

MINUTES
MONT VERNON SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 16, 2008
MONT VERNON VILLAGE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Jayson Darula called the board meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Mont Vernon School Board: Jayson Darula, Bruce Schmidt, John Schwope, and Leo White

Administrative Team: Lisa Ambrosio, Dr. Mary Jennings, Nicole Heimarck, Meghan Libby, Nancy McGuire, Renee Sparks, Betty Shankel, and Gail Westergren

Public: Jennifer Bertrand

Budget Committee: Joe Fleurette

Reporter: Daymond Steer, *Cabinet*

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

- A. Principal's Report – Board members received a handout entitled Principal's Report, December 11, 2008, in their board packets.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gail told board members the basketball pole and flagpole projects have not yet been completed due to the weather.

Gail told board members the laptop cart is highly used and very much appreciated by staff.

Gail said the calendar of upcoming events has been thrown off by the recent ice storm.

Leo White suggested the administration contact Eileen Nabor regarding the town trust to assist in the maintenance of the basketball court and for the payment of a new basketball hoop.

- B. Staff Development Report – Nicole Heimarck reported on Professional Development Days to date. The Mont Vernon Village School has had 49 days,

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Amherst School District, 178 days and the Souhegan School District has had 97.8 days.

Discussion ensued regarding in district versus out of district professional development as well as the number of days used. Nicole stated she could not project the number that would be used for the year.

John stated the board would like to know if this is the typical number of days.

Jayson Darula invited comments from the Public but none were forthcoming.

III. PUBLIC TIME

The A. Minutes 1. November 13, 2008, were pulled from the Consent Agenda for changes to be made.

V. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to approve Consent Agenda Items A. Minutes 1. November 13, 2008, B. Treasurer's Report 1. October 2008, C. Manifest and D. Donation to Student Activity Fund. Leo White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0)

A. Auditor's Report – FY08 Budget – Board members received a copy of the Mont Vernon School District Annual Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2008.

V. PRESENTATIONS

Sheryl Stephens Burke from Melanson Heath & Company thanked the Mont Vernon School District for having them as their auditors again this year.

Sheryl told board members on page 9 of the Financial Statements, the Total Net Assets (Equity) as of June 30, 2008, is \$1,411,253.

Sheryl referred board members to page 10 of the Financial Statements where the Change in Net Assets was \$91,263, which is the Net Income for the Year.

Sheryl explained the Statement of Revenues and Other Sources, and Expenditures and Other Uses – Budget and Actual on page 15. Sheryl said the district received more than budgeted for Revenues and Other Sources in the amount of \$5,639. The district under spent in Total Expenditures and Other Uses by \$302,871. The Excess of Revenues and other sources over expenditures and other uses saw a Budget Variance of \$308,510.

Board members received a copy of the Management Letter for the Year Ended June 30, 2008.

The Management Letter offered no new recommendations however; it did provide the Status of Prior Year Recommendations.

One of the recommendations was to Improve Controls over Disbursements and the current year status is “Resolved.”

The second recommendation was to Consider Implementing Internal Control Improvements. The current year status is the district is in the process of addressing this recommendation. The District’s response is they have continued to increase their internal audit activities and oversight of high-risk areas. Additionally, they have begun updating key financial policies and procedures in support of improved internal controls.

The last recommendation was to Improve the Student Activity Fund Policies and Procedures. During the fiscal year 2008 audit, the following issues were encountered:

- Lack of documented approval for several disbursements tested.
- Several instances where pre-numbered receipts were not provided to the individual turning over funds.
- Although the majority of non-student related funds have been closed out, several still exist.

Melanson recommends further action be taken. They recommend the District adhere to the well-designed procedures established in its student activity procedures manual and monitor student activity funds on an ongoing basis.

The District responded by stating they are continuing to educate school personnel regarding the appropriate use of student activity funds and have distributed documented procedures for handling activity funds. They are also continuing to increase time spent on the internal audit function for these funds.

John Schwope said it sounds like this is an implementation issue.

Betty Shankel said it's really an education issue with regards to personnel. Betty said they are going to have the Bookkeeper go to the MVVS once per month to review the funds.

John asked if this issue would always be on the Management Report. Betty said it could be hard to get off, but they are working on it.

Dr. Jennings told board members Betty and Lisa did a great job getting these controls started.

Jayson thanked Sheryl for her presentation.

B. FY09 Budget Adjustment – Board members received a Memorandum addressed to the Mont Vernon School Board from Dr. Jennings dated December 7, 2008, regarding Budget Adjustments, to the FY09 Budget in their board packets.

Dr. Jennings explained at the November 13, 2008, board meeting the administration presented a possible FY09 Budget shortfall of approximately \$100,000. Since then, the administration has reviewed the budget in detail and

submits the following adjustments.

Budget Shortfall: Dr. Jennings said the actual budget shortfall at this time appears to be \$111,613. This shortfall is due to the following adjustments in the budget. Dr. Jennings said the two biggest issues are the Middle School Tuition and English as a Second Language which was eliminated on the floor of the Town Meeting.

Middle School Tuition \$87,835 – shortfall due to increased number of Mont Vernon students to AMS and increased per pupil costs.

English as a Second Language \$7,630 – 3 new students to MVVS, funding cut at District Meeting.

Building and Maintenance \$7,750 – Increased custodial and service contract costs.

Legal Services \$5,000 – Increase due to two negotiations.

Title I Services - \$3,400 – Reduction in grant funding.

Proposed Adjustments –

Benefits: Health, Dental, FICA, NH Retirement \$39,000 – Projected in First Quarter Report as possible savings due to enrollments.

Benefits: New Package offered to Paraprofessionals \$38,000 – Employees chose not to take part in new health plan benefit.

Psychological Services: SPED \$16,840 – Salary covered when submitted through IDEA grant.

Utilities \$12,457 – Fuel cost savings; change in rates

Textbooks: Reading \$5,257 – Book publisher offers first year of reading pilot text free of charge.

Dr. Jennings said if the board agrees with the Proposed Adjustments, the administration would bring budget transfers to the next board meeting for action.

Dr. Jennings said the board also inquired as to the possibility of hiring of an additional general education aide. Dr. Jennings said if an aide were added to the staff mid-year, the cost for the remainder of the year would be approximately \$14,000. To find funding for this position, budget lines would need to be “frozen” or unspent for the remainder of the year. The administration sees the following possibilities of adjusting funding this year.

Accounts Identified for 50% Aide (Column 1):

\$2,000 Tuition Reimbursement Principal
 \$5,000 Workbooks and Instructional Materials (Savings regarding Scott Foresman donation of materials)

Total \$7,000

Accounts Identified for Additional 50% Aide (Column 2):

\$4,000 Field Trips
 \$1,000 Library Books (School has received a donation from the PTA)
 \$340 Instructional Materials
 \$1,660 Books and Info Resources

Total \$7,000

Dr. Jennings said they are recommending the board hire a .5 aide for the remainder of the year, freezing the line items in column one above. Dr. Jennings said if the board would want to create a full-time position, the line items in column two would also be affected.

Bruce Schmidt said he is comfortable with column one however, if a full time aide were needed he would want to see additional justification. Bruce said he would want to know how the aide was being used.

Jayson Darula asked how the teachers felt about the proposed reductions in column two if the board was to approve a full time aide. Gail said they have other sources of revenue they could utilize to fund the field trips for example, bake sales. Gail said the teachers felt the reductions were doable if necessary. Gail said the teachers feel strongly that an aide will improve the quality of instruction.

Gail said if the board decides to utilize a part-time aide it will be used in the afternoons in the 5th and 6th grades.

Gail said her personal recommendation is for a half-time aide. Gail said with the addition of this aide, the teachers believe they would be able to provide remediation and enrichment.

The board agreed the administration should move forward and look for a part-time aide, which will provide assistance for the 5th grade class.

C. FY10 Budget – 1st Draft – Gail Westergren presented the School Budget Presentation dated December 11, 2008 for the Fiscal Year 2010. Board members received a copy of Gail's presentation in their board packets. Also provided to board members was the line item detail behind the budget for Special Education as well as Gail's line item detail dated 12/10/08.

Gail highlighted the Current Budget.

- Adequately supports the needs of students with a focus on appropriate instructional materials in all areas and curriculum revision.
- Adequately supports educational goals by addressing ongoing commitments to literacy, mathematics, social studies, science and integrated arts.
- Supports technology plan and replacement

cycle.

- Adequately supports special education needs.
- Does not adequately support ELL needs.
- Provides a safe environment.
- Includes increases in Technology Integration Specialist and increases for MVEA agreement.

Current Enrollments and Projections were provided.

- Current enrollment of 254 at the Mont Vernon Village School and 72 at Amherst Middle School.
- Projected enrollment of 263 at the Mont Vernon Village School and 68 at Amherst Middle School.

Gail presented a slide, which detailed the proposed Class Sizes for FY10.

- Kindergarten – class of 21
- G1 – 2 classes of 17
- G2 – 2 classes of 18
- G3 – 1 class of 19, 1 class of 18
- G4 – 2 classes of 25
- G5 – 1 class of 19, 1 class of 18
- G6 – 1 class of 26, 1 class of 25

Gail said she is proposing Kindergarten registration be held early in February so they have an actual hard number. Gail said if they have no more than 21 registered for Kindergarten, they could have one class of 21 students.

Gail detailed the FY10 Educational Programming as follows:

- Ongoing commitment to early literacy intervention, with continued support of literacy coach/language arts consultant and the addition of a pilot reading program.

\$24,700

- Costs of preparation for the implementation of a pilot reading program and development of science inquiry kits. \$4,200
- Student Activities – Year 3 of 3 to offset cost of band program instructor. \$4,000
- Implementation of new science curriculum with new instructional materials for use in all classrooms. \$5,180
- Technology expenditures include purchase of two Smartboards, a mobile projector cart, library automation, and address replacement of equipment on 5-year cycle as well as upgrades to infrastructure. \$46,273

Gail told board members Special Education Costs are expected to decrease by 3.93%.

Operation and Maintenance of Plant Services are expected to increase overall by 5.87%.

Gail presented Additional Considerations:

- MVEA Contract – FY09 salaries were used because contract for next year is currently being negotiated.
- SAU Budget – MVSD budget reflects costs of proposed SAU Budget.
- Benefit Costs – Gail said benefit costs have increased significantly. Estimated healthcare increases of 10%, estimated dental insurance increases of 3.7%, and teacher pension increases of 20%.

Gail provided board members with a slide that detailed the Staffing Comparison for FY09 and FY10.

Gail said if the projections are correct and there are 21 students in Kindergarten next year, they would be proposing a .50 teacher for Kindergarten.

In FY09 there is a Spanish Teacher and in FY10 they are proposing to eliminate this position.

In FY09 they have a Literacy Coach for .25 and in FY10 they are proposing a Literacy Coach for .50.

In FY09 they had 9 Special Education Aides and in FY10 they are proposing 10 Special Education Aides.

Gail summarized the proposed FY10 Budget as follows:

- Overall decrease of 1.19%.
- Addresses normal increases in cost of living, utilities, and fixed costs.
- Provides for continued educational improvements with a focus on literacy and technology.
- Supports District and SAU goals.

Board members were given the opportunity to comment or ask questions on Draft 1 of the budget as presented.

Leo White said although the budget presented represented a 1.19% decrease as compared to the FY09 budget, it still didn't include the teacher's salaries, which are currently in negotiations. Leo said once the salaries are input into the budget, the budget could go up.

Leo said they don't have the revenue numbers for Mont Vernon. Betty said they haven't found out how the figures should be split between Amherst, Mont Vernon and Souhegan.

Leo said he has great concerns about eliminating the Spanish program. He said it wasn't an easy program to get approved and now the administration wants to eliminate it.

Dr. Jennings said she is very proud that Mont Vernon has had Spanish at the Village School teaching students Spanish in grades K-6.

Dr. Jennings said for the last two years and prior to her coming on board for SAU 39, Amherst has not been willing to implement a Spanish program in K-6. Dr. Jennings said students receive Spanish in Middle School, grade 7.

Dr. Jennings said the Mont Vernon Village students since they have had Spanish for six years prior to coming to the Middle School, they get to 7th grade and do not advance in Spanish and it is put on hold. Dr. Jennings said the Amherst curriculum doesn't align with the Mont Vernon curriculum and she doesn't see it aligning in the near future.

Dr. Jennings said the Amherst students that have one year of Spanish in the 7th grade get caught up to the Mont Vernon Students that have had six years of Spanish at the Village School by the 8th grade.

Bruce Schmidt asked why if differentiated learning is a successful technique, why is it failing our students at the Middle School in Spanish?

Dr. Jennings said as hard as it is, they believe literacy (reading and writing) is very important and this should be their main focus. Dr. Jennings said they want to improve their NWEA scores and literacy.

Leo White said he is not sure he agrees with the administrations philosophy.

Dr. Jennings said if Mont Vernon's scores were where they wanted them to be, she would agree the Spanish program was worth keeping but; more emphasis does need to be placed on reading and writing.

Bruce Schmidt said he agrees they want to improve the NWEA scores but not at the cost of the Spanish program.

Gail said a lot of teachers say they don't have enough time to do writing.

John Schwope asked if keeping the Spanish program was a time issue or a money issue. Dr. Jennings said it was both.

John Schwope asked if there was physically enough time to do both Spanish and Literacy.

Dr. Jennings said they currently have five specials during teachers prep period, she said they believe there is not enough time.

Dr. Jennings said the ideal way to teach Spanish is to integrate it into the everyday curriculum, not what they are currently doing.

Dr. Jennings said the Spanish program is a scheduling issue, use of time issue, and a differentiated instruction issue.

John Schwope asked if we can do both and Dr. Jennings said yes.

Dr. Jennings said they presented a very lean budget because of the wild card, the teacher contract being negotiated.

Bruce Schmidt said he was concerned about the Kindergarten teacher being proposed as a part time teacher for next year. What will happen in future years – when the students are in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade, etcetera? Bruce said he would like to see the plan for each year going forward with the proposed Kindergarten class size of 21. How is the plan thought through for the entire six years for this class size of 21?

Jennifer Bertrand asked what was the state recommended average class size.

Gail said the state recommendation is between 15-25, with the optimum number being 20.

Leo requested some high level sorts of the budget similar to those done in previous years. Leo said he thinks the board should consider having a second meeting in January since they still have to go through the budget line by line. It was agreed, if the budget review weren't completed in the first meeting, they would schedule another meeting in January.

Dr. Jennings said the board meeting in January would only be on the budget.

Dr. Jennings said at the meeting in January they will also decide on the warrant articles.

Dr. Jennings reviewed the items the board wanted addressed at the meeting in January with regards to the budget.

- Understand the long-term plan with regards to staffing.
- Understand band stipends – parent funded, budget funded, how many students are participating and is additional funds needed?
- Spanish – other ways to offer Spanish during the day. Current schedule – assessment on time spent teaching Spanish.
- Budget sorts – high/low actual dollars, and percent increase to percent decrease.
- Tuition Agreement – Sample warrant article and back-up articles.
- Detailed justification regarding Library Automation and data on how often Interlibrary loans are done.
- Present a plan that supports this year's 5th grade class next year as a 6th grade class the way it needs to be supported.

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Leo White seconded the motion. By roll call vote Schmidt-yes; White-yes; Darula-yes; Schwope-yes all board members

**VI. NON-PUBLIC SESSION
RSA 91-A:3 II (a)**

voted to enter into Non-Public Session at 8:55 p.m.

The board discussed personnel issues.

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to come out of Non-Public Session. Leo White seconded the motion. By roll call vote Schmidt-yes; White-yes; Darula-yes; Schwope-yes all board members voted to come out of Non-Public Session at 9:30 p.m.

Leo White spoke of the Selectmen's Meeting, which he and Jayson Darula attended. Maintenance of McCollom Field was discussed. The deed for the field states that if the School District does not maintain the field, ownership of the land will revert to the town. The Selectmen asked if the School District would be willing to continue delegating maintenance of the field to the town, with the School District retaining ultimate responsibility for the maintenance. Jayson and Leo agreed. The Selectmen promised to confirm this in a letter to the school district. Once the letter arrives, the board should vote on whether or not to accept it.

VII. OTHER

Leo White added the Selectmen said they would send a letter stating agreement. The board should vote when the letter is received.

Mary Jennings added the Director of Emergency Preparedness for Mont Vernon is going to ask the American Red Cross to help maintain the multi-purpose room for a daytime emergency shelter.

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn the meeting. Leo White seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. (4-0) The meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

X. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN