

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)**  
2 **Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: Monday, June 3, 2024, in-person and online**  
3

4 **RGB members present:** M. Cutler, A. Edelson, L. Johnson, F. Kinney, J. Orzechowski, G. Sauer, K.  
5 Swierad, D. Whitman and TJ Williams  
6

7 **SWT represented** by: Supt./Dir. Michael Lawler, M. Honsinger, Asst. Dir. and R. Tattersall,  
8 Business Manager  
9

10 Audience: CAT-TV  
11

12 **Recorder:** Sandra Redding, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent  
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14 Meeting was opened at 10:05AM by Chair Swierad. With no public comments or concerns  
15 noted, the consent agenda was introduced:

- 16 • May full board minutes were unanimously approved with motions from Kinney and  
17 Johnson with one correction noted, concerning number of members voting for a set time  
18 in the afternoon for full board meetings. Recorder will check tape and correct if indicated.
- 19 • Payroll warrants were unanimously approved with motions from Kinney and Cutler
- 20 • Vendor warrants were unanimously approved with motions from Kinney and Cutler

21 Business office documents were noted as present with no questions or concerns.  
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23 TJ Williams reported that the education/facilities committee met. He gave a summary of the  
24 meeting included in the committee minutes, noting the importance of reaching out to students in  
25 their earlier school years to share information about the opportunities here at SW Tech. The  
26 Center recently had the pleasure of hosting area 5<sup>th</sup> grade students learning about our  
27 programs. Many hands-on experiences were available for the young students to enjoy. It took  
28 much time and energy of our faculty and staff as well as community members to plan and  
29 deliver this outstanding event here on our campus. We all look forward to holding more events  
30 like this in the future.  
31

32 Action items:

- 33 • HOSA Field Trip to Houston, TX, 6/25-6/30 Motions by Cutler and Orzechowski to  
34 approve supported by unanimous vote
- 35 • FBLA Field Trip to Orlando, FL, 6/28-7/3 Motions by Cutler and Orzechowski to  
36 approve supported by unanimous vote
- 37 • Nominations were tabled at this time
- 38 • Resignation received from Tim Mullen, Manufacturing Instructor. He has been at SW  
39 Tech since 2017 starting as a para-educator and filling in as instructor for the past 4  
40 years. Noting that he has done a very good job with this program and added a welding  
41 certification for his students in the last several years, the board thanked him for his  
42 service and efforts to keep the program going. The resignation was accepted with  
43 regrets and Swierad indicated Mullen will be missed.
- 44 • At this time, a nomination was added for consideration. Adult Education Coordinator Rob  
45 Bahny presented the nomination for LNA Administrator replacing a resignation. Patricia  
46 Bossong has been serving as Interim LNA Administrator for the past several months and  
47 is recommended by Bahny for the permanent position. With motions from Kinney and  
48 Cutler, Bossong was approved by unanimous vote for this position.  
49

50 Rob Bahny continued with an update on Adult Education at SW Tech. He shared that  
51 enrollment this past year has held solid at about 110-121 adult students participating in a variety

1 of classes .The most popular are the in-person LNA, CDL and Excel classes. Many online  
2 classes are available as well. New classes offered are Massage Therapy, Meat Butchering and  
3 Tractor Maintenance in the fall. Our Forestry Program Instructor, Eric Bishop has initiated links  
4 with V-Trans in Vermont. We have a second CDL instructor in training because of the continued  
5 heavy interest in that program. Bahny shared that our LNA and CDL classes have a hundred  
6 per cent pass rate. Instructor Cindy Mars, (LNA) and Bruce Miles, (CDL) are to be congratulated  
7 on this stellar accomplishment. We have had very good press from the Bennington Banner  
8 lately. They covered the arrival and display of Kaman Composites heavy equipment helicopter,  
9 "K-Max" on the SW Tech/MAU campus. Many students and faculty learned a great deal about  
10 what this company does here in Bennington and the world. SW Tech has a solid connection thru  
11 our Manufacturing Program and Work-Based Learning Program with the world-wide company  
12 and we appreciate their involvement with us. Bahny also took questions concerning the CDL  
13 program as to whether it is just for adults or are we including students? Forestry students can  
14 take the class, but they must be 18 years old. Also, Edelson inquired if we could offer electrical  
15 and plumbing programs. Unfortunately, these trades require trainees to be apprenticed and  
16 there must be licensed trade professionals to work with them. The apprenticeship term is quite  
17 rigorous and long, so high schools usually do not offer such programs. Vermont Tech College is  
18 more appropriate for this training.

19 Supt. Lawler thanked Bahny for the growth and success of the Adult Education program at SW  
20 Tech. Bahny has stabilized the offerings pertinent to what our community needs and also takes  
21 into consideration vocations that would be suitable anywhere in the country. He has spent a  
22 great deal of time shaking the trees and beating the bushes to establish critical policies and  
23 procedures for success in all adult ed programs.

24  
25 Supt. Lawler proceeded to share his last superintendent's report of his career at SW Tech.  
26 First, he congratulated all the SW Tech award winners and graduates. The Annual Awards  
27 Ceremony will be tomorrow night, always an exciting and rewarding event. He thanked faculty  
28 and staff for all the hard work, patience and extra duties so unselfishly performed to insure the  
29 success of our students. He noted that this event is high on his list of favorites. As our CTSOs  
30 are about to depart to national competitions, Lawler expressed his good wishes for success and  
31 enjoyment for the students who are traveling and competing.

32 Next, he shared some of the highlights from his last ten years as superintendent/director:

- 33 • Improved academic rigor as the state upped the ante for student performance
- 34 • Improved the culture at SW Tech, helping to stabilize the administration, faculty and staff  
35 to create a family-like atmosphere
- 36 • Survived the 2017 NEASC decennial evaluation which requires several years of  
37 preparation as this process looks at everything we do
- 38 • Kept our school open during Covid which was very challenging. It was a huge  
39 undertaking and we became experts in areas we never expected to enter. We developed  
40 many new procedures to insure the health and welfare of our students, faculty and staff.  
41 We personally got to know every student as we met them daily with questions,  
42 temperature checks and new ways to experience education. Our school became a  
43 supply hub for information, innovative teaching methods and supplies for health needs.  
44 Many meals were dispersed to students and their family along with test kits for Covid.  
45 We learned a lot about ourselves and our community.
- 46 • Our students, faculty and staff traveled to Puerto Rico twice to assist in the re-building of  
47 homes ruined due to hurricanes. This was an unbelievable experience for all who  
48 participated in so many ways.
- 49 • We are proud to assist our students in their Career and Technical School Organizations  
50 leadership conferences, competitions and travels. Because of their diligent work and

1 their instructor's guidance, we are proud to showcase the many, many awards the  
2 students have earned. All of our program students have the opportunity to join a CTSO  
3 and compete.

- 4 • Established a new program, Graphic Arts which has been hugely successful.
- 5 • Hired many new employees to increase the knowledge base of SW Tech for our  
6 students and we are proud to note that we encourage and enjoy a very family-like  
7 atmosphere in our facility.
- 8 • Updated school name and brand to reflect the current times and trends with input from  
9 students, faculty, staff and community.
- 10 • Experienced two major floods in our building which caused great damage to classrooms  
11 and public areas. Fourteen rooms were affected in a variety of ways with our video  
12 classroom seeing the most damage. Many students and classes were displaced for a  
13 time. These events caused huge insurance claims and we are relieved to have  
14 recovered very nicely.

15 Supt. Lawler then thanked the school district community, board, faculty and staff for the years of  
16 support and patience as he assumed this position. He noted there is no manual or guidebook  
17 provided as a roadmap for the job. The torch has been passed to next choice for  
18 superintendent/director, Meg Honsinger, who has been here for 10 plus years and knows what  
19 is important.

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21 Many best wishes and thanks for a job well done were extended by Chair Swierad and other  
22 board members. Swierad reminded the group that there would not be a July meeting. Next  
23 scheduled meeting is August 12, 2024, 4PM. A special meeting may be needed in the next  
24 week, so watch for more info on that. Education/facilities committee would like to meet in the  
25 near future as well as policy. More details to follow.

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27 With motions from Kinney and Cutler and unanimous support, this meeting adjourned at  
28 11:50AM.

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