

Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)
Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: January 17, 2005
Assembly Room, Career Development Center

Members Present: Lance Matteson, Chair; Brian Doxsee (left 8:25pm); Leon Johnson; Frank Lamb; Ed Letourneau (arrived 6:45pm); Sean-Marie Oller; Rick Pembroke (arrived 7:00pm, left 8:12pm); Dixie Zens.

Staff and Others Present: Alan Baker, CDC Instructor; David Barker, Asst. Director; Bill Burfeind, Treasurer; Jim Boutin, SVSU Technology Coordinator (arrived 7:10pm); Nancy Czarniecki, MAUMS Teacher (left 8:15pm); Carl deCesare, CDC Instructor (left 8:15pm); Nicole Forest, CDC Instructor (left 8:15pm); Bruce Gabrus, CDC Instructor (left 8:15pm); Wendy Klein, CDC Co-op Coordinator (left 8:15pm); Wes Knapp, SVSU Superintendent; Bruce Lee-Clark, CDC Instructor (left 8:15pm); Greg Lewis, Business Manager; Donna Oyama, Director; Cindy Palmer, Asst. Treasurer; Stephannie Peters, CDC Instructor.

Cablecasting Live for CAT-TV: Nathan Wallace-Senft.

Recorder: Richard Bump

Matteson called the meeting to order at 6:25pm and asked board members, CDC staff and instructors to introduce themselves to each other and to the listening public.

1. Public Comments: None presented.
2. Board Goals: Matteson distributed and then reviewed a document describing the 3 basic board goals established during the recent governing board retreat, as follows
 - better align programs with community needs
 - strengthen organizational leadership, efficiency and effectiveness
 - improve marketing and outreach
 - Matteson also noted that
 - three task forces have been created to address each of the three goals, and then noted the membership of each task force as well as the 2005 priority actions already developed by members of each of the task forces
 - there will be a discussion of one goal at each board meeting
 - the task forces will meet monthly or bi-monthly
 - existing standing committees will also be involved
 - progress on the goals will be assessed in November
 - the 2006 budget will incorporate conclusions and recommendations made by the task forces.

Matteson noted that there was preliminary discussion of the 'alignment' goal during the December meeting of the board, and that that discussion on this goal will continue at an upcoming meeting. During the course of the above presentation, Matteson noted that he reports, with regret, that Janet Thompson has resigned her board seat, effective immediately

3. Computer Technology and Networking Program Presentation: This presentation was postponed to a subsequent meeting.
4. Treasurer's Report: Burfeind reviewed the *Cash Flow and Account Balances as of December 31, 2004 - Cumulative* (a copy of which was included in the Agenda packet), noting receipts and disbursements for the first six months of the Fiscal Year, and a closing cash balance of \$1,062,454. Members thanked Burfeind for his report.

5. Consent Agenda: Oller moved and Johnson seconded a motion to remove the final three items from the Consent Agenda (the FY06 budget, three Articles for Annual Meeting regarding reserved funds, and the documentation relating to the Automotive Maintenance program), and to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. After noting in the minutes of December 20, 2004
- the correct spelling of Julian Eckhardt's name (page 1, Staff and Others Present; page 3, item 3a)
 - Burfeind and Palmer should be listed in Staff and Others Present (they were both in attendance between 7:00 - 7:30pm)
 - page 2, item 1, line 24: delete "Regional Development Council (RDC) and the" (the RDC and the BCIC are one and the same organization)
 - page 4, item 4a, 12th line from the bottom: replace "enforce hereafter the policy" with "enforce hereafter a policy"
 - page 5, item 5, 2nd line: replace "the technical adjustment" with "one of the technical adjustments"
 - page 6, item 8, 3rd bullet, 2nd line: replace "non-CDC teachers" with "SVSU teacher contract interpretation"
 - page 6, item 8, 6th bullet from bottom, 1st line: the correct spelling of Helene Mellon's name; and in the 2nd line: insert "regarding SVSU contract compliance" after the word "oversight"
 - page 6, item 8, 2nd bullet from bottom: the correct spelling of Dan Kane's name
 - page 7, item 8a, 8th bullet: the adopted second of the two Superintendency service proposals is included in the Agenda packet for the February 2005 meeting and should be attached to the Minutes of December 20, 2004

the motion passed unanimously. The Consent Agenda, as approved, included

- the Minutes of December 20, 2004, as amended
 - CDC Payroll Warrants #38 and #39 in the amount of \$76,573.40
 - CDC Vendor Warrant #40 in the amount of \$42,368.11
 - CDC Payroll Warrants #41 and #42 in the amount of \$62,165.62
 - CDC Vendor Warrant #43 in the amount of \$62,476.02
 - the CDC/MAU FY06 Allocation Formulas
 - the name change of the adjunct positions to "Services".
6. FY06 Budget: Oller moved and Zens seconded a motion to adopt the FY06 budget, a copy of which (version 19) was distributed along with several other budget related documents at the beginning of the meeting (Version 19 of the budget replaces the budget document distributed with the Agenda packet). Matteson then initiated an extended discussion of the FY06 by commending the work of the members of the Finance Committee as well as of Oyama and Lewis over the several months of the budget process and the multiple versions of the budget itself. Matteson reported that although the proposed operating budget reflects an 8.35% increase, the per pupil tuition rate for next year will actually decrease slightly (down 0.11% from the current year). The reason that tuition is not increasing proportionate to the budget is due to increasing enrollment (which jumped 11% from Fall 2003 to Fall 2004). Matteson also reported that
- some areas were "cut deeply," especially equipment, and that there are hopes that some of this funding will be replaced through grants.
 - the \$32,000 anticipated revenue from MAU has been removed from the MAU budget (as noted in a 1/12/05 memo to the Board from Lewis, a copy of which was included in the Agenda packet), and Oyama expressed appreciation to MAU for keeping the CDC funding in their budget for as long as possible.

In response to a comment from Johnson, Oyama noted that she has had conversations with local state representatives about technical center funding issues, especially about the financial hardships caused by using the three-year rolling averages as the base for the state support grant and especially as enrollments are increasing. Johnson also suggested that, given the CDC is the "first boat out on the water" as a totally independent school district, the state might be more willing to consider additional support at this time. Matteson also noted

that the budget will be warned 1/25/05, and Lewis reported that SVSU has reduced its superintendent services cost by \$3,000 in recognition of professional development work provided by CDC staff for SVSU employees. Lewis then reviewed the *Compact Analysis of Changes from FY05 to FY06* noting that

- the Fund Balance is increasing 8.03% and that increase is tied directly to the overall budget increase
- SVSU Supervisory purchased services have increased 41.7%
- SVSU Technology purchased services are up 4.81%
- CDC Salaries and Benefits are up 10.11% (and this figure contains the bulk of the total budget increase)
- the CDC/MAU Allocation formulas are essentially flat
- Direct Instruction costs are increasing 3.24%
- Student support services have decreased 3.36%
- technical support services are up 35% due in large part to the purchase of 12 new computers, as well as several scanners and printers
- general administrative support services are up 53.8% due in large part to now knowing actual costs for elections throughout the SVRTSD
- school administrative services are down 9.33%
- business/fiscal services are up 14.6% due to increases in interest and insurance premiums
- plant and maintenance costs are up 3.11% due in part to increase cost of utilities
- safety services are up 23.6%
- transportation costs are down 53.7% (there is no bus to be purchased in FY06).

Lewis also noted that there are decreases in certain areas despite the increase in student enrollment, and that salary and benefits comprise 72% of the expense budget. The revenue budget forecasts an 8.35% increase over the current year, due primarily to an increase in the per pupil state support grant, an overall increase in the number of students, and an increase in the tuition reduction grant (and this increase also takes into account the \$100,000 revenue loss from MAU for the former LATC classes). Lewis also briefly reviewed the actual gross tuition costs for each of the sending communities and as based on a \$4,794.73 tuition per student. In subsequent discussion, members and staff noted that

- the legislation allowing a reduced tuition to New York state students has expired, and all out of state students are paying the current tuition rates
- the student FTE count has increased from 165.9 in 2002 (2nd semester) to 215.9 in 2005 (1st semester) and the FY06 six semester rolling average is 183.81 FTEs
- CDC 11 and 12th grade students represent 60% and 61% of the MAU's 11th and 12th grade population respectively.
- the student number used by the state to redirect its state support grant from a high school to the CDC is the same as the FY06 FTE for that school (for Bennington, for instance, that number is 109.58, and the student number for each community is listed in the *Tuition Distribution List*, page 19 of the budget report)
- the budget includes \$136,640 in "usual and customary increases for salaries and benefits" and this increase is consistent with what the other districts in SVSU are budgeting (and members noted that contract negotiations are on-going)
- the \$12,500 increase in the Adult Education program recovers some of the unfunded costs of Adult Education
- the new on-line courses will provide an additional revenue stream for the Adult Education program and will help offset declining enrollments and revenues in the evening programs
- the Bush administration is proposing changes to vocational/technical education which will result in a further reduction in federal funding
- the Perkins grant is also in jeopardy, and this grant currently underwrites a portion of the adult services coordinator salary
- members and staff need to thoroughly understand the issues in order to be able to speak clearly, concisely, and convincingly to the voting public regarding revenue sources and expense categories

- the total budget for FY06 is \$2,860,051.47
- the FY06 budget funds two additional 60-minute pre-tech foundation sections
- health insurance has increased 12%.

Pembroke then called the question, seconded by Lamb, and the motion to call the question passed unanimously. Matteson then repeated the standing motion, to adopt the FY06 budget, as presented, with an 8.35% increase over the FY05 budget, and the motion passed, Doxsee, Lamb, Letourneau and Zens in favor; Johnson and Pembroke opposed; Oller abstained.

7. Warning and Articles for Annual Meeting: After Lewis read aloud Article C from the *Warning of Annual Meeting* (a copy of which was included in the packet distributed at the beginning of the meeting), Lamb explained that the purpose of this article is to establish a savings account to fund future major improvements or repairs to the CDC facility. The article calls for an annual budgeted allocation of \$20,000 to be deposited into the reserve fund, and that the accumulated fund balance shall not exceed \$500,000. Lamb also explained Article D which establishes a similar reserve fund to be used for anticipated equipment replacement and repair, budget-funded annually at \$40,000 with an accumulated fund balance not to exceed \$750,000. A question and answer document further describing these two funds was distributed and briefly reviewed. In subsequent discussion, members and staff noted that
- the Finance Committee discussed the structure of these funds and articles at great length
 - there is no money set aside in the FY06 budget for either of these funds: if both articles pass, line-item funding for each fund will begin in FY07
 - a storage shed would be considered a facilities improvement
 - regardless finances of any particular year, these articles would have to be funded each year (\$60,000 total) unless the voters specifically approve rescinding the articles or waiving the requirement for a given period of time
 - some of the \$1,021,000 in major equipment needs and as listed on the question and answer document include a smoke trailer (to be used by fire prevention students to better simulate real conditions) and a mowing package (to be used by horticulture/landscape students)
 - the Finance Committee realizes that the annual funding for these two articles is relatively conservative, but members also understood that the funding amount should not be above what the taxpayers can afford
 - members need to be cautious about jeopardizing standard or emergency state or grant funding by having these excess reserves available; alternatively, many programs require a local match and having this available might in fact increase the CDC's competitiveness by being able to better leverage funds
 - although legal counsel has already reviewed these articles in an earlier draft, if the articles are approved at this meeting, counsel will review them again before the Board approves the final warning at the 1/25/05 meeting
 - members and staff need to be able to address the logic, need, and formulas used to determine the specific dollar amounts listed in the articles (funding caps and annual funding amounts)
 - legal counsel needs to review the wording carefully in order to avoid possible misuse of these funds by future boards
 - all businesses need to plan and budget for capital equipment and facilities improvement, replacement, and repair, and the CDC has to do the same
 - the CDC has a long and prudent history of canvassing the private sector for used equipment, donations, and discounted costs

Oller then moved and Lamb seconded a motion to adopt the SVRTSD *Warning of the Annual Meeting February 28 and March 1, 2005*, subject to legal review and revision as necessary for Articles C and D. After Oyama noted that the salaries for the Treasurer, District Clerk and Moderator are set by the Board and are included as line items in the FY06 budget, the motion passed 5 in favor, Johnson and Pembroke opposed.

8. Automotive Maintenance Position and Nomination: After Matteson reported that the Finance Committee has reviewed the funding sources and need for this position, Pembroke moved and Johnson seconded a motion to approve the position of the Automotive Maintenance Teacher and the Nomination of Tom Haskins to this position, pending sufficient enrollment in the course. The motion passed unanimously, and without discussion.

9. Policies: Lamb moved and Zens seconded a motion to adopt

- *Policy #3060C - Professional Development*
- *Policy #3100C - Transportation*
- *Policy #4001C - Sexual Harassment*
- *Policy #4035C - Conflict of Interest in Hiring.*

After specifically noting that the conflict of interest policy refers only to the hiring process, the motion passed unanimously. Johnson reported that the Policy Committee has been active and will submit five policies for warning and five policies for adoption at the February meeting of the board. Johnson also noted that the SVSU Systems Management Committee is currently developing a policy regarding public relations and communications, which may be of interest, once completed, to this board. Matteson commended Johnson, Lee-Clark and other members of the Policy Committee for their on-going effort.

10. Director's Report:

- a. *Program of Studies*: Oyama noted that the newly reformatted four-color 2005-2006 *Program of Studies* for the CDC (a copy of which was included in the Agenda packet) will be available in all the sending schools and will be sent to all families with students in grades 8-11. Oyama noted that a black and white copy of the *Program* has been included in the MAU *Program of Studies*.
- b. *Teacher of the Year*: Oyama was pleased to report that Barb Gorbaty, CDC Instructor, was recognized at a ceremony on 12/14/04 as a finalist in the Vermont Teacher of the Year awards. And later in the meeting, Matteson, on behalf of all members of the board, congratulated Gorbaty for her outstanding achievement.
- c. *Adult Education*: 12 students have now signed up for the *Education-to-Go* on-line courses offered through Adult Education. These courses were first introduced in November, and registration for courses beginning in February and March is now underway.
- d. *CAT-TV Event*: Oyama also reported that two CDC teachers and three CDC students participated in a live CAT-TV program discussing the various opportunities available to students at the CDC and the reasons why it makes good sense to take advantage of those opportunities. Two Board members also participated in the program. The program will be rebroadcast at various times on CAT-TV through 2/7/05.
- e. *Letter of Agreement*: Oyama distributed and then reviewed a proposed *Letter of Agreement* between SVSU and SVRTSD which
 - names the CDC Director as the Superintendent's "designee" responsible for approving all SVRTSD employee professional development requests so long as those requests align with bargaining unit parameters
 - stipulates that additional professional development activity may be assigned beyond the bargaining unit contract provided that the Director mandates those assignments and that they are paid for by sources other than that allowed through the purchased services of the SVSU Superintendent Services package

After a brief discussion wherein Oyama and Matteson noted that professional development activities undertaken by CDC faculty will continue to be submitted to Helene Mellon, SVSU Asst. Superintendent for Curriculum, and that Mellon will be responsible for ensuring consistency with the bargaining agreement and that personnel files are updated accordingly, Lamb moved and Doxsee seconded a motion to approve the *Letter of Agreement* as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

f. *School Visits*: Oyama reported that during recent visits to schools within the district,

many people have expressed an interest in developing after-school technical programs, to be offered locally or at the CDC, or via distance learning technology.

- g. School Board Open Positions: Oyama read aloud an announcement to be placed in the local newspapers inviting interested people to become candidates for the school board positions which are open for election in March, 2005. There are four positions open, one to fill an unexpired seat for one year, and the other three are three-year positions. Petitions can be obtained from and returned to Tim Corcoran, the District Clerk, at his Bennington office. Petitions with at least 30 signatures must be returned by 1/24/05.

11. Superintendent's Report: After stating that he was dismayed by the departure of Janet Thompson from the board, and that she had provided valuable input while a board member, Knapp reported/commented on the following
- during the most recent monthly meeting with area legislators, he asked those legislators to research possible corrective legislation which would fund a technical center for the full amount a student takes courses at that center (the current 240 minute funding cap can be and is exceeded on a regular basis by a number of students, and that additional time does not currently receive state funding)
 - he was pleased to be able to adjust downward the cost of the SVSU services contract
 - funding for the Interactive Learning Network (ILN) has been dropped at the state level, and the Commissioner of Education is recommending that the local districts share the cost for this service, which he and Boutin have decided would be an appropriate thing to do. This technology could provide a significant opportunity for CDC to increase enrollment, as this would allow students from outlying districts to participate in CDC courses without actually having to be on campus.

In subsequent discussion, Lamb noted that students from outlying schools are frequently interested in taking CDC classes but still want to take their academic core programs at their local school, but transportation considerations usually cancel this option. A creative use of the ILN technology could satisfy this request: students could take their local 'academic' courses via distance learning while at the CDC. In a related matter and in response to a request from Lamb, Oyama reported that Stamford school administrators are interested in discussing prorating tuition between the CDC and MAU for Stamford students who might take CDC courses while enrolled at MAU. Knapp also noted that Stamford administrators are also interested in discussing transportation funding and other options for their students. Matteson suggested that the pro-rated request from Stamford reflects precisely the need for legislative change, which if passed, would remove the financial disincentive for having a student take a technical center course. Knapp noted that although Stamford and SVSU administrators have informally discussed several issues, there has been no formal letter of request received as yet by SVSU. Matteson suggested that the Superintendent's Office should make clear to the MAU board that Stamford is very interested, and that MAU now needs to take action. Knapp and Oyama also noted that administrators in Wilmington, Arlington, and Burr and Burton are also interested in pursuing these issues. Matteson also suggested that the Finance Committee might take action on the technical education funding legislation.

12. Education Committee: Oller noted that Oyama reported on Education Committee activity at the last board meeting.
13. Finance Committee: Activity of this committee has already been covered in the budget and annual meeting discussions above.
14. Policy Committee: See item 9 above.
15. Marketing and Outreach Committee: See items 1 and 11 above.

16. Teacher Negotiations Report: These negotiations remain in the fact-finding stage, and the SVSU negotiators, at the request of the teachers' negotiators, have compiled a set of fact-filled documents which will be sent to the fact-finder probably by 1/22/05. Knapp noted that
 - the fact-finder indicated that no action would be taken on the documents until after holiday break
 - response from the fact-finder is anticipated to be within a month after the document is sent
 - although it is not ideal, it is also not unusual that contract negotiations are not completed in advance of approving a budget (and the results of the current three-year contract negotiations are effective as of the beginning of the current fiscal year).

17. Other: Oyama noted that the CDC teachers in attendance during this meeting were here in order to show their support for the budget. Matteson suggested that the teachers are also concerned about the pace of contract negotiations. After noting that she thought the *Program of Studies* "looks great", Oller expressed concern about the low number of board members in attendance at many board meetings. Oller noted that the "rotating" attendance results in repeated discussions from one meeting to the next, and that this issue should be discussed at a future meeting. Johnson reported that low attendance is a problem for the committee meetings as well.

18. FYI: Other documents included in the Agenda packet but not discussed during the meeting included
 - the Code of Ethics for Board Members, signed
 - the 1/04/05 Memo to Greg Lewis from Dorfman-Robbie regarding a revision to the annual audit
 - the 1/5/05 General Ledger Revenue Report
 - the 1/1/05 General Ledger Expenditure Report.

At 8:45pm, Lamb moved and Oller seconded a motion to adjourn, and the motion passed unanimously .