

# TRSU BOARD

## Regular Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 27, 2019

6:00 p.m.

TRSU, The Roost

### I. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

**Board:** Fred Marin, Mary Alberty, Paul Orzechowski, Dan Buckley, Joe Fromberger

**Staff:** Meg Powden, Lauren Fierman, Mary Barton

**Public:**

Ms. Powden called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She invited the board members to introduce themselves. She also wanted to recognize that they have two new board members, Kate Lamphere and Deb Brown, but unfortunately neither could make it to this meeting. Mr. Fromberger noted that Ms. Brown was going to be “out of commission” for a little while with hip replacements. Ms. Powden noted that Ms. Lamphere is aware that the meetings are typically the first Thursday of the month, but since this meeting was a rescheduled one, she wasn’t able to make this date.

### II. ELECTIONS:

#### A. Board Chair

Mr. Marin **nominated** Mr. Orzechowski as chair. Ms. Alberty seconded the nomination. There were no other nominations and Mr. Orzechowski was elected unanimously.

#### B. Board Vice Chair

Ms. Alberty **nominated** Mr. Fromberger a vice chair. Mr. Buckley seconded. There were no other nominations and Mr. Fromberger was elected unanimously.

#### C. Board Clerk

There was discussion about the district board clerk being a statutory requirement, but not necessarily at the SU level. Typically, the board clerk is responsible for the minutes and signing certain documents, but the board can vote to appoint someone to that on a case by case basis. The board consensus was to not elect a board clerk at this time.

### III. APPROVE AGENDA:

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of discussion of transportation under New Business (E). Ms. Alberty seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### IV. APPROVE MINUTES:

#### A. February 7, 2019 Regular Meeting

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the minutes of the February 7, 2019 meeting. Ms. Alberty seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### V. OPERATIONAL DECISIONS:

#### A. Set Meeting Date, Time, Location

The board discussed having normally met on the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Roost. Ms. Alberty **moved** to set the regular meetings for the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m. at the Roost. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**B. Adopt Code of Ethics**

The board members have read the code of ethics at their district meetings. Ms. Alberty **moved** to adopt the code of ethics as written. Mr. Fromberger seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**C. Adopt Robert's Rules of Order**

There was discussion about there being an alternate method to operate since the board is a small board where the board chair is entitled to vote. And with a small board, there is no requirement for a second for a motion. A small board is anything less than 11 board members. There was discussion about the "regular" Robert's Rules of Order and the chair only having the ability to vote to make or break a tie. The board members were in favor of the board chair having the ability to vote. Ms. Alberty **moved** to adopt the small board rules under which to operate the meetings.

**D. Newspaper of Record**

Ms. Powden reported that the VT Journal has been serving as the newspaper of record for some time, and they have provided quotes to continue doing so. Their rate is \$13.50 per column inch and both districts have recently approved continuing with VT Journal as the newspaper of record. Ms. Alberty **moved** to continue using the VT Journal as the newspaper of record. Mr. Buckley seconded and the motion carried unanimously. There was discussion that a second was not needed.

**VI. APPOINTMENTS:**

**A. Warrant Signer**

There was discussion about Mr. Marin having been the warrant signer, but he is now an alternate on the board. There was discussion about the LMH board alternate. Ms. Alberty **moved** to appoint Mr. Marin as the warrant signer. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Recording Secretary**

Ms. Alberty **moved** to appoint Amber Wilson as the recording secretary. The motion carried unanimously.

**C. Delegate for State Wide Health Insurance**

Ms. Powden reported that this is a new position because the educators throughout the state will need to select a state-wide health care provider, so there is a joint committee of board members and members of the NEA. Then when the committee has decided on a carrier and policy, the delegate, who is a voting member will vote on this. Ms. Powden reported that Ms. Mahusky is willing to serve as the delegate. Mr. Fromberger noted that the board can decide to appoint a delegate who is not on this board, but rather a member of one of the district boards, if the board feels that that person will represent the board's interests. Mr. Fromberger **moved** to appoint Ms. Mahusky as the voting delegate for the state-wide health insurance. The motion carried unanimously.

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

None.

**VIII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Ms. Powden reported that she and Ms. Barton have been speaking about the new autism program housed at LES. The program has been a success. There are a small number of students, but people are showing interest in joining the program. They are grateful for the staff that they have hired, who have the specific expertise in dealing with students with autism. She also reported that they have Allison

Stone, who has been providing functional behavioral assessments. She has also been consulting at the schools in the district. Mr. Fromberger questioned if they are saving the money that they anticipated. Ms. Barton confirmed that they are and if they bring in additional students, as is anticipated, they will save more. There was discussion about the tuition and transportation costs that are being saved, while also ensuring that the students are in a great program that is also providing SLP services every day. They are also working on integrating the students into the regular programming. Ms. Powden noted that one of the goals of this program was to bring as many students from this district back to this district as possible. There was discussion about the programming needs in order to bring those students back. There was discussion about some students being housed at various residential and day programs to meet their needs.

Ms. Powden reported that Ms. Baker has been working for several days on a state-wide longitudinal data system. This is a mandate from the state that the SU needs to report a whole series of data that is collected centrally. She has been working with the school registrars (who have been the data collectors) and will be reporting the data as SU-wide data. Previously it was separate reports to the AOE. There are still some issues that need to be worked out, but Ms. Baker has been very active in getting all the data necessary to the AOE. The data includes current annual reports.

Ms. Powden reported that Ms. Waite recently introduced a policy for transgender and gender non-conforming students. The policy aims to provide those students various protections. The policy committee has sought student and administrator input. Mr. Marin noted that the policy committee sought input from the Circle Group (GM) and A World of Difference (LMH).

Ms. Powden reported that Friday was an in-service day for the teachers. The elementary teachers worked on the social studies module, while the GM teachers continued to work on PBE (proficiency-based education) by department. The BRHS teachers had a facilitator who worked with them on the transition they will be undergoing. She noted that Ms. Trimboli has been doing a great job thinking about the ways that she can support her staff and the students who will be transitioning next year.

She also requested that since this is a new board, if there are other things that they would like to hear from her, whether the workings of the SU or other items, to please let her know.

## **IX. OLD BUSINESS:**

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

There was discussion about the minor typographic changes that have been made to these policies, as well as cleaning up gender references. Mr. Marin reported that the policy committee recommended adoption of these policies.

Ms. Alberty **moved** to adopt policies G04, G04-C, G07, H03, and H04 as presented. Ms. Powden noted that the G04-C policy is unique because the library in CTES is a town library and therefore has some different things noted in the policy. She reported that the GMUSD board adopted that policy after some discussion. Mr. Fromberger noted that during the Act 46 discussions, there was concern about maintaining a strong relationship with the town of Cavendish regarding the library.

Mr. Buckley questioned if the fee schedule has been set for community use of buildings for policy H03. Ms. Powden reported that it had been. There was discussion about this being an SU adoption and the SU doesn't have any buildings, and whether this policy is necessary for the SU or if it then becomes an all-encompassing policy. Ms. Powden reminded the board that both of the SD's have approved this policy. There was discussion about it being redundant that the districts approve a policy and then the SU does. There was discussion about them being 3 separate legal entities that have to each adopt their own policies. The motion carried unanimously.

**B. Superintendent Evaluation**

There was discussion about the responses to the surveys. Mr. Marin reported that they have received 5 staff responses and 5 board member responses to the surveys. He will send out an email with a link to the survey reminding people to respond by the deadline. The deadline is April 1<sup>st</sup> and the hope is that they get a breakdown and analysis shortly after. There is a meeting scheduled on April 4<sup>th</sup> to discuss the results. The April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting will be primarily in executive session to discuss these results.

**X. NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. Policies, First Read**

The board reviewed policies C07, E1:001, H08 and H09. Mr. Fromberger noted that policies H08 and H09 haven't changed much from the first presentation to the GMUSD board, and that board had raised some concerns about the policies.

**B. Public Relations Proposal**

Ms. Powden reported that the PR committee is bringing this proposal forward. She reminded the board members that they would have seen this proposal at their individual SD meetings. It was written by Tonia Fleming when she served on the PR committee. The current PR committee has revised it somewhat and have set priorities on the proposal. Mr. Fromberger noted that the GMUSD board discussed this proposal and felt that the plan is very ambitious and if it does what they intend, it should increase enrollment. They had also discussed that the implementation of this proposal would be better accomplished by an employee, rather than a committee. They had discussed Ms. Moeykens being the PR Coordinator. Mr. Buckley reported on the LMH discussions around the draft proposal presented to their board. There was discussion about the PR committee continuing to operate, but on an annual or biannual basis as needed. There was discussion about the important work being the transfer of information from the schools to Ms. Moeykens. Ms. Powden noted that when she hired Ms. Moeykens, she had advertised for an Executive Assistant and a PR Coordinator. There will be systems in place for the various people in each school to do timely postings and Ms. Moeykens will also be trying to gather that information as well. Ms. Alberty **moved** to adopt the PR Proposal as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**C. Personnel Handbook**

Ms. Powden reminded the board that they saw the personnel handbook last year and they have been updating it. She reminded the board that they have been working toward consistent benefits and they are presenting those revisions here. She asked the board members to review the handbook and they can take action on it at the next meeting.

**D. Audits FY18**

Ms. Powden noted that the previous boards stayed in existence through December 2018 so they could review the audits. Unfortunately, they didn't receive the audits until after December. There is a dilemma about the audits and who approves them. She proposed holding a TRSU meeting and inviting the prior board members to inform them. They no longer have the ability to vote on the audits, but will be able to review them. Then the administration would ask the TRSU board to approve the audits on behalf of the former boards. Mr. Buckley suggested that a better way to accomplish this is to have the LMHUUSD board approve the LES, MHS and U39 audits and the GMUSD board approve the GMUHS, CAES and CTES audits. Ms. Powden noted that they could certainly do that, but they would still need to account for Plymouth's audit, perhaps at a TRSU meeting. There was discussion about the audit approval not being statutory, but rather a past practice. There was discussion about adding it to a future agenda. Ms. Powden noted that the

reason they had wanted to do it at a TRSU meeting so that the auditor only had to come to the area once. Mr. Fromberger suggested that they have a single meeting of the two SD's and they each make their own motions for their own audits, similar to carousel meetings of the past. Ms. Powden will work out the timing, likely for the May board meeting.

#### **E. Transportation**

Mr. Orzechowski reminded the board that Ludlow was going to need to provide transportation for its students once BRHS closes. He also noted that the TRSU controls transportation. He questioned if there was a way to share the GMUSD resources for transportation, including a transportation director. Ms. Powden noted that GMUSD agreed to provide transportation from Ludlow and Mt. Holly to GMUHS, but it sounded like Mr. Orzechowski was inquiring about the transportation of elementary students. Mr. Orzechowski suggested sharing the transportation director throughout the entire SU and splitting the cost. There was discussion about Mt. Holly already having bussing and transporting their students to the school. Mr. Fromberger noted that GM is the hub of the GMUSD transportation, and he would love to have an arrangement that works for both districts, both financially and logistically. Mr. Fromberger suggested that the administration needs to develop a plan about how transportation is coordinated across the SU and then bring in Mr. Parah to discuss. Ms. Powden noted that Mr. Parah has already worked out a plan for the middle and high school students and if they were looking to have him work out a plan for the elementary students, they would need to seek information from Scott Murphy regarding the municipal system. Mr. Orzechowski noted that Pam at the town office feels that it is almost a full-time job going through the logs. He also advised that the town didn't recommend that the school purchase the town's busses since there would be a significant cost to converting the buses to actual school buses. There was discussion about how to work out the plan. Ms. Powden advised that they can't assume that Mr. Parah would be amenable to being the transportation director for all of TRSU, but they can certainly ask him to look into it. Ms. Fierman noted that if they were going to ask him to do that additional work, they would have to pay him for the additional work. She noted that he currently has 3 jobs at the school—transportation director, custodial director and athletic director. She reported that one of his qualities is solving a problem so he may be interested, but they will have to check. Mr. Fromberger noted that his opinions expressed tonight about the transportation solutions were his own, not the GMUSD board's since they haven't had that level conversation.

### **XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION-TITLE 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(B)**

#### **A. Negotiations for Non-Bargaining Staff**

After finding that premature general public knowledge would clearly place the public body or a person involved at a substantial disadvantage, Ms. Alberty **moved** to enter executive session at 7:01 p.m. to discuss negotiations for Non-Bargaining Staff under Title 1 V.S.A. § 313 (a)(1)(B) inviting Ms. Powden. The motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 7:35 p.m. Ms. Alberty **moved** to increase non-bargaining staff salary by 2.75%, and to increase Ms. Baker's salary to \$63,376 and Ms. Powden's salary to \$134,194. There was no further discussion and the motion carried unanimously.

### **XII. NEXT MEETING:**

The next meeting will be Thursday April 4, 2019 at the Roost. Because it will have only one item of discussion, the executive session, it will be labeled a special meeting. Ms. Ceglowski will also attend the meeting by phone. The personnel handbook discussion will wait until May, as will the policies for second read.

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

Ms. Alberty **moved** to adjourn at 7:37 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson  
Board Recording Secretary