

## 1 Mont Vernon Village School

2 Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2020

3 Meeting Minutes- Approved 10 15 2020

## 4 Attendees:

5 Administrative Team: Adam Steel- Superintendent, Christine Landwehrle- Assistant  
6 Superintendent, Meg Beauchamp- Director of Student Services, Michele Croteau- SAU #39  
7 Business Administrator, Kim Sarfte - Principal MVVS, Roger Preston- Director of Facilities.

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

10 Public: Kim Roberge, 35 Salisbury Rd, Mont Vernon, NH, Eileen Naber, 14 Beech Hill Rd,  
11 Mont Vernon NH, Elizabeth Burkart, Mont Vernon NH, Bonnie Angulas, Mont Vernon NH,  
12 Amy Wyman, Mont Vernon NH, and Autumn Grdina, 17 Old Milford Road, Mont Vernon NH.

13 Board Minutes: Danae A. Marotta

## 14 I. Call to Order

15 **Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board, Ms. Sarah Lawrence, called the meeting to order**  
16 **at 4:45 PM.**

17 Today, we will be conducting a school board meeting of the Mont Vernon School Board.

18 Before we get started, I'll read through a checklist to ensure that the meeting that we are holding  
19 is in compliance with the Right-to-Know Law.

20 As chairperson of the Mont Vernon School Board, I find that due to the state of emergency  
21 declared by the Governor as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in accordance with the  
22 Governor's Emergency Order Number #12, pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04 and its  
23 extensions, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. Please note that there is no  
24 physical location to observe and listen contemporaneously to this meeting which was authorized  
25 pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Order.

26 In accordance with the Emergency Order, I am confirming that:

- 27 1. We are providing public access to the meeting by telephone, with additional access  
28 possible by video and other electronic means. We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic  
29 meeting. All members of the committee and selected legislative staff have the ability to  
30 communicate contemporaneously in this meeting through this platform. And the public  
31 has access to contemporaneously watch and or listen to the meeting on Zoom and via  
32 phone by following the directions and links provided on our website: [www.sau39.org](http://www.sau39.org).
- 33 2. We have provided public notice of the necessary information for accessing the meeting.

34 3. We are providing a mechanism for the public to alert the public body during the meeting  
35 if there are problems with access. If anyone has a problem, please email  
36 [awallace@sau39.org](mailto:awallace@sau39.org).

37

38 4. In the event the public is unable to access the meeting will be adjourned and  
39 rescheduled.

40 5. Please note that all votes taken during this meeting shall be done by roll call vote.

41 6. Finally, let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. When each member states  
42 their presence please also state where they are and if anyone else is in the room with you  
43 during this meeting, which is required under the Right-to-Know Law.

44 She called the Roll Call: Eckhoff- home and alone, St. Denis- home and alone, O'Keefe- home  
45 and alone, Hinckley- home and alone and Lawrence- home and alone.

46 II. Public Comment I of II

47 Ms. Lawrence added that they are taking questions via Zoom.

48 Ms. Hinckley noted that Mont Vernon community member, Ms. Amy Wyman, questioned if the  
49 District was continuing with the food delivery program from over the summer.

50 Superintendent, Mr. Adam Steel, replied that the food delivery program has not been extended  
51 due to staffing. They are looking into if parents can pick up the meals, it is still being discussed.

52 Ms. Lawrence asked for further questions.

53 There were no further questions and the Board thanked Ms. Wyman.

54 III. Consent Agenda

55 Ms. Lawrence asked if there were any questions on items 1-3.

56 Mr. O'Keefe questioned if they need to submit the emails that they receive from concerned  
57 parents. He suggested that they be apart of the public record.

58 Ms. Hinckley also noted that she has received some emails and has forwarded them to Ms.  
59 Lawrence.

60 **Mr. O'Keefe motioned to accept the Consent Agenda items 1. Draft Minutes Aug 17th,**  
61 **2020, 2. Draft Minutes Aug 27th, 2020, 3. Draft Minutes Aug 28th, 2020 with Board**  
62 **Signatures, as written. Ms. Hinkley seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion**  
63 **passed.**

64 Ms. Lawrence called a roll call: Lawrence-Yes, O'Keefe-Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Eckhoff-Yes,  
65 St. Denis- Yes and O'Keefe-Yes.

66 Ms. Lawrence added that she would like to review the emails from concerned parents from some  
67 of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents. She noted that one email was around the decision not to hire the third  
68 additional teacher the 5<sup>th</sup> grade at that point, had 20 in person learners in one classroom with one  
69 teacher. She added that she has an email from Ms. Autumn Grdina. 17 Old Milford Road, Mont  
70 Vernon NH.

71 Ms. Lawrence asked Mr. Steel for clarification as what to do with the emails.

72 Mr. Steel replied that they can be appended to the minutes.

73 Ms. Lawrence then read an email from a concerned parent and it captures the sentiment.

74 She noted that this person is a concerned parent that considers herself an informed member of the  
75 community that attends board meetings regularly, active in the community and the PTA and is  
76 regular contact with board members and administration. She had no prior knowledge of the  
77 change that was made in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade from two classes to one. She had heard from a friend on  
78 social media. She was asking if the change was made with direct input from parents or  
79 communication to parents of the students that were directly affected. She also asked if anyone  
80 attended the meeting which the change was voted on. She still has not gotten a formal  
81 communication about that from the school. If she had not heard it from a friend, then she would  
82 not have found about it until her son came home from school. A class size of 20 would not be  
83 acceptable during non-pandemic environment so why is it acceptable now. A class size of 20 is  
84 not acceptable at AMS, to the point that they are asking people to go remote to keep the class  
85 sizes down, then why is it ok for MV to have a class size of 20. Yes, the children are in the  
86 largest classroom but why is it acceptable for them to be in the classroom all day long.

87 Ms. Hinckley added that she is also a 5<sup>th</sup> grade parent. She believes that the parents are used to  
88 small class sizes, and in the Re-Opening Plan it was discussed that the class sizes were not going  
89 to be larger than 10 or 11. Additionally, there was no communication with them about this  
90 change until after the kids were dropped off. She heard that most from parents.

91 Ms. Lawrence added that Principal Sarfde has spoken with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents and the  
92 recording to that was sent out. They can also get an update from her.

93 Superintendent Steel remarked that all of the Principals will be answering questions at the SAU  
94 meeting tonight.

95 Ms. Lawrence then read an email from Ms. Kristen Scully, Mont Vernon Community Member.

96 *“ Good Afternoon, I am writing to you with my concerns with the remote learning plans for the  
97 Mont Vernon Village School. I kept up with the happenings over the summer and felt that the  
98 district had a good plan but always wondered how it would work for the MVVS. I still believe  
99 that they have a good plan for Amherst and the High School, however, the plan does not  
100 translate well to Mont Vernon. My concern is the limited amount of instruction time in core  
101 subjects that the students have with their teacher. My son is in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and he has 40  
102 minutes a day for each Math and ELA 4 days a week. It is my understanding that Science is  
103 provided but will not be taught by the teacher and Social studies is only being slipped into ELA.*

104 *160 minutes a week for ELA and Social Studies does not seem to be enough for the students to*  
105 *learn what needs to be taught, especially in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade when they cover more materials in*  
106 *social studies. This is not a reflection on the teacher, she has been great especially given the*  
107 *last-minute switch. After the morning meeting, and 80 minutes of instruction he is doing his*  
108 *assignments for the rest of the day. The instruction time seems very sparse to me, especially*  
109 *given the instruction time for in person learning. It averages 64 minutes a day since there is not*  
110 *instruction time on Fridays. Small groups are being done at the end of the day and Fridays, but*  
111 *each student is not involved every day. In addition, Spanish is not being taught, although a*  
112 *website is provided with links. This concerns me greatly as the plan was for students to be*  
113 *learning the same thing whether remote or in person. One full year of growth should be in all*  
114 *subjects not just ELA and Math. While I know that being remote is a choice, all summer it was*  
115 *promised that the two modes would be as close as possible in instruction. This is not holding true*  
116 *in Mont Vernon. I think it will make it very difficult if students want to switch modes. This is*  
117 *especially true if the 5<sup>th</sup> grade needs to implement a lottery for in person learning. Some of the*  
118 *out of box thinking needs to happen in order for the school to come up with better and more*  
119 *equitable options. This does not have to be spending more money but perhaps how the schedule*  
120 *is viewed, maybe in person teachers teach a section to remote students and if the in-person*  
121 *students are doing class work they can be overseen by a paraprofessional. Perhaps the Spanish*  
122 *Teacher takes one of her three days a week and teaches the remote students. It would also be*  
123 *helpful to have an idea what the in-person learners are being taught on a weekly basis, a weekly*  
124 *update would be helpful to know what topics are being taught in school. I believe this was asked*  
125 *by one of the parents in a zoom meeting this summer. Parents can better supplement if needed.*

126 *The teachers and school administration have been hard at work to make this work as evidenced*  
127 *by all the last-minute changes, but it needs to be recognized that the district plan falls very short*  
128 *in Mont Vernon for remote learners. An additional teacher for online students would not have*  
129 *solved this problem. Mont Vernon is a very different school with fewer teachers and students. A*  
130 *plan specific to Mont Vernon would have better suited the students.*

131 *Respectfully Submitted,*

132 *Kristen Scully”*

133 She questioned if there were any other emails.

134 Mr. O’Keefe replied only the emails that were CC’ed to the other board members.

135 Ms. Lawrence added that there was one email about a bussing situation. The gist from that parent  
136 is that there seems to be some confusion about an overflow bus #4 that is trailing behind bus #3  
137 and potentially others creating confusion. This parent has reached out to the bus company and  
138 the school and is not satisfied with the response. It still feels as though the bus company is not  
139 completely sure what the plan is. She did forward that email to the Principals of the two schools  
140 involved.

141 She asked if there were any other comments

142 Mr. O’Keefe commented that he wants to make sure that the school administration is being  
143 responsive to the parents with these types of concerns.

144 Mr. Eckhoff suggested that any emails that the Board receives should automatically go into the  
145 minutes so that they are part of the record.

146 Ms. Lawrence noted that she always responds to the community member and asks to make sure  
147 that it is allowable to be read into the minutes.

148 She asked if there were any other comments.

149 Mr. Eckhoff asked about the enrollment numbers with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. He inquired if they  
150 comfortable about where they are at.

151 Mr. Steel responded that it might be 19 with enrollment. He has communicated with a majority  
152 of the parents and understands where they are coming from. They are doing everything they can  
153 to support those students and know that they are not where the 5<sup>th</sup> grade families want to be.

154 Ms. Lawrence asked about a having a conversation with Principal Sarfde about the remote  
155 concerns. It does not sound like the remote experience is as close as an experience as in person.

156 Mr. Steel replied that Principal Sarfde will be happy to provide an update, their remote learning  
157 it is much better than it was in the spring. They have invested a lot of time and energy providing  
158 support to their staff to make sure that it is a better experience than before. He wants to caution  
159 that remote learning is not the same as being in person.

160 IV. Public Comment II of II

161 Ms. Hinckley replied that there are several in the Q and A.

162 Ms. Kim Roberge and Ms. Eileen Naber inquired about the number for in person and remote.

163 Ms. Lawrence replied that she did see that in the Principal’s Reports.

164 Ms. Elizabeth Burkart questioned the sufficiency of communication regarding lunch and social  
165 distance spacing.

166 Mr. Steel replied that they are working on a plan to change the lunch from the MPR. Spacing is 6  
167 feet and in some cases it is not. As stated in their plan, it is still their goal to make that possible.  
168 He opened up the Principal’s Report for the MVVS. The high is 30 in grade 3, which is class size  
169 of 15.

170 Mr. O’Keefe noted that K-4 has two remote teachers not just one.

171 Ms. Bonnie Angulas inquired how will the school be notified of positive Covid cases.

172 Mr. Steel replied that their website has up to the minute data. In addition, they would send home  
173 letters and make individual phone calls to families. NH DHHS directs their steps.

174 Ms. Amy Wyman inquired about the enrollment cap for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. She would like the  
175 definitive answer on the cap for in person students.

176 Mr. Steel answered that the number is 20. They will try to avoid having a lottery and they are not  
177 in that situation now.

178 Ms. Autumn Grdina, 17 Old Milford Road, thanked the Administration and Board for listening  
179 to their concerns. She asked for prior informative communication.

180 Ms. Lawrence replied that Principal Sarfde has made communication a top priority. They do  
181 have a question about the tents with the weather changing.

182 Mr. Steel replied that he will follow up and get back to the Board.

183 Ms. Hinckley inquired if they have the ability to revisit the number of teachers.

184 Ms. Lawrence replied that she is not sure due to the budgetary constraints.

185 Mr. Steel added that if they were to realign staff then the funds would have to come from  
186 somewhere else. They have made their request to the DOE and the DRA to use the amount of  
187 money that was approved by the Board. They have received that, and the tax rate is being  
188 processed as we speak.

189 The Board thanked Superintendent Steel.

190 V. Non-Public Session RSA 91 A:3 II

191 **Mr. O’Keefe motioned to enter into Non-Public Session RSA 91 A:3 II (k) at 5:25PM. Ms.**  
192 **Hinckley seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, motion passed.**

193 **Ms. Lawrence called a roll call: Lawrence-Yes, O’Keefe-Yes, Hinckley- Yes, Eckhoff-Yes,**  
194 **St. Denis- Yes, and O’Keefe-Yes.**

195 Members Present: Ms. Lawrence, Ms. Hinckley, Mr. Eckhoff, Mr. O’Keefe, Mr. St. Denis.

196 Other persons present during nonpublic session: Superintendent Steel

197 Description of matters discussed, and final decisions made: Covid 19 and future school plans

198 No motion was made to seal the minutes.

199 VI. Meeting Adjourned

200 **Ms. Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 5:40PM**

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