

LAMOILLE UNION DISTRICT #18 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES - DRAFT
GMTCC COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2009

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

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

The meeting began at about 7:00 PM.

P. Ingvaldstad welcomed everyone. Board members and administrators introduced themselves. P. Ingvaldstad noted that David Williams was moderator last year.

Article I:

To determine whether Robert's (Revised) or other rules of order shall govern the parliamentary procedures of the meeting.

MOTION: W. Sander moved that Robert's Rules (Revised) should govern the parliamentary procedures of the meeting, seconded by D. Whitcomb, and the motion was passed.

Article II:

To review and approve the minutes of the February 19, 2008 Annual Meeting.

It was voted to approve the minutes.

Article III:

To elect by ballot the following officers: a) Moderator; b) Clerk; c) Treasurer.

J. Eisenhardt nominated Carl Powden for the position of moderator. Hearing no further nominations:

MOTION: K. Roberts moved that nominations cease and that 1 unanimous ballot be cast for Carl Powden as Moderator, seconded by W. Sander, and the motion was passed.

Carl Powden took over as moderator.

B. Bailey nominated Donna Griffiths for the position of clerk. Hearing no further nominations:

MOTION: K. Roberts moved that nominations cease and that 1 unanimous ballot be cast for Donna Griffiths as Clerk, seconded by D. Whitcomb, and the motion was passed.

B. Bailey nominated Stephen Desrosiers for the position of Treasurer. Hearing no further nominations:

MOTION: K. Roberts moved that nominations cease and that 1 unanimous ballot be cast for Stephen Desrosiers as Treasurer, and the motion was seconded and passed.

Article IV:**To establish compensation for the elected officers of said Union School District.****MOTION: J. Eisenhardt moved that compensation remain the same as it is currently,****seconded by W. Sander.** C. Powden read the current compensation: \$800 per year for Directors, \$1000 per year for the Board Chair, \$15/hour for the Treasurer, and \$300/year plus mileage for the Clerk. **The motion was passed.****Article V:****To hear and act upon the reports of the Union School District.****MOTION: K. Roberts moved to hear and accept the reports of the Union School****District, seconded by D. Whitcomb.**

P. Ingvaldstad gave a report. He showed highlights of the budget. He said he thinks the community has supported education through its financial support for building these facilities, and he is very thankful. Facilities are only part of the picture. Student aspirations are important. We have worked to improve the graduation rate. The number of students in VT who want to go to college has gone up 4%. We look to the community to support our budgets. We worked hard to contain costs this year, when major employers in our community are laying people off. We sold the Sweeney House and 4 acres, and are returning a portion of that money to the voters, along with some other money. In teacher negotiations, we will be asking staff to help us contain costs.

Steve Desrosiers presented a Treasurer's report showing beginning and ending balances and activity for the year ending June 30, 2008..

The motion was passed.**Article VI:****To receive from the Board of School Directors of said District its estimate of expenses of the Lamoille Union Middle & High Schools for the ensuing year. This is a public information hearing regarding the budget. (See Article XI.)**

M. Frederick gave a presentation. She said we started out knowing this was a challenging economic time. Administrators directed their staff that the budget should include no new programs or activities. This budget is designed to maintain continued improvement to student outcomes, learning opportunities, facilities stewardship, needed improvements, financial stability, and efficiency.

The proposed Middle School budget is \$4,302,562, a 2.4% increase. M. Frederick showed the areas of change. C. Hinds said Regular Instruction is increasing by about \$42,000, primarily due to step increases and contractual agreements. There is about a \$23,000 increase in Instructional Supports, which includes use of the library, workshops, and professional development which contributes to the quality of education. There is about a \$13,000 increase in Administration, which includes legal fees, audits, negotiations, assessment materials, etc. There is a decrease in Debt Service. There is a decrease in transportation, due to costs shifted to Co-Curricular/Athletics. Special Education costs remain about the same. Food Service is

up slightly. There is an increase in Network Technology, due to increases in service systems to support technology, and an additional support person shared among LUHS, LUMS, and GMTCC.

The proposed High School budget is \$10,592,747, a 2.35% increase. B. Schaffer discussed expenditures by area. He said the budget reflects a desire to continue to provide the same quality of service as in years past. There are increases in Regular Instruction reflective of step increases. The biggest increase is in Instructional Support. There is an increase in Maintenance, due to an increase in utilities costs.

The combined proposed budget for the Middle School and High School is \$14,895,309, 2.37% increase. M. Frederick showed the breakdown for Operating Budget, State & Federal Budget, GMTCC Tuition Transfer, and Debt Service. Debt Service reduces every year as the bond goes down. She went over calculations showing this budget is not subject to the 2-vote provision under Act 82. She showed budget increases or decreases in different areas from 2006-07 to 2009-10. The trend during that period has been toward smaller budget increases.

B. Hoag asked about insurance for teachers. M. Frederick said next year there will be no increase in insurance costs. B. Hoag asked how much staff pay for health insurance, whether they can get family coverage, and how much of a financial incentive they get not to sign up for family coverage. M. Frederick said we offer a family insurance rate, as well as single or 2-person coverage. The cost for family insurance is around \$16,000, but employees pay 15% of that. B. Hoag said that's a huge amount of money for us to pay for a first year teacher to get excellent insurance. He doesn't think first year – or 5 year – teachers should get that. We need to send a statement to the governor that the state needs to take over the health care system. There should be no bonus for not taking family insurance. M. Frederick said those are valid comments, and the people around the table hear what he is saying.

M. Frederick showed the revenues that support this budget. The percentage change in tax revenue is about ½ percent. She showed projected tax rate calculations, based on the tax commissioner's announced rates.

Article VII:

To receive from the Board of School Directors of said District its estimate of expenses of the Green Mountain Technology & Career Center for the ensuing year. This is a public information hearing regarding the budget. (See Article XII.)

J. Teegarden said GMTCC is one of 16 tech centers in VT. It is an independent school, though it shares a campus with LUHS and LUMS. There are students from schools other than LUHS. The sending schools, including LUHS, pay tuition to GMTCC. Tuition for LUHS went up about \$10,000 this year. He talked about some of the programs for kids and adults offered at GMTCC. The proposed budget is \$3,354,369, a 0.71% increase. He showed revenue projections and the state aid calculator summary.

B. Hoag asked how GMTCC has changed since 1977, when he attended. J. Teegarden said one thing that has changed is the name. It used to be Lamoille Valley Vocational Center. The programs have changed. B. Hoag asked, has it changed hands? J. Teegarden said no, but

sometimes people think the tech center is part of LUHS. B. Hoag said in 1977, people did think the tech center was part of the high school. J. Teegarden said the two schools have two separate budgets. B. Hoag asked, has that changed? J. Teegarden said no.

A citizen asked about tech center enrollment. J. Teegarden said it has been dropping, but over the past 2-3 years some programs have not been active. This year we will have all the programs, but it is worrisome that kids are not taking advantage of what we do. We have a Regional Advisory Board and each program has an advisory committee. We update programs constantly, and constantly encourage kids to attend the center. W. Sander said 5-6 years ago, enrollment was much lower, then it went up. Now it is down, but it is still much higher than 5-6 years ago. J. Teegarden said there were 173.5 FTE students in fall 2008. Around 200 would be the number he would be comfortable with. He said kids choose to come here; they don't get assigned here. P. Ingvaldstad asked J. Teegarden to talk about how expectations for kids who come in have changed since 1977. J. Teegarden said we have high expectations. To come into auto technology it is almost necessary to have taken algebra. To be a certified technician nowadays requires a lot of math and science. We expect more of kids, and are very particular about who comes. B. Hoag said he didn't take algebra, but enjoyed auto mechanics – aren't we limiting kids if we require algebra? J. Teegarden said we are not saying kids can't come to the tech center without algebra, but we are saying if they do come we really want them to take algebra while they're there. B. Hoag said the algebra they take should be applied algebra, relevant to their programs. We might be losing people by scaring them about algebra. J. Teegarden said that is good advice. P. Ingvaldstad said there is now a half time math teacher working at the tech center. Another change is our pre-tech program, with 20 10th graders every year who are getting prepared for the tech center. J. Teegarden said we want every student who comes to the center to get some kind of credential.

J. Teegarden said the whole campus is heated with a wood chip boiler system put in as part of the GMTCC construction, resulting in estimated savings of \$70-80K per year. We also have a building in Hardwick where our forestry program is located, which has a wood boiler and is heated mainly with wood cut by students.

Article VIII:

To act upon information from the Board of Directors on funding a Capital Reserve Fund to be used for capital expenditures in areas such as: facility improvement, equipment, or debt service.

Shall the voters of Lamoille Union School District #18 appropriate \$140,000 from the fund balance to said fund for the purpose of funding capital needs in technology, transportation, facilities, or capital debt service?

MOTION: K. Roberts moved to appropriate \$140,000 from the fund balance to the Capital Reserve Fund for the purpose of funding capital needs in technology, transportation, facilities, or capital debt service, seconded by J. Eisenhardt, and the motion was passed.

Article IX:

To see if the voters of said District will authorize its Board of Directors to borrow money to be used for payment of expenses of the District, pending receipt of payments from member districts, by issuance of its notes or orders, payable not later than one year from the date of issuance.

MOTION: J. Eisenhardt moved to authorize the Board of Directors to borrow money to be used for payment of expenses of the District, pending receipt of payments from member districts, by issuance of its notes or orders, payable not later than one year from the date of issuance, and the motion was seconded.

B. Hoag asked, does the school actually use this authorization to borrow money? M. Frederick said yes. **The motion was passed.**

Article X:

To transact any other business to properly come before the meeting.

B. Hoag said we are falling behind other countries. We have 170 days of school and should have 250. He has to give people reading and writing tests before they come to work for him. It is time to put the internet to work. Kids could do school work from home, allowing us to reduce fuel use, and use school facilities for other things. If we don't go to 250 days of school, all our jobs will go to India. We could save money by setting a goal that by 10-15 years from now, kids will not leave home for school.

P. Ingvoidstad said B. Hoag made many good points. Some of the things he talked about are very important objectives for us. Years ago, we passed a policy allowing students to design their own courses. We need to look outside these walls to offer education any way we can. The number of students getting CCV or Johnson State credits while at LUHS is going up. We can get everyone on board with new ideas more readily during difficult times like these. This board and administration and teachers are looking for improvement all the time, and they need the community to support that. Every student needs more than parents for support. We need mentors in our community. He encouraged people to mentor kids if they are able.

W. Sander said he doesn't think an extended school year is the issue as much as the quality of the school year we have. We have been working on literacy skills throughout LNSU, working to get kids reading fluently by 3rd grade. We were finding kids with literacy problems at the middle school, but have worked hard at the middle school on literacy. We are providing a good product. We have raised the graduation rate to above 90%. An increasingly high percentage of students are going on to quality schools and succeeding. Jobs are going to India because Indian workers can be paid less; that doesn't mean they are more qualified. Looking at the overall situation, we compare favorably with the rest of the world. People come to the U.S. for higher education. Our main problem is motivating kids and families. We provide an excellent education for motivated kids with motivated families. It is harder to reach kids from poverty. This is a national problem; we do better here than most areas.

B. Hoag said we are doing extremely well. But he disagrees that the only reason jobs are going overseas is because of lower pay overseas. A majority of LUHS students are not going to high level colleges. K. Roberts said a good percentage do go to top level schools. She said that in 1964, the first international math standards test was given, and the U.S. was second to

last. But she has heard a professor from China point out that when you look at wealth, livability, social democracy, etc, the U.S. is first in those areas. What you choose to identify as important is worth having public discussions about. She asked B. Hoag, what do you really want – for kids to go to great private schools, or to stay in VT? There is a conflict between those two things. We have discussions all the time about how to do the kind of thing he's talking about. Money and time are limitations. B. Hoag said we could save money if we eliminate bus drivers and heating. The school year we use was set up for farmers.

J. Sander said some of the countries outscoring us don't offer a free public education; they pick and choose which children to educate. Having kids work from home is a wonderful idea, but if parents are drug-addicted, alcoholic, etc, society expects us to support their children. How can we do that if the children are not here on campus?

B. Hoag reiterated that he believes we need to cut insurance benefits for staff.

MOTION: W. Sander moved to recess until March 3, 2009 (Town Meeting Day) for the purpose of voting by Australian ballot at the usual polling places in the member districts on the following business and said ballots being brought to the Lamoille Union High School Library following the closing of the polls in the members districts, where they will be commingled and counted:

Article XI: Shall the voters of the Lamoille Union School District #18 adopt a budget of \$14,895,309 necessary for the support of the Lamoille Union Middle and High Schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009?

Article XII: Shall the voters of the Lamoille Union School District #18 adopt a budget of \$3,354,369 necessary for the support of the Green Mountain Technology & Career Center for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009?

J. Eisenhardt seconded, and the motion was passed. The meeting recessed at 8:28.

The meeting reconvened on March 3, 2009. The number of ballots cast was 1112. Results of the vote for Article XI (the MS/HS budget) were 663 in favor, 434 opposed, 14 blank, and 1 spoiled, for a total of 1112. Article XI was passed. Results of the vote for Article XII (the GMTCC budget) were 713 in favor, 380 opposed, 18 blank, and 1 spoiled, for a total of 1112. Article XII was passed.

Respectfully submitted by,
Donna E. Griffiths