

Poultney Town School Board
Official Minutes
November 18, 2008

Attending: Mary Jo Teetor, Board Chair, and Board Members Pat Davenport, Al Jackson, and Michael Nagar, Superintendent Tom Gallagher, JeanMarie Oakman, PHS Principal, Kristen Caliguiri, PES Principal, Louis Milazzo, Business Manager, Anne Colpitts, Recording Clerk, Bonnie Lenihan, Tracy Gallipo, Linda Leach, Soaring Vail, Chris Baker, Kyleen Martelle, Gary Jurnak, Christy Gloss, Craig Leach, Nancy Schwaner, Liz LeBrun, Clarena Renfrow, Melissa Kristiansen, Linda Paquette, Nancy Davenport, Michele Harmon, Tammy Petty, Kim Rupe, and Corey Davenport.

Chair Mary Jo Teetor called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.

Consent Agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes: Action: *Al Jackson moved to approve Unofficial Minutes from October 21, 2008 (Regular and Continuation), November 15, 2007, March 11, 2008, and March 13, 2008 (last three sets of minutes not previously presented to board for approval). Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried with amendments.

b. Superintendent's Report: Superintendent Gallagher asked Dick Stewart, a former superintendent who is now a consultant, to take an objective look at class size in the Poultney schools, in light of the current economic situation, the new state two vote requirement, and Poultney's declining enrollment. His goal was not to make recommendations, but to provide information. He said he recognizes that discussing student/teacher ratios and staffing is a sensitive issue and that offering a comprehensive program is difficult in a small school. At PES, the average ratio of students to teachers is 15.15:1, which is about average for the state. The special ed staffing ratio is slightly on the heavy side for state average. In grades 7-8, the average student to teacher ratio is 11.83:1; in most middle schools it would be 17 or 18. Changing from offering 6 sections of core subjects to offering 4 would raise class averages to 18-19. In grades 9-12, the ratio of students to teachers in most subjects was 11 or 12 to 1, in part because of small numbers in advanced and AP classes. Foreign language was an outlier with an average of 7:1, and P.E. was higher with an average of 15:1. The state average class size for secondary schools is around 20:1. The ratio of special ed students in classrooms and case managed is around the state average. Dick also broke down cost per pupil for teaching staff and supplies (not including library, guidance and administration). The average cost per pupil was \$6,400 in elementary, \$8,223 in 7-8, and \$6,867 in 9-12. Compared to state averages, the per pupil cost is somewhat high, due to the low student to teacher ratio. Compared to Rutland, where the average elementary school ratio is 20:1 and the secondary 22:1, Poultney's is lower. Superintendent Gallagher said there are two options in a situation like this - cut staff or increase enrollment. To increase enrollment, Superintendent Gallagher encouraged the schools' staffs to do what they can to create a positive reputation for the schools in town. Poultney schools should also

do more to promote themselves, for example, by advertising the opportunity to take college classes. One idea would be to make a video to show to other districts. Mike Nagar suggested showing the video to realtors in the area as well.

c. Principals' Reports: PHS: Corey Davenport, a PHS junior, presented a proposal to do Community Service Learning as an alternative to the PDC. Corey presented a list of the Vermont state standards and demonstrated how many of them can be completed through Community Service Learning. He proposed doing 100 hours of community service with Young at Heart and the Poultney Recreation Program and maintaining a journal during that time. He said he feels this would be a valuable choice for students, would serve the community, and would raise the profile of the school in town. Mary Jo clarified that he was requesting the board approve this as an alternative for himself and for other students in the future. Principal Oakman recommended that the board approve this alternative for Corey, but not as a general alternative for other students. Although she said that Community Service Learning is an equally valid way of assessing a student's acquisition of developmental assets, PHS chose to require PDC's and the program has worked well. Superintendent Gallagher suggested requiring community service as a graduation requirement (apart from the PDC's). Principal Oakman also suggested that Corey conclude his community service experience with a final reflection that would be presented to a jury of his peers. Pat Davenport complimented Corey on a great presentation, and suggested maintaining a signed log to protect him from any questions in the future. **Action:** *Mary Jo Teetor moved to allow make an exception for Corey that would allow him to do Community Service Learning instead of a PDC to meet the graduation requirement. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

PES: Linda Leach and Soaring Vail presented on the new core reading program, Reading Street. The presentation focused on the technology portion of the program, which is in addition to the student textbook and the regular teacher's manual. The website offers many resources that are included for no additional cost, including transparencies and leveled readers. It gives students the opportunity to work on-line and get instantaneous results. The program also allows for differentiation, including for ELL students, and allows teachers to plan and create assessments on-line. Grades 2-6 use this program, and K and 1 use the leveled readers. Both the teachers presenting and Principal Caliguiri reported that their students are excited and engaged by the new curriculum.

PHS (continued): The fall semester final exam schedule has been set. Kelli Wilson-Young has been hired as SAP counselor and will be paid through Title 4 funds. She is a family therapist and drug and alcohol counselor, and she will be working Mondays and Thursdays. Principal Oakman has also been brainstorming marketing strategies, and plans to update school and guidance brochures, look at participation rates in clubs and sports, and create a student-made video of the school. Other positives to highlight include: safety, partnerships with local colleges, small class size, PDC's, student handbook, championship sports teams (3 last year), high quality drama productions, peer mediation, options for customizing curriculum to individual needs, good professional development, before and afterschool programs, lots of grant writing, student-centered challenge program, artist-in-residence programs, strong parent

involvement, 3 computer labs, clean and attractive facilities, school is hub of the community, wellness center, connections to local colleges, community service opportunities, and receiving a “private school education at a public school”.

d. Business Manager’s Report:

1. Approve Warrants:
 - a. #41, in the amount of \$190,817.68, dated 10/10/08
 - b. #42, in the amount of \$144,922.27 dated 10/24/08
 - c. #43, in the amount of \$66,505.63, dated 11/7/08
2. Financial Reports: Louis Milazzo handed out a variance analysis for the current year in a new format. The summary of variances, mostly due to staffing changes, shows an anticipated positive variance of \$23,000.

Old Business:

- a. FY10 Budget: Louis gave a general overview of the new budget. He put in step increases, and met with both principals to add line items they have control over. Salaries and benefits are estimates since this is a negotiation year. Insurance costs should only increase 2% according to a letter from the insurance company. The total expense is \$246,000 over FY09, a 3.39% increase overall. Of this, \$165,000 is due to salary and benefits estimated increases. In the SU budget, the total assessment to Poultney is down by \$51,470.

New Business:

- a. Textbook Approval: Done
- b. Negotiations: The board received a letter from the association leadership asking how the board would like to proceed. Superintendent Gallagher said that the board needed to set dates and clarify the superintendent’s role. Pat Davenport proposed meeting before the holidays to set a timeline. The association representative agreed, and Superintendent Gallagher will set up that meeting.
- c. Non-teaching coaching pay FY08 – clarification: Superintendent Gallagher asked to clarify when the raise for non-teaching coaches to the same pay rate as teachers went into effect. The board minutes from February 2008 said it would take effect in the 2008-2009 school year, but some people remembered that it would take effect mid-year, when the change was approved. The board agreed that the minutes were accurate.

Policies:

- a. 2nd/3rd Reading:
 - i. Acceptable Use of Electronics and the Internet
Action: *Mary Jo moved to adopt with the following amendments: 1) In the third paragraph on p. 2, “administrative procedures” is replaced by “staff and student procedures,” and 2) In the last sentence, “staff” is changed to “staff and students” both times it appears. Al seconded the motion. Motion carried.

b. 1st Reading:

- i. Policy on Policy: 2nd reading in January
- ii. Board Member Conflict of Interest: 2nd reading in January
- iii. VSBA Code of Ethics: 2nd reading in January
- iv. Public Participation at Board Meetings: 2nd reading in January
- v. Professional Development: Superintendent will implement next year, and will clarify if it refers to PTSD or SU professional development. 2nd reading in January
- vi. Volunteers and Work-Study Students: Board members raised concerns about losing volunteers and substitutes who have to pay for their own background checks, and proposed possibly paying the fee in some cases. No action was taken.
- vii. Alcohol and Drug-Free Workplace: 2nd reading in January
- viii. Public Complaints About Personnel: 1st reading in June 2007, 2nd in July 2007, adopted 8/21/07
- ix. Drug and Alcohol Testing – Transportation Employees: 2nd reading in January
- x. Harassment of Employees: This policy should be reviewed by attorney. No action taken on this or remaining policies.
Procedures – Harassment of Employees
- xi. AIDS/HIV Infection
- xii. Residency Policy
- xiii. Firearms
- xiv. Limited English Proficiency Students
- xv. Participation of Home Study Students
- xvi. Hazing
- xvii. Pupil Privacy Rights
- xviii. Education Support System
- xix. Student Conduct and Discipline
- xx. Selection of Instructional Materials
- xxi. Head Lice
- xxii. Wellness

Action on Personnel:

a. New Hires

- i. Tammy Moyer – Athletic Scheduler PES
- ii. Nicole Batease – IA PES
- iii. Joey Williams – Varsity Basketball Cheering PHS
- iv. Kim Jones – 8th Grade Girls’ Basketball PHS
- v. Jean Haskins – IA (revised due to certification/pp)
- vi. John Lizotte – IA at Stafford

b. Resignations

- i. Nicole Manning – IA PHS

c. Terminations – None

d. Request/Notification of Early Retirement

- i. Linda Leach

e. Amended Request for Maternity Leave

- i. Beth Winters – Extended to 12-16 weeks from the previously approved 8 weeks.

Action: *Al Jackson moved to accept action on personnel, noting that Linda Leach's early retirement was accepted with regret. Pat Davenport seconded. Motion carried.

General Public Comment: None

Next Regular Meeting: December 16, 2008, 6:30pm, PHS.

Mary Jo Teetor adjourned the meeting to move to executive session at 9:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Colpitts, Recording Clerk