

Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
Regular Board of Directors Meeting
July 28, 2008
7:00 PM at Middletown Springs Elementary School

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Board Members Present: Tracee Oakman Rupe, Russell North, Jim Gilmour, Kimberly Mathewson, Clarence Haynes, Jodi Comeau, Mary Jo Teetor, Al Jackson, Mike Nagar, Anne Robbins, Tammy Holcomb, Karen Stomski, Superintendent Thomas Gallagher.

Others Present: Michelle Folger, Bonnie Lenihan, Richard Stewart, Tammy Petty, and Colleen Nagar.

The meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM by Chair Clarence Haynes.

Motion by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Karen Stomski to move the board into executive session for the purpose of personnel interview. The Board included Superintendent Gallagher, Interim Business Manager Richard Stewart and Board Member Tracee Oakman Rupe into the executive session. Motion carried.

Motion by Karen Stomski, seconded by Russell North to move the board out of executive session at 8:18PM. Motion carried.

Motion made by Russell North, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to authorize the Superintendent to offer the position of Business Manager, with a base salary of \$60,000.00 (prorated) and prorated benefits, to Louis Milazzo; to include other duties as assigned by the Superintendent, effective August 25, 2008. Motion carried.

Consent Agenda:

Minutes: The minutes of May 19, 2008 (Continuation); June 18, 2008 (Finance Committee); June 23, 2008 (Regular), and June 30 (Continuation) and July 2, 2008 (Continuation) were reviewed. Discussion ensued.

Amendments noted as follows: Insert the name Bernie Lambek, Esq. to the list of those present on the meeting June 30, 2008. Correct to FY08 (from FY09) on page 2 of the June 18, 2008 Finance Committee report/minutes. The minutes from July 2, 2008 (Continuation) need clarification/verification of the actual language as stated by the Board Attorney regarding the Agreement between Cheryl Chedester and the Board. The

Board indicated that a sentence was omitted from the written agreement which differs from the Agreement which was read aloud to the Board by the Board Attorney. The Chair will review the audio tape, and will contact the Board attorney regarding the matter and shall report back to the board at the August meeting.

Report of the Superintendent: Superintendent Gallagher submitted a written report (included in board packets) and in addition, commented on the policy for curriculum development. It was not apparent which version of the policy was the most recent. The matter will be researched and reported back at the August meeting. There will be a Policy Committee Meeting on August 6 at 6PM at the Office of Tracee Oakman Rupe.

Appreciation was given to the Superintendent for his thoughtful comments in his report, especially in the section of Roberts Rules of Order. The Superintendent was asked to elaborate on this area, and he spoke candidly to the Board regarding common goals throughout the Supervisory Union, some of which he suggested be discussed in executive session. The Superintendent indicated that he has observed wonderful things happening in the classrooms and that he has also observed Administrators, staff and Boards all want the same goals. He indicated that it is his role to establish these common goals.

The Superintendent elaborated on the Central Office issues noted in his report. He indicated that the Human Resource Module was much more complicated and time consuming than anyone realized. The amount of details, and research needed to obtain all the data to input is more extensive than believed. The Superintendent also elaborated on the issue of the amount of time taken away from the Administrative Assistant's position (thus his support) based on the amount of time needed for board meetings, as well as transcription time. The Superintendent reported that historically the recording secretary position was afforded a separate stipend, however, this stipend was cut from the budget a few years ago and the responsibilities were added to the job description for the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent. The added responsibility, and removal of the stipend, has resulted in less time being available to support the Superintendent. The Superintendent will discuss suggestions further with the Board at a later date. Discussion ensued. The Superintendent will report back to the Board with answers to some questions posed.

Business Manager's Report: deferred to new or old business as there are proposed action items within the report.

Report of the Director of Student Support Services: Written report was submitted and included in board packet (addendum). Bonnie was asked details regarding the transportation issue. Discussion ensued.

Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Russell North to allow the Director of Student Support Services, in collaboration with the Superintendent, to investigate optional transportation vendors; to secure the most cost effective and safe method of transportation. Motion carried.

The Board questioned whether or not there were additional new hires and Bonnie responded that there were and they would be listed on the next board agenda for approval as the worksheets had been provided after this agenda was completed. Bonnie also clarified for the Board that a new hire listed on the current agenda (Claudia Ellis) which indicates partial funding via IDEIA-B Grant was not inclusive of summer services, it was only for school year services.

Report of Curriculum Director: No written report due to Director's summer schedule. The Director verbally reported that the CFP (Consolidated Federal Program) Grant(s) did receive substantial approval, allowing us to move forward with contracting employees for summer services and other salaried positions for FY09; the final approval was being worked on in collaboration with the Superintendent and the Interim Business Manager. Michelle also reported that she has been working with Jay Niles on the data analysis for test scores; and that she would be attending the retreat at Mt. Snow next week with all the other Administrators. Michelle is also working on the new teacher mentoring assignments. She commented that we had received high praise from the program assessors for our current Teacher Mentors. She is working on the new teacher orientation.

Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Kimberly Mathewson to approve the consent agenda with the noted amendments to the minutes; with the exception of the July 2, 2008 Continuation Minutes, which will be tabled to the August meeting. Motion carried.

General Public Comments: None

Old Business:

Process Improvements: Board was referred to the material in the packets regarding the recommendations regarding account reconciliation (memo July 17th). Interim Business Manager, Richard Stewart spoke at length, (providing details) with the Board regarding the recommendations/proposals for correcting this process.

Mr. Stewart recommends that the Board approve revising the title of the Accounts Payable Clerk to Accounting Clerk and to increase the hourly rate of pay by .30 per hour (due to the added responsibilities), effective August 1, 2008. He outlined the corrected process for improving this process, including timelines, and increased collaboration and cooperation with the Treasurers.

Mr. Stewart's second proposal was to contract with NEMRC for technical assistance necessary for reconciling prior accounts. He was able to secure a lowered rate for the services, if the board approves.

Mr. Stewart impressed upon the board the urgency and necessity of the above proposed recommendations in order to comply with audit findings and prior board directives. He

commented that the goal was to have the reconciliations current (provided the board approved the proposals) prior to the field audit scheduled for November 20, 2008.

Discussion ensued.

Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Al Jackson, to accept/approve the proposals as presented by the Interim Business Manager. Motion carried.

Financial Report:

Mr. Stewart referred the board to the material in their packets (Memo July 21) FY08 Ending Fund Balance. He stated, subject to final audit, that the ending fund balance is expected to be -\$1,350.00; a nearly level funded fund balance. At the conclusion of his report, the Interim Business Manager was excused.

The Chair called for a break at 9:45PM; and called the meeting back to order at 9:58PM.

New Business:

Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Russell North to authorize the extension of Mr. Stewart's contract two weeks from the start of the new Business Manager's contract, plus one additional day each week, up to ten (10) additional days at the current daily rate of pay. Mr. Stewart has agreed to be available as long as necessary via e-mail during and after this time. Motion carried.

Human Resource Committee: No report. The Committee was charged with reviewing the Central Office Administrators and Staff Benefits Guidelines, as well as reviewing the benefits for all RSWSU Teachers. There were also two requests presented from Central Office staff for pay increases and benefit increased which the committee was to review prior to budget season. The HR Committee Chair will work on scheduling a meeting.

Policy Committee: None. Next meeting is scheduled for 8/6/08, 6:00 PM at the Office of Tracee Oakman Rupe, Wells, VT.

Finance Committee: Included in packet, and reported by Mr. Stewart. Next meeting is scheduled for 8/18/08.

Approval of Warrants:

#28, 30, 31 & 32 as noted on the agenda.

Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Anne Robbins to accept/approve the warrants as presented. Motion carried.

Policies:

Policy Dissemination (revised) for 1st reading (#2): Add BOARD MEMBERS before employees to the sentence “It will be the responsibility of the employees and students to know and follow the Board policy.” With this noted change, this policy will be moved to the August meeting for 2nd reading.

Animal Dissection for 1st reading: Discussion ensued the possibility of requiring parental permission for the student(s) to elect to opt out. It was determined that this could be included in the procedures rather than the policy. It was agreed by consensus to move this policy to the August meeting for 2nd reading.

Action on Personnel Contracts:

Motion made by Clarence Haynes, seconded by Tammy Holcomb to table approving the personnel contracts (new hires) until after executive session. Motion carried.

Other Lawful Business:

Discussion ensued regarding holding an Open House in honor of the new Superintendent.

Mike Nagar brought up the topic from the last regular meeting regarding the removal of the Chair from office. He asked if the Chair was willing to resign. He asked if the Chair was willing to work out issues with the board. He asked if the Chair was willing to step up to the responsibilities of the Chair.

Clarence asked for the Vice Chair to take over the meeting to allow him the opportunity to respond.

Mary Jo Teetor, VC announced that Mike Nagar had the floor. Mike pressed the Chair for answers.

Clarence Haynes stated that he does not agree with the premise (that he was asked to resign) as stated, and will answer specific questions.

Mike Nagar stated that he had attempted to reach Clarence over a PSD issue. Mike stated that PSD was in “crisis “ and he did not receive a return phone call from Clarence.

Clarence Haynes responded; How and why does the Chair of the RSWSU have any power over the PSD board?

Mike Nagar responded; You have influence over the Superintendent, and the PSD Board was having issues with the Superintendent.

Mary Jo Teetor commented, communication is crucial; confidentiality was breached between the Superintendent and the Board (RSWSU) Chair. It is important for the RSWSU Chair to be available.

Clarence Haynes requested that the issue be taken to executive session in order that he might answer more fully.

Mike Nagar disagreed.

Kimberly Mathewson suggested that the Superintendent had offered to meet with the Chair and Vice Chair to attempt to resolve some of the issues. She commented that rather than hash the issues out at this meeting, the board allow the Superintendent and the two board members an opportunity to meet in an effort to resolve their differences. Kimberly commented on how positive the meeting had been to this point, and stressed the goal of the entire board to move forward in a positive direction, and not to fall back into the formerly negative direction.

Mike Nagar agreed with the suggestion for providing the opportunity for the Superintendent to work with the Chair and Vice Chair to resolve their differences.

Mike Nagar called for the Chair to publicly apologize to the PSD Valedictorian and her family for making comments as quoted in a Rutland Herald article regarding grade issues at PHS.

Clarence Haynes inquired if all the grade issues had been handled, and if all were straightened out?

Mary Jo Teetor stated that the grade issues are and have been dealt with. She also commented that as issues arise, they are dealt with.

Clarence Haynes stated that he did not contact the Rutland Herald, they contacted him.

Discussion ensued, the article was referenced and portions were read aloud.

Further conversation occurred.

Kimberly Mathewson reiterated her earlier suggestion and strongly urged the board to allow the meeting between the Chair, Vice Chair and the Superintendent to take place. She referenced the Superintendent's comments in his earlier report for moving toward common goals. She stated that the tenor of this portion of the meeting was counter productive to meeting or moving toward these goals.

Further comments were made regarding the dissatisfaction of some of the board members (PSD) with the Chair (RSWSU).

Mary Jo Teetor, VC asked if the board had reached a consensus to allow the meeting(s) to take place between the Chair, Vice Chair and Superintendent and to report back to the full board on the outcome/progress. The board agreed they had reached a consensus.

Kimberly Mathewson inquired of the roles and responsibilities of the executive committee. Mary Jo Teetor stated that the full board must charge the executive committee with specific responsibilities. Whatever the outcome of the executive committee meeting, any action must be by the full board.

Motion made by Mary Jo Teetor, seconded by Kimberly Mathewson, for the RSWSU Board Chair and Vice Chair to meet with the Superintendent in an effort to resolve differences and to report on the status of said meeting(s) to the board at the August meeting. Discussion ensued. Motion carried.

Motion made by Clarence Haynes, seconded by Jodi Comeau that the issues raised and comments made be tabled until the August meeting. Discussion ensued. Motion carried.

Mary Jo Teetor turned the meeting back over to Clarence Haynes.

Discussion continued regarding the Open House for the Superintendent. A volunteer committee was established (Mary Jo Teetor, Tammy Holcomb, Steve Letendre, Annie Robbins or Lisa Patry). Approved by consensus.

A Board member inquired of the Superintendent whether or not a meeting between the board and the Administrators was being scheduled. The Superintendent stated that he would discuss this in executive session with the board.

Set Next Meeting: August 25, 2008 7:00 PM at Tinmouth.

Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Karen Stomski to move the board into executive session, at 10:51 PM, for the purpose of discussing personnel matters. The board included the Superintendent into the executive session. Motion carried.

The recording secretary was excused.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente
Recording Secretary
RSWSU

**Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
July 28, 2008 (Continuation)
Board of School Directors**

Official Minutes

July 28, 2008

Karen Stomski moved the board leave executive session at 12:01am. Jodi Comeau seconded. Motion carried.

Clarence Haynes moved to approve new hires as listed on agenda. Karen Stomski seconded. Motion carried.

Clarence moved to instruct the superintendent to deal with the personnel issue of the Director of Student Services in an appropriate manner. Tammy Holcomb seconded. Motion carried.

Karen Stomski moved to adjourn at 12:04am. Mike Nagar seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Mathewson, clerk