

1 Mont Vernon School Board Meeting

2 Monday, May 11th, 2020

3 Meeting Minutes- Approved 06 01 2020

4

5 Attendees:

6 Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, John Schuttinger- Principal of the MVVS
7 and Danielle Guarrera, MVVS Spanish Teacher.

8 Mont Vernon School Board: Sarah Lawrence- Chair, Peter Eckhoff- Vice Chair, Scott St. Denis-
9 Secretary, Stephen O'Keefe, and Jessica Hinckley.

10 Meeting Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

11 Public: None

12 I. Call to Order

13 **Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board, Ms. Sarah Lawrence, called the meeting to order**
14 **at 9:06PM.**

15 II. Opening Items

16 Ms. Lawrence noted that they have reviewed most of the information at the SAU meeting held
17 tonight at 6:00PM.

18 III. Consent Agenda

19 **Mr. O'Keefe motioned to accept the Consent Agenda items 1. 04 13 2020 Draft Minutes**
20 **and 2. Policy JFABD- Admission of Homeless Policy JFABD Students- From 04 13 2020**
21 **Meeting. Mr. Eckhoff seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

22 **Ms. Lawrence called a roll call: Lawrence-Yes, Eckhoff-Yes, St. Denis-Yes, O'Keefe- Yes**
23 **and Eckhoff-Yes.**

24 IV. UFB Update

25 Ms. Lawrence added that Ms. Croteau covered this at the SAU meeting at 6:00PM. She asked
26 Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, if he had anything to add.

27 Mr. Steel replied that the only decision that the Board would have to make is if they would like
28 to spend it. He would advise against it given the low amount and current economic climate. It is
29 a Board decision.

30 Mr. O'Keefe asked if it was a concern that it was such a low amount.

31 Mr. Steel replied that a good general rule of thumb is to have between 1% to 2% of their
32 Operating Budget. He believes that they budgeted the correct amount.

33 Mr. O'Keefe questioned about expenditures from now until the end of the year. He suggested
34 that they strip the floors now to save on the manpower.

35 Mr. Steel remarked that they are currently in the middle of a changeover with the Director of
36 Facilities. SAU #39 Business Administrator, Ms. Michele Croteau, is thoughtful about getting
37 work completed now while they can.

38 Mr. O'Keefe asked if there were any floors that were getting stripped.

39 Mr. Steel added that the floors are getting taken care of. The custodians will have different things
40 to do over the summer and they are under contract.

41 Ms. Lawrence asked if there was anything that was a dire need.

42 Mr. Steel replied that they have a list and always have. His read of the community is to be
43 conservative and return funds to the taxpayer.

44 Mr. Eckhoff noted his understanding of the contract and questioned if there is no work to be
45 done why would they continue paying them after the building is clean.

46 Mr. Steel explained that when this pandemic started, they committed publicly to paying their
47 employees through June 30th whether they were working or not. They are working and they have
48 things for them to do. The new fiscal year starts July 1st and that is when contracts come out.
49 They can either lay them off and hire new employees in the fall or keep them on during the
50 summer and find projects for them to do over the summer. Before the economy declined, it was
51 hard to find hardworking trustworthy employees. Given the cost benefit analysis, the second
52 option is preferred. If they thought that the whole next school year would be shut down, then
53 they would surely scale back. They are not sure what will happen with ESY over the summer and
54 it could involve possible intense cleaning protocols.

55 Mr. Eckhoff suggested that they ask Principal Schuttinger and the custodial crew to look into
56 projects that they can do to improve the school.

57 Mr. Steel responded that he will discuss that with Ms. Croteau.

58 Principal of the MVVS, Mr. John Schuttinger, clarified that they have three staff, one that is full
59 time as the lead and two that are part time.

60 Ms. Lawrence asked Mr. O'Keefe if he can discuss some of the maintenance items that he had
61 noticed.

62 Mr. O'Keefe added that he noticed roof shingles over the back gym doors are curled and
63 exposed.

64 Mr. Steel replied that they will make sure that they take a look at it. They are getting close to
65 having the funds for the roof. He clarified that this coming June 30th they will have approx.
66 \$112,000 Unassigned Fund Balance (*Projected 6/30/2020 UFB \$111,908*).

67 Mr. O'Keefe added that he believes that it should go back to the taxpayer.

68 Ms. Lawrence commented that it seems as if the Board agrees to return the funds to the
69 taxpayers.

70 The Board agreed.

71 Principal Schuttinger remarked that the tiles that Mr. O’Keefe is referring to over the
72 Multipurpose room are over a Maintenance Office and storage area.

73 Mr. O’Keefe noted that a few years ago they had a lot of negative feedback about the appearance
74 of the building’s grounds and they want to make sure that it does not happen again.

75 The Board thanked Superintendent Steel.

76 V. First Reading Policies- DAF, EHAB, IJL/KEC, and JICI

77 Ms. Lawrence noted that they have Policies DAF- Admission of Federal Grants, EHAB- Data
78 Governance and Security, IJL/KEC- Learning Resources Selection and Reconsideration and
79 JICI- Weapons on School Property as a first reading.

80 She asked the Board if they had any comments or questions.

81 The Board had no comments or questions.

82 VI. School Building Goals Update

83 Principal Schuttinger reviewed the objectives of Building Goals, 1. Provide quality physical
84 activity programming for students after school beginning October 2019. 2. Grades 3-6 will
85 achieve 60% proficiency on the NHSAS 2020, 3. Design a Multi-Tiered System of Support
86 (MTSS) that meets the needs of all learners by January 2020, and 4. Move all staff using
87 Empower to a level of proficiency by December 2019.

88 He added that Math Interventionist, Ms. Charline Brown, collaborated with classroom teachers,
89 co-taught lessons and created and executed the ‘house’ system for all students and staff. These
90 house groups met twice this year with math/logic challenges. A third was being planned for
91 April. Ms. Brown also presented to all staff during regularly scheduled staff meetings five times
92 prior to March 13.

93 Mr. O’Keefe questioned how do they start on the objectives with the disruption of school.

94 Mr. Steel noted that the new Principal, Ms. Kim Sarfte, has read through the goals, minutes, etc.
95 That is a part of the onboarding system and he is working with her to get her up to speed.

96 Principal Schuttinger explained how the students have greatly enjoyed the math challenges and
97 are very engaged. The staff is open and receptive and are happy to work with the students. He
98 wondered if NWEA will change their expectations due to the Covid-19 being an international
99 pandemic.

100 Mr. O’Keefe inquired how soon will they intervene with testing in the Fall.

101 Mr. Steel replied that teachers will spend extensive time documenting where their students have
102 ended. The NWEA will start early in the school year so that they know where they are.

103 Ms. Lawrence asked for further comments.

104 VII. Curriculum Coordinators-Update

105 Ms. Lawrence thanked Principal Schuttinger for providing this update in written form. She asked
106 him if there was anything that he wanted to highlight.

107 Principal Schuttinger replied, nothing in particular. They are doing a lot of great work with Math
108 and Science.

109 Ms. Lawrence commented that this is highlighting a lot of great stuff and asked if there were any
110 areas that were presenting a challenge or where staff may need support.

111 Principal Schuttinger responded that he will ask the faculty and get back to the Board before the
112 next meeting.

113 Mr. Eckhoff inquired about students that are behind and wondered if there were community
114 members that can come into the school and volunteer for tutoring in Math, Science or Reading.

115 Mr. Steel replied that he is looking forward to opening the school on time with students in the
116 school. He is hoping for a startup program using funds from the CARES Act in late August. The
117 challenge is to get qualified tutors that are available. That is what they are working towards and
118 it is too early to tell at this time.

119 Mr. St. Denis commented that the whole world will be behind and to try to cram 4 months will
120 be overload. They need to be cognizant about students' emotional health and that should be in
121 the forefront. Getting them caught up will happen, it will just take some time.

122 Mr. Steel remarked that he agreed.

123 VIII. World Language-Update

124 Ms. Danielle Guarrera, MVVS Spanish Teacher, introduced herself and added that Principal
125 Schuttinger has a written update.

126 Ms. Lawrence noted that the Board would be happy to accept Public Comments at this time.

127 Mr. Steel remarked that there is one person that is part of the public that is also a staff member
128 and they do not have any questions or comments at this time.

129 Ms. Guarrera noted that she had met with Ms. Paloma Ahgren and Ms. Alejandra Costas,
130 Modern Language Teachers at AMS two years ago and at the beginning of last year. She has
131 taken their curriculum from Empower with what they are doing for the 5th and 6th grade. They
132 cannot fit it all in. She has started with the basics, colors and numbers starting in Kindergarten.
133 In the second grade, they start with the alphabet. The bigger units start in the 4th grade learning
134 about countries and creating presentations. MVVS students are exposed to it earlier and have
135 some experience for AMS.

136 Principal Schuttinger added as far as the program goes it is clear that it is a challenge to meet the
137 number of times as AMS. The concern from the MVSB was how well our students are prepared
138 for World Language at Amherst Middle School (AMS) when they transition to grade seven.

139 Students at AMS take either Spanish or French beginning in grade six every other day for the full
140 year. This equates to five sessions in two weeks compared to MVVS having three sessions over
141 two weeks. This past summer, Ms. Danielle Guarrera worked closely with her AMS counterparts
142 to adjust the AMS grade 6 Spanish curriculum to fit the schedule at Mont Vernon. The AMS
143 grade 6 content has been spread across two years at MVVS (grades 5 and 6). However, due to
144 remote learning, we are unable to fully implement this year and assess the effectiveness of this
145 curricular adjustment.

146 Students at MVVS do not have an option for learning French at school. The concern is that
147 students leave MVVS and transition to AMS with no French instruction was raised at few Board
148 meetings. The current practice for students wanting French in grade seven is by working through
149 a packet of materials for the summer between grade six and seven. He reviewed several scenarios
150 for World Language instruction at MVVS.

151 Ms. Lawrence asked for questions for Principal Schuttinger.

152 She asked about changing over to a 1-4 scale.

153 Principal Schuttinger added that the challenge is that Spanish needs to be considered as a class
154 and they need to remind parents that it is just as much weight as a core class.

155 Mr. St. Denis suggested that the Ms. Guarrera give a presentation in the beginning of school to
156 explain the importance of World Language. It might be beneficial for the parents to hear that as
157 opposed to a brief walk through.

158 Mr. Schuttinger replied that it was a great idea.

159 Ms. Lawrence added that it is important for the new Principal to know that the Board is
160 committed to World Language and that it is a focus in the school and in the community.

161 Mr. Steel replied he will relay that to Ms. Sarfte.

162 Ms. Guarrera noted that 5th and 6th grade had a exposure with Empower grading this year. She
163 has had some conversations with the 6th grade parents and it is the equivalent of AMS's Spanish
164 I this year.

165 Mr. O'Keefe requested that they check in with middle school staff in regard to the transition.

166 Mr. Eckhoff inquired if it is possible to have online resources for World Language.

167 Principal Schuttinger replied that Ms. Guarrera has been using Rocklingua and she has made a
168 great use of it. It is a much better product than a popular program and better for students. They
169 want to make sure that kids are using it. If used more consistent, is excellent for fluency.

170 <https://rockalingua.com/>

171 Mr. St. Denis cautioned with using electronics as it does not replace the teacher, especially at the
172 elementary levels.

173 Ms. Lawrence added that years ago they did have a full time World Language teacher and that
174 position was cut by the voters. The Board sees the value in in World Language and wants to get

175 the kids on par with AMS students. She is very thankful for Ms. Guarrera and Principal
176 Schuttinger and their efforts.

177 She asked if there were any other comments around that topic.

178 Principal Schuttinger explained that they will have a change with sharing the information
179 regarding placement. They will announce placement in August and with remote learning has
180 presented more of a challenge. He will have the staff meet with students virtually. Placements
181 will be made but not announced until August.

182 Mr. O'Keefe inquired about the teachers following the cohort. He thought that they were doing
183 that.

184 Principal Schuttinger replied that they had discussed it and the challenge is where the and they
185 will be. They do not have a planned-out summer yet and teachers have not taught next year's
186 curriculum if ever. There was a thought of having students loop with each other but there are
187 certain personalities that cannot loop together. They will still discuss looping.

188 He then shared his very positive experience with looping as a 6th grade teacher.

189 Ms. Lawrence questioned if there were any concerns with students transitioning to AMS.

190 Principal Schuttinger replied no, he is very comfortable with the families and they know they can
191 reach out to him.

192 Ms. Lawrence asked about any ideas for the 6th grade celebration.

193 Superintendent Steel replied that they have been having discussions.

194 Ms. Lawrence asked for any other Board comments.

195 Mr. O'Keefe asked if there was anyone that wanted to be a Mentor.

196 Ms. Lawrence replied that she would be glad to help and gave her support for Mr. O'Keefe's
197 newly elected position as SAU #39 Board Chair.

198 IX. Non-Public Session

199 None

200 X. Meeting Adjourned

201 **Ms. Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 10:14PM.**

202 She thanked the Board for their continued commitment to the education of the students of Mont
203 Vernon.