

**Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union**  
**Board of School Directors Regular Meeting**  
April 27, 2009 - 7:00PM - Tinmouth Community Center

**OFFICIAL MINUTES**

Board Present: Kimberly Mathewson, Chair (M); Tammy Holcomb, Vice Chair (M); Mary Jo Teetor, Clerk (M); Karen Stomski (M); Mike Nagar (M); Al Jackson (M); Jodi Comeau (M); Cindy Taylor-Patch (M); Kimberly Stewart (M); Jim Gilmour (M); Helen Mango(M).

Administration Present: Thomas Gallagher, Superintendent; Joe LaRosa, Grant Administrator; Darren McIntyre, Assistant Special Education Coordinator; Michelle Folger, Director of Curriculum; Bonnie Lenihan, Director of Student Support Services; and Louis Milazzo, Business Manager.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03PM by Chair, Kimberly Mathewson.

Helen Mango, Tinmouth Board Chair, introduced the two new Tinmouth Board Members, Kimberly Stewart and Cindy Taylor-Patch. Introductions were exchanged and the Board welcomed the new members.

Prior to beginning the presentation, Mr. LaRosa spoke to the board regarding his Executive Assistant, Toni Montero. Following is the statement was entered into the record. (See attached).

**Presentation:** Mr. LaRosa presented the transition plan to the board regarding the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant. A summary was provided in the board packet, and Mr. LaRosa provided a more comprehensive packet at the meeting. Mr. LaRosa's official last day will be sometime in June 2009; however, he reiterated his offer to make himself available for questions as needed. Mr. LaRosa outlined what needed to occur on a month by month basis and discussed the sustainability plan due by February 2010. Joe stressed the importance of coordination of the program as well as the need to obtain "serious" funding necessary to sustain the plan. Joe stressed the importance of keeping on top of the grants and managing them.

Superintendent Gallagher interjected that he would be working on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (and other) grant as well as the stimulus funding beginning July 1, 2009. Superintendent Gallagher laid out his vision and spoke regarding the priority for curriculum work completion. He is confident that the challenges will be met.

The board inquired of Mr. LaRosa who is on the steering committee? Mr. LaRosa replied; Local College representatives, VISTA/Americoprns representatives, Carrie Becker, parents, and Principals. The Superintendent suggested having an RSWSU Board representative/liaison on the steering committee as well.

Mr. LaRosa was thanked for his presentation.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Minutes: March 23, 2009 Regular and Continuation. The following amendments were made by the board:

March 23 (regular): place a semi-colon after each board member listed in "Present".

March 23 (continuation): correct spelling Holcomb and Mathewson.

Note the reason for entering into executive session for "personnel reasons".

Discussion ensued regarding adding the Continuation Minutes to the end of the Regular Minutes so as not to have two separate sets of minutes for same meeting. It was noted the timely submission of both minutes was necessary to allow combining them. It was determined by consensus to add continuation minutes to the end of the regular minutes on a trial basis.

Discussion ensued regarding the February 2, 2009 minutes included in the packet. It appears that these minutes were approved on February 23, 2009 and the title only needed to be changed to Official (amendments already noted). The recording secretary will check on and report back.

**\*Helen Mango made a motion to approve the regular and continuation minutes of March 23, 2009 with amendments, seconded by Jodi Comeau. Motion carried.**

Report of the Superintendent: (Written report included in board packet). Superintendent Gallagher indicated he was working on funding his consultation fees through the stimulus money. The RSWSU is anticipated to receive \$1,000,000.00 in combined stimulus funding and Consolidated Federal Program funding. Information is still coming in from the legislature. Superintendent Gallagher stated it is currently planned that he will work on Grants, Stimulus Incentive funding, Curriculum Audit and assisting the new Superintendent, Joan Paustian, in anyway he can.

Report of the Business Manager: Mr. Milazzo provided handouts to the board. He inquired if the board is interested in an RSWSU Fuel bid proposal. Discussion ensued. It was the consensus of the board that this was a good idea and Mr. Milazzo should pursue. Mr. Milazzo indicated he was in the process of collecting information regarding the number of gallons used across the Supervisory Union. Current estimates are showing a projected surplus of \$11,000.00 for the RSWSU in FY09. Mr. Milazzo will continue to monitor and inform the board of any unanticipated changes. The RSWSU final audits were available. Mr. Milazzo indicated there were three items which the auditors wrote up; all three are either already resolved or in the process of being resolved. Systems have been put into place to prevent overspending in grants in the future. All accounts have been reconciled and all outstanding checks

either have been reissued or are in the pending response from vendor. There were no significant deficiencies noted in the audit.

One board member inquired regarding an article in a local paper recently where school districts could save money by accessing the state's centralized purchasing (for general office supplies, etc); and inquired if this was being researched. Discussion ensued. Bulk/central ordering for school supplies and custodial supplies had been attempted several years ago, but was not successful. It was found that schools had differing preferences for products ranging from general school supplies, copy paper, to cleaning products and were not receptive to losing local control over products ordered for their buildings. Further discussion acknowledged that centralized ordering through the state, may take business away from local vendors.

Scanning - One board member suggested that if boxes were ready to be scanned, the process could be started using some of the stimulus funding. She suggested starting the process sooner than later.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: (Written report included in board packet). Mrs. Lenihan reported that there would be an additional presentation under "new business" and mentioned the board was sent material electronically earlier in the day. Mrs. Lenihan reported the supervisory union was preparing for a Medicaid audit the following day, and did not anticipate any significant findings.

Mrs. Lenihan reported a donation from Donna Johnson, Physical Therapist, of used therapy tables. The tables were currently being housed in the wellness center at Poultney High School, if any school wishes to have them in their buildings, they should let her know. A letter was sent to Donna Johnson thanking her for the generous donation.

One board member inquired regarding the corrective action plan #11 and 13. Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. McIntyre responded that these were for transition and evaluation respectively not being completed within 6--days. The corrective action plan had been completed satisfactorily before the 12 month deadline, and they had received much positive feedback. Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. McIntyre indicated the state audited two areas each year; and next year the areas should be Early Childhood Education and Out of District Placement.

Report of Curriculum Director: (Written report included in board packet). Mrs. Folger reported that paragraph five of her report was incomplete. She reported that some courses offered through Castleton State College were discounted to as little as \$300/3-credit course. Mrs. Folger stated the Supervisory Union was fortunate to have Castleton State College as a partner.

Report of Grant Coordinator: Covered under presentation at beginning of meeting.

**\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor to accept the consent agenda reports.**

**Motion carried.**

**Approval of Warrants:**

#52, in the amount of \$2,802.00, dated March 4, 2009.

#53, in the amount of \$13,299.52, dated March 13, 2009.

#54, in the amount of \$40,168.25, dated March 27, 2009.

#55, in the amount of \$46,819.59, dated April 10, 2009.

**\*Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to approve the warrants as noted. Brief discussion regarding a question on transportation costs; explanation given, grant funded. Motion carried.**

**General Public Comments:** None

**Old Business:** None.

**New Business:**

Committee notes and meeting schedule:

Systems Management Committee meeting notes from March meeting included in packet. Helen Mango, Committee Chair, reported verbally regarding the committees' most recent meeting of April 21, 2009. She mentioned there were two policies among those presented in the board packet that were ready for board action this evening. The committee is accomplishing a great deal of work, and is getting a good handle on policies adopted and needed across the board. Ms. Mango reminded the local boards to review all policies and reiterated the procedures for policy adoption. The Superintendent interjected and thanked all boards for their hard work. He especially recognized Helen Mango and Karen Stomski for their efforts on behalf of their local boards in reviewing and cross referencing their local policies with the RSWSU policies. This project is a huge undertaking. The plan is to have, at minimum, all mandatory policies adopted by all boards and placed in one RSWSU Policy manual as well as on-line. Inclusion of other policies will be forthcoming on a regular basis until eventually there is only one master RSWSU policy manual for all. Each local board may have policies specific to their board/schools; however, these will be incorporated into the master policy manual and labeled appropriately. Additionally, if a local board adopts a version of the RSWSU policy which differs, it too, will be noted in the RSWSU policy as specific to the respective board/school.

The next meeting of the Systems Management Committee is set for May 4, 2009 at Central Office beginning at 3:00PM - 5:00PM. Jan is to contact Charity to notify.

Discussion ensued among board members regarding the process of local boards adopting policies which included language specific to another board and/or the SU board. It was explained that local boards are adopting the policies as they pertain to their board/schools; it is permissible to adopt a policy which contains

language specific to another board. Although one board member continued to express reservations of the process; the board by consensus was in agreement with the process; and agreed with the goal of having one master policy manual for all boards.

The Human Resource Committee will meet on May 20, 2009 at 7:00PM at the Wells Village School. The committee last met April 1, 2009 and reviewed the superintendent evaluation process. The committee will meet on May 20th to review final evaluations with the superintendent in order to allow him to move forward with the process.

The Finance Committee's next meeting will be announced by the Committee Chair at a later time. Tinmouth board member, Cindy Taylor-Patch will be joining the Finance Committee. This committee will review evaluations of Central Office staff and discuss distribution of contingency fund for pay increases.

The RSWSU Board Chair called for a short break at 8:00PM. Meeting called back to order at 8:10PM.

Presentation: Superintendent Gallagher stated that he supports Mrs. Lenihan's proposal. Mrs. Lenihan presented to the board a proposal whereby the Supervisory Union does not use the same person who evaluates students to provide services to students. She proposed using Rutland Mental Health. Vendor recommendations have not historically come to the board in the past. Since a new model is being proposed; Mrs. Lenihan would like the board's feedback before moving forward.

Mrs. Lenihan outlined the pros and cons of the new proposal.

Under current method, vendors can charge whatever rate they choose, and we have no control. Vendors under the current method often exceed their contracted dollar limit, resulting in an increase to local expense if IEP does not allow for services provided; the excess must be billed to regular expenses. This is often the result of 1) unanticipated students moving into the district 2) emergent situations that were unforeseen 3) services being provided beyond the scope of the IEP.

Vendors under the current model often evaluate and provide services to students.

Under the current model, Mrs. Lenihan reported an increase in students being referred who do not qualify for IEP services. This expense then falls to regular education (504/157). Mrs. Lenihan's review discovered Principals are not always aware of what to look for. Mrs. Lenihan has arranged for training of the administrators in a recent administrative team meeting, as well as another presentation from an attorney which was helpful in awakening some to what can and can't be done.

Under the current model, Mrs. Lenihan reported there were a few billing issues this year, which have been corrected as they arose. It is anticipated that if the board stays with the current model, there will be much word

changing needed on vendor contracts. Mrs. Lenihan indicated currently the School Based Clinicians are being used inappropriately as guidance counselors.

Under the current model, Mrs. Lenihan acknowledged longevity of vendors, familiarity with families.

Under the Proposed Model:

It would allow the Supervisory Union to move from four school based clinicians to two. Same services provided and compliance met. There is an anticipated savings of \$28,500.00/clinician. Rutland Mental Health will provide matching funds, resulting in \$57,000.00 cost to the district. There are no hidden fees in the new model. Rutland Mental Health oversees all staff. Rutland Southwest S.U. can negotiate/contract the hourly rate if we use Rutland Mental Health model. Referrals can be expedited if using the Rutland Mental Health model. IDEIA-B funding cannot be used if also using Federal funding (for the same services). Planning is underway, by the business manager, for establishing a plan to utilize the IDEIA-B and Federal funding to the maximum capacity while providing all needed services to the students. Rutland Mental Health employees would be "salaried" versus our current hourly rate. Rutland Mental Health can provide a high level of services and can fast track services. Coordinated Service meetings can be scheduled much faster.

School Based Clinicians' primary responsibility is to serve Special Education students who qualify for IEP. This service has grown to include more students who do not qualify for IEP services. This can be controlled using the new model. The proposed model would be an annual contract with Rutland Mental Health.

Q: What would occur if we were unsatisfied with the services once the SU was in a contract agreement?

A: The contract agreement could contain language allowing for termination of contract/agreement before the contract period ended.

Q: How will the change be perceived/accepted by parents and students?

A: It was acknowledged by Mrs. Lenihan that relationships have been established between current vendors and parents and students; the change would likely cause some questions. Once new relations have been established, it is anticipated the new model will be successful.

Q: What is the turnover rate at Rutland Mental Health; would this be a problem if turn over is high?

A: Turnover is unknown.

Q: Concern was expressed that some vendors supplied by Rutland Mental Health would not have a great deal of experience and might use this opportunity as a "stepping stone" to advance their career. If there was a high turnover rate, it may negatively impact our students.

The board agreed that a change was needed to avoid having the person who evaluates students be the same one who provides services.

Mrs. Lenihan asked for input from the board regarding moving forward with this new proposal.

Helen Mango indicated she recommended that each local board have opportunity to discuss. Mrs. Lenihan asked it not be discussed publicly until it is determined which model the SU will proceed with. Current vendors have not been notified of the proposed new model.

Mrs. Lenihan was thanked for her presentation.

Superintendent's Goals: (Included in board packet as addendum to Superintendent's Report). Goals were discussed with Human Resource Committee, and have also been shared with the incoming Superintendent, Joan Paustian. All are "on board" with the proposed goals. Superintendent Gallagher noted in addition to the goals proposed, a long range plan for Curriculum and the need for continuation of Systems Management work is needed. Technology is an area that also needs a plan. Currently there are four different individuals doing work in this area throughout the SU. The current model may need to be reviewed. A disparity regarding how the Consolidated Federal funding is allocated has been noted by Superintendent Gallagher. Tom will be working with Joan on this as well.

**\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Al Jackson to approve the Superintendent's Goals as presented. Brief discussion ensued. An evaluation model is to be created. Evaluation of Superintendent and Transition Plan should be completed annually in March. Curriculum work is already in process. Motion carried unanimously.**

Approval of Substitute List (as presented in board packet):

**\*Motion made by Karen Stomski, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor, to approve the substitute list. Motion carried.**

Approval to Apply for and Expend Federal Grant funds:

**\*Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Helen Mango to allow the Superintendent to apply for and expend Federal Grant funds for FY10. Discussion ensued. Motion carried.**

### **Policies:**

It was noted by the Systems Management Committee Chair, Helen Mango, that each board should review and

adopt the Acceptable use of Electronics and the Internet at their next available board meeting. It has already been passed at the SU level and one local board; it is important to pass it at all local board levels. Helen brought the board's attention to the new format of SU policies and a minor change she recommends to all policies which are adopted by all boards. This new change will include the inclusion of "and its member boards" after the statement "it is the policy/belief of the Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union board".....

Helen brought the board's attention to the "grid" at the bottom of the SU policies (new format) which will now show the adoption date for each board level. Discussion ensued regarding the SU board passing policy for all boards. Explanation was provided; the each local board has the option of adopting the SU policy as is, or making changes. If changes are adopted by a local board, which differ from language in the SU or other local board's policy; it will be noted on the master policy. Local boards are not losing control of adopting policy; rather the process allows for acknowledgement of local board's unique changes. The philosophy is to adopt one unified policy at all board levels; however, in the event that a local board wishes to include different language or language which is unique to that board; it will be noted on the master policy. The advantage of the new policy is the committee keeps work on the forefront, and collaboration from all boards allows for input which might not have been considered at individual board levels.

**\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor, to adopt the Substitute Teachers policy (D-6) with amendments. Motion carried.**

**\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Al Jackson to adopt the Volunteers & Work Study Students (D-7) with revisions and amendments. Discussion regarding the title of last paragraph to be changed to "Implementation" not "policy" Motion carried.**

**Personnel Contract Action:**

**\*Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor to accept with regret the resignation of Toni Monterio, effective June 2009. Motion carried.**

**Other Lawful Business:** Tammy Holcomb provided to the board a new corrected cell phone number.

**Set Next Meeting:** May 26, 2009 (changed due to holiday), 7:00PM at Wells Village School.

One board member noted the need for the board to move into executive session for personnel issues; board only.

All except the board members were excused at 9:37PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jan Dente  
RSWSU Recording Secretary

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April 27, 2009  
Official Continuation Minutes  
RSWSU Board of Directors  
Tinmouth Elementary

Tammy Holcomb made a motion to move into executive session at 9:39PM for personnel. Karen Stomski seconded the motion. Motion carried

Karen Stomski made a motion to move out of executive session at 9:48PM. Jodi Comeau seconded the motion. Motion carried.

No Action Taken

Mike Nagar made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:49PM. Al Jackson seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Teetor, clerk