

NORTH COUNTRY SUPERVISORY UNION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - *DRAFT*

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2014

6:30 P.M. @ NCSU CENTRAL OFFICE, Room A209

Present:

Board Members

Rose Mary Mayhew, NCUHS
Peter Moskovites, NCUHS
Frank Carbonneau, Coventry
Lincoln Petell, Holland
Gigi Gobeil-Judd, Derby
Charla Nadeau, Brighton
Wilma Therrien, Newport Town
Jessica Ward, Newport City
Richard Cartee, NCUJHS
Jason Brueck, Charleston
Steve Mason, Lowell

Staff

John Castle, Superintendent
Glenn Hankinson, Director of Business/Finance
Kathy Nolan, Director of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction
John Peters, Director of Technology Support
Liz Butterfield, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent
Aimee Alexander, NCE Teacher

Public

Brian McNeal, Newport City resident

Press

Robin Smith, Orleans County Record

I. The chair called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. There were no changes to the agenda.

II. **Motion to Approve the Minutes** of October 16, 2014-*Attachment A*

CARBONNEAU/BRUECK APPROVED

Information: Policy Committee Minutes of October 16, 2014 – *Attachment A.1*

III. **Privilege of the Floor/Public Comments** - None

IV. **Superintendent's & Central Office Reports** – *Attachment Supt. Report*

John reported that we will continue to request a waiver from the state for transportation, and that we will be applying for a waiver for the Special Education provision that requires centralization.

John queried the Board on their thoughts concerning the hiring process that he had described at previous meetings. There were no comments or thoughts shared.

John reported that he attended the Green Mt. Imperative, an invitation only conference of business leaders, legislators, the NEA, teachers, and education administrators. Though it was touted as a "Breakthrough Summit" John left early on the second day because of his frustration with the lack of focus. The main topic was governance, which the state paints as necessary for equity and efficiency of schools. John feels we can achieve this through collaboration. He said that we need to stay tuned and communicate with our representatives and the public. John asked what the interest of Board members on this topic is. Jason stated that it is hard to imagine this district getting any bigger and wondered why we don't come up in conversation more often as an example of a very large SU. John replied that the state is looking at collapsing Supervisory Unions structure internally, so there would be no local boards, just one board for the SU, which would make decisions for all schools in the SU. He stated that there are challenges either way, both requiring good leadership and good governance. Peter stated that studies show that consolidation will not save money, and asked what is driving this? John replied that some of the push is equity: providing programs and services for all, but what does that look like? John reiterated that consolidation does not save money, but the state believes that dispassionate individuals will make objective decisions concerning reduction of staff and the closing of schools. Frank asked if we are looking at efficiencies in the next budgets. John stated that we are, in EEE and some other areas of opportunity, but none that are dramatic. Frank said that the VSBA has sat with legislators and discussed this issue, imploring them to look hard, and study things that work in NCSU as a large SU, and SU's such as RNE for things that work in a small SU. John stated that the funding issue around education is at a crisis point. Many boards will be looking at staffing reductions, because that is the reality, but it should be done at the local level. John rejects Montpelier saying, "We know how to do it better than you do." Rose Mary said that the state is linking the 2 billion dollar deficit this year to education. Richard said we have to tell the legislators, "Let us run our schools, stop the unfunded mandates." Peter asked what we should be looking at, now that it is budget time. John replied that staff reductions and program reductions are the areas that need to be considered. Given the projected enrollment at

NCUHS, they are hoping to keep the cost per student the same next year as this year, so we can say deficit did not come from us. Frank wondered about programs that have been built over the years, and now have to be cut vs. cutting staff. Jason pointed out that our per pupil spending is always in the bottom 1/3, asking how can we possibly go lower?

V. Business Operations & Finance Report

Action:

A. **Motion** to approve the October Financial Statement-*Attachment B*

MOSKOVITES/NADEAU **APPROVED**

Information: FY2016 School Budget Development: Glenn and John reported that they are working with the principals, looking at numbers and programs. John and Glenn distributed an enrollment analysis for the boards to consider when crafting their budgets. They encouraged board members to ask questions of John and Glenn and the principals. Jason asked, "What is the tipping point where you can make reductions?" The schools still have to have heat, light, maintenance, etc., even with fewer students.

IV. **VSBA Update** – Frank Carbonneau reported that he attended the VSBA Annual Meeting. He shared that AOE Secretary Rebecca Holcomb stated many of the same things that we've been saying. There was a student debate, which Frank found very impressive: the students debated "consolidation".

Frank reported that board members were shown a 25 minute video, put together by Nicole Mace of the VSBA and Joe Blanchette. Joe worked with the NEA in the past and organized strikes. Frank recommends that we get a copy of the video and view it in Executive Session. He feels it could offer important insight into the power of unions and the negotiations process.

Frank reported that 600 board members attended the regional VSBA meetings this fall. He recommended that board members read Steve Dales op-ed piece in the Times Argus concerning health care and single payer insurance, suggesting that there could be massive savings to boards and teachers.

VII. New Business

Presentation/Discussion

A. **FY2016 Budgets** – *Attachment C*

John began the discussion by stating that the framework of the SU budget is based on the fact that the Central Office exists to serve the schools, mostly as personnel. The funding comes from CFP, IDEA-B, fees for services, and assessments. The Admin Team has spent a lot of time together wrestling with all aspects, considering how to make sure we have the capacity to provide the right level of services across the SU. In December, the board will be voting on the SU budget, and for the first time, on the EEE assessment.

Kathy presented on **CFP, Title 1 and Title IIA** which provide about 2 million dollars, but the amounts are diminishing each year. She gave a short history of supplemental services in this SU, which have always been directed at K-6 and K-8 schools, to give students the best base. The funds paid for 17 intervention teachers. The law that was passed last spring dictates that **on July 1, 2015 we must offer PreK to 3, 4 and 5 year olds**. We can no longer use CFP funds for PreK, because CFP must be supplemental, which PreK is not, now that we are required by law to offer it. Previously, \$470,000.00 was "off the top" for NCSU PreK center-based programs. Kathy stated that we will be putting that amount toward school allotments next year. It will be divided between the schools, and the Administrators are hoping the boards will use that money to supplement PreK programs at their schools. John clarified that the money can be used at the board's discretion, but the Administrators are encouraging that it be used for PreK. Diane Nichols-Fleming spoke about the different programs that can offer PreK. Private providers must be in the Stars program and have 4 or 5 Stars, they have to hire a licensed EE teacher, and the teacher must be paid what a school system teacher would be paid. There are also Head Start programs and a few other larger programs that can offer PreK. Registered homes must have Stars, but only have to provide a licensed teacher for three hours. Kathy explained the chart that Glenn and John had prepared showing the additional money that each school will receive.

Steve commented that the Administrators are trying to make sure all board members are informed so they can make budget decisions, answer questions from their constituents.

John explained that what it boils down to is that Early Ed can no longer use the \$500,000.00. It makes sense to look at going to school based programs, which would increase participation and meet the needs of our communities. This change would mean that, potentially, all center based employees would be losing their jobs. John is hoping they would be hired by the schools for the school-based PreK programs. He acknowledged that this is a dramatic proposal, and that the PreK

centers have built a sense of community, which will be lost. John commended Diane Nichols-Fleming for doing a tremendous amount of work in a short time. John also mentioned that several boards have expressed concern about their EEE assessment. He shared that the PreK building next to the Central Office costs \$64,000.00 in rent per year, which he said is hard to justify. John has begun a conversation with the landlord to explore options.

Diane shared that this is an extremely challenging time for the PreK staff, a time of anxiety and stress, and mourning the loss of community that they have built in the centers. They are trying to celebrate the legacy of the program and how it has spread out to the community, but it is a roller coaster of emotions.

Diane further explained that EEE = disabilities. 50% of kids in PreK are EEE kids. They are spread out in public programs, private program, homes, etc. A case load of 14-15 kids per special Education teacher is recommended, but each of ours is carrying about 20 children, plus travel time. John suggests that we maintain providing the EEE services at the SU level, as it is now. That is what the law dictates, plus it's the most efficient. He stated that it is hard to come up with EEE services at the local level, but the SU has the capacity.

There is about \$70,000.00 in Medicaid funds available, that could be used to help with the one-time costs of the transition to school based PreK programs.

John said that the schools are looking at creative solutions and partnerships. He feels that if we can coordinate with private providers, we should. John commended Diane for her commitment and her vision that this is not about the money, it is about the children. He reiterated that many children who are not being served now will be served in this new model.

The next area discussed was the **SU Assessment for the Director of Technology Support** position. Glenn explained that 65% of the position is now funded with Medicaid funds, which is allowed, but he and John Castle recommend that it be fully funded in the SU budget. The Medicaid money could be used for Early Ed and/or the Encore programs. Glenn suggested that the funding could be phased out of Medicaid and into SU funding over a couple of years. There was discussion about what it would look like to move the funding to the SU budget. Glenn explained that salaries are in budget at 2.5%, but health care has not been calculated at an increase yet. The total SU Assessment is showing an increase of 8.84%, but that is because the boards made revisions to 2015 budget of \$31,000.00 more than budgeted. Thus, the increase from actual expenditures is 5.11%. If you remove the change in the Technology Director funding, it is 1.11%. Glenn suggested taking the middle ground and phasing out the Medicaid funding of the Technology Director. Peter suggested spreading it out over 2 or 3 years, while Frank suggested a 3% increase at the SU level for this year.

Peter then suggested a 3 year phase out, which will equal a 2.5% increase in the SU budget this year. Steve Mason asked if that was the consensus of the board, and all agreed.

Jason asked, "How do we know if Central Office expenses can be cut? We don't know enough about the Central Office." John replied that the change in PreK will reduce one position, the Assistant to the Early Education Director, and the work will be re-allocated to the Special Education department. John stated that the Administrators are constantly looking at efficiency, and that the current administrative structure is meeting the needs of the SU, and he is not looking at an increase or a decrease. Rosemary asked that the board be able to look at health insurance for SU personnel (not covered by negotiations) before voting on a budget.

VIII. Unfinished or Other Business

Action:

Clarification of NCSU Employee Manual for Central Office Staff – Attachment D

John explained that clarification is needed concerning whether the Christmas holiday is a three day holiday. There was apparently a change made in the past few years, but there is no documentation. John explained that the Administrators' contracts allow for 3 days, with the exception of the Superintendent, but the Superintendent has a fall holiday. The Central Office Employee Manual allows 15 holidays, so John asked, "If not 3 at Christmas, then when?" **Motion:** The NCSU Employee Manual for Central Office Staff will state that the staff shall have three days off at Christmas."

NADEAU/BRUECK APPROVED

Health Insurance Buy-out: This affects 3 administrators and one Support Staff employee. John explained that previous Manuals maintained the buyout parallel to where you were in the plan vs. a single plan. The buyout was 75%, then it went to 40%, but it did not define if that is a percent of all plans or of a single plan. Peter felt that the board needs more information on the actual amounts, in order to look at it in the larger context of the budget. Glenn agreed to have the figures for the next meeting.

B. Policy Audit Consideration: Steve shared that the Policy Committee would like to see an audit performed by the VSBA at a cost of approximately \$600.00. They would make recommendations for consolidating, eliminating, and possibly adding some policies. **Motion** to hire the VSBA to perform a Policy Audit at a cost of approximately \$600.00. MAYHEW/NADEAU **APPROVED**

C. Approve Policies F.04 and F.05 - Attachments E and F

F.04: There was a discussion of policy vs. procedure vs. practice vs. philosophy, and what is “reasonable suspicion”. Peter will bring up his concerns around reasonable suspicion, the rights of students, and drug sniffing dogs at the NCUHS board level. **Motion** to approve Policy F.04 as recommended by the NCSU Policy committee. MOSKOVITES/MAYHEW **APPROVED**

F.05: Motion to approve Policy F.05 as recommended by the NCSU Policy Committee. This is the model policy from the VSBA, though the Policy Committee did remove some items. There was a short discussion to clarify parental notification, with the consensus being that we have to trust our administrators to make the right decisions. NADEAU/BRUECK **APPROVED**

D. Rescind Policy C.16 – Attachment G: This item was **passed over** as the policy is specifically an NCUHS policy.

IX. Date of Next Meeting/Future Agenda Items:

A. The board agreed to hold a Special Budget Meeting on Monday Dec. 15th at 6:30 p.m. in Room A209 of the Central Office. The SU budget will be discussed, with information on Central Office health insurance costs and buy-out costs made available.

X. **Executive Session** – was not necessary.

XI. **Motion to Adjourn:** NADEAU/JUDD **APPROVED** 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Liz Butterfield,
Recording Secretary

Meetings:

<u>Group</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
NCSU Budget Meeting	Monday	December 15	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	December 18	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A213
NCSU Full Board	Thursday	December 18	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209
NCSU Policy Committee	Thursday	January 15	5:30 p.m.	NCSU A213
NCSU Executive Committee	Thursday	January 15	6:30 p.m.	NCSU A209