

**Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union**  
**Board of School Directors' (Regular) Meeting**  
November 24, 2008  
7:30 P.M. at Middletown Springs Elementary School

**Official Minutes**

Board Members Present: Mary Jo Teetor (M), Mike Nagar (M), Steve Letendre (M), Kimberly Mathewson (M), Anne Robbins (M), Russell North (M), Pat Davenport (M), Charity Downs (M), Karen Stomski (M), Tammy Holcomb (M), Helen Mango (M), Jodi Comeau (arrived at approximately 8:20) (M), and Superintendent Thomas Gallagher.

Others Present: Bonnie Lenihan, Director of Student Support Services, Darren McIntyre, Assistant Special Education Coordinator, Michelle Folger, Director of Curriculum, Louis Milazzo, Business Manager.

---

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 P.M. by Vice Chair Mary Jo Teetor.

**Consent Agenda:**

Approval of Unofficial Minutes of October 27, 2008 (Regular and Continuation).

Revised Official Minutes of September 22, 2008 handed out. Notes from HR Committee meeting also handed out.

\*Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Karen Stomski to approve the minutes from October 27, 2008 (regular and continuation).

Amendments to be made as noted below:

October 27, 2008 (regular) - Under Present - Pat Davenport should be listed as Member (**M**) not Alternate (A).

Specify Systems Management **Committee**.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: correct Act 62 to **Act 82**.

Continuation Minutes (10/27/08):

Should read "**continuation**" of regular meeting not special and the meeting took place at **Poultney High School**, not Middletown Springs.

\*It should be noted, after exiting executive session, the board determined the substitute list should be brought back to the November meeting for approval (after reviewed by, and feedback received from building administrators).

\*Motion carried to approve minutes (regular and continuation) of October 27, 2008 with noted

amendments.

Report of the Superintendent: In addition to the written report included in the board packets, Superintendent Gallagher provided handouts to members of the HR Committee and Finance Committee regarding salary survey data for superintendents, principals and central office staff personnel (state-wide). Superintendent Gallagher also brought the Governance Study (included in the board packets) to the boards' attention as some of the data in the report was pertinent to current issues.

The Superintendent clarified (for the board) that the transportation contract was not a supervisory union contract as reported earlier; each applicable local board has a separate transportation contract. The transportation contracts will come before each applicable local board in December.

Superintendent Gallagher expressed concern regarding liability and workers compensation issues if the practice of Central Office personnel maintaining the sidewalk during winter months were to continue. The Superintendent is evaluating other alternatives.

The Superintendent advised the board that the Policy on Policy (included in the board packets) was being re-written and should not come before the board at this meeting.

It may be necessary to reschedule the December RSWSU board meeting as the Tinmouth Elementary School is unable to accommodate due to a conflict in scheduling. Discussion ensued.

Helen Mango suggested the meeting could still take place in Tinmouth using the old firehouse rather than the school. Agreed by consensus.

Superintendent Gallagher had attended a legislative meeting earlier in the day and reported that he spoke on behalf of some of our local boards who may be negatively impacted by the 2-vote legislation recently passed. The legislators agreed to re-visit.

The Superintendent clarified that there were two audit training opportunities (curriculum audit); not three as reported earlier. There are none in September.

The substitute list is not back before the board for approval at this meeting as the superintendent has not received feedback from two of the building administrators to date.

The Superintendent reported he had been in contact with RSWSU Board Chair, Clarence Haynes. He wished Mr. Haynes improved good health. Mr. Haynes regrets that he was unable to attend the meeting this evening, due to continued health concerns.

Superintendent Gallagher proposed to the board that the Superintendent Search be conducted internally. He suggested that he would be willing to do the majority of the work. He felt that doing so would provide a larger pool of qualified applicants as confidentiality could be controlled/ensured. He has been in contact with the VSBA and they have agreed to refund the approximately \$1,500.00 which was paid to them previously for the continuation of the search (advertising costs). Superintendent Gallagher will confirm the dollar amount. Discussion ensued.

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Mike Nagar to approve Superintendent Gallagher's proposal to handle the Superintendent Search locally. Motion carried.

Report of the Business Manager: Mr. Milazzo handed out variance reports stating the primary variance was due to a number of outstanding checks. Discussion ensued. Mr. Milazzo will report the outstanding checks to the State (unclaimed property division).

The field audits have been completed and Mr. Milazzo expects a draft report in approximately one month. The Finance Committee was unable to meet with the auditors while they were here due to time restrictions and scheduling difficulties for the board members. The auditors indicated it would be possible to attend a meeting to discuss details if needed (at a cost to the supervisory union). It was agreed by consensus that the board would await the draft audit before determining the need for scheduling a meeting with the auditors.

Mr. Milazzo reminded the board that the SU incurs interest when paying the VSBIT insurance (liability) on a quarterly basis. He inquired whether the board felt it was feasible to pay the entire amount up front to avoid interest payments. Discussion ensued. Mr. Milazzo will research the cash flow for each school district as well as the supervisory union to determine if it would be possible to pay the premium at the beginning of the fiscal year in the future.

Report of Director of Student Support Services: (written report included in board packets). The board questioned #10 on the written report regarding receipt of late invoices from Mill River. Discussion ensued. Mr. Milazzo is researching. Superintendent Gallagher elaborated details for the boards' information. Further discussion ensued.

There were no further questions of Mrs. Lenihan.

Report of Director of Curriculum: (written report included in the board packets). There were no questions from the board.

**General Public Comments:** None

### **Budget FY10:**

Superintendent Gallagher addressed the board regarding the state of the economy. Research has been completed comparing our S.U to other S.U.s and it was determined that RSWSU has more Central Office staff than the needs of the supervisory union dictate (based on student enrollment).

Superintendent Gallagher informed the board that Mr. LaRosa (Grant Coordinator) was not returning in FY10 and the position was not being replaced; the work was to be absorbed by other administrators throughout the supervisory union including Central Office. Superintendent Gallagher also proposed that the Director of Curriculum position would be eliminated in FY10 with the work to be absorbed by the Superintendent and other administrators throughout the supervisory union. Superintendent Gallagher proposed that he return in FY10 at a significant decrease in salary, as Superintendent while mentoring a new Superintendent who would act as Assistant Superintendent. Mr. Gallagher would work an abbreviated schedule, frontloading most of his time to the beginning of the year and gradually decreasing his schedule as the Assistant Superintendent's responsibilities increased, allowing for adequate transition and training. The board could, at anytime, decide to change the schedule (decreasing the Superintendent's time if it felt it necessary). In FY11 Mr. Gallagher proposed not filling the Assistant Superintendent position. Mr. Gallagher informed the board that the FY10 budget reflected this proposal with an estimated cost savings of \$30,000.00. It is Superintendent Gallagher's hope and desire to find a Superintendent replacement who is willing to commit to at least five years.

Superintendent Gallagher reported that Mr. Milazzo was also handing out information regarding fund balances. The assessment report will not be handed out, as assessments are not yet final. Updated assessment information will follow at a later time. Assessments are subject to change depending on the ADM reporting.

Superintendent Gallagher informed the board that the curriculum department savings is offset in the Superintendent section of the FY10 proposed budget. There was one line item in the proposed budget which reflects a proposed 3% salary increase for Central Office staff.

The Ira School District has inquired regarding not being assessed for business office services (specifically AP/AR and Payroll). Tinmouth is already excluded from the assessment in this area as they provide their own bookkeeping services. Ira asks for the same consideration (since they do pay for the assessment for technology even though they do not have a school or technology). This proposal would result in an approximate \$4,000.00 decrease to Ira's assessment. The difference would be assessed to the remaining school districts with Poultney paying \$2,500, Middletown Springs paying \$700, and Wells paying \$800. Discussion ensued. This issue will be taken under consideration and

discussed further at a future meeting.

A board member inquired of the Superintendent regarding his vision for a new Superintendent, what the likelihood was of not finding a Superintendent who could “hit the ground running”. Superintendent Gallagher responded that the likelihood was higher that the supervisory union would find someone who was not a sitting superintendent (primarily due to the salary being offered). His proposal would allow the supervisory union to transition an inexperienced individual through mentoring which (in Mr. Gallagher’s opinion) would provide support, thus increasing the likelihood of the individual staying. The Superintendent elaborated further for the board.

It was determined that, if possible, the board should approve the budget at this meeting in order to allow the local boards to move forward with their budgets. Superintendent Gallagher thanked the Finance Committee and especially Mr. Milazzo who worked extremely hard on the proposed budget. The process was well done. The board echoed the Superintendent’s thanks.

\*Motion made by Steve Letendre, seconded by Karen Stomski to move the board into executive session at 8:35 P.M. for the purpose of discussing personnel and budgetary issues. Motion carried.

\*Motion made by Kimberly Mathewson, seconded by Karen Stomski to move the board out of executive session at 8:45 P.M. Motion carried.

\*Motion made by Tammy Holcomb, seconded by Anne Robbins to approve the proposed FY10 budget. Motion carried.

Kimberly Mathewson stated that the board appreciates Mr. Gallagher’s hard work to date as well as his proposal for FY10. In approving the budget, the board approves Mr. Gallagher’s proposal as well. The board wishes to publicly acknowledge Michelle Folger for her many years of dedicated service to the Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union. Michelle has been very gracious and professional regarding the decision to eliminate the position of Director of Curriculum, she is to be commended. The Superintendent stated for the record (and the board reiterated) that the decision is strictly financial and not at all performance related.

**Report of Finance Committee:** Tammy Holcomb reported that the primary focus of the committee has been on FY10 budget. A board member inquired regarding the status of bank reconciliations. Mr. Milazzo reported that all districts are up to date. Mrs. Marino was working with NEMRC in finalizing one account, Mr. Milazzo will report back to the board on the status next month. Going forward, all is staying current. The Finance Committee will not meet in December. It will schedule its next meeting in January.

**HR Committee Report:** The committee also dealt with FY10 budget work. Superintendent Gallagher inquired if the HR Committee previously handled the Superintendent Search, or if there had been a separate committee. The previous procedures were explained. A board member noted that there should be fair representation of all boards on whatever committee was assigned to this role. The Superintendent will take the prior procedures under advisement and will inform the board at a later date of his proposal regarding the process.

A board member inquired if the supervisory union was on target with the new 403(b) regulations. Mr. Milazzo explained the process and indicated he believed the S.U. was up to date. He will update the board at the next meeting. There will be no HR Committee meeting in December, one will be scheduled in January.

**Report of Systems Management Committee:** Helen Mango referenced the notes included in the board packet and outlined the progress to date as well as the future goals. There will be no committee meeting in December, the next meeting will take place in January.

Superintendent Gallagher indicated that the committee would review a time management proposal to post policies on the SU website, thus decreasing the need to create paper manuals and repeat work for each board's packet.

**Approval of Warrant #42** was acknowledged by the board.

Vice Chair Teetor called for a short break at 9:07 P.M. resuming the meeting at 9:25 P.M.

**Policies:**

Superintendent Gallagher reminded the board to remove the Policy on Policy as it was being re-written. He recommended the board pay special attention to policies on Driver Education and Residency.

**Policies (for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading):**

Grade Advancement (G-9): add "or designee" under Implementation, after "The Superintendent". No further changes.

Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Criminal Record Checks (D-1): Discussion. No further changes.

Board Commitment to Non-discrimination (C-6): add "gender identity" as a protected class under Policy section (after age,); and again under Notice of Non-Discrimination, first paragraph, (after age,). Reference new statute in footnotes for gender identity. No further changes.

Student Attendance (F-25): add "or designee" after "The Superintendent" (second paragraph). No further changes.

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to adopt the four policies (Grade Advancement; Personnel Recruitment, Selection, Appointment and Criminal Record Checks; Board Commitment to Non-Discrimination: and Student Attendance) as amended. Motion carried.

**Policies (for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading):**

Driver Education: strike "is within" and replace with "has a high school within" second paragraph (after Poultney Town School District). Add "designated" (after no and before high schools) in paragraph three, first sentence. Strike "'s jurisdiction" fourth paragraph second line. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Residency: Discussion, no changes noted, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Board Meetings Agenda Preparation (C-1): add "Supervisory Union" (before Board) under Agenda Preparation, first sentence. Add "& Vice Chair" (after Board Chair) end of first sentence, under Agenda Preparation. Add sentence to end of paragraph under Agenda Preparation indicating the Warnings and Agendas shall specify the purpose for executive sessions during regular meetings (if known in advance). Warnings and Agendas shall specify the purpose for executive sessions for Special or

Emergency Meetings. Specify the locations for posting warnings/agendas for each board in paragraph two under Agenda Distribution . Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Board Meetings (C-2): No changes, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Regular Board Meetings (Procedures) (C-2R): reclassify order of agenda to match currently used format; also identify what falls under consent agenda. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Public Participation at Board Meetings (C-3): Discussion ensued. Superintendent Gallagher advised the board(s) to take a close look at this policy as it would change how some local boards currently hold meetings. Some local boards currently allow public participation throughout their meetings, not only during the section on the agenda for public comments. Superintendent Gallagher suggests this policy be discussed first at each local board level, with feedback to be presented to the Systems Management Committee. This policy tabled to a future meeting at this level.

Substitute Teachers (D-6): Remove “Principal and /or his/her” and replace with “teacher”, fifth paragraph. Add “services” after substitute (end of sentence, paragraph five). Define # of days for long term substitute in last paragraph. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Volunteer and Work Study Students (D-7): insert “or designee” after “Superintendent” beginning of last paragraph. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Emergency Closings (E-5): insert “or designee” after “Superintendent” in first paragraph. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

School Crisis Prevention & Response (E-7): Insert “or designee” after “Superintendent” under Administrative Responsibilities, 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph, first sentence. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Procedures for Bomb Threats (E-7R): Procedures already in place via crisis manual. Will be sure the crisis manual procedures are attached to the policy and/or referenced.

Student Publications (F-15): No changes noted, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Curriculum Coordinating Council (G-1A): Tabled for another 1<sup>st</sup> reading in January 2009. Reformat to match other policies.

Selecting Library Materials (G-4): no changes noted, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Complaints about Instructional Material (G-6): Insert “or designee” after “Superintendent” under Implementation, section 1. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Special Education (G-10): No changes noted, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

School Community Relations (H-1): No changes noted, move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

Parental Involvement (H-2): Insert “or designee” after “Superintendent” under Implementation, first sentence. Move to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading.

\*The board agreed by consensus to move the policies noted above, with amendments, with the exception of Public Participation at Board Meetings and Curriculum Coordinating Council, to 2<sup>nd</sup> reading in

December.

**Personnel Contracts:**

New Hires: Kelli Wilson-Young (SAP Counselor at PHS) (funded by CFP Grant; Sara Brzezinski (Drama Club Teacher at Middletown Springs) (funded by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant); Lana Deppert (Substitute for ASP at Tinmouth) (funded by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant) and Linda Chanlatte (Part-time Administrative Assistant to Curriculum Director).

Resignations: None

Terminations: None

\*Motion made by Charity Downs, seconded by Helen Mango to approve the news hires as listed. Motion carried.

**Other Lawful Business:** None.

**Set Next Meeting:** Next meeting scheduled for December 22, 2008 at 7:00 P.M. at the Old Firehouse in Tinmouth. (Helen Mango will forward directions),

\*Motion made by Helen Mango, seconded by Karen Stomski to adjourn at 10:20 P.M. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Dente  
RSWSU Board Recording Secretary