

Harwood Unified Union School District
September 20, 2017
6:00-9:00 pm
Harwood Union High School Library

Amended and Approved Minutes

Present from the Board: Christine Sullivan, Garrett MacCurtain, Peter Langella, Alycia Biondo, Caitlin Hollister, Alex Thomsen, Rosemarie White, Maureen McCracken, Jim Casey, Gabe Gilman (Vice Chair), Rob Williams, and Jill Ellis

Present from Central Office: Brigid Nease, Superintendent and Michelle Baker, Director of Finance & Operations

From the public: Tom Cahalan

Call to Order

Christine Sullivan called to order at 6:03 p.m. Board agreed to a shorter meeting and postponing some agenda items.

Additions and deletions

- Appointment of Duxbury candidate, Tom Cahalan
- Confirm summer board orders
- Warren School staff thank you

Public Comment - review and accept proposed procedure - prior to taking comment

Act 166 Letter: Some board members received a letter with a question apparently related to Act 166. After brief discussion about, Christine asked the board members to send the communications received to her and she will determine if there is need for an agenda item for a future board meeting.

Public Comment Guidelines: Discussed proposed guidelines for Public Comment. Public Comment is not a discussion; it is an opportunity for the public to provide input. Board needs to clear about what the public can expect in return. Discussed whether the guidelines need to indicate when in the meeting public comment can happen. Agreed that the guidelines need to specify public comment is at the beginning of the meeting unless moved by the Board when a specific agenda item is likely to address item(s) of interest to public. Also agreed that the

Rosemarie White made a motion to accept the Public Comment guidelines as presented with the above revision. Maureen McCracken seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Gabe Gilman made a motion that the June letter be referred to legal counsel. After brief discussion, Gilman withdrew the motion.

Approve minutes from August 30 and September 13, 2017

No edits to minutes. Approved as is.

Appointment of Duxbury candidate, Tom Cahalan

Brigid Nease reviewed the process for filling the vacant Duxbury seat and read an email she wrote to the Board that afternoon that outlined Act 49 and the impact it has on the process for nominating someone to a vacated seat. As in the past, candidates for an open seat are solicited from the town holding the seat. Candidate(s) that come forward are presented to the Board who votes on who will fill the seat. The person who is appointed to the seat holds it until Town Meeting, when candidate(s) for the seat are voted on by the public. Whoever is selected at Town Meeting holds the seat for the remainder of the existing term.

With Act 49, the candidate voted in by the Board must now be forwarded to the candidate's Select Board. Following consultation with the Select Board, if there are no objections, the candidate can be sworn in. If the Select Board raises concerns, the School Board must discuss them at their next meeting. If they affirm their selection, the candidate can be sworn in. The final decision on who is selected is the School Board's. A Select Board cannot veto a selected candidate.

Rosemarie White made a motion to have a procedure for posting open seats. Jill Ellis seconded. Gabe Gilman made a friendly motion to change procedure to policy. Discussion: Brigid Nease reported that the law states that open seats need to be filled in 30 days. Central Office has standard language that is posted in Town's Front Porch Forum and local newspapers. Open seats are posted for a minimum of two weeks and longer if necessary. How is the procedure made available to the public? Gabe withdrew his friendly amendment. Brigid Nease will write down the administrative procedure for filling a vacant seat. Board can direct her to post it on HUUSD website. Motion passes unanimously. No abstentions.

Brigid Nease reported that the open Duxbury seat was advertised for more than four weeks. Tom Cahalan has come forward as a candidate for the seat.

Garett MacCurtain nominated Tom Cahalan to fulfill the open Duxbury seat. Rob Williams seconded. Tom introduced himself and accepted the nomination. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions. Christine Sullivan will forward Tom's name to the Duxbury Select Board for consideration.

The process outlined above will be used to fill the Fayston seat recently vacated by Heidi Spears.

Reflections/debrief retreat

Val Gardner's facilitation and expertise was very helpful, particularly hearing about how other unified districts have worked through moving from individual board to a unified board. From a long-range strategic planning perspective, appreciated hearing about the socio-economic trends that are impacting Vermont communities and how our schools will need to respond. The discussion about being a representative vs. a trustee was also particularly helpful. Val's

facilitation, especially how she differentiated her own opinion, “my bias”, from her expertise was excellent. Felt she modeled for board members how to keep distinct their own opinions from the Board’s message when talking with community members and stakeholders.

The Board thanked the Mad River Barn for hosting retreat and providing a comfortable space for the work.

The Board thanked Caitlin Hollister for organizing the retreat.

Board discussed having a second retreat after the budgeting process to revisit strategic priorities. It would also an opportunity to debrief what might be a difficult Board process / series of decisions to reach a final budget. Would like to have Val back to facilitate again if she’s available. Brigid Nease suggested that if available, Val might be able to do a brief session with the Board during budget season to assist the Board is staying focused and able to have difficult discussion.

Alex Thomsen made a motion to authorize Caitlin Hollister to be in touch with Val to determine her availability to do short session as budget process gets underway in November or December and a longer session post budget to debrief budget development process and shift into strategic planning. Jim Casey seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Review meeting norms and make decision regarding adoption

Garett MacCurtain made a motion to adopt the proposed meeting norms as presented. Alycia Biondo seconded. Discussion: need a mechanism by which Board member indicate they want to speak. Jim Casey made a motion to amend the proposed meeting norms to include Board members raising their hands when they wish to speak and waiting to be recognized by the Board chair. Alycia Biondo seconded. Motion passed unanimously as amended. No abstentions.

Review study committee goals and adopt as board goals

Board reviewed the study committee’s proposed goals. Discussion focused on clarity of language (e.g., does value of education refer to quality or affordability), shared understanding of goals, and what kind of data will be collected and evaluated to assess effectiveness. Various revisions to the goal language were proposed, with agreement to change value to “will deliver education at a cost that is acceptable to the community.” The success of goal will be measured by whether the proposed budget is voted up or down. Noted that the language in the goals needs to be updated to HUUSD and proposed needs to be deleted. Christine Sullivan will make those language changes.

Alycia Biondo moved the goals be accepted with the proposed amendment to item #5. Maureen McCracken seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Revisit proposed budget process and decide whether to accept as budget work plan

Peter Langella made a motion to accept the proposed budget work plan. Alycia Biondo seconded. Discussion: Michelle Baker reported the administrative team is continuing its work to develop a preliminary budget and will do the first budget presentation to the Board at the November 29 meeting. Board would like to see a list of the challenges the admin team is

encountering in structuring the budget. Budget format should be goal and project based rather than line item. Does the Board need to give the admin team broader directive(s) to begin the budget development process or should the Board wait to see what the admin team delivers? Brigid Nease suggested starting with a level services budget and determining how that will translate into a preliminary tax rate. Once Board knows anticipated tax rate, it can determine if rate is too high and then request scenarios from the admin team for ways to bring down tax rate, while still addressing strategic goals. When the Board present the budget to the community, the presentation needs to provide rationale for how established priorities, long term challenges, and emergent issues/concerns are being addressed and how funds are allocated in the budget to make it happen. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Revisit work groups / committees - job descriptions, membership, schedule

Alycia Biondo requested that a discussion of a creating a community engagement committee be added to the Board agenda for next meeting. Question was asked about whether the communications committee could be combined with a community engagement committee? While there is overlap with work that a community engagement committee would do, each has their own purview and priorities. Community engagement is about bringing the public into the Board's work and communication committee is the Board facing forward and being proactive about getting the Board's message out to the community. Operational concern was raised about number of board committees and ensuring sufficient membership on each committee.

Alex Thomsen made a motion that before addressing individual committees there should be a broader discussion about the number, purpose, current membership, and schedule for all the committees and the effectiveness of that structure. Caitlin Hollister seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions. Working groups were asked to provide Christine Sullivan with the more current description of purpose and membership.

Communications - overview and timeline for year, decide on communication regarding budget process

Not discussed.

Policy - B3, C3, C5, C10, D5 - which at board, which to work group - discuss and agree upon process

Not discussed.

Facilities Committee

No report made.

Negotiations Committee

No report made.

Personnel/Superintendent evaluation

Not discussed.

Review self-assessment tools - can we decide how and when we want to use these?

Not discussed.

Other Business

Summer Board Orders:

Rosemarie White made a motion to confirm board orders dated 7/12/17 - 9/13/17, #1008 - #1071 in the amount of \$3,024,276.68. Peter Langella seconded. No discussion. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Caitlin Hollister proposed Board do something to thank the Warren School staff for their efforts to get the school year underway given the disruption caused by the Warren School's facility issues. Discussed what form the recognition should take. Agreed on providing breakfast on a pre-identified day. Caitlin volunteered to work out details with Alycia.

Rob Williams moved that a recognition breakfast be provided to the Warren School staff in amount not to exceed \$250.00. Alex Thomsen seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.

Possible executive session

None needed.

Adjourn

Alex Thomsen moved to adjourn at 8:21 p.m. Maureen McCracken seconded. Motion passed unanimously. No abstentions.