

OESU BOARD MINUTES

Via Zoom

July 16, 2020

Present:

Board Members: Angeline Alley (BMU), Allison Ingerson (BMU), Judy Murray (BMU), Angela Colbeth (OUUSD), Danielle Corti (OUUSD), Melissa Gordon (OUUSD), Charlie Buttrey (Thetford), Donna Pluta (Thetford), Megan Snider (Thetford), Sara Nolin (Waits River)

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Bruce Williams, Melanie Elliott, Alison Kidder, Nicole Bell, Lori Blood

Others: Carol Cottrell, Ted Pogacar, Robin Amber, Amy Hayward, Edith Fogarty

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 PM by Angeline Alley, Chair. Those present introduced themselves and were welcomed.
- II. Board Business
 - A. Motion by Melissa Gordon, seconded by Megan Snider to accept the Board minutes of June 24, 2020. Motion voted on and carried with one abstention (Sarah Nolin)
 - B. Board Orders—Still processing them. Quite a few COVID expenses at SU level.
 - C. Contracts—None
 - D. Correspondence—(include as attachments)
 1. A letter from several Newbury Taxpayers requesting a reduction in the OUUSD budget, to be accomplished by not giving increases to administrators. They also advocated for keeping Provision 2 (universal lunch) in the budget
 2. A letter from several Newbury taxpayers requesting an article to dissolve OUUSD to be included on the OUUSD budget revote
- III. Upbeat Data Collection Tool Part B (Emilie Knisley)
 - A. Survey conducted by a Third Party, who looked at data in the fall, and used that information to set goals. It was followed by the same survey in the spring, which would help to see if administrators had addressed those goals. Included in the spring survey were questions on remote learning. The Principals worked with Upbeat in their goal setting.
 - B. Section for OESU as a whole, and data for each individual school
 1. High Academic Expectations
 2. Teachers Care & Commitment
 3. Parent/Teacher Communication
 4. Meaningful Work
 5. High Quality Professional Development
 6. Teacher Autonomy
 7. Teacher Influence in School Administration
 8. Principal /Teacher Trust
 9. Instructional Leadership
 10. School Safety and Order
 11. Teacher Appreciation

12. Teacher Collaboration
13. Work/Life Balance
14. Distance
15. Career Path
16. Satisfaction
17. Conscientiousness
18. Resources and Facilities
19. Self-Efficacy
20. Teacher Evaluation
21. Teacher Hiring and Onboarding
22. Teaching from Home: Student Engagement
23. Teaching from Home: Communication
24. Teaching from Home: Collaboration
25. Teaching from Home: Work/Life Balance
26. Teaching from Home: Self Efficacy
27. Teaching from Home: Appreciation
28. Teaching from Home: Resources
29. Teaching from Home: Professional Development

IV. Financial Reports

A. OESU has a deficit on the balance sheet, but it is preliminary. Special Ed reimbursement will be coming back to the SU, so Lori Blood believes this deficit will improve

B. Revenues: Special Ed reimbursement later in the summer. COVID project. Expenses of \$55,000 right now at SU level. These will be billed out to the school level. The schools will then claim them for reimbursement as COVID expenses. L. Blood will email a balance sheet to Board members tomorrow.

C. Emilie Knisley believes that the SU will end with a surplus.

V. Curriculum Report (Nicole Bell)

A. A few teachers approached Ms. Bell asking for support as to how to talk with students regarding racism and social justice

B. Waits River and Thetford have partnered with Montshire Museum. She is hoping to get this going in all the schools.

C. All schools will be using STAR assessment.

D. Had Mentoring Matters Training this week, and it went very well.

E. Some schools moving toward Illustrative Mathematics program, which has units that have been adapted to use with remote learning.

VI. Update on Plans for School Opening in August

A. Transportation System: Potentially this is the unhealthiest scenario. The SU is working with Butler Bus. Butler Bus has assured that they will be responsive as far as cleanliness. They are working on reassigning bus runs to reduce the number of students on buses. There is ongoing and changing guidance almost daily. The SU and Butler Bus are working to put together a transportation system that is as safe as possible.

B. Building safety issues: Bruce Williams is in constant communication with them. They have received excellent guidance from the Dept. of Health and from VSBIT.

C. Food Service: Questions as to how food will work in hybrid model? We have been a leader in the State in getting food out to families.

D. Challenges of teaching within the building in a safe way.

E. Emilie Knisley: prioritize opening school for in-person learning as best we can, especially for younger students. High school students are, or can be, more independent. Keep students in pods, eliminate communal areas.

F. A letter will go out from Emilie Knisley and Bruce Williams by Monday. This will have a broad overlook. They hope to open in the fall, realizing there may be a point during the year when remote learning will be necessary. Handbooks for families are being developed. A public meeting for parents is being planned by each school.

G. Discussion on the value of continuing Board meetings with a Zoom option.

VII. Superintendent Evaluation

A. Survey among Board members, but only 5 out of 27 Board members completed one. At the August meeting the evaluation will be broken down by the VSBA, and goals will be set based on that. Other goals can be set, as well.

VIII. August Transition

A. The SU has been in the new office space since July 1st. It was a very challenging week getting moved in. They feel it is a remarkably healthier situation. The Finance dept is there working every day. They are hoping to organize a virtual Open House. Board members were invited to make an appointment to stop in any time.

IX. Conversation Regarding Budget

A. The OUUSD Board met last night and were asked to bring a request to the OESU Board. Danielle Corti has heard from several community members. They would like them to be looking at administrative costs. OUUSD brought their projected budget down by just under 1%. The OUUSD Board is asking the OESU Board to bring their budget down by 1% also to give a little more relief to OUUSD. Charlie Buttrey noted that if OESU cuts its budget by 1%, the result to OUUSD would be a relatively small amount. Danielle Corti: if there is an effort made to look at the SU budget, that effort would go a long way in the community. Melissa Gordon: some citizens thought that administrators should get no raise. She doesn't agree that they should get no raise. Angeline Alley: the two letters were sent only to the OUUSD Board. Danielle Corti: They OUUSD is looking at a revote in late August or early September. That would mean that the warning needs to be set by next week.

B. Emile Knisley shared the OESU Budget for FY '21, Student to Administration Ratio, Dates of Administration contracts (any adjustment to those signed contracts need to be mutually agreed upon). Figures for student services have been agreed upon.

1. Possible savings:

a. Software Savings--\$10,000

b. Fuels Savings—Bruce Williams is researching this

c. Grant Revenue for Building Projects

d. Spending Freeze

e. Hiring Freeze

f. Reductions in Force of active staff would be needed to achieve major savings. This would have negative operational impacts

g. Merger of the SU has not saved money across the organization. Structural and organizational changes are required to glean those in the long-term; efficiency and systems changes—contracts, information, SU centralization of curriculum, professional development and other services instead of independent organizational choices. Administrative staff are required to support the current structure across the SU, and is independent nature

h. Student Services Contingency

C. Possible Increases

1. Union Labor Rates

2. Staff training and mentoring costs due to staff turn-over at the SU; business manager, etc.

D. Any major savings would have to come from layoffs, and not people who are under contract. So many expenses are bound by contract.

E. Motion by Charlie Buttrey, seconded by Judy Murray to direct administrators to reduce the overall budget by no less than \$50,000. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

X. Agenda for August

A. Opening of school and getting word to parents

B. Superintendent Evaluation

C. Grievance Hearing at 5:00 PM

D. Negotiations Update

XI. Public Participation--None

XII. Motion by Danielle Corti, seconded by Sarah Nolin to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 PM. Motion voted on and approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

The minutes are in draft format and are unofficial until formally approved by the Board at a subsequent meeting.