

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)**  
2 **Committee to Review Bylaws Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, November 17, 2020**  
3 **Zoom Online Meeting**

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5 **RGB members present:** Chair Michael Munson, Art Haytko, Leon Johnson, Jackie Kelly and John  
6 MacDonald

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8 **CDC represented** by: Michael Lawler, Superintendent/Director; John Lamson, Pre-law Instructor, SWT  
9 Pre-Law Instructor

10 Audience: Asher Adelson

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13 **Recorder:** Sandra Redding, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent

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15 Meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Munson at 4:05PM. He opened with an explanation for the  
16 purpose of this committee. He noted the recent public situation with board member, Ed Letourneau and  
17 how this has brought attention to the fact that the bylaws of SVRTSD need updating. A lot has been  
18 written and shared publically re: the EL situation. Public comments made by EL were disconcerting and  
19 inappropriate and reflect badly on SW Tech and students. He was asked to resign thru a letter and has  
20 not responded other than to mention he will take action in his own time. Supt. Lawler stated that the board  
21 does not have the right to force him out as he is duly elected by the district. Munson then welcomed the  
22 public to the meeting and asked for comments. Citizen Asher Edelson shared his thoughts and had a few  
23 questions:

- 24 • Noted that he agreed with public sentiment on the removal of EL from all boards and would  
25 continue to express this at upcoming specific board meetings
- 26 • Does this qualify as hate speech?
- 27 • He also feels EL's comments reflect badly on tech center, a truly wonderful place
- 28 • Please don't let this situation just slide away
- 29 • Question as to when EL last attended a meeting for this district
- 30 • Could lack of participation in meetings be a cause for removal?

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32 Much discussion took place concerning bylaws, possible changes/solutions and outcomes:

- 33 • The District has no charter; perhaps one should be considered as this would contain rules which  
34 the force of the law would support
- 35 • The present bylaws as reviewed by Lon McClintock, board counsel, do not allow for a duly  
36 elected member to be forced out or recalled
- 37 • It was noted that the complaints re: EL seem to be brought up by the same group of people who  
38 attend all the school board meetings. Are these few people truly representative of the entire  
39 district and should a more expansive review of voters be undertaken to get a fair overview of this  
40 matter? We should not jump to conclusions or actions until a more complete and fair minded  
41 evaluation is taken. This is in no way support of comments made by EL, just looking for a fair and  
42 more expansive district response.
- 43 • As our bylaws do not allow for removal or censure, perhaps the Vermont School Board Code of  
44 Ethics might include a mechanism for a solution to this situation. It was noted that board  
45 members sign a VSBA Code of Ethics pledge every year. However, this year, as all boards were  
46 meeting remotely, the Code was agreed to orally at the re-organizational meeting of this board.  
47 However, this does not change anything as all that can happen legally is to request a member to  
48 resign with no legal backup to force this action. In the state of Vermont, there is no recall of any  
49 elected official on any level except thru the voting booth. The only removal that is allowed is if a  
50 board member is an officer of said board, he/she may be removed from that position. This is as  
51 far as a board can legally go.
- 52 • It was suggested that this situation requires specific action and research which is in addition to  
53 the general work of reviewing and updating all the bylaws. This could be accomplished with  
54 assistance from John Lamson and using the procedures the policy committee relies on.

1 Research, suggest and bring any potential changes to board members with overview from legal  
2 counsel.

- 3 • Board members are concerned about legal liability of the district and individual board members  
4 related to the EL situation. This must be considered.
- 5 • Should we wait to hear what voters of the District want? EL is up for re-election in 2021 and this  
6 would allow for due process. EL was requested to step down which did not result in any action  
7 from him, but legally, this board can do no more. He last attended a meeting of this board in  
8 September and was consistently active in past years. There is no federal or state law to assist in  
9 this situation. VSBA Code of Ethics is a bit more specific, but still not recognized as a method for  
10 removal. At this point, board should be looking to future situations as no matter what happens  
11 now, it will not affect the outcome of the present situation.
- 12 • Conflict of Interest Policy, C7205, might be an avenue for solutions to the EL situation. It was  
13 suggested that this policy be examined/updated with new, stronger language. This may help with  
14 liability situations. John Lamson will look at this policy and return with suggests/updates for the  
15 policy committee as well as this committee. The VSBA Code of Ethics should be examined as  
16 well.
- 17 • The public should be informed and kept in the loop as progress is made.

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19 The committee requested the following actions:

- 20 • John Lamson will research updated language for Policy C7205 and share that at the next policy  
21 and bylaw review committee meetings.
- 22 • The board and Lamson will dig deeper into the VSBA Code of Ethics for possible application to  
23 EL situation and beyond.
- 24 • John MacDonald will research removing EL as an officer/chair from any SVRTSD committees.  
25 Also, whether, if EL attends any board/committee meetings, he could be asked to recuse himself  
26 from votes pertaining to specific situations.
- 27 • Consider board member stipend and meeting attendance issues.
- 28 • Note that several meetings may be necessary to facilitate information/suggested changes

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30 Supt. Lawler informed group that the Finance Committee will be in action in the near future. Next full  
31 board will meet Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. Finance, Policy and Bylaw Review should try to meet before  
32 this meeting if possible. Dates and times TBD.

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34 With no further business at this time, the committee adjourned with motions from J. Kelly and L. Johnson.  
35 Unanimous at 5:06PM.  
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