

MONTPELIER ROXBURY
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS MEETING
Virtual

Wednesday, September 16, 2020
MINUTES

Minutes Approved: *approved 10.07.20*

Present

Board: Jim Murphy, Ryan Zajac, Gerri Huck, Mara Iverson, Jill Remick, Emma Bay-Hansen, Aniket Kulkarni, Bridget Asay, Andrew Stein

Administration: Libby Bonesteel

Students:

Absent: Eve Taylor

1. Board Meeting Call to Order The meeting was called to order at 6:32pm

- Public Comment

The board heard public comment as related to the removal of the School Resource Officer (SRO) from MRPS from Hunter Dutton, Abbey Jermyn, Jacqueline Dennison, Kaia Santana, Bibba Kahn, Noel Riby-Williams, Pete Kelman, and Caitlin Brower-Moore. Additionally the board heard public comment from Nathan Donahue related to equitable transportation services for Roxbury. The public comment period ended at 7:00pm.

2. Consent Agenda

- Minutes of September 2, 2020 Meeting
- Warrants for:
 - FY'21 Warrants for Payroll and Accounts Payable for September 18, 2020
- New Hire
- Superintendent's Report

Mr. Zajac moved, seconded by Mr. Kulkarni, to approve the consent agenda including the addition of the warrant and co-curricular contracts. Motion carried unanimously at 7:03pm.

3. Board Discussion

- Virtual Learning Update
 - Libby Bonesteel & Mike Berry

Ms. Bonesteel and Michael Berry, MRPS Director of Curriculum and Technology and Principal of the Virtual Academy, provided a background as to why VTVLC, Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative, was selected for MRPS remote students in grades 7-12 and provided a status update as to how it's been going since the start of the school year. Mr. Berry explained teacher shortages at VTVLC have been targeted to specific grades and subject areas and have not had a significant impact on MRPS. In response to questions from the board related to access to meals for remote learners, Ms. Bonesteel

shared that yes, all kids age 0-18 can receive free meals from MRPS, we have two pick up sites (one in Montpelier and one in Roxbury) for remote learners, and to visit the MRPS website for more details.

- Bussing Challenges - RVS
 - Stacy Emerson

Ms. Bonesteel introduced Stacy Emerson, Student Transportation of Vermont Operations Manager. Ms. Emerson provided a history of STA's work with MRPS, an overview of discussions and decisions made this summer in collaboration with the Superintendent in regards to the MRPS bussing, and challenges with the staffing of busses (lack of applicants, time to train new applicants which has been made more difficult by DMV closures, and the timeline required to perform required background checks). Ms. Emerson closed by thanking the community for their support and stating STA is and will continue to try their best to fulfill the needs of the MRPS community.

It was clarified that the board is committed to providing bussing to Roxbury as discussed at the September 2nd, 2020 board meeting. Further, Roxbury residents riding the bus to Main Street Middle School and Montpelier High School need to travel to Roxbury Village School in the morning to catch that bus as opposed to door-to-door service as happened last year. It was shared that this is a challenge, particularly for those families living on the east side of Roxbury. This decision was made by the Superintendent due to a lack of a bus monitor on that route to perform health checks, a safety priority of MRPS. Ms. Emerson stated if a monitor is hired (which she appreciates having for the safety of the driver), STA would be happy to pick that route back up. In response to a question from the board, Ms. Bonesteel stated that the bus monitor position requires completion of a satisfactory background check and fingerprinting. The candidate should be able to use a thermometer and be good at working with children.

- Planning community Outreach for budget development

Mr. Murphy provided an overview of the budget development work that is about to begin, the historical types of outreach the board does to engage the public in the process, and goals for engaging with even more members of the public this year. Mr. Murphy invited the community to email board members to set up times to discuss, perhaps in virtual meeting settings, the upcoming budget, concerns, needs, etc. in groups or individually.

- SRO conversation planning

Ms. Bonesteel began by providing a history of SRO's including the history of the specific SRO position at MRPS, data on how and where their time has been spent, data on engagement with students, and details on the current budget for the SRO position. She proceeded to describe the purpose of the SRO, to share a list of MRPS's current work with the SRO, and present a summary of feedback received from the community in regards to the current SRO position. Further, Ms. Bonesteel shared MRPS's desired outcomes for safety, described how and for what the district has depended on the SRO for, and expressed openness to an alternative arrangement with the Montpelier Police Department to meet MRPS's safety needs. Ms. Bonesteel provided an overview on what MRPS has done in the past 2 years in regards to mental health and social emotional learning (SEL) and the positions that currently exist at MRPS in these fields. In closing Ms. Bonesteel presented four potential paths forward: 1) The board tells the

Superintendent they will not support a budget that includes expenses for an SRO and the administration will problem solve on alternative ways forward. 2) The board directs the Superintendent to revise the outdated SRO MOU with the city of Montpelier to reflect current practice and potential limitations for this school year. 3) The board appoints a board committee of board members, the Superintendent, MRPS faculty, city officials, and community members with the goal of defining a pathway forward. 4) The board creates a policy that details the guidelines for the District's relationship with the Montpelier Police Department.

The board then moved into discussion and acknowledged a desire and need to take action. They discussed wanting to find a way to engage with the community around the SRO position specially and the greater overarching topic of diversity, equity, and inclusion at MRPS. The board then proceeded to wordsmith appropriate next actions, including a proposed immediate suspension of the SRO position and what that means both financially and physically. The board and Superintendent discussed what guidance would be necessary to supply to the Superintendent as to how to ensure safety in various scenarios and how and if MRPS would be able to engage with the Montpelier Police Department to address the types of non-emergency work that the SRO position currently does.

Ms. Bay-Hansen moved, seconded by Ms. Asay, that the board form a study committee to complete a thorough analysis of the intended and unintended impacts that the presence of police officers and the SRO position has on our community and in our schools. This community committee will gather public input and use it to define aims and expectations for school safety, justice, and the role and conduct of police in and around schools. In the interim, we direct the Superintendent to limit the physical presence of the School Resource Officer and other police officers whenever possible. Motion carried unanimously at 9:17pm.

Ms. Asay moved, seconded by Mr. Zajac, to appoint Mara Iverson, Emma Bay-Hansen, and Jim Murphy to the charge committee to come up with a charge which would include composition and timeline. Motion carried unanimously at 9:19pm.

- Negotiations Committee Assignments

An addition to the agenda, the board discussed proposed and accepted Negotiations Committee assignments as follows:

MREA: Gerri Huck, Jill Remick, Andrew Stein
AFSCME: Aniket Kulkarni, Bridget Asay, Jim Murphy
MESSA: Aniket Kulkarni, Ryan Zajac, Jill Murphy

4. Policy Monitoring

- G04 Title 1 Comparability
- G05 Animal Dissection
- A01 Board Member Conflict of Interest

Ms. Asay moved, seconded by Mr. Kulkarni, to approve the Title 1 Comparability and Animal Dissection policy monitoring reports. Motion carried unanimously at 9:23pm.

Mr. Zajac moved, seconded by Ms. Iverson, to approve the Board Member Conflict of Interest policy monitoring report. Motion carried unanimously at 9:26pm.

5. **Adjournment**

Mr. Kulkarni moved, seconded by Mr. Stein, to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously at 9:26pm.

Anna Bromley
Recorder