

Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
Board of School Directors'
Regular Meeting
October 27, 2008
7:00 P.M.
Poultney High School

Official Minutes

Board Members Present: Mary Jo Teetor (M), Pat Davenport (M), Mike Nagar (M), Tracee Rupe (A), Anne Robbins (M), Helen Mango (M), Tammy Holcomb (M), Karen Stomski (M), Russell North (M), Steve Letendre (M), Kimberly Mathewson (M), Thomas Gallagher, Superintendent.

Others Present: Louis Milazzo, Joe LaRosa, Michelle Folger, Bonnie Lenihan, Darren McIntyre, Tammy Petty and Colleen Nagar.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by Vice Chair Mary Jo Teetor.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Unofficial Minutes from 9/22/08 (regular and continuation) included in board packet; and 10/6/08 (special) handed out by board clerk Kimberly Mathewson.

*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Russell North to approve the unofficial minutes of 9/22/08 and 10/6/08.

The following amendments were noted for the record:

10/6/08 - correct spelling of Stomski throughout the document. Capitalize Mango and correct spelling of Mary Jo Teetor as appropriate. Remove the word "it" from paragraph 2, sentence 2.)Mary Jo Teetor questioned whether "it" alternate...).

9/22/08 (regular)- Correct location of Systems Management Committee to Central Office.

Page 4 - Finance committee meeting scheduled for 10/20/08 not 10/30/08.

9/22/08 (continuation)- no changes noted.

It was suggested that when listing the board members present, that an (A) or (M) identify their board status so as to determine who is a voting member.

*Motion to approve the minutes with noted amendments carried.

Superintendent's Report: (included in board packets) - In addition to the written report, Superintendent Gallagher reminded the board of the Systems Management Committee meeting scheduled for 10/28/08 at Central Office at 4:00 P.M. He stated that each committee member was receiving an updated Policy Book which contained all current RSWSU Policies.

Superintendent Gallagher reported that there was no update available for the board on the scanning question; it is being researched and he hopes to have an update available for the next meeting.

Kelley Services have presented a list of substitutes for the board's approval. This is a requirement per statute.

Superintendent Gallagher indicated that Volunteers serving in the schools who have the potential of being unsupervised with students must complete the criminal record check process. The total cost for volunteers is approximately \$30.00. He asked for cooperation from all boards on this important matter.

Superintendent relayed an update of the progress made by the RSWSU Technology Coordinator, Nick Striglia. Mr. Striglia was thanked for all the work he does throughout the Supervisory Union.

The Superintendent requested that the RSWSU Human Resources Committee schedule a meeting as soon as possible, preferably prior to the upcoming Finance Committee meeting of November 5, 2008 in order to discuss Central Office staff salaries and benefits for budgetary purposes; as well as the Superintendent Search.

The Superintendent gave the board an overview of the proposed Policy on Policy (included in the packet for consideration and 1st reading).

Superintendent Gallagher reported that he has discussed the possibility of a curriculum audit with the Administrative Team and it was very well received. In order to contain costs, it is suggested that we train personnel to become curriculum auditors (in-house). This is being researched further; the board will continue to receive updates.

There were no questions of the Superintendent on his report.

Report of the Business Manager: (written report included in board packet) - Mr. Milazzo noted that no discussion or action had been taken at the last meeting regarding the possibility of funding a grant writer. Discussion ensued and clarification provided.

*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Russell North to approve the expense of \$500.00 toward hiring a grant writer effective immediately. Motion carried.

Mr. Milazzo reviewed the financial statement with the board. He explained the variances and answered questions posed by the board. Mr. Milazzo reported that upon reviewing the Special Education Audit findings (while revising the SEER report); a few changes and omissions were discovered resulting in approximately \$60,000 in expenses to the Supervisory Union (which will need to be assessed back to the local boards (PSD and WSD)). Mr. Milazzo also reported that due to grant amendments and carry over funds, this additional expense may have little to no impact overall; research on this was continuing.

FY09 revenues (budgeted) were not reduced in anticipation of the audit findings; which will likely have an impact on the local budgets this fiscal year.

A board member inquired if safe guards are now in place to decrease or eliminate this type of finding in the future. Mrs. Lenihan indicated that a number of changes had been implemented to safeguard against this type of finding; for example, students' Individual Education Plans are reviewed for every expense submitted to verify the expense is eligible.

Mr. Milazzo will arrange for the Finance Committee to meet with the auditors while they are here. Mr. Milazzo to notify the committee once this is scheduled.

No further questions of Mr. Milazzo on his report.

Report of the Director of Student Support Services: (written report included in board packet) - Mrs. Lenihan wished to publicly thank Mr. Milazzo on behalf of herself and Mr. McIntyre for all the assistance he has provided to the Special Education Department. Mrs. Lenihan also wished to thank Assistant Special Education Coordinator Darren McIntyre for all his hard work and assistance he has contributed. The board and Superintendent reiterated her thanks.

In addition to her written report, Mrs. Lenihan reported that there had been a small audience for the Special Education training session (prior to this board meeting); she offered to answer any questions any board member might have, and to provide handouts from the training if requested.

A board member inquired whether or not the corrective action plan was available to the public. Mrs. Lenihan indicated that it was not made public, however, she would be willing to share the information prior to the next board meeting with any board member who was interested. Mrs. Lenihan could make herself and the information available at 6:30 P.M. prior to the November board meeting.

A board member inquired regarding the changes to Act 82 and the impact on the Supervisory Union. Mrs. Lenihan explained that there is new regulation under review in the legislature since the previous regulation, although intended for daycare programs, has impacted EEE-Pre-School programs already in existence.

There were no further questions of Mrs. Lenihan on her report.

Report of the Curriculum Director: (written report included in board packets) - A board member inquired what training was in place to address the NECAP scores. Mrs. Folger reported all the current training programs currently in place throughout the Supervisory Union.

A board member asked for clarification regarding the Framework for Understanding Poverty. Mrs. Folger explained that a book was purchased for use by teachers and administrators throughout the Supervisory Union.

There were no further questions of Mrs. Folger on her report.

Report of Grant Coordinator: (written report included in board packet) - Mr. LaRosa gave a brief presentation to the board. The presentation included an update on the 21st Century Grant programs. Mr. LaRosa gave an overview regarding Programs, Partners and Future Funding (all included in his written report). He gave a sampling of the programs offered across the Supervisory Union; explained how the Partners portion of the system works and the importance of same, spoke regarding the importance and need for future funding.

Mr. LaRosa reported that the Supervisory Union was in its last two years of funding for the 21st Century Grant. He has been completing research and believes that the SU will qualify for up to \$1,000,000 over the next five years in grant money, if we continue to actively pursue grants. Due to recent changes in legislation, grant funding has to be matching in order to access. He reported on several grants currently being explored such as Safe and Healthy Students Grants (a collaborative effort with other Supervisory Unions); Middle School Promising Practices (currently in negotiations, updated information should be available for the board in November) as well as several other grants (listed in his report).

Mr. LaRosa thanked the board for their earlier approval of the \$500.00 to grant writing expenses.

Mr. LaRosa spoke regarding a Sustainability Plan. He reported that the 21st Century Grant Coordinator position was phasing out, and will be eliminated by the end of FY09. The plan is to assign direct site coordination to the building administrators. Consolidating grant coordination and reporting into another administrative position. Mr. LaRosa reported that competition is strong and our Supervisory Union should be prepared to be highly competitive in pursuing grants. His proposal is not to eliminate the administrative assistant to the grant coordinator position as this position will be necessary to maintaining continuity in the current programs and to relieve the building administrator from clerical tasks related to the grants such as data entry etc. Mr. LaRosa indicated that the fee structure is currently left up to the building administrators (to determine the amount to charge per activity, etc). Mr. LaRosa proposed a new fee scale be developed. The 21st Century Grant required that parents/guardians be asked to contribute based on their ability to pay. Last year approximately \$10,000.00 was collected in fees which goes back to the local schools toward their after school programs to off set costs.

Mr. LaRosa stressed that Partnerships need to increase for sustainability.

Superintendent Gallagher commented that the current economy is forcing boards to take a hard look at budgets throughout the entire Supervisory Union. Enrollment is decreasing (there are currently 650 students across the Supervisory Union). Boards must look hard at dollars versus needs. Budgets are decreasing, therefore grants will have to increase to supplement needs. Superintendent Gallagher thanked Mr. LaRosa for his thorough report.

A board member inquired if Mr. LaRosa felt that grant funds were decreasing due to the economy. Mr. LaRosa replied that boards should look to the private sector more as federal and state grants are decreasing. The boards should be more competitive in pursuing grant funding; there is funding out there.

There were no further questions of Mr. LaRosa on his report.

*(No action taken on the consent agenda).

General Public Comments:

Q#1: Why can't the General Public Comments be moved to the end of the meeting to allow opportunity for questions on all material presented during a meeting?

Q#2: Are there RSWSU bylaws? The issue has come up several times, but no answer is given.

A#1: The board sets the agenda, but may agree to alter the sequence of the agenda items. If it is the pleasure of the board, it may be possible to hold an early Public Comments and a later one to accommodate both those who do not wish to stay to the end of the meeting, and those who wish to stay to the end.

A#2: The board follows statute and policy. The board's major role is to establish policy. The current board is working through the Systems Management Committee to establish policy; this process is lengthy and may take the better part of a year to complete.

Old Business: A question regarding the progress on Superintendent Search was posed. The Superintendent indicated that he has requested the HR Committee meet prior to November 5 to start the process moving.

New Business:

FY10 Budget Development - Mr. Milazzo reviewed the 1st draft (included in board packets). He also handed out a coding sheet for easy reference. Discussion ensued.

Tammy Holcomb inquired whether the board wished to increase legal fees or keep as is (10K).

Mr. Milazzo reported that the anticipated increase to health insurance costs is 8.5% - 10%; the current draft is budgeted at 10% increase over FY09. A “not to exceed” percent will be received in November from VSBIT.

A board member inquired whether the cost for the Superintendent Search (advertising) was included in the FY10 budget. It was believed that the cost of advertising was pre-paid. This will be researched and reported back at the November meeting. If there is to be an expense, it would come out of FY09 budget, not FY10.

Mr. Milazzo reported that he had initially budgeted for a new laptop for the Itinerant Nurse (FY10); however, the current laptop has recently malfunctioned and must be replaced now (FY09). This will be purchased at the Supervisory Union level and assessed back unless the board objected. The board agreed by consensus to assess back the cost this year.

The board requested projected assessment for FY10 be included for budgeting purposes. Mr. Milazzo is currently completing this work, and will have it available in November.

The need to have the HR Committee provide feedback to the Finance Committee prior to the November 5th meeting to assist with budgeting process was reiterated.

The HR Committee will also review the possibility of creating an evaluation/merit raise system rather than a flat percentage increase.

*It was determined by consensus to leave the legal fees budget line at \$10,000.00 for FY10.

A board member inquired regarding restructuring the Central Office as it related to budgeting. The Superintendent indicated that he would have recommendations at a later date.

Discussion regarding employee vs. vendor for two special education employees. Mr. Milazzo explained that these positions should be vendors and would be budgeted and handled as such in FY10.

A board member inquired regarding how a special education budget line could be 100% offset by grant funds when the rate of reimbursement for special education expenses is only 54.6%. Mr. Milazzo explained that the line referenced in the budget was entirely grant funded, and only local expenses (non-grant funded) were eligible for the 54.6% special education reimbursement. Mrs. Lenihan elaborated as well.

Mr. Milazzo was thanked by the board for all the hard work he has put into creating the budget drafts to date. The Finance Committee and Superintendent also commended Louis on all the effort put into this process.

Approval of Substitutes: (List of current Kelley Services substitutes presented to the board) - discussion ensued. It was determined by consensus to discuss further in executive session, reserving approval for after the executive session.

Report of the Finance Committee: Ms. Holcomb reported that there was an increase to dues and fees in the

technology section due to a new spam filter.

Ms. Holcomb announced that Mr. Stewart's last day in the Supervisory Union was November 3rd in the event that any board member wished to stop in to thank him and wish him well.

Report of Human Resource Committee: None

Report of Systems Management Committee: None

Upcoming Committee meetings:

Finance Committee - November 5, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at Central Office.

Human Resource Committee - November 2, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at Middletown Springs Elementary School.

Systems Management Committee - October 28, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. at Central Office.

Approval of Warrants:

Warrant #38, in the amount of \$23,827.18, dated 9/26/08

Warrant #39, in the amount of \$500.00, dated 10/1/08

Warrant #40, in the amount of 35,140.02, dated 10/10/08

Discussion ensued.

A board member inquired regarding the purpose for Warrant #39 and why it was run separately from the other warrants. Mrs. Lenihan explained that the need came up unexpectedly and could not wait for the next payable run. The purpose was to support a homeless student with needs. Further discussion ensued.

The board asked to have the RSSU changed to RSWSU on the warrants.

A board member inquired whether action was required to approve the warrants. Vice Chair responded that the warrants were already approved (via board signatures) and no action was required. The information was simply read into the minutes for record purposes.

Vice Chair Mary Jo Teetor called for a short break at 8:47 p.m.; meeting resumed at 9:00 p.m.

Policies for 2nd Reading:

Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Mike Nagar to adopt policies a-1 (noted on agenda for 2nd reading).

Discussion ensued.

Firearms: remove "his/her" prior to designee.

Limited English Proficiency Students: no changes.

Participation of Home Study Students: no changes.

Hazing: correct spelling of “Union“. No other changes.

Field Trip: add “Additionally” at the beginning of the second paragraph. No other changes.

Pupil Privacy Rights: no changes.

Educational Support System: no changes.

Grade Advancement, Retention...: decided to hold until November meeting for clarification.

Acceptable Use of Electronic Resources & the Internet: no changes.

Student Conduct & Discipline: 1st reading should be noted as 9/22/08; no other changes.

Selection of Instructional Material: no changes.

Head Lice: Add “custodians to the list on #1 under policy. Under outbreak procedures, add language the same as Wells SD language re: shampoo rugs etc. No other changes.

Discussion ensued.

Motion to adopt all policies amended as follows : The Board agreed to adopt all above policies except Grade Advancement (which will come back for 3rd reading). Motion carried.

Policies for 1st reading:

Personnel Recruitment, Selection & Criminal Record Check: no change.

Board Commitment to Non-Discrimination (C-6): change to “the Supervisory Union Board” will not ...in paragraph 1.

Procedure: Insert Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union in blank of 1st sentence, remove School District; add “Supervisory Union or a member” prior to School District under Definitions (grievance paragraph); same paragraph, change “the” to “a” School Board or its employees. Under procedures, section 2; remove the word “School” before Board in three areas. No other changes.

Student Attendance: no changes.

Policy on Policy: Last page, section 5, correct “earning” to “warning” (1st sentence); and correct “warned” to “warned”, second sentence.

*The board agreed by consensus to move all policies noted above for 2nd reading in November (with noted amendments), No motion required.

Action on Personnel Contracts:

New Hires:

*Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Helen Mango to approve the following new hires:

Patricia Ryan - Title I Tutor at PHS

Meghan Keith - After School Program Homework Staff at WVS

Ann (Mickey) Moore- After School Program Homework Staff at WVS

Katie Crowley - After School Program Co-coordinator - increase to hours for WVS.

Motion carried.

Registrations: None

Terminations: None

Leave of Absences: None.

Next Meeting scheduled for November 24, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Middletown Springs Elementary School.

*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Anne Robbins to move the board into executive session for personnel matters at 9:42 p.m.. Motion carried.

The Recording Secretary and Business Manager were excused at this time.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente
RSWSU Recording Clerk