

TROY SCHOOL
SCHOOL BOARD MEETING (REGULAR)
Troy School
Thursday, December 7, 2017

APPROVED MINUTES

- I. Gaston called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
The Pledge of Allegiance was recited to open the meeting.
Gaston then called for any additions or adjustments to the agenda:
- Cliff asked that agenda item III., Public Comments, be moved after agenda item VI., Superintendent’s Report, as was discussed and agreed to at the October 19, 2017 meeting. Gaston clarified that the NCSU cautioned against this seemingly minor and permanent agenda modification. As a matter of practice and policy, issues brought before the Board are best addressed locally (i.e., the lowest level possible). Should concerns persist, there is an established process that allows for involvement of the Superintendent and Board. In short, there is concern that the process to resolved issues/complaints may (at times) be circumvented with this agenda modification. Further, the longer wait time for those wishing to address the Board is viewed as excessive and unnecessary. With no objection, ‘public comments’ remained as agenda item III.
 - Cliff asked that agenda item IV., Financial Report and Information, list the three specific issues (i.e., \$1,000.00 overage summary report, identify copier lease account, and fund transfers for under budgeted technology services/software) identified at the November 2, 2017 meeting. Gaston clarified that agenda item IV. C, Approve Miscellaneous Fund Transfers and/or Assignment of Budget Area, although broad, includes the three issues raised at the November 2 meeting. With no objection, agenda item IV. remained as written.
 - Gaston asked that agenda item IV., Financial Report and Information, specifically include determining if a special Board meeting would be convened in January (to approve the FY 2019 budget), and, if so, the date and time.
 - Gaston informed the Board that the Vermont School Board Association recently released a video entitled “Making Sense of Vermont’s Education Funding System”.
- II. Approve Minutes of November 2, 2017 (Attachment A). Referring to the overspent status of the copier lease account (Para V. B), Cliff cautioned against complacency knowing that \$9,800.00 was included in the budget. That is, although targeted for the copier lease, the funds may have been inadvertently reallocated to another account (i.e., to cover another expense). To be sure, the \$9,800.00 fund transfer must also include an assessment of the account from which it was transferred from (i.e., to ensure the account is not left in an over spent status). **Motion** to approve minutes of November 2, 2017. **FORSTER/APPROVED.**
- III. Public Comments, Communication with Parents/Staff/Citizens. Gaston welcomed community members and asked if they had comments for the Board. Hearing none, the Board moved to the next agenda item. NOTE: Ms. Cathi St. Marie arrived after public comments had been called for and addressed the Board after an adjustment in the agenda. Ms. St. Marie introduced herself as the owner and operator of a day care in North Troy Village. Comments included:
- Declining after school enrollment over the past 2 months was attributed to the extended (i.e., long) bus rides because of an unfilled bus driver position at the Troy School.
 - Not achieving capacity (because of the drop in after school enrollment) has caused a loss of income.
 - Given the modified bus route pick-up and drop-off times she recently ensured a student was by the curb ahead of the posted pick-up time. Although the student waited well beyond the posted pick-up time the bus never came.

- If Troy School was short staffed bus drivers because of non-competitive wages then increasing wages could/would resolve the situation.
- Alternatively, without competitive wages and continued reliance on one bus driver (rather than two) the concern (i.e., fear) is that the current, and ‘temporary’, conditions will become the new, and ‘permanent’, normal.
- In sum, is there a plan to hire a bus driver to get bus routes (pick-up and drop-off times) back to normal?

In response, Chris indicated that Ms. Daigneault would fill the vacated bus driver position (as Ms. St. Marie was aware). The more recent delay in hiring Ms. Daigneault was because she needed to pass a state mandated requirement to pass an air brake knowledge test before she can take the road test (Principal’s Report, para 3). The road test was rescheduled for December 19. Ms. Daigneault will be hired as soon as all state requirements for school bus drivers are met. Gaston and Mike indicated that Troy School’s experience was not uncommon as there is a state-wide shortage of bus drivers. In terms of wages, Chris indicated that the Board is unable to adjust wages outside the negotiated pay scale. To be sure, no one wants a student waiting for the bus in the cold longer than is necessary. Chris was to confirm pick-up and drop-off times to ensure everyone is provided with the correct information. Lastly, Gaston apologized for the position this situation has put her in with Chris acknowledging and appreciating everyone’s continued patience.

IV. Financial Report and Information

NOTE: The Board tabled discussion to allow Ms. Cathy St. Marie the opportunity to address the Board.

Action:

A. Approve warrants: **Motion** to approve warrants totaling \$190,549.14. G. BATHALON /**APPROVED**

B. Approve financial report of November 2017 (Attachment B):

- Chris handed out the ‘Over Under Report’, i.e., accounts that are over or under budget by \$1000.00 or more. Cliff requested that the ‘Over Under Report’ be included with the board packet to allow more time for review before the meeting.

Motion to approve the financial report of November 2017. G. BATHALON/**APPROVED**

C. Approve Miscellaneous Fund Transfers and/or Assignment of Budget Area:

- Glenn acknowledged the three technology-based contracted service accounts as being overspent. Given the magnitude of the budget deficits (range \$107.36 - \$983.22) is small, Glenn recommended not to make fund transfers at this time. The Board was in agreement and no further action was taken in regards to these accounts.
- 'The account with budgeted copier lease expenses was identified as 01-100-1100-5400-00-209-10, Purchase Property Services – Elementary (from November 2017 Over / Under Report). Cliff reiterated due diligence in that a fund transfer to the copier lease account must not result in an overspent status of the account from which the funds were transferred from.

Information/Discussion:

A. FY 2019 Budget Considerations and Recommendations

Glenn provided the Board with the first working draft of the FY 2019 budget. Key points:

- The FY 2019 first draft budget is \$16,586.13 (0.56%) lower than the approved FY 2018 budget.
- Notable changes in revenues include a \$47,000.00 (25.13%) loss in schoolwide programs subgrants, \$18,383.00 reduction in VT education spending grant (Troy School’s FY 2018 share of Governor Scott’s health savings recapture initiative), and \$20,000.00 loss of VT Small Schools Grant.
- The notable \$42,468.00 (39.78%) reduction (or savings) in transportation costs is not ‘real’. Consider that with this savings is an associated loss of \$42,468.00 in state aid for transportation (revenue). Simply, \$42,468.00 of transportation costs with the associated loss of \$42,468.00 in state aid for transportation (revenue) are shifted to the NCSU as a contracted service - as mandated by state statute.

- Chris distributed Troy School Budget Notes to serve as a reference for Board budget discussions. Cliff noted that with an anticipated increase in state taxes families on limited or fixed incomes will be hard hit. Therefore, he cautioned against bypassing programs that may be considered a ‘sacred cow’. Gaston agreed, in general, but cautioned against budget cuts that negatively affect student learning especially with Troy School likely being identified as needing improvement by AoE.
- It was agreed that the agenda for the January 4 meeting be focused primarily on the budget.

V. Principal’s Report (Attachment C)

- (Para. 3) Chris indicated that Ms. Daigneault (bus driver in training) was not allowed to take the bus road test scheduled for December 8. The delay is unfortunate as she needed to have taken and passed the air brake knowledge test (a requirement that he, and others, were unaware of). Ms. Daigneault rescheduled her road test to December 19. Chris appreciated everyone’s patience as this has been difficult for families with children riding the bus to school.

- (Para 4.a) Chris worked with John Elliott to obtain 3 estimates for heat tape supplies for installation on the PRE-K modular classroom.

Motion to purchase heat tape supplies from Green Mountain Electric (~\$4000.00) and to hire/contract D&D Electrical to install the heat tape (~\$1500.00) at the Pre-K modular classroom. G BATHALON/**APPROVED**

- (Paras 4.b-c) Chris received confirmation that approved USDA projects (with funding) may be revised to target other pressing projects. Troy School has met the USDA matching funds requirement. Discussion centered on identifying project priority. Cliff felt strongly that the west wall be given priority as it remains the only portion of the building envelope not renovated. That this portion of the building sits on a notoriously wet area is of great concern as there may be rot behind walls. Gaston and Mike concurred and so Chris narrowed in on construction estimates to renovate wall. As a next step, Chris will work with a local contractor to obtain a detailed cost estimate to renovate the wall (with adjustments, based on the condition of the building, determined during demolition). Glenn noted that the Board was required to advertise and invite bids for projects exceeding \$15,000.00.

Motion to obtain detailed cost estimates (with adjustments, up or down, based on condition of the wall) to renovate the west-side of the school building. FORSTER/**APPROVED**

- (Para 4.d) Chris clarified that there are 4 signs: 1 for Pre-K modular classroom (provided at no cost) and 3 for the main building (gym entrance, corner of building facing Town Clerk office, and front office entrance). The signs identify the buildings as ‘Troy School’.

Motion to approve the expenditure of \$559.00 for 4 signs as described / designed by ATD Signs. DESAUTELS/**APPROVED**

- (Para 8.d) Gaston asked if the restorative process was having a positive impact. Chris highlighted key aspects of the restorative process as was presented by the Troy School Intervention Team at the September 7 meeting. The goal is for students to own their behavior and, by so doing, reduce the more severe consequences (i.e., detention and suspension).
- Action: Gaston indicated that Board approval of the principal’s report was not required as the Board voted on actionable items as they are presented (per email correspondence with NCSU). Cliff thought that, at times, approving/accepting the report in total was appropriate if there were no actionable items presented. Gaston will ask for clarification.

VI. Superintendent’s Report: John deferred his time to lead the Fall Community Forum.

VII. Fall Community Forum – “NCSU’s Plan to Meet Act 46 Goals” (Attachment AGS)

Gaston introduced John as the moderator for the Fall Forum. His remarks included:

- Reviewing Act 46 goals and options for consolidation / governance (referring to the NCSU trifold ‘Act 46: Information and Options’).
- His believe is that local Boards provide transparency in school operations and funding.
- Under Act 46, the preferred model (or option) is for School Districts to merge and form one central School Board to oversee operations and funding of all schools. The one Board would have proportional representation such that small towns would have fewer Board members than larger towns. Specifically, the Troy School Board would no longer exist if the NCSU were to adopt the preferred option.
- State legislators provided tax incentives to School Districts and Supervisory Unions that chose to consolidate. Those tax incentives are not available to School Districts and Supervisory Unions that have not consolidated.
- With that as background, the NCSU was faced with a major decision. Without question, whether the NCSU consolidated or not was best decided by those with a vested interest – the local community. That is, an ‘ask rather than push’ strategy was implemented.
- Members of local Boards held meetings (NCSU-developed ‘Meeting in a Box’) that, for many, included talking at Town Meeting to determine the right path (option) for the NCSU.
- It was very clear that the NCSU would submit an alternative governance structure. That is, not consolidate but to keep the NCSU structure.
- The AoE published rules that served as a guide for what documents and/or data were required or recommended for inclusion in NCSU’s plan. The binders include all data, required or optional, to ensure nothing was missed.
- The narrative to the plan (found on the NCSU website) addresses how the NCSU, in its current configuration, will meet or exceed the goals of Act 46. The final document will be hand delivered to the AoE before Christmas.
- Secretary Holcomb, AoE, will report her recommendation (and decision) to the State Board of Education on June 1, 2018. Secretary Holcomb has the authority to deny NCSU’s alternative governance plan. She also has the authority to approve it but with mandatory conditions.
- The State Board of Education will review and give final approval of school district plans to meet the goals of Act 46.
- Looking to the future, John is concerned that the Vermont Legislature may force consolidation of school districts that choose not to consolidate under Act 46.

VIII. Unfinished Business

Updates:

- A. Health Insurance Buyout. John clarified that no Board action was needed/required as the VEHI open enrollment period recently ended. Further, Vermont NEA notified NCSU that the health insurance buyout (i.e., opt-out payment or cash in lieu of benefits) is negotiated. To that end, a side letter/agreement may be the preferred document to detail conditions and terms of the buyout.
- B. School Property Signage. Gaston provided an information sheet detailing the VT Agency of Transportation sign law and local Troy Town zoning bylaws regulating signs. An example of a school sign prohibiting the consumption of alcohol on school property was provided along with material and accessory (i.e., post) costs. The Board agreed that with the background information in hand, the project could be handed over to John Elliott and Chris to flesh out the details.

IX. New Business

Action:

- A. Award Plow Contract (Attachment D)
 - Cliff felt the costs (per plowing and sanding visit) were high.
 - Gaston noted that the FY 2018 budget included \$3500.00 for snow removal.

- Discussion focused on whether Chris could hire local plow operator(s) to maintain the school driveway and parking lot should the Board reject the bid.
- Chris was confident that local plow operators would provide snow removal/sanding services until new bids are received and awarded. Chris noted his appreciation for Troy Town aid in snow removal and/or sanding when constrained by time and/or events.

Motion to reject the bid and re-advertise snow removal services bid invitation. FORSTER/APPROVED

B. Appoint Announced Tuition Designee (Attachment E):

Motion nominating Chris Young, Principal, TS as ‘Announced Tuition Designee’.

G BATHALON/APPROVED

C. Adopt revised NCSU Common Board Policies*:

1. E.12 Monitoring Devices on School Property and Busses. – Cliff questioned why ‘patrons’ (i.e., “to ensure personal safety of patrons or employees”) are specifically identified in a school policy? That is, the notion that patrons (or customers) visit the TS seemed odd and/or incorrect. John suggested that ‘patron’ may have been taken directly from model and/or existing monitoring device policies from other VT supervisory unions. The NCSU Policy Committee did not object to using ‘patrons’. Cliff did not object to adopting the policy as written.

2. G.7 Educational Support System

3. J.7 School Nutrition and Fitness.

Motion to adopt NCSU common board policies E.12, J.7, and G.7. FORSTER/APPROVED

*Policies being reviewed can be found at <http://www.ncsuvt.org/ncsu-full-board/policies-being-reviewed>

Discussion/Information:

A. Safe Routes for School grant requirements. Because of the late hour and need for additional time to prepare an information sheet, the Board tabled discussion to a later meeting.

X. Date and time of next meeting January 4, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

Suggested Agenda Items: it was agreed that the number of agenda items would be limited to allow for an extended ‘FY 2019 Budget’ presentation and discussion. Confirm ‘Special Education’ as Program Presentation topic.

XI. Executive Session (not required or requested)

XII. Adjourn at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Gaston P. Bathalon

Present:

Gaston Bathalon, Chair

A. Mike Desautels

Cliff Forster

In Attendance:

Administration:

John A. Castle, Superintendent of Schools

Glenn Hankinson, Director of Business and Finance

Chris Young, Troy School Principal

Community/Staff:

Andrea Machado

Dawn Greenwood

Cathy St. Marie

Rose Mary Mayhew*, Chair, North Country Union High School Board

Roland Mayhew*

*Attended Fall Community Forum