

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 BOARD MEETING MINUTES
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010

Board members present: D. Baker, J. Eisenhardt, T. O’Hear, B. Penberthy, S. Reber, K. Roberts, W. Sander, D. Whitcomb. Absent: B. Bailey, P. Ingvaldstad, S. Hamlyn-Prescott, D. Osborn. Others: D. Taylor, B. Schaffer, J. Teegarden. C. Hindes, M. Spaulding, D. White, S. Cano.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

1. *Call to Order, Introductions, Adopt the Agenda, Announcements, and Public Input*

A. *Call to Order – 7:52*

S. Reber apologized for not making enough effort to inform people that a meeting was not being held on the regular date last week. He will try to do better in the future.

B. *Adopt the Agenda*

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to adopt the agenda, and the motion was seconded. S. Reber said one change needed is that the board won’t be asked to approve the copier bid. **The motion to approve the agenda with that change was passed.**

C. *Announcements*

K. Roberts said she will be in Washington with federal legislators next week, if people have any thoughts for her to share with them. W. Sander suggested trying to cool them off on charter schools, and letting them know how devastating that could be. He also said there is no way to do merit pay. K. Roberts said the Race to the Top initiative is not designed for Vermont, and it is unlikely we will see a nickel of it. Vermont didn’t enter the first round.

D. *Public Input*

D. Baker said a Belvidere student had told her the Eden late bus driver said he didn’t have to go to Belvidere if the road was too bad. She said the driver needs to be told Belvidere is part of the district and the bus shouldn’t be on the road if the roads are too bad to get to Belvidere. S. Reber asked whom issues like this should go to. C. Hindes suggested starting with the building principal, who can then talk to M. Spaulding or others. M. Spaulding said contract issues such as this are dealt with by M. Frederick. D. Whitcomb asked who has the contract for the late bus. M. Spaulding said Eden. D. Whitcomb said he can take this complaint to the principal at ECS.

2. *Consent Agenda Items (Approval of Minutes of the January 5 Meeting, Acceptance of Administration Reports)*

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to approve the consent agenda. K. Roberts asked, regarding the recommendation to approve a new Discovery Room Supervisor, since this is the 3rd one this year, what is the challenge in keeping someone in that position? B. Schaffer said they will be doing some restructuring of the alternative program. He thinks he and C. Hindes have a solution. He hoped to merge with the Access program that runs parallel to the Discovery program, but that wasn’t possible.

Both people who left Discovery Room Supervisor positions were seeking higher pay and higher professional aspirations. **The motion was passed.**

3. ***Directors' Orders:***

<i>General Fund</i>	<i>1/8/10</i>	<i>\$68,150.64</i>
	<i>1/15/10</i>	<i>\$65,192.70</i>

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to approve directors' orders as printed, and the motion was seconded and passed.

D. Baker said she hates approving money without seeing information about it. K. Roberts said the HPES board gets the check run and detail. She agrees with D. Baker. W. Sander said he feels the current system works fine as long as clerk is available to talk about the orders. He doesn't want to see detailed explanations, or the extra work that would entail. S. Reber said maybe in the future he can find out if the clerk will be here, and if not, get more information from her about the orders.

4. ***Follow-Up to Commissioner's Presentation at Carousel Meeting***

D. Whitcomb asked if board members could get DVD's of the TV broadcast of A. Vilaseca's presentation. S. Reber said he will arrange for that.

W. Sander said he read through all the information D. Taylor sent out, including the idea of having all VT schools become charter schools. He is distressed by seeing ideological statements taken as fact. He can see it being disastrous if they push too far too fast.

K. Roberts said A. Vilaseca is frequently somewhat disingenuous. He talks about discussion of his ideas being only a conversation, but this is his agenda, and so it is de facto the state board's agenda. The governor is on a different page, but they're getting closer in alignment. It is clear to her that the state board simply defers to A. Vilaseca. The Deputy Commissioner is a strong proponent of charter schools. The legislature is going to do as little as they can, but they have to do something, because they have to find 20% in savings. Their actions will be somewhat arbitrary and led by whoever gets their ear.

D. Baker said we have to get the system off property tax. She suggested the state could pick whatever rate they need and put it on income tax. There are a lot more workers than property owners. K. Roberts said her suggestion is do it in arrears. We know the average cost per student. They could set a price per student and normalize it the following year based on actual outcomes. And if a kid spent half a year in Johnson and half a year in Hyde Park, that's how the districts would get paid.

W. Sander said he hasn't seen evidence that larger districts will be more efficient. He believes the highly decentralized system we have may be the most efficient. The bigger the system, the less accountability there is.

K. Roberts said we all have principals we see as our educational leaders, and we see LNSU as a business unit to support education in the buildings. Montpelier thinks it would be good for us all to do the same thing. They think it would be more efficient. W. Sander said efficiencies of mass purchasing can be achieved under the existing structure. Open enrollment could be done, too – just let the money follow the kid.

K. Roberts said one idea she agrees with that was rapidly dismissed was the notion of regionalizing special ed, which was recommended to level the playing field and provide better capacity. Or special ed could even be made statewide. Special ed costs are not borne equally by towns, but depend on demographic accidents.

D. Whitcomb said he thought this discussion should be on the agenda for the next meeting with the full board. He would like someone to find all A. Vilaseca's speeches and get them to the board. K. Roberts suggested the board should focus on what we are looking for. Legislators are hearing all the things A. Vilaseca mentioned. Only if we present real alternatives will they possibly choose those alternatives.

S. Cano said she and D. White wanted to listen to this discussion because this board represents people from different communities. She suggested maybe the board could talk about which of the many reports we want to comment on. Another thing to think about is that when we hear about a 7.5% or 20% cut in spending, LNSU schools have already been working hard to find efficiencies and reduce costs. It would be good if there were a way to take a look at what people have already done and have districts that haven't already done the work do more. Why should we have to cut in the same way as other districts that haven't already done systems development and infrastructure work for years? K. Roberts said our towns are at average spending. K. Roberts suggested a report to focus on might be the one from a policy committee that was not the Transformations group – a legislative panel tasked with recommending legislative changes. That group was probably the most credible in terms of representation. They functioned as a committee, set themselves a goal, has tenets they were operating under, and came out with consensus. An example of a different type of report is the one about financing and effectiveness. The group working on that consisted of 24 people. It was originally named one thing by the legislature, and the author of the report (A. Vilaseca) unilaterally changed the name. There was no consensus, and most of what they voted on was omitted from the final report.

W. Sander said a suggestion in one report was to allow districts to replace 2 retirees with only one new teacher. That wouldn't work in Waterville. Another suggestion he doesn't agree with is to pay for things that are not part of "basic education" by local funding, not property tax.

S. Reber asked where the board wanted to go with this. K. Roberts said she thought picking one report to respond to was a good idea. She also said everyone should come and be vocal at the legislative breakfast. There was consensus to put further discussion of this on the agenda. W. Sander said he thought the board should focus on all the reports, not just one. S. Cano said she thought the board had previously received

copies of the policy group report K. Roberts had mentioned. It had 5 recommendations. S. Cano said that group met with people from Maine. S. Cano said she would ask D. Taylor to forward copies to everyone. (*S. Cano left at 8:38.*)

5. ***Review and Finalize Annual Report***

S. Reber distributed copies of a draft annual report. D. Baker said she thought it would be a 3-page insert in the Transcript. S. Reber said the committee met to discuss it, and M. Frederick reported that it turned out there would be almost no savings from doing it that way. So committee decided to mail it out as usual, but tighten it up a bit. They left it to building administrators to come up with the information they felt was appropriate to include.

B. Schaffer, C. Hindes, and J. Teegarden described what they had included in their reports. (*D. Taylor arrived at 8:47.*) K. Roberts suggested not including the minutes, but maybe including an index or directory page showing where documents are available online. She also said that although the Auditor's Statement says the audit can be reviewed at the Eden Town Clerk's Office, it should be available at any building in the district. S. Reber said the committee's idea was not to include the minutes but to say where they could be found. He will ask M. Frederick about that.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to approve the annual report, J. Eisenhardt seconded, and the motion was passed.

6. ***Administrative Reports and Action Items***

A. **Central Office**

S. Reber said M. Frederick told him the copier bid is not up for approval yet, but she gave him information to hand out about it. D. Taylor explained that secretaries from each school are being asked to take a look at the features of each copier before making a decision.

B. **GMTCC**

J. Teegarden distributed copies of a booklet created by Patti Coultas explaining education requirements for people who come in out of the field to be instructors.

C. **Central Office**

S. Reber distributed copies of the FY09 audit. D. Taylor said we're required by statute to have an audit done. This year every district had an audit. Before this year, it was on a rotating basis. Accepting the audit doesn't necessarily mean the board is in agreement with its contents. M. Frederick recommends accepting it.

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to accept the FY09 audit dated June 30, 2009, and the motion was seconded and passed.

7. ***Request for Future Agenda Items and Adjourn***

K. Roberts said the name of group whose report she recommended everyone get is the Educational Transformation Policy Commission. D. Taylor said she could send out a link to it. Several people said they would like hard copies. Some said they would like to see it before the legislative breakfast on Feb 1.

S. Reber asked which committee meets next time. W. Sander thought it would be the curriculum committee. The next meeting will be Tuesday, Feb. 2. The annual meet-

ing will be Feb. 16, in Cambridge. That is our regular meeting night. What to do about the second meeting of the month will be discussed at the next meeting. The informational meeting will be here on Feb. 23.

S. Reber asked if B. Schaffer could check and see which department head should come next. But that will probably not happen until after we reorganize.

ACTION: It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:06, and the motion was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths

Actions taken at the LU District #18 Board Meeting 1/25/10:

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B. Adopt the Agenda

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3. Directors' Orders:

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