transportation weren't budgeted; The speech services, EEE para educator and EEE transportation, along with the HCRS services for CTES were underbudgeted. There was discussion about the SU spending more than budgeted and whether there should be a decision to not spend in another category so that the budget is not over spent. Mr. Fromberger advised that this year will be difficult to pass the school budget. Ms. Powden advised that the budget work is their "best plan" and they begin in October until the boards approve it and then the voters approve it, but all the while and into the actual budget year, students move in and move out and need services. The business office tries to allocate some savings in other areas to unanticipated expenses. Mr. Fromberger felt that it is important to not spend more money than what the voters gave them. Ms. Hammond advised that some of the things that weren't budgeted but needed get added to the next year's budget, but that

contributes to the increase from one year to the next. Mr. Fromberger suggested that they need to deliberately move funds from one area to the other when there is an unanticipated expense. Mr. Buckley suggested that when an expense gets moved from one area to another, there is an added note that indicates that it corresponds to a savings in XYZ line item.

E. MHS PTSA Request for Assistance

Mr. Orzechowski read aloud a letter from the MHS PTSA. They are looking for permission to temporarily use the tax-exempt postal permit at the TRSU to send out a mailing to promote a fundraising event, and send thank you notes to participants and donors. There was discussion about whether they would be reimbursing the SU's cost. Mr. Orzechowski does not know because they haven't returned his call today. Ms. Powden felt that they might be looking to use the postage meter. There was discussion about the print house that the SU uses providing the postal permit. Mr. Orzechowski will work with Ms. Powden to determine what is possible and then will bring it back to the board.

VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION: Title I § 313 (a)(1)(F) Confidential attorney-client communications for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body

Mr. Orzechowski asked for a motion to find that premature general public knowledge regarding a legal matter concerning confidential attorney-client and board communications would clearly place the board at a substantial disadvantage because it undermines the board's ability to govern. Mr. Buckley made the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Orzechowski asked for a motion to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing legal matters that concern confidential attorney-client communications under the provisions of Title I, § 313 (a)(1)(F) Confidential attorney-client communications for the purpose of providing professional legal services to the body inviting just the board. Mr. Fromberger made the motion at 7:06 p.m. and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 7:15 p.m. No action was taken.

X. NEXT MEETING:

The next special meeting will be Tuesday, March 24, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at CAES tentatively, with Ms. Moeykens sending out a doodle poll to see if that day doesn't work for any current members.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Buckley **moved** to adjourn at 7:16 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary