

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SWVRTSD)**
2 **Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: March 21, 2011**

3 Assembly Room, Career Development Center
4

5 Members Present: Gloria Alexander; Jim Boutin; Justin Corcoran; Kevin Goodhue; Rickey
6 Harrington; Larry Johnson; Leon Johnson; Fran Kinney; Frank Lamb; Jon Peaslee; Rick
7 Pembroke.

8
9 Staff and Others Present: Bruce Lee-Clark, CDC Instructor; Greg Lewis, Business Manager;
10 Bob Montgomery, Interim Superintendent/ Director; Dawson Raspuzzi, Banner reporter;
11 Sandra Redding, Office Manager; others.

12
13 Videotaping: CAT-TV

14
15 Recorder: Barb Schlesinger
16

17
18 The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Interim Superintendent Montgomery.
19 Montgomery welcomed the viewers and attendees, explained why he was opening the
20 meeting, welcomed the new board members (Jim Boutin and Rick Pembroke), thanked the
21 former members (Claude DeLucia and Ed Letourneau) for jobs well done and their service
22 to the tech district and also thanked Frank Lamb for the years he has put in as board chair
23 and his tireless effort.

24
25 **Public Comment**

26 Following the Agenda, Montgomery called for Public comments.
27

28 Board member Kinney read from his prepared notes regarding a resolution to directing
29 Montgomery to conduct an investigation as to potential liability to the board and its individual
30 members may have been exposed to due to the recent resignation of the former
31 superintendent that he asked for at a recent meeting. He does not believe this has been
32 done. He and Larry Johnson had concerns and spoke with Mr Goodrich from the Vermont
33 School Board Association and, acting on Goodrich's advice, prepared the following motion
34 as to how the investigation should be conducted.
35

36 Kinney read his motion which was seconded by Larry Johnson.
37

38 Interim Director Mr Montgomery be given the task of initiating an investigation into
39 the resolution of the matter that led to the resignation of the superintendent. This
40 investigation should disclose all terms and conditions and monies that may have
41 been put forth and any settlements that may have taken place. This investigation is
42 to be carried out by an individual or firm with the appropriate qualifications and
43 experience to do so. Should legal assistance be required in order to carry out this
44 task, Mr Montgomery is instructed to contract that service from a source specialized
45 and experienced working with legal matters involving schools and education. Mr
46 Montgomery shall report the findings of this investigation back to this board along
47 with an outline with all the steps taken in order to accomplish the investigation.
48

49 Peaslee noted a Point of Order: the Board had yet to reorganize.

1 **Agenda Changes/ Additions**

2
3 **Peaslee moved and Lamb seconded a motion to set the Agenda. All were in favor.**

4
5 **Board Reorganization**

6
7 **▪ Chair**

8 Montgomery called for nominations for Chair:

- 9
10 - Peaslee nominated Lamb, who declined.
11 - Harrington nominated Boutin.
12 - Alexander nominated Goodhue, who declined.
13 - Peaslee nominated Leon Johnson.

14
15 **Peaslee moved and Kinney seconded a motion to close nominations. All were in favor.**

16
17
18 Redding collected the paper ballots with Lewis and Montgomery then tallying.

19
20 **Vote tally: Boutin 7 (seven) and Leon Johnson 4 (four). And so it was voted that Boutin will serve as Chair.**

21
22
23 Boutin spoke that he looks forward to serving the board and to as smooth a transition as possible.

24
25
26 **▪ Vice-Chair**

27 Boutin called for nominations for Vice-Chair.

28
29 Kinney moved and Larry Johnson seconded the motion of Harrington for Vice-Chair.

30
31 Peaslee moved and Alexander seconded the motion of Goodhue for Vice-Chair.

32
33 **Kinney moved and Corcoran seconded a motion to close nominations. All were in favor.**

34
35
36 Redding collected the paper ballots with Lewis and Montgomery then tallying.

37
38 **Vote tally: Harrington 6 (six) and Goodhue 5 (five). And so it was voted that Harrington will serve as Vice-Chair.**

39
40
41 **▪ Secretary/ Clerk**

42 Boutin called for nominations for Clerk:

43
44 Peaslee moved and Pembroke seconded the motion of Larry Johnson for Clerk/ Secretary.

45
46 **Leon Johnson moved and Goodhue seconded a motion to close nominations. All were in favor.**

47
48
49 **Larry Johnson was elected clerk unanimously by voice vote.**

1 ▪ **Meeting Day**

2
3 **Corcoran moved and Lamb seconded a motion for meeting day to accept the**
4 **proposed meeting schedule/ dates included in the packet.**

5
6 Discussion:

7 Boutin proposed the board schedule at least two joint meetings a year with the MAU School
8 Board. This would establish good repoire and communication. These meetings would not
9 be in addition to the eleven regularly scheduled meetings.

10
11 During general discussion, the following topics were raised:

- 12 - Action(s): Would these meetings be forums or would action(s) be taken?
- 13 - Scheduling: the boards meet on different Mondays.
- 14 - Agendas
- 15 - Meeting Length
- 16 - Dual board memberships: What 'hats' would the people who sit on both boards be
- 17 wearing?
- 18 - Fairness: How will the other school boards be handled? The CDC is a regional
- 19 technical center – this would/ should be done for all school boards in the CDC's
- 20 district. Banners were suggested for outlying districts.
- 21 - Basically, the meetings would be for planning and information – The RGB business
- 22 meeting would be before.
- 23 - The Facilities Committee(s) [both MAU's and the CDC's] would possibly be a better
- 24 starting venue than the full board for this type of meeting.
- 25 - Format/ logistics of the meetings.

26
27 **Pembroke moved and Harrington seconded a motion to ask the RGB Chair to have a**
28 **conversation with the leadership of the Mount Anthony Board to coordinate joint**
29 **discussion(s) and to limit those meeting to discussion only – no actions will be taken.**

30
31 **Pembroke moved and Harrington seconded to amend the previous motion and to**
32 **extend the invitation to include all the other regional school boards. All were in favor.**

33
34 ▪ **Meeting Time**

35
36 **Alexander moved and Harrington seconded a motion to change the meeting time to**
37 **6:00pm. Five voted in favor and four voted against (Larry Johnson, Leon Johnson,**
38 **Kinney, and Peaslee). Pembroke abstained. The motion carried for the meeting time**
39 **being set at 6:00pm.**

40
41 Leon Johnson brought up the discussion of the meeting time being difficult for those who
42 work and that 6:30 was a compromise from the 7:00pm he has suggested in the past.

43
44 ▪ **Paper of Record**

45
46 **Peaslee moved and Goodhue seconded a motion for the Bennington Banner**
47 **remaining Paper of Record. All were in favor.**

48
49 There was brief discussion regarding having the Manchester Journal as a second Paper of

1 Record. Costs and postings/ Warnings were discussed in light of the Journal being a once
2 weekly publication.

3
4 **▪ Authority to Sign Warrants (Off Warrant) signers**

5
6 **Goodhue moved and Corcoran seconded a motion to authorize the three officers to**
7 **sign warrants. All were in favor.**

8
9 Peaslee explained why there was a there was a need and how it worked.

10
11 **Consent Agenda**

- 12 - Minutes of the February 21, 2011 Regional Governing Board Meeting
13 - Minutes of the February 28, 2011 SWVRTSD Annual Floor Meeting
14 - Minutes of the February 10, 2011 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
15 - Minutes of the March 3, 2011 Composites Meeting
16 - Minutes of the March 10, 2011 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
17
18 - SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 18 2/28/2011 in the amount of \$ 10,938.08
19 - SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 1032 2/28/2011 in the amount of \$ 65,301.36
20 - SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 19 3/21/2011 in the amount of \$ 14,190.44
21 - SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 1034 3/21/2011 in the amount of \$ 67,776.85
22
23 - SWVRTSD Vendor Warrant # 1033 2/28/2011 in the amount of \$ 42,511.93
24 *Void check #11950 (Warrant#1029 1/28/11) - 100.00*
25 *\$ 42,411.93*
26 - SWVRTSD Vendor Warrant # 1035 3/21/2011 in the amount of \$ 73,165.32
27
28 - Revenue & Expenses
29

30 **Peaslee moved and Lamb seconded a motion to approve the Consent Agenda.**
31 **Pembroke abstained with the remaining members voting in favor in favor.**

32
33 Discussion:

34 Pembroke posed questions regarding the \$5,000 difference between the two payroll
35 warrants, the legal fees (Warrant 1035, page 14) and culinary program expenses. He also
36 requested a Sources and Usage Report be emailed. Lewis answered Pembroke's specific
37 questions and will email the requested report to all board members.

38
39 Larry Johnson posed questions regarding seemingly duplicate payments to NUCO (Warrant
40 1033, page 9) and the payment to Oldcastle. Montgomery, Lewis and Boutin answered
41 Johnson's questions.

42
43 Pembroke requested notification of all committee meetings. Brief discussion followed
44 regarding how meetings are warned. Montgomery asked for clarification as to how
45 Committee meetings (both standing and non) should be warned.

46
47 In conclusion, all board members will get notification of all meetings via email in addition to
48 meeting Warnings being published in the Banner.

Field Trips

- SkillsUSA 4/6 → 4/7 Burlington VT 20 Students

Peaslee moved and Corcoran seconded a motion to approve the SkillsUSA field trip. All were in favor.

- Human Services 4/7 → 4/8 RI & MA Colleges 11 Students

Peaslee moved and Corcoran seconded a motion to approve the Human Services field trip. All were in favor.

Action Items

- Department of Education Letter
Peaslee started the discussion by commending Montgomery on his letter to Vilaseca, the Vermont Education Commissioner. Leon Johnson commented that we should not burn bridges and that we need every friend we can get. Lamb noted the gist of the Commissioner's letter was to grant permission to conduct search for a superintendent/ director.

Lamb moved and Goodhue seconded a motion to set up a Search Committee for the Superintendent/ Director position and establish a deadline of the April 2011 RGB meeting for having a candidate(s) for the board's review.

Discussion followed regarding the motion's April timeline, the up-to two-year search period, how we spend our money, possible consolidation or contracting the position out options, and contracting for a third party analysis. Harrington voiced his support of hiring Interim Superintendent Montgomery for the position without conducting a search; Lamb noted the combined position saves money, cancels the need for a study, and allows the board to hire and move on. Lamb noted this discussion has nothing to do with the hiring of an Assistant Director.

Further discussion of the using April as a guide followed in addition to the posting procedure and policy regarding fielding the position.

Boutin asked Lamb about changing the April timeline. Lamb stated 'there needs to be a timeline (guide), the motion sets up the mechanics to proceed.' Lamb then amended the motion with the April 2011 date to be a 'guide'.

Vote was taken with five Yeas, five Nays (Harrington, Leon Johnson, Kinney, Peaslee and Pembroke). Chairman Boutin cast the deciding vote for. The motion carried.

Further discussion regarding board responsibilities, looking at all options, policy (?)/ practice of bringing three candidates to the board, the Superintendent's responsibility and the three recommendations of the Commissioner (March 11, 2011 letter) followed. Pembroke

Harrington moved and Peaslee seconded a motion to stop wasting time and hire Montgomery as Superintendent/ Director now. Hand vote was taken with two voting in favor and eight against. The Chairman abstained. The motion was defeated.

1 **Pembroke moved and Leon Johnson seconded a motion to enter into negotiations**
2 **with Vermont School Board Association to do an analysis on the Southwest Vermont**
3 **Regional School District's operation, of which they will present to us**
4 **recommendations for changes if deemed necessary.**

5
6 Montgomery asked about the costs for such an analysis and noted the School
7 District has just been through the NEASC evaluation and is audited yearly.
8 Pembroke figures \$30,000 would be the most it would cost, which he feels is an
9 affordable amount to see where we are at operationally.

10
11 Additional discussion followed as to why we would want to do this study, what the
12 two other tech centers were required to do when they hired superintendents recently,
13 consolidation, due diligence, other well known evaluation instruments and the three
14 recommendations of the Commissioner. Harrington noted that until the public votes
15 for consolidation, it will not happen.

16
17 **Corcoran moved and Peaslee seconded to call the vote. Harrington voted nay. The**
18 **motion carried.**

19
20 **Hand vote was taken on Pembroke's motion with five for and five against (Goodhue,**
21 **Alexander, Harrington, Lamb, and Corcoran (?)). Chairman Boutin cast the deciding**
22 **vote for the motion. The motion carried.**

23
24 **Director/ Superintendent's Report:**

25 Montgomery reported on:

- 26 - The value of attending monthly Director's meetings. Bob thanked Bob Mazur for
- 27 stepping in and helping while he is off campus.
- 28 - The Culinary kitchen is active and actually cooking. On March 28th they will hold
- 29 their Grand Opening from 3-5 pm.
- 30 - FBLA will be competing at the state level in Burlington.
- 31 - Upcoming Board training – What would be the Chair's desire? Bob reported most
- 32 board members do attend. Boutin and Montgomery will get together and then
- 33 recommend to the full board. Boutin will see if CDC can piggyback with the SVSU.
- 34 - The Building Trades Instructor. Friday is the last day applications will be accepted
- 35 Montgomery requests the position be filled as fast as it can be and might call a
- 36 Special Board Meeting to approve a candidate before the regular April Board
- 37 meeting. Currently two subs are covering the 5 students in the second year program
- 38 and nine in the first year program. The students are working on their OSHA10
- 39 materials; no work is being done on the house on Laura Lane. There was a brief
- 40 Q&A on the hiring process, candidates, interview committee and hiring contract.

41
42 Boutin commented on the newsletter; Bob noted that Meghan Maguire is doing a wonderful
43 job.

44
45 **Executive Session:** Not needed

46
47 **Other**

- 48 - Board Committees
- 49 A sign up sheet was passed around

- 1 - Former Superintendent's Resignation

2
3 **Kinney reread his motion which Larry Johnson seconded from this evening's**
4 **Public Comments.**

5
6 Interim Director Mr Montgomery be given the task of initiating an investigation into
7 the resolution of the matter that led to the resignation of the superintendent. This
8 investigation should disclose all terms and conditions and monies that may have
9 been put forth and any settlements that may have taken place. This investigation is
10 to be carried out by an individual or firm with the appropriate qualifications and
11 experience to do so. Should legal assistance be required in order to carry out this
12 task, Mr Montgomery is instructed to contract that service from a source specialized
13 and experienced working with legal matters involving schools and education. Mr
14 Montgomery shall report the findings of this investigation back to this board along
15 with an outline with all the steps taken in order to accomplish the investigation.

16
17 Discussion followed with Montgomery inquiring as to how Kinney would like to be
18 notified of the results (probable executive session), the time line, confusion as to why
19 this is being done, and costs. Kinney and Larry Johnson do not feel a thorough
20 investigation was conducted; merely an interview and they want to make sure all the
21 bases are covered and the CDC is protected.

22
23 **Boutin recommends, with the Board's approval, that he get together with**
24 **Montgomery on this issue with Lamb. The three will come up with a process/**
25 **procedure in which they can respond to the concerns and will report to the**
26 **Board. Boutin requested the motion be withdrawn. Kinney withdrew his**
27 **motion.**

- 28
29 - Board Training

30 Leon Johnson expressed that the board needs to look at training in so far as what it
31 needs to be effective in doing things as a group. Leon also expressed that we have
32 an opportunity as a technical center to shine; and not only in name. We should
33 further get away from paper and go electronic.

- 34
35 - Peaslee commented that individual directors have no authority and that you are only
36 a board member while sitting at the table. Also, we should take no action on any
37 complaint unless the parties are named (each) and the date, location and the parties
38 involved in the incident are reported to the board. We should be working off of fact
39 not rumor.

- 40
41 - Boutin commented that we sit in a board that represents technical education; the
42 skills learned in this building will never be outsourced. We need to make this place
43 the best it can possible be and set some goals to make the Center even better.

- 44
45 - **Boutin said he believes the board should set a goal to work toward offering diplomas;**
46 **vocational technical diplomas should be a step above a high school diploma, and**
47 **that would be one of the goals that we should look at. A student coming out into the**
48 **world with Technical Education training is above and beyond the normal high school**
49 **kid.**

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- Kinney spoke of the need to place students with local businesses.
- The Superintendent Search Committee (formed this evening with Alexander, Larry Johnson and Harrington as its members) will sit down with Boutin and HR and come up with a process.

At 8:38pm Lamb moved and Peaslee seconded a motion to adjourn. All were in favor.

Attachments:

- Minutes of the February 21, 2011 Regional Governing Board Meeting
- Minutes of the February 28, 2011 SWVRTSD Annual Floor Meeting
- Minutes of the February 10, 2011 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
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- Minutes of the March 10, 2011 Strategic Planning Committee Meeting
- SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 18 & 1032
- SWVRTSD Payroll Warrant # 19 & 1034
- SWVRTSD Vendor Warrant # 1033
- SWVRTSD Vendor Warrant # 1035
- Revenue & Expenses
- Field Trips (2x)
- Board Reorganization

Distributed at Meeting

Tech Center Telegram 3/14/2011