

**HARWOOD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING**  
**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016 6:00 - 9:00 P.M.**  
**HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY**

**Approved Minutes**

**Attending Members:** Garrett MacCurtain (Duxbury), Heidi Spear and Jill Ellis (Fayston), Peter Langella and Gabriel Gilman (Moretown), Rob Williams and Christine Sullivan (Waitsfield), Rosemarie White and Alycia Biondo (Warren), Alexandra Thomsen, Colleen Ovelman, Jim Casey, and Maureen McCracken (Waterbury)

**Administration:** Brigid Nease, Michelle Baker

***The Executive Committee of the WWSU Board does not need to meet during September.***

1. Call to Order by Superintendent – at 6:07 p.m.
2. Board Organization:
  - A. Elect a Chair: Nominations: Rosemarie White nominated Christine Sullivan; Jim Casey nominated Gabe Gilman.

Discussion of best structure for the board. - Co-chairs or Chair and Vice Chair? Because of the amount work to be done, Co-chairs could share the work. However, it might be difficult to know who to go to for an issue or problem. Since there will be more pre-planning work with Brigid and Michelle for meetings, etc. – possibly a couple of hours a month - logistically might be more beneficial to have a Chair and Vice Chair. Everyone agreed on structure of Chair and Vice Chair.

Gabe Gilman revised the motion for Christine Sullivan to be nominated as Chair, seconded by Alycia Biondo. Motion carried.
  - B. Elect a Vice Chair: Heidi Spear revived motion for Gabe Gilman to be nominated as Vice Chair, seconded by Peter Langella. Motion carried
  - C. Designate Newspaper(s) of Record: Times Argus, Valley Reporter, Waterbury Record
3. Information/Discussion Items:
  - a. Information: HUUSD All Board Member Training on Oct. 12th from 6:00-9:00 by Nicole Mace, Esq./VSBA; Review. Brigid explained why needed and value of being provided by VSBA. Focus: What is Role of Board, Role of Administrators, Work of Local Board, Work of Unified Board as they prepare to take over on July 1.

There are 5 other trainings – Intro to Budgeting (Following meeting in Oct, this training will be 2 hours; Brigid and Michelle will provide information on how budgets are done.)

Two trainings in the spring: building your new policy manual (January or first meeting in February) and how to get to know all the schools in the second half of the year.

Initial Board Retreat: ½ day led by VSBA – great to do prior to July 1. Could do a Saturday or an evening. The retreat could be an evening - could be a potluck, etc. Can decide on this later.

Next: a two-hour training on legal and ethical issues (March or April).

Lastly, preparing for negotiations training (January?).

Most training can be done at meetings.

Discussion of value of the first training.

Question of necessity of the legal and ethical training? Could be written information for the board instead, Gabe would be willing to put together a handout on this and a 10-minute Power Point.

Do not need to commit to all of the trainings at this time. Have never had a third party for all of the former retreats - do we have to use VSBA for all of these? Suggest that the board does a couple of the trainings and then decide about the rest of them.

Information on the VSBA Annual Lake Morey Retreat, Regional meetings - Orange/Lamoille/Washington. Anyone can go to these. (Cost is covered for the retreat.)

Want community to know that everything possible is being done to build the best board, so think trainings are a great idea.

Brigid suggests that all of the trainings get scheduled to be sure to get the dates preferred, can then cancel the ones board feels are not needed. Consensus on this recommendation. Suggest a debrief at the end of each of the trainings.

b. Act 46 Implementation Training on 10/6 from 9:30-2:00 at VSBIT in Berlin; 2 Board Members Needed. Have 4 slots (Brigid and Michelle are already registered. Two board members can also attend: Maureen McCracken and Rosemarie White. Christine Sullivan will be an alternate if one of them cannot make it for at some part of the training).

c. Discuss and decide on the meeting location(s): Gabe Gilman made the motion that HHS Library be used as the normal meeting space, seconded by Heidi Spear. Alycia Biondo suggested keeping this flexible in case another place might be needed for special meetings. Motion carried.

d. Discuss and Decide on a plan for Teacher and Support Staff Negotiations; Review Statute. 16.VSA 2009. Delegate responsibility? Challenging role – great if people are willing to go and participate in this process. Takes a great deal of time for meetings, etc. Will have exec session at each board meeting to be updated on the progress. Many places hire an attorney, but very expensive.

Brigid suggests perfect way is for herself and Michelle and two board members to conduct negotiations. Meetings are 1st and 3rd Thursdays, starting early Oct. Would be a good idea for other members to show up at one or more meetings, but not participate. Brigid will talk with the negotiating group to see if this would be agreeable. Jim Casey is willing to be the board delegate; Maureen McCracken will be the second but would have to start in November. Gabe Gilman moved to nominate Maureen and Jim to be on committee, seconded by Alycia Biondo. Motion carried. Negotiating team will be Brigid, Michelle, Maureen and Jim.

e. Discuss The Agenda Planning Calendar and the Work for the Year.

Budget planning starts in November (Nov 9, 14, Dec 14, 28), finalized on January 11 or schedule another meeting if needed - January 25.

Discussion of how to start the budget process:

Have spending problem, declining enrollment as always. Look at tax rates for each community. Brigid suggests a level service budget to start, with new rates for health insurance, etc. Get a level service budget from each school, might be able to see areas to save cost without cutting services. How to compare budgets between school and what services they provide? Maybe there will be more information at the budget training session. What about the promise to the public to save money by consolidating? Will have to have the difficult conversations about differences in class size, technology, languages, amount of minutes that some faculty have free for planning, etc. during the day compared to other schools. (Class size is unpredictable.)

f. Discuss the New Policy on School Choice within the SU and the Timeline: Choice as soon as practicable. First year stay at original spot, but could leave if applied and accepted. Will have to develop new policy on this, but need data to do it. Why would parents want to change a child – program, location, class size, transportation? Could use Survey Monkey to get this information. Make it necessary for everyone to complete to get accurate data? Is it worth dealing with it now or wait until following year?

Important for us to have predictive information, but be careful not to start a rush. Start working on a survey, tell folks what we're doing, could develop a form and an application to apply, even in year one.

Gabe Gilman will work with Brigid to create a survey to bring to the next meeting. Add to each school's websites to look for the survey.

Should each of the newsletters from each school be shared – all web sites could be sent to the central site, with an eye towards sharing. Should there be a communication sub-committee? Brigid will speak to the administrators about sharing their newsletters – are they exportable? Put Board Members on the distribution list of all school newsletters.

Rob Williams is willing to put together some ideas for a newsletter from this board, to begin to design board's own communication tools – Front Porch Forum, Facebook, etc. Have a HUUSB tab on the WWSU website in the meantime.

Local boards still have to be responsible for legal issues until July 1, and to create a capital improvement plan.

g. Brainstorm the Questions We Have.

Question: Where are we with the bond for the high school?

Work towards next year. Not asking for bond until visioning around middle school issues has been completed.

Agenda for next time: Working groups, sub-committees.

There needs to be three work groups: communications, policies, and facilities. Committee does in-depth work, brings recommendation back to the board and answers questions.

Communications Work Group: Rob Williams, Maureen McCracken, Heidi Spear, Colleen Ovelman.

Policy Work Group: Gabe Gilman, Garrett MacCurtain, Jill Ellis, Catherine Sullivan.

Facility Work Group: Alycia Biondo, Rosemarie White, Alex Thomson, Peter Langella.

5. Other Business:

Heidi Spear made motion to approve minutes of the organizational meeting of August 31, seconded by Rob Williams. Motion carried.

Rosemarie White made motion to approve the balance of the revised minutes of the 1st meeting of the board, seconded by Heidi Spear. Motion carried.

6. Rob Williams moved to adjourn meeting at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Maureen/Rosemarie. Motion carried.

Minutes by  
Freya Chaffee