

**Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
Board of School Directors' Regular Meeting
February, 22, 2010 7:00 pm at Wells Village School**

Official Minutes

Board Members Present: Kimberly Mathewson, Chair (M), Tammy Holcomb, Vice Chair (M), Jim Gilmour (M), Charity Downs (M), Pat Davenport (M), Tracee Oakman Rupe (A), Mary Jo Teetor, Clerk (M), Karen Stomski (M), Jodi Comeau (M), Cindy Taylor-Patch (M), Helen Mango (M) and Mike Nagar (M).

Administrators Present: Joan Paustian, Superintendent; Bonnie Lenihan, Director of Student Support Services; Darren McIntyre, Assistant Special Education Coordinator, Louis Milazzo, Business Manager and Thomas Gallagher, Director of Education Advancement.

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 7:06 pm.

The Chair acknowledged that this was the last supervisory union board meeting before town meeting. She thanked all board members for their efforts over the past year.

Consent Agenda:

Approval of Minutes: **Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to approve the minutes of January 25, 2010 (regular and continuation) and of February 1, 2010 (special). Motion to approve minutes as amended, carried.**

Report of the Business Manager: Mr. Milazzo's financial reports were included in the board packets. In April 2010 he plans to include the revenue report as well.

Mr. Milazzo reported that he had gone out to bid for copiers, as the current contract is due to end June 2010. The bids were opened today and reviewed. Mr. Milazzo plans to meet with the Administrators to review, and will make a recommendation to the local boards as well as the supervisory union board in March for action.

Mr. Milazzo has discussed a new health insurance option with both the finance committee and human resource committee recently. VSBIT/VEHI is offering a High Deductible Plan with a Health Savings Account option in addition to the current options through VEHI. Mr. Milazzo outlined what this new option entailed (an added benefit to employees at no additional cost to the district). Lengthy discussion ensued. The Chair thanked the board for the discussion, and suggested that the issue may be discussed at a future date in order to continue with the report of the business manager and remainder of the consent agenda. Mr. Milazzo will provide additional information to the entire board at the March meeting.

Mr. Milazzo informed the board that he had gone out to bid for group life insurance coverage. He recommends approving Sun Life as the company to offer employees the option of purchasing group term life insurance coverage (at no cost to the district). **Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve Sun Life as the group term life insurance company for the entire supervisory union. Motion carried.**

Report of the Superintendent: Dr. Paustian's written report was included in the board packets. In addition, she reported that the Curriculum Coordinating Council (CCC) has been meeting regularly. They are working on the Strategic Plan. Jan Willy has been invited to assist with the process.

Andrew Donaghy and John Malcom, local Legislators, have received updated financial sheets for our supervisory union (and member districts). Dr. Paustian has recently met with the two local representatives to provide updates regarding what the boards and schools are doing in regard to budgets etc. Dr. Paustian and the representatives plan to communicate regularly to discuss important issues in the future.

Dr. Paustian reported that Informational Meetings are beginning this week. Middletown Springs is holding a pre-informational meeting on Wednesday evening, and Poultney is holding their Informational Meeting on Thursday of this week. Tinmouth, Wells and Middletown Springs will be holding their Informational Meetings on March 1, 2010; and Ira will hold their Informational Meeting at town meeting on March 2, 2010.

Dr. Paustian informed the board that no funding was built into the budget for professional development for the PHS School Based Clinician. A course has been approved, and Mr. Gallagher is working on revising grant funds to pay for the course.

Dr. Paustian informed the board that contract uniformity was being worked on in issuing FY11 contracts.

Dr. Paustian provided the board members with a calendar of anticipated board meetings for the upcoming year. She pointed out that due to the current schedule for meetings, frequently there were three or four meetings occurring in one week. She asked the boards to consider the possibility of changing some meetings to avoid multiple meetings in the same week whenever possible. She provided several suggestions which would facilitate this.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: Mrs. Lenihan's written report was included in the board packet. Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. McIntyre provided detailed reports in the board packets regarding Medicaid funding and the Evaluation Model. They reviewed them with the board and took questions. The board was appreciative of the information, in particular the data regarding the new evaluation model, and accountability. Mrs. Lenihan and Mr. McIntyre recommend continuing with the evaluation model for FY11 with a few minor changes. The Medicaid reporting was explained as well. The board appreciates all the hard work and care that went into both of the reports. Mrs. Lenihan plans to share the reports with the Administrators.

Report of the Director of Educational Advancement: Thomas Gallagher reported to the board regarding the 21st Century Grant. He reported what he (and two other administrators who have attended meetings) has learned this year. He mentioned that it was different from what had been previously reported by the former Grant Administrator and discussed the differences with the board. In particular he discussed sustainability as it pertained to fees collected as well as matching grants. He also discussed the need for a 30-hour per week administrator. He explained how other supervisory unions were managing the grant. He gave an overview of the grant that was recently submitted. He thanked all the Principals for their support and assistance with gathering and providing information for the grant submission, and particularly acknowledged Susan McKelvie for her assistance in editing and providing input on the grant submission. He thanked Superintendent Paustian for her support and Jan Dente for her assistance. The grant which was submitted called for a cooperative spirit from all schools for a supervisory union wide program.

Mr. Gallagher also updated the board regarding the process for submitting Consolidated Federal Program grants this year. The process is different from years past. It is a bit cumbersome and has impeded him from expediting submission. Discussion ensued.

Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve the reports as presented. Motion carried.

Approval of Warrants:

**Motion by Jodi Comeau, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve
Warrant # 76 in the amount of \$200.00, dated 1/19/2010
Warrant #77 in the amount of \$16,314.41, dated 1/29/2010
Warrant #78 in the amount of \$56,614.70, dated 2/12/10**

Motion carried.

General Public Comments: None

Old Business:

RSWSU Teacher Benefits- nothing new to report.

The Chair called for a short recess at 8:25 pm. Meeting was called back to order at 8:35 pm.

New Business:

Report of Committees:

Systems Management: Next meeting scheduled for March 4, 2010 at 3:00 pm at CO. Policy work continues.

Human Resources: No new meeting scheduled at this time.

Finance: No new meeting scheduled at this time. Business Manager covered work of committee in his report.

Approve the substitute list: **Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve the substitute list as presented. Motion carried.**

Supervisory Union-Wide Negotiations: At the request of the board, Thomas Gallagher discussed the possibility of negotiating a supervisory union-wide teachers' agreement (as opposed to individual agreements). The timing seems right as three of the four teachers' negotiated agreements are currently ending June 2010; with Tinmouth ending June 2011. He provided information to the board regarding the concept and process as well as his experiences with same. Much of the language in each individual negotiated agreement is currently the same or very similar. The entire agreement would not have to be the same for all units. Superintendent Paustian provided the board members with a handout which compares key areas in each current individual negotiated agreement in order that the board members could see what areas have commonality and where there are differences. Mr. Gallagher offered his services should the board decide to move forward with the concept. An informal discussion with the NEA representative indicated that the NEA would not be opposed to the concept.

Discussion ensued.

Helen Mango inquired whether the Tinmouth Teachers (who are not unionized) would be expected to participate, and if so expressed concern regarding changing the current dynamic. She also expressed concern that this concept had been visited in the past and was not well received by the NEA in particular. Discussion followed.

Tom indicated that one of the positive outcomes with one supervisory union wide negotiated agreement is that it may relieve some of the difficulty faced by individual boards; it impersonalizes the negotiating process when dealing with the entire supervisory union. Rather than having four separate teachers' agreements and two separate support staff agreements to negotiate; there would be one teachers' agreement and one support staff agreement to negotiate. Mr. Gallagher stressed that having one unified negotiated agreement does not equate to having all the same issues/benefits/salaries, etc. There can be separate clauses for each board if particular areas needed to be different. Discussion ensued regarding the advantages vs. the disadvantages. Each local board and each local teacher's unit (and support staff unit) would have equal representation on the negotiating team. Pat Davenport commented that Addison Rutland Supervisory Union does have a unified negotiated agreement; however, there are clauses specified which are unique to respective towns.

Charity Downs inquired whether or not the support staff units would also have one unified agreement. Tom responded that it would be up to the board, but it was certainly a possibility.

Charity also suggested that combining both the negotiated agreements and the governance in general would result in additional costs for administration. Tom disagreed.

Tom mentioned that one of the biggest advantages of having one unified negotiated agreement was that it pulls board members together and allows sharing of ideas and information that might not otherwise occur during individualized agreements. Having a larger unit, impersonalizes the process; allowing it to be conducted with less difficulty. Every board would have to ratify the agreement.

Mary Jo Teetor suggested that each board hold a “brainstorming” session to consider the idea; then the entire supervisory union board would meet again with Tom and Joan to discuss further.

One of the goals would be to make common all language that does not have funding tied to it. Each local board should arrive at five (5) areas they would like to accomplish/change and bring them back to the next supervisory union meeting to compare and share.

Further discussion ensued regarding whether it was possible to complete the process before or by June 30, 2010 when the three current negotiated agreements are due to end. The board was reminded that regardless of whether or not the unified negotiated agreement or individual negotiated agreements were planned, if neither were settled prior to June 30, 2010 they would simply follow the current agreements until such a time as a new agreement took its place.

It was agreed by consensus that each local board reviews their agreements to determine five areas that they would like to accomplish and bring them back to the full supervisory union board at the March meeting to discuss. It was agreed by consensus that a special executive session meeting would be held prior to the regular March meeting for this purpose (March 22, 2010 at 5:30 pm at Poultney High School for executive session; 7:00 pm for regular meeting). Each local board should provide their identified five areas to Tom prior to the March special/executive session meeting in order that he can compile the information. It was determined that one representative from each local board should attend the executive session. Superintendent Paustian will also be involved in the process.

Governance Study (Phase II) & Woodbury Study - Kimberly Mathewson indicated the estimated cost to complete the Phase II Governance Study is between \$3,000 - \$5,000. She asked the board if they wished to pursue the study. Much discussion ensued. One point was raised that much time and effort was already being expended on a curriculum audit and a technology audit; it may not be sensible to complete a governance study at this time. There is a consolidation push in the legislature and it is not being promoted as a cost savings. Legislature is looking to eliminate local boards. The boards may not have control of consolidation despite efforts to do such. It may not be prudent to expend the time and effort on this if the legislature will assign realignment of governance regardless or despite local efforts to consolidate on their own. It may be more sensible to look toward unification of negotiated agreements, and complete work on the curriculum audit and technology audit.

By consensus, the board agreed not to pursue the Governance Study Phase II.

Pat Davenport commented that teachers may want to negotiate a unified agreement. It could bring stability, longevity and security.

Tom was thanked for his time and valuable contribution.

Authorize the Superintendent to apply for and expend Consolidated Federal Program (CFP) and other grant funds for FY11. Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Jodi Comeau to authorize the Superintendent to apply for and expend Consolidated Federal Program and other grant funds for FY11. Motion carried.

Approve Policies: Motion made by Charity Downs, seconded by Helen Mango to approve the five bolded policies on the agenda (B-2 Board Goal Setting and Self Evaluation; D-13 HIPAA; E-201 Family and Medical Leave; F-2 Bus Discipline; and F-9A Transportation of Students in Private Vehicles). Motion carried. The remaining polices have been returned to the Systems Management Committee for revision (E-202 Animals in School; E-9 HIV/AIDS; F-101 International Exchange Student; F-103 Residency and H-3 Community Use of School Facilities).

Employment Action:

New Hires:

Motion by Karen Stomski, seconded by Mary Jo Teetor to approve the new hires Katie Crowley, Barbara Gallinari, and Sheila Ploof (as after school program positions at Wells Village School) for FY10; and to approve hiring Kimberly Blair Stedman as the Speech Language Pathologist (to serve Middletown Springs, Tinnmouth, and Wells) for FY11.

Until the technology consultants respond to the Superintendent, action regarding the website management position is on hold.

Resignations:

Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Karen Stomski to accept with regrets the resignation of Bonnie Lenihan as Director of Student Support Services, effective June 30, 2010. Motion carried.

The Superintendent informed the board that advertisements for the Director of Student Support Services position (as well as other vacancies for FY11) will commence after town meeting. The Superintendent outlined the process for hiring a new Director. A committee will be formed which will include the Superintendent, two principals, the current director, Tom Gallagher and one or two board members). The job description will be reviewed prior to advertising as well.

Superintendent Paustian commented that although the position of website management was on hold until receipt of the technology consultants' report; she is recommending that Jan Dente be paid for the work completed in good faith to date. The Superintendent, Business Manager and Tammy Holcomb had reviewed the work log of 13.5 hours from July 1, 2009 to present. All work has been completed outside of the regular work day. **Motion by Helen Mango, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to approve overtime pay for website work completed by Jan Dente to date. Motion carried.**

Other Lawful Business: None

Set Next Meeting: Executive Session, Special Meeting to be held March 22, 2010 at 5:30pm at Poultney High School. Regular/reorganization Meeting to be held March 22, 2010 at 7:00 pm at Poultney High School.

Executive Session: Motion made by Jodi Comeau, seconded by Mike Nagar to enter into executive session for the purpose of personnel matters at 9:55 pm. (Session for the board members and Superintendent, all others excused). Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente
Recording Secretary