

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)**
2 **Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: Monday, November 2, 2020, Zoom Online Meeting**
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4 **RGB members present:** Leon Johnson, Jackie Kelly, Francis Kinney, John MacDonald, Michael
5 Munson, Kenneth Swierad, Todd Siclari and Dane Whitman
6

7 **CDC represented** by: Michael Lawler, Superintendent/Director; Meg Honsinger, Assistant Director;
8 Rebecca Tattersall, Business Manager
9

10 Audience: CAT-TV; Bennington Banner and members of the general public.

- 11 • J. Connor
- 12 • Laura Payne
- 13 • S. Plaisance
- 14 • B. Lee Clark
- 15 • W. Klein

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17 **Recorder:** Sandra Redding, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
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19 Meeting was called to order by Chair John MacDonald at 10:05AM. He welcomed the public and asked
20 for comments. There were several citizens who wished to be heard concerning the remarks/comments of
21 board member Edward Letourneau. MacDonald invited online comments from the public:

- 22 • J. Connor-no comments
- 23 • L. Payne-asked for an update concerning the E. Letourneau situation; she suggested that
24 censoring might be an effect tool; response from email contact w/state? Would like list of board
25 members and their term dates
- 26 • S. Plaisance-no comments
- 27 • B. Lee Clark-stated he was involved in creating by-laws for SW Tech; no provision to recall an
28 elected board member; that this was considered by by-law originators, but they decided against;
29 He encouraged the present board members to research and perhaps petition voters to determine
30 what an amendment might look like; noted we must be very careful in the legalities of re-calling a
31 board member; updating of by-laws should be an ongoing occurrence.
- 32 • Board member, Michael Munson thanked B. Lee Clark for his comments and suggested that by-
33 law amendments must be done cautiously and not run afoul of the Constitution
- 34 • Board member, L. Johnson suggested that this discussion should be held off till the proper time in
35 the meeting as this was time for public comments
- 36 • Chair MacDonald stated this was just updating and clarifying information; asked for further public
37 comments. L. Payne asked if we had a response from the Attorney General's office and
38 response was in the negative. Agency of Education did replied. MacDonald stated further that
39 there is confirmed support to rectify the E.L. situation, but we have no recourse per district by-
40 laws or state regulations, so the board, superintendent and faculty/staff did what they could at this
41 time. E. L. was asked to resign by letter and he has not responded at this time nor has he
42 attended any of this board's meetings. Supt. Lawler read the response from the state and this is
43 posted on our website.
44

45 With no other public comments, Mac Donald moved onto the Consent agenda for today's meeting.
46

47 Consent agenda:

- 48 • Minutes from October 19, 2020 full board meeting were motioned, K. Swierad and F. Kinney,
49 unanimously approved
- 50 • Payroll Warrant was motioned F. Kinney and K. Swierad, unanimously approved
- 51 • Vendor Warrant was motioned F. Kinney and K. Swierad, unanimously approved after a brief
52 discussion concerning the noted cost of our phone landlines. Supt. Lawler and R. Tattersall
53 shared that this cost was because of required 911 Compliance updates and some of the costs
54 would be covered by matching pandemic funds. Tattersall is researching if there were any
55 overcharges and we may see a decline in costs if that is the case.

1 There were no committee reports.

2
3 Action items:

- 4 • Upgrade server- Tattersall clarified the costs for equipment, (\$12,100) and installation of the
5 previously approved upgrade which did not show/include the labor costs of up to \$13,000. This
6 high end labor cost would cover up to 78 hours of installation if need be. There are no further
7 costs to keep the system up and running, just the already budgeted amount.
- 8 • Motion to approve additional costs to complete server upgrade were made by L. Johnson and K.
9 Swierad followed by unanimous approval.

10 Discussion of formation of a committee to update RGB by-laws:

- 11 • Motion to form committee to look at by-laws was offered for discussion by L. Johnson and M.
12 Munson:
 - 13 ○ By-laws should be looked at with advice of counsel. This has not been done for a long
14 time and review should be an ongoing process. It was suggested that a first look should
15 be given to Section 3 of Article 5 as it pertains to the E.L. situation. How can the public
16 read the by-laws? Supt. Lawler shared that the by-laws could be found on our website
17 and in our dropbox. Process should begin by addressing the pertinent section and article,
18 then moving on to establish a committee to review and update by-laws as needed. By-
19 laws should be constantly reviewed as it must be an evolving document to reflect the
20 current times. Zone in on Article 5 first. Clarify specific issue on re-call of a board
21 member as that is a pressing issue, then create a system for continuing review.
 - 22 ○ Motion to form a committee to review by-laws with initial research for Section 3 Article 5
23 then moving on to update/review by-laws in total was made and second by J. Kelly and
24 M. Munson. Motion was unanimous. M. Munson was asked to chair this committee, (to
25 which he agreed) and any board members interested should email board chair.

26 Supt. Lawler then presented his report:

- 27 • Lawler asked permission to read a letter composed and endorsed by many SW Tech faculty and
28 staff concerning the E.L. situation. This was allowed and he proceeded. This letter is available
29 on our website as are all other communiques concerning this situation.
- 30 • Lawler reported on the continuing school schedules and responses to the pandemic. At SW
31 Tech, we have students being transported by our vehicles and drivers to attend school in-person
32 four days a week on varying schedules as well as continuing with hybrid online learning. Much
33 effort has been made to insure the safety of all involved. All personnel have been very
34 cooperative in keeping schedules and situations running smoothly. Of course, there are a few
35 glitches here and there, but overall, we have been very successful in creating the proper
36 environment for all. We are committed to keeping our school open and functional. All the different
37 ways we are assisting students to have a full learning experience is intense and ever changing.
38 We have added video equipment to every program for sharing in-house labs and online program
39 work. We have the capacity to teach in many ways. We also support students by offering
40 takeout breakfasts and lunches, (which are delivered each day, organized and passed out by our
41 staff). It is clear to see that students are glad to be here and appreciative of all the ways we work
42 to support them and keep them safe. Lawler explained that it is quite a challenge to keep
43 students engaged with online learning for many different reasons. Some just cannot learn this
44 way. We truly miss our students and will continue to work diligently to assist them and get them
45 back in house as soon as possible. Lawler jokingly noted that the cold, unpredictable Vermont
46 weather is a personal challenge as several staff must be outdoors for check-in and departure. He
47 often has outside duty which he loves, (not). Lawler shared his appreciation for all personnel as
48 we work together to get the job done.

49 •
50 Chair MacDonald inquired if any further business. Johnson asked who is our representative on the
51 ESP/NEA negotiations. Tattersall stated F. Kinney is listed as our rep and he confirmed.

52
53 Motion to adjourn at 10:55AM by F. Kinney and L. Johnson. Unanimous.

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