

NORTH COUNTRY SUPERVISORY UNION
FULL BOARD MEETING
Thursday, September 18, 2014
6:30 p.m. in the NCCC Room 380
MINUTES

Present:

Board Members

Brighton: Melanie Yasharian, Charla Nadeau
Charleston: Laura Becerra
Coventry: Viola Poirier, Alan Desroches
Derby: Gislaine R. Gobeil-Judd
Holland:
Jay:
Westfield:
Lowell: Steve Mason
Morgan:
Newport City:
Newport Town: Wilma Therrien, Arlene Brown
Troy: Cliff Forster
Westfield: Kevin Amyot
NCUHS: Peter Moskovites, Rose Mary Mayhew
NCUJHS: Scott Boskind

NCSU Staff

John A. Castle, Superintendent
Glenn Hankinson, Business Manager
Leanne Desjardins, Special Ed. Director
John Peters, Technology Director
Kathy Nolan, Curriculum/Asses./Instr. Director
Liz Butterfield, Recording Secretary

Public

Brian McNeal

Press

Robin Smith, Orleans /Caledonian Record

I. The meeting was called to order at 6:33 by NCSU Board Chair Steve Mason, who led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag
There were no changes to the Agenda.

II. **Motion** to approve the minutes of April 2014 & July 2014 – *Attachments A and B*
BROWN/BOSKIND APPROVED

III. **Public Comments:** Mr. Brian McNeal of Newport City shared his concerns with cell phone policy and use in the schools. He believes that harassment and cheating is taking place with cell phones and their use is uncontrolled. Mr. McNeal stated that he has received quite a few calls from parents and that cell phones are not being policed in the schools. Mr. McNeal read the Common Policy to board. NCSU Board Chair Steve Mason acknowledged that this is an important issue and suggested that those board members present take this message back to their boards and administrators, and to let them know that people feel that enforcement needs to be strengthened. John Castle offered to meet with Mr. McNeal, also, to discuss cell phones in the schools. Mr. McNeal thanked the Board for listening to his point of view.

NCSU By-Laws and Strategic Plan Review facilitated by Harry Frank of the VSBA –
Attachments C and D

Steve Mason affirmed that copies of the bylaws were sent out to all members, as requested at the last Full Board meeting. He stated that the Strategic Plan is not set in stone, and that the Superintendent will be taking a lot of time reviewing it. Harry Frank of the Vermont School Boards Association was introduced.

Bylaws: John Castle led the discussion of the bylaws, stating that a change of leadership is a good time to challenge assumptions, and that there are specific areas that he has questions about. John asked the Board members to share their concerns and questions concerning the bylaws. Scott Boskind responded that some Board members feel that the Executive Committee maintains too much power and that a quorum of 6/13 is

not enough people to be making major decisions, especially when large amounts of money are involved. John Castle mentioned that he had spoken with Richard Cartee, who was not able to attend the meeting, and that Richard has the same concern. John questioned whether there are 25 or 26 voting members, as two different numbers appear in the Bylaws. Steve Mason stated that 26 appears to be a typo, and the appendix indicates the correct figures. John inquired about the quorums for the Executive Committee and the Full Board, pointing out that the quorum for the Executive Committee, 6 of 13 voting members, is less than a majority, but is allowed by law.

Rose Mary stated that she agrees that more people should be involved in major decisions concerning money. She suggested looking at the Executive Committee in March, once it has been under John's leadership for a time. Peter Moskovites agreed and stated that there had been utter confusion on quorums in the past, and that the Boards and Committees need clear knowledge of authority. John spoke of the fact that the state Board of Education allows each of our districts to elect an alternate. He stressed that this person only is the designated alternate, and that the Boards must maintain that integrity. Charla said that the Chairs have a duty to make sure the designated alternate is the one who comes to meeting. John mentioned that some boards still need to elect an alternate.

John also asked about regular Full Board meetings, the Annual in March and the one in September, but pointed out that the Full Board must vote on the budget. Steve Mason confirmed that it has been past practice to have the Full Board vote on the budget, and stated that the group is flexible, and that all the board chairs know that a Full Board meeting will be called to vote on the budget.

John asked why there are no Executive Committee meetings scheduled in June or August. Steve said that the availability of members is tough in the summer.

Rose Mary asked how it is that non-committee members have input to committees. Steve replied that committee decisions are only recommendations, that the final decisions come before the Full Board or the Executive Committee. If the Full Board or the Executive Committee can discuss the item, then the standing committee does not need to meet. Rose Mary feels that only committee members should vote to make a recommendation, but that is not what has happened at Executive Committee. She stated that the committees were formed by the Executive Committee, but were getting recommendations from people at committees who were not committee members. Steve stated that only those designated as Committee members can vote.

Harry Frank shared the views of the VSBA on committees, stating that their tasks and purpose should be very specifically designated, as well as how decisions will ultimately be made.

John stated that he would like to have the Full Board or the Executive Committees making decisions. Harry agreed that standing committees can raise problems, and that the VSBA recommends doing all business at Full Board or Executive Committee meetings. Rose Mary clarified that the issue is that 2 or 3 committee members can make a recommendation to the Executive Committee, who move on it based on the views of those few people. She also said that when the Executive Committee moves an item forward to the Full Board, the Board members assume that the issue was fully vetted by the Executive Committee, when it may have been only the original three people who discussed it at all.

John asked if the Board wanted to discontinue the committees and the consensus was to discontinue them unless the Board Chair or the Superintendent sees the need to call a committee meeting.

Peter Moskovites asked if all of these changes will show up in March at reorganization, to which John replied in the affirmative.

Strategic Plan: John introduced the topic, saying that it is his responsibility to move the Strategic Plan forward, and would like to get the Board's sense of where we are and some direction on the things the board feels are most important.

Harry Frank stated that Bylaws and Strategic Plans are "Value Statements", documents that signify what we value, what we want to accomplish, and how we are going to do that.

Harry proposed divide out by three groups at flip charts to ask those questions.

Scott Boskind pointed out that the process was followed over many years, went to the Leadership Team, Administration, the public, and parents and said that he is concerned that it is supercilious to break it down even further.

Harry answered that the Board is a governing body – the members are responsible for this plan, no one else. He stated that the Board must make sure that they all understand the Strategic Plan, and that they should ask, “Does it reflect our values as we understand them?” He stated that the Board may not want to change anything, but that can be a complementary procedure...

Peter Moskovites suggested that the Superintendent “sit and live with this for 5 or 6 months, then let us know what you would like to do or change.”

Groups broke out, and reconvened for reflection Harry used some of the questions that came up during the exercise to point out that the Board needs more information about many aspects of the Strategic Plan, and then needs to make sure it’s happening.

Steve commented on a universal point that all three groups touched upon: How do we accomplish this, considering the limits of space, manpower and money? John stated that he is ultimately responsible for implementing the Strategic Plan for the Board.

Harry stated that there is work to be done, a continual shaping and re-visiting, in spirit and letter, of how the plan was developed. He felt that it had been an interesting and engaging discussion, and that the Board should do something similar regularly.

John felt that it is helpful to have perspectives. He said that there are areas of the Strategic Plan that he has problems with, and that he will let the Board know with honesty and transparency. He cited 1C, concerning the Common Core, as an example: he is not against it, but the CC is not all the standards, and not all students will reach assessment. He cautioned to be careful of goals that not all can attain: Be aspirational but realistic. He feels that we must look at outcomes and decide what are most important, i.e.: what know, who to be, etc. He stated that this is holistic, beyond quantifiable standards.

IV. Superintendent’s Report – Mailed Separately

John shared that after reflection he has decided, with Liz and Sandy, that Liz will coordinate the agendas for all SU schools. Liz will be the conduit and Sandy will help with the Board Packets.

V. Special Education Report: Leanne Desjardins

Leanne commented that Opening Day was such a pleasure, and that it was a joy to be a part of festivities: There was Community, it was Collegial, she danced, and it was wonderful!

Leanne shared that the Special Education Department has been conducting workshops, including local trainings and workshops for new teachers, which the 2nd year SpEd teachers were also invited to attend. She explained that co-teaching has expanded to more schools this year, with students in regular Ed classrooms with a co-teacher by their side. She stated it has been very positive, and the SU can bill that time as SpEd.

Leanne stated that this year’s focus is on the newly revised Woodcock Johnson, WJ4, including a daylong workshop focusing on interpretation of data from the Eval Team.

As for SpEd budgets, she said that Service Plans are currently being constructed with principals, and will be ready to slide into General Ed budget.

Leanne spoke of the Speech Language Pathologist shortage in this area of the country. She shared that four years ago the SU sponsored an online Master’s program that two people participated in, and that they are still with the SU as SLPs. She is wondering if the Board would consider doing it again with three to four staff members, working through Lyndon State for their pre-requisite classes and then Carolina College for the Master’s program, all of which would take about five years. She is looking for support with funding from boards. She stated that it is not inexpensive, but that we need to “grow our own” SLP’s.

Charla asked if there would be a sidebar agreement. Leanne said that the union said no the last time, but with new leadership in the SU, the union may say yes to a year or two of service.

Peter asked, “How do you decide that this is the shortage you address?” Leanne replied that there is no shortage of teachers, and the greatest shortage, consistently over the years, has been SLPs. Outside contracts are quite costly, and our own fall under the teacher’s contract. If SLPs work at the hospital, they make much higher pay. She said that there were no longer federal funds available for this type of program. She shared that our current SLPs are interested in helping our area grow. Leanne stated that Occupational Therapy is another area of shortage, and the hospital has told us this year that they can no longer do OT evaluations, so those will be more costly. Charla shared that Brighton struggles to fill their OT needs and uses direct services, which are costly. She supports the idea of growing our own.

VI. Curriculum, Instruction & Assessment Report: Kathy Nolan

Kathy reported that there are 30 new teachers in the NCSU this year, and that some of them grew up here and have come home. She shared that an Orientation Day was held in August for the new teachers, which covered many areas. They have since held a 2nd workshop and some of them lit up because they love what they are doing! Each has a mentor assigned from an NCSU school, matched for the situation and teaching content.

VII. Technology Report: John Peters

John gave an overview of the extensive work that the Technology Department accomplished over the summer. He spoke of schools using Google Docs in the classrooms, and how that relates to how are we spending our money: Equipment or Education? John stated that by using what is available for free, it is advantageous for the kids: they can access Google Docs at home and send their work to their teacher. Document sharing can also be a money saver, as paper & printing are expensive. John shared that the Tech Department has installed Wireless Access Points in 6 schools recently, and that Digital Wish, a nonprofit that gets donations from large corporations, provided them at a cost of \$100.00 each vs. \$700.00. The Wireless Access Points have increased capacity, also. John also spoke of his work with the SU Nurses and the SNAP program. There were HIPPA and FERPA concerns with nurses walking around with a data base on their computer. A MAC grant was used to move SNAP to a hosted service, and all data now resides on a hosted secure service. John also spoke of upgrades to the phone and internet systems in the SU: The goal is 100 megabytes by 2018. Fair Point is doing \$100,000 of work at the Junior High “on their nickel”, in the hope of bringing the rest of the area on board. John reported that SIP has been installed Newport Elementary School, which makes them E911 capable. The High School & Central Office are also scheduled to have SIP installed this year, with the other schools to follow as soon as possible, which may require updates of phone systems. Some of the phone systems are 30-40 years old and parts are no longer available for them.

VIII. Business Operations Report: Glenn Hankinson

A. **Motion** to approve the August 2014 Financial Statement - *Handout* Glenn reported that it is early in the year and all seems well. The General Fund will be close to budget. POIRIER/NADEAU **APPROVED**

B. **FY2016 Budget Development Context & Considerations:** The Superintendent passed out the FY16 NCSU Budget Timeline and explained his vision for the process, saying that he anticipates – and looks forward to - a robust conversation. He anticipates conservative budgets. John said he will promote and encourage centralized services, but only where it makes sense, and will continue to have healthy conversations around this topic with boards and in negotiations.

VII. VSBA Update – Frank Carbonneau: Not present, tabled until next meeting.

VIII. Unfinished or Other Business

A. **Policy Update:** Frank Carbonneau was not present, had spoken to Steve Mason and told him that he has been working on it. This will be put on next month’s agenda.

B. Review/Approve Superintendent’s Goals – Attachment E

Motion to approve the Superintendent’s Goals. Steve Mason explained that it is necessary for the evaluation process that the Superintendent have goals that have been approved by the Board. John asked if there were any questions. There were none. **MOSKOVITES/MAYHEW APPROVED**

Mr. McNeal asked if he could distribute to board copies of an email between himself and Dr. First concerning cell phone use, and was given that permission.

John Castle passed out an **Agenda Schedule draft** and asked for input from the board. He explained that he and Liz will be designing one for each school. It is a work in progress, and John would like members to let know of Program Report topics, departmental or other, and even broader than just our SU. He said we can influence the legislature and state officials, and should be having those discussions.

IX. Date of Next Meeting: Oct. 16, 2014: Executive Committee

X. **Executive Session** (Anticipated) Steve Mason said that the Executive Session had been anticipated to discuss Negotiations, but he recommended not holding the session and invited board members to come to the meeting on Monday if interested in teacher negotiations. John Castle reported that Support Staff negotiations begin next week.

XI. Motion to Adjourn BROWN/NADEAU 8:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Butterfield
Recording Secretary

Meetings:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
Negotiations Committee (Support Staff Contract Negotiations Meeting with Derby, Troy & NCUJHS team)	Thursday	September 25	3:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	October 16	5:30 p.m.	NCSU 2 ND Floor, Small Conference Room
NCSU Executive Committee	Thursday	October 16	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209