

## BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

Via Zoom

January 6, 2021

Present:

Board Members: Angeline Alley, Allison Ingerson, Judy Murray, Kristen Murray, Allana Page, Kelsey Root-Winchester, Sarah Sanders

Administration: Emilie Knisley, John Barone, Scott Blood, Linda Metcalf,

Others: Coco Huang (student rep)

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 PM by Angeline Alley, Chair. The agenda was reviewed, and the CRC report was added under other business
- II. Motion by Paul Hazel, seconded by Allana Page to approve the Board minutes of December 2, 2020. A correction was noted for the spelling of Kristen Murray's and Kelsey Root-Winchester's names. Motion voted on and approved unanimously as corrected.
- III. Correspondence—Letter of resignation was received from Kate Lester
- IV. Budget
  - A. There is a \$382,959.34 surplus, which was put into the fund balance. Estimated education spending = \$6,912,648. Equalized pupils = 412. Education Spending per Equalized pupil = \$16,743.32. Tax rate for Ryegate = \$1.54, Groton = \$1.53, Wells River = \$1.53. The Contingency Fund this year has a balance of \$180,000.
  - B. John Barone: Linda Metcalf reached out and asked if there were capital improvements being considered for next year.
    1. Scott Blood: For the Elementary, they plan to replace the fence around the playground. The previous estimate was \$12,000, but after consulting with a local company, it appears it will be closer to \$13,000.
    2. John Barone: For the Secondary, there is a proposal to take two offices and convert them to classroom space. These are needed because we are increasing the number of applied classes. These are specifically designed around special education students' needs. Hopefully we will no longer need the isolation room nor the ancillary nurse's space. These rooms will be converted to office space. The cost estimate is about \$15,000, which would include any needed additional furniture.
  - C. No information yet from Daryl Sulham on air quality assessment.
  - D. Angeline Alley: She would like to move the Contingency Account back up to \$200,000.
  - E. Angeline Alley: She would also like to put more money aside for the roof and also put money toward the cost of air quality assessment.
    1. Emilie Knisley: We could maybe use federal COVID dollars toward air quality assessment. We could then use some of capital reserve account for remediation, depending on the air quality assessment. The Board would have to go to the voters for the amount going to Capital Reserve Account. The last

audit of the Capital Reserve Account shows no money in that account. Any money in Capital Reserve has to be spent within 5 years.

2. Sarah Sanders: asked if there were concerns about air quality and/or roof? A. Alley: the flat roof has had leaking issues in the past. There are some rooms in the school that do not have good air circulation. With COVID, this becomes more of a concern.

F. Judy Murray: Why can we say folks should support the budget? John Barone: We are maintaining and increasing our student programs. We are increasing opportunities for our students while keeping a conservative budget.

G. Linda Metcalf: If we decrease the fund balance by \$120,000, the Tax rate for Ryegate would be \$1.58, for Groton \$1.57, for Wells River \$1.57. Estimated Education spending per equalized pupil = \$17,171.90

V. OESU Update

A. Reviewed the budget last night. Overall, it went down 6.5%, which will be spread across the districts. The SU has an arts assessment, which other districts share, and are wondering if BMU might want to be part of the arts assessment. This would be similar to the ropes course that is shared across the SU. They looked at some policies that will be coming to us. Assistant Supt. Bruce Williams will be retiring at the end of this year.

VI. VSBA update—no report

A. Judy Murray asked about the way health insurance impacts negotiations. Overall, there is a 12% increase to the staff. A request has been received from VSBA to talk with our Congressmen about this large increase.

VII. Action

A. Motion by Paul Hazel, seconded by Judy Murray to accept the resignation of Kate Lester with regret, effective December 14, 2020. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

VIII. Public Participation—none

IX. Executive Session—none needed

X. CRC Report—Talked about a way to share the annual report as a brochure. Hopefully next year, the report will go digital. The CRC will talk with community members to see if they are receptive to this. The report will highlight positives from this year, as well as the inequalities that were found and how they were addressed, and the pivots that were made. Without being in the building and at sports events, we haven't been able to connect with the community as well.

A. Kristen Murray: Make a point of contact to whom they can share how they feel about a digital annual report.

B. Emilie Knisley: Maybe community members, who want to receive a written report, can request one. Maybe leave a few paper copies in the libraries, Upper Valley Grill, etc. The written report can probably be copied in the building without being sent out to a printing company.

C. Angeline Alley: Maybe there are ways to shrink and shorten the report. Include the financials, the message from the Supt., Principals, and Board Chair.

D. Kelsey Root-Winchester: The legislature has given towns the option to push back the Town Meeting date. Emilie Knisley: The school district vote could still be on Town Meeting Day. It has to be the same day for all three towns.

XI. The next Board meeting was scheduled for meeting next Wednesday, January 13<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 PM. Sherry Hoyt will draft the Warning, and Board members can sign digitally.

XII. Motion by Paul Hazel, seconded by Kristen Murray to adjourn the meeting at 7:08 PM.

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.**