

Cavendish Town Elementary School District
 Tuesday, October 17, 2017
 CTES Art Room
 5:30 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL/CALL TO ORDER:

Board: Barbara Dickey, Fred Marin, Doug McBride, Gene Bont
 Staff: Meg Powden, George Thomson
 Public:

Dr. Bont called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the agenda with the addition of appointment of a recording secretary and executive session for a personnel matter. Mr. McBride seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

III. APPOINTMENT OF RECORDING SECRETARY:

Ms. Powden introduced Amber Wilson as the recording secretary for the TRSU. Ms. Dickey **moved** to approve hiring Amber Wilson as the recording secretary for the remainder of the school year. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Ms. Dickey noted that the paragraph about the ratification of the teacher's master agreement needed adjustment. She read aloud an amendment to the paragraphs under C. Ratification of Teacher's Master Agreement for 2017-2018 as it should read:

Ms. Dickey said that Jenn Harper was the lead negotiator for the teachers; she was so impressed at how competent, gracious and respectful she was of everyone. Ms. Dickey thought everyone was ok with the agreement although the health insurance was very difficult to negotiate. The teachers will be offered all four VEHI plans. However, the supervisory union will only provide the equivalent of 80% of the cost of the VEHI Gold CDHP plan and each teacher will be required to cover the rest of the premium. In addition to the plan choice, teachers will be able to choose between an HSA and an HRS. An HRA can only be used to reimburse medically related expenses and money deposited in an HRA and not used by the end of the year can only be rolled over for 6 months. An HSA can be used for any expenditures and is not time limited. The new contract provides (for single plan) for the teachers to spend \$400 out of pocket, after which the supervisory union will provide \$2100 in their account and then match pre-tax dollars at a rate of \$1.67 for each dollar.

Ms. Powden explained health care recapture. The state requires the supervisory union to send them the anticipated funds we are saving and for CTES that is \$14,674.

Mr. Marin **moved** to approve the minutes of the September 19, 2017 meeting as amended. Mr. McBride seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

V. APPROVAL OF CROSSWALK FLASHING BEACON:

Bruce McEnaney requested cost sharing for a crosswalk beacon in front of the school. He distributed information on the beacon. He explained a situation that happened at the crosswalk a few years ago where the car following him thought he was stopping to let someone out, when in fact he was stopping for a pedestrian in the crosswalk and there was nearly an accident. He explained that he has applied for cost sharing funding from the state. He suggested that there should be 2 beacons east bound and 2 beacons west bound. He explained that if there were a larger vehicle parked near the sign they might not be able to be seen if there were just one on each direction. He explained that the town crew can install in order to save money on labor. He explained that the lights are solar powered and they run sequentially around the pedestrian sign. The other flashers will remain in place. He also reported that when bridge 58 is re-opened he will be requesting another flasher to be installed between Depot Street and the school for those people who come in that direction. Mr. McBride noted that coming from Cavendish village into Proctorsville, the flashing lights would help drivers realize that they are entering a school zone. There was discussion about the school being so close to the main street. There is an activation button on each post. The duration of the flash can be set as the district feels appropriate to accommodate crossing. The sign isn't a stop sign, it is just a warning to be aware of the crosswalk and the possible presence of a pedestrian. The light also adjusts its brightness to the ambient light. Mr. McBride questioned if there were student crossing guards or safety patrol any longer. Mr. Thomson noted that this is an added responsibility for a student and a liability for the school.

Mr. Marin questioned how this expense would impact the budget. Mr. Thomson noted that the budget is already leaning toward deficit spending. He didn't believe there was money in the budget, but he questioned if for \$4500 it was worth the safety of the child. Mr. McBride noted that sometimes there is a teacher assisting with crossing, but that person is not out there all day. Mr. McEnaney noted that over the next year or two, even road construction flaggers will have LED lit stop/slow sign paddles. Mr. Thomson noted that whenever he drives

through Ludlow he always notices the lit pedestrian signs. Mr. McEnaney explained some of the costs for the panels, lights and posts. The bottom line is a cost of \$8572, of which the state will cover \$4000.

Ms. Dickey **moved** to approve the proposal from Bruce McEnaney and commit the funds to pay the \$4572 remaining after state cost sharing, with the town doing the installation. Mr. Marin seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Mr. McEnaney reported that the installation should be done this fall.

VI. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Public Comment
None.

B. Written/Oral

Dr. Bont read aloud a letter of resignation from Melissa Moore. She is resigning from the food service manager position as of 10/27/17. She thanked the board for 21 great years. There was discussion about filling the position. Mr. Marin asked Mr. Thomson to let her know that the board appreciates her service and dedication and the many changes in food service that have happened over the years.

C. Board Comments

Ms. Dickey noted that the staff contract negotiations are completed. They have agreed to a 2.5% increase except for the bus drivers who have an MOA with a considerably higher increase in an effort to attract and retain the drivers. She reported that the insurance is offered the same as the teachers for the High Deductible plan, but their contribution will be 15% with the district paying the other 85% of the premium if they choose to take advantage of the health insurance since the support staff has lower wages than the teachers. She explained the HRA/HSA plan. The expectation is that the staff member will bear the first \$400 out of pocket expense (for a single plan). After that, the SU contributes \$2100, then whether they choose an HSA or HRA, the SU will contribute \$2 for every \$1 the employee contributes.

There was also discussion about additional paid holidays, personal time, time at lunch, sick leave and other benefits, but they were put aside until the new district goes into effect and they will be equalized at that time. Ms. Dickey reported on the different amount of personal time allowed at each of the schools. This will add expense to the budget. Ms. Powden noted that there is one additional sick leave day approved. There was discussion about the GM support staff being eligible for insurance as they have been before. Ms. Dickey clarified that this is basically a continuation of existing services. Ms. Powden noted that with all the districts going into one district, this next negotiations process will be very different.

Ms. Dickey also noted that there are 18 steps on the salary schedule and there has been discussion about reducing the steps in the next negotiations. Ms. Powden reported that negotiations will need to start soon for the next year.

VII. OLD BUSINESS:

A. Heating Control System Update

Mr. Thomson noted that the materials have been ordered for the update and the installation should begin in November. Once it is complete, he will be submitting the grant paperwork for Efficiency Vermont. There is also a grant from VSBIT that CTES was selected at the SU level.

Mr. Thomson reported that the CO2 estimates were received. They have been told that in a building this size, the monitors aren't necessary and since there are issues with the budget this year. He noted that without the CO2 system, the heating control system will still run efficiently. He noted that the current furnace heats the rooms unevenly.

B. Library Entryway Roof Repair

Mr. Thomson reported that Mr. Evans and the facilities committee had reviewed some remediations for the entryway and have brainstormed some alternatives, including "snow catchers", gutters with heating tape. They contracted a contractor, but the contractor does not think that is a great idea. There was discussion about the standing seam roof and snow sliding quickly off the roof. They had originally thought that a standing seam roof was very expensive, but have since learned that it isn't as expensive as they thought. The facilities committee will need to meet again.

C. School Bus

Mr. Thomson reported that the bus is back. They had to spend about \$4500 on new tires before they knew they didn't have a bus driver. He noted that he went online to see what buses sell for to see what they can get for it if they decide to sell it. The prices range from \$2000-\$15,000 with miles from 100k-200k. He believes that they could get \$7500 for the bus if they decide to sell it. He had thought they could sell it to make up for some of the deficit. He suggested that they hold on to it for now. It needs an inspection. Other than that, there shouldn't be other maintenance fees. He noted that they will need to start it and drive it from time to time. He spoke with Mr. Parah and GM doesn't necessarily feel that they need another bus (they have plenty and they are leased). Dr. Bont suggested that next year when they are in one big district, they might be better off selling it now. Mr. Thomson noted that next year it will be a GMUSD issue to provide transportation.

Mr. McBride noted that the GMUSD has created a transportation committee. There will be a transportation study and if they wait until the transportation study is completed to make the determination. If the new SD provides transportation, it will be unnecessary and can be sold. But if the SD decides that the schools need to

provide the transportation, they will still have a bus. The only risk is another year of depreciation of the bus value, but the feeling is that this loss will be minimal. There was discussion about whether it could be stored/parked with minimal expense. Mr. Thomson felt that if they are going to keep it for the time being, it should be maintained as legal and road-worthy (insured, inspected, driven from time to time).

VIII. NEW BUSINESS:

A. YTD Budget Review

Mr. Thomson reported that the budget review should have been sent to everyone. He has reviewed it and found that they have spent some funds for the cooler and the oven. The payments to GM for the use of their bus will be in the budget. They also have the expense of the bus repair as well. He also reported that the reinstatement of the Title I program is an added expense, but Mr. Adams felt they could absorb that expense.

Mr. Thomson noted that there were some expenses added to the budget—Title I changes, crosswalk sign, etc.—that will lead them to deficit spend. They are looking into hiring a behavior intervention specialist through HCRS, but that is believed to be an SU expense. They will also be looking at adding some special education para-educators. Some of this expense will be reimbursable. He reported that it is October and he is currently projecting deficit spending.

He is reporting a change in revenue. They have \$17,850 in tuition reported coming in, but he doesn't think that is fully accurate. There are 6 students coming in and 4 going out. He noted that some of this tuition revenue is from a Baltimore student that in the first month of school decided to go to Springfield. There was discussion about the enrollment of 91 students.

Mr. McBride questioned the special education line items—function 1200 and function 1202. The \$265,893 plus the \$20,726 are added together to get the \$286,619 for the whole program.

B. GMUSD Update

Ms. Powden reported that the GMUSD board met the other night in this room. One of the highlights was the formation and appointment to committees, including transportation, finance, education, and transportation. Ms. Powden noted that the senior management has met and will divide themselves among the committees. Mr. Eppolito will work with the education committee. There was also discussion about a policy committee for the new SD. She suggested that the TRSU policies will be brought to the SD for approval. They will also be charging the committees at the next meeting. Mr. McBride noted that the meeting showed that the task is daunting and there is a lot of work to be done in order to achieve their goals by July 1.

C. Ludlow & Mt. Holly Update

Ms. Powden reported that the Ludlow and Mt. Holly boards formed a 706 study committee and the proposal will be presented to the state board tomorrow. She explained that Ludlow and Mt. Holly would form a single district as of 7/1/18 operating preK-6 and tuitioning 7-12 after BRHS's closure. BRHS will remain open for up to 2 years to allow proper transition. If approved by the state board, the proposal will be presented to the voters on 11/28/17. She reported that there is a group of people working on creating an independent high school in place of the Black River public school. Ms. Powden reported that the choice will allow the students to select any public or approved independent school for grades 7-12. There was discussion about some students choosing GM. There was discussion about students who choose private approved schools having the state average tuition paid by the Ludlow-Mt. Holly district and any remainder of the school's tuition will need to be made up by the students' families. There was discussion about the number of private schools in the state—both day schools and boarding schools.

D. Principal Report

Mr. Thomson reported that he gave a report to the GMUSD a week ago and it hasn't changed much. He highlighted the capital improvements, the new milk cooler. He noted that the health inspector came in by surprise today and they passed. He reported that the colorful chairs in the art room were purchased with trust fund money. Mr. Thomson reported on the convection oven repairs being about \$1500-\$1700 for a 21 year old oven, so he decided to purchase a new one instead.

Mr. Thomson reported on the in-service work with Dave Melnick on teaching to students with trauma. He also reported that he and Meg and the rest of their 15 person team who have trained for the Integrated Field Review (IFR) which is a requirement for the state to come in and evaluate how each district is doing meeting the education quality standards. He reported that every year the state sends a questionnaire about how the school feels it is meeting the standards, and every three years, they have to have feedback about how well they are meeting the standards. There will be a few people from each SU visiting other SU's to review the standards. The team was responsible for submitting artifacts that verify how the districts are meeting the standards. He explained some of the work that they will do with the review, including 2 commendations and 2 recommendations for improvement. The teams will meet with staff, parents and students as part of the review. There will be a team visiting TRSU on 11/14/17. The SU is expecting a report on their visit in December. Ms. Powden will share the reports with the boards. Mr. Marin questioned if the team was going to be meeting with board members, but Ms. Powden noted that this is a good idea, but not one that is part of this process.

Next week they will be participating in de-escalation techniques with Crisis Prevention, including training for proper restraint for children as necessary. This training will allow the staff to be able to restrain a student as necessary with minimal injury to the student or staff member. Parent teacher conferences will be on

Thursday afternoon. Mr. Thomson reported on the theme for the month—self-control. He also reported that the theme for September was hurricane relief. The community garden continues to provide and much of the food has been used in the salad bar. Many of the vegetables have been shared with the senior dinners at the Episcopal Church. He also reported on the contest to guess the weight of the “squash-kin”. The winning student’s class will win a desert treat. The “pump-quash” weighed 133.5 pounds and 2 students in the same class guessed 133. The Thanksgiving lunch will be on 11/15.

Mr. Thomson noted that when Ms. Moore indicated that she was going to resign, they spoke with Lori Jones who has worked there for 18 years. Her chief concern was the paperwork, but it turns out that she has done much of the paperwork necessary. She has also done the work when Ms. Moore has been out. He has hired Ms. Jones to replace the position. They will then need to hire someone to replace Ms. Jones’ former position. They have begun interviewing for the position.

The science NECAP scores have been received—they were administered in the spring. There was discussion about the new assessments for the next year. There are 4 different categories. The students averaged 58% proficient across the tests. The lowest scoring was in the inquiry area. The state average was 48% proficient.

Mr. Thomson reported that they have had a request from the Methodist Church to use the facility on Thanksgiving for a free community dinner. They are working with Black River Good Neighbors (BRGN) in Ludlow. They are looking to provide meals to residents of Cavendish and Ludlow. BRGN will provide the food if an organization can prepare the food, and the church has offered to do that. He is in support of it and the Church will sign all the necessary paperwork. He explained the process for building use by community organizations. Mr. Thomson noted that the kitchen changes will save them a little money due to the length of employment of the individuals.

E. Superintendent Report

Ms. Powden noted that the IFR team will also be looking at the Act 77 compliance, including developing personalized learning at the secondary level. The SU and teachers are continuing to work on proficiency based education (PBE). There was discussion about the in-service work and the modules of instruction necessary for the PBE. Ms. Powden noted that the PBE work began for the 7-12 teachers 2 years ago, 6th grade teachers last year and the other elementary school teachers are beginning the work this year. Ms. Powden noted that PBE is an improvement and this the right way to have more engaged learning. She noted that when they think about what they want the students to do upon graduation, this process will allow them to develop their voice and advocate for their learning and to grow into citizens. There was discussion about asking Mr. Eppolito to come to the next board meeting to explain some of the shift in thinking and processes. Mr. Thomson reported that in 2020, the graduating class will need to demonstrate certain proficiencies in order to graduate. The high schools have been working on developing this process, but since the learning begins in elementary school, they elementary schools are now beginning to develop this work in order to prepare the students for high school and the PBE they will get there. There was discussion about this being a state initiative. Ms. Powden noted that Vermont’s use of the word “proficiency” is similar to other states’ use of the word “competency”. The board discussed some of the changes that will be happening with flexible pathways, including internships and job shadowing.

Ms. Powden reported that recently there have been reports about the state wide education funding and a short fall. This can potentially affect the tax rates and budgets. Mr. Adams will report more on it as more information develops. Ms. Powden suggested researching “Great Schools Partnership” for more information. Mr. Thomson reported that there is a bit of information and research available and he will share some with the board.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Mr. Marin **moved** to enter executive session at 7:02 p.m. to discuss a parent request and a personnel matter inviting Mr. Thomson and Ms. Powden. Ms. Dickey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at ____ p.m. [action taken]

X. NEXT MEETING—dates & agenda:

The next meeting will be on November 21, 2017 at CTES at 5:30 p.m. The next GMUSD meeting will be on November 14, 2017 at CAES at 6:00 p.m.

XI. ADJOURNMENT:

_____ **moved** to adjourn at ____ p.m. _____ seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary