



MT. MANSFIELD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT MINUTES

March 7, 2022, 6:30 PM

This meeting was held remotely.

In attendance: Tara Arneson, Kevin Campbell, Heather Chadwick, Tom Cheney, Alison Kosakowski Conant, Gail Conley, Eric Gildemeister, Edye Graning, Diane Kirson-Glitman, Chuck Lacy, Ethan Maurer, Stuart Morigeau, Katie Nelson, Lisa Pawlik.

Absent: Andrew Pond (due to selectboard conflict).

Administrators: John Alberghini, Kevin Hamilton, Rebecca Marsh, Andrew Jones, and Jeff Wallis for technical support.

Student representatives: Sirena Sawyer.

6:32pm **Call Meeting to Order:**

Dr. Alberghini called the meeting to order, as no officials had been elected for the newly formed Board at that point. He congratulated newly appointed members, and those re-elected. The [Oath of Office](#) has been given to new and re-elected school directors, who will affirm their commitment by signature. New members gave brief introductions:

- **Alison Conant, Richmond.**
- **Heather Chadwick, Richmond**
- **Lisa Pawlik, Underhill**

The agenda was reviewed and two items tabled for the next meeting.

6:37pm **Election of Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk:**

Dr. Alberghini called for nominations.

- Chuck Lacy nominated Edye Graning for Chair.
- Kevin Campbell nominated himself for Vice Chair.
- Tom Cheney nominated Ethan Maurer for Clerk.

With no other nominations and no objections, all were appointed. Andrew Pond excused himself to attend the Bolton selectboard meeting.

6:38 pm **Describe Committees and review assignment timeline:**

([Link to committees and current representation](#))

Edye Graning took over as Chair of the meeting. She explained that all members are asked to serve on at least one committee, and reviewed past positions. Members can submit notes of interest to her. The Finance Committee is asked to continue as is until the audit has been approved this month.

In discussion, Ethan Maurer noted that this extension of responsibilities can seem daunting for new members. Reach out with questions. Chair asked members in their second term and above to offer help as mentors to new members, by emailing her their interest.

6:44pm **Notification of meetings and discuss Board communication practices:**

The office of the Superintendent posts agendas in 14 locations, at least two in each town. Chair posts the upcoming meetings on FPF. Notice also available in multiple places on MMUUSD website. Draft minutes are posted on the website within five days of a meeting.

Members communicate through email, and Public Meeting Law requires that any responses be sent only to the sender, not to the group. In replying to community member questions, Board members should refer them to the Chair, who speaks for the entire Board.

6:47 pm **Meeting operations:**

Robert's Rules are followed to the best of the Board's ability. Agendas are typically posted five days before the meeting, and links supplied the Friday before whenever possible. Annual calendars for meetings are generated in the spring, and run through the next school year. With COVID restrictions being modified, in-person meetings are expected to reconvene after April break.

6:50 pm COVID-19 Updates:

[COVID Information](#)

Dr. Alberghini celebrated the modification of restrictions, and stated that MMUUSD continues to operate in alignment with the VT DOH and AOE. Mask mandate will be lifted for Pre-K to 12 on March 14th, with masking becoming optional. In school this week there will be discussion with students on what that looks like, and training in systems some have not experienced to date - such as regular use of the cafeteria, seating arrangements and group work. All choices will be respected as masking becomes optional. Community feedback is largely positive. The majority of the surrounding districts have similar procedures.

As the COVID situation may continue to evolve, MMUUSD will be ready to alter procedures at any time, and to communicate effectively with the community.

VPA recommendations will be followed for spring sports.

Vaccination rates will be published soon. These are no longer being used as a benchmark for masking mandates. The district is seeing few daily cases at this time.

Ethan Maurer asked about the special provision put in place during COVID for the Superintendent to have decision-making capabilities, thereby increasing response time to events. Chair noted that this provision ended with the State of Emergency.

Board emphasized that schools are becoming mask OPTIONAL not mask OFF. The choice to mask remains in place for all.

7:13pm Browns River Middle School Administrative Report:

(link: [Browns River Middle School Administrative Report](#).)

Kevin Hamilton began by praising and thanking his BRMS staff for their incredible efforts during the pandemic, echoed by Assistant Principal Rebecca Marsh. He then shared his report.

In Q and A the following points were made:

- Teaching during COVID highlighted both the pros and cons of virtual technologies. Some new avenues of learning and access were mastered.
- Some teachers are reevaluating their careers - after the challenge of virtual teaching and struggling to support their own families through the pandemic.
- There is currently one student teacher at BRMS.
- The importance of connections across staff, and with families, became even more apparent over the last two years. A return to students working in teams and small groups is eagerly anticipated.

7:30 pm Community Comments: None.

7:32 pm Curriculum Update:

Andrew Jones shared his report. Click title for link.

7:52pm Q and A.

- Seeing the district as a Pre-k-12 continuum, with MMUHS being the culmination, will bring increased clarity to the scope and sequence of learning opportunities, and foster consistency district-wide.
- Chuck Lacy suggested that the focus on reading scores might encourage the district to partner with local libraries, streamlining how the whole community supports and teaches reading skills.
- The position of Director of Curriculum and Innovation is essentially focussed on *teaching and learning systems*.

- Greater creativity could be brought to PD - beyond traditional college courses taken and their attendant pay grade jumps. PD done well helps the district keep people in their positions, and brings inspiration to the classroom.

Land Acknowledgement Consideration:

Sirena Sawyer

Tabled.

Approve Minutes: (2/24/22)

Tabled. Incorrect minutes attached.

8:02 pm **Adopt VSBA Code of Ethics:**

([Link to VSBA Code of Ethics](#))

Ethan Maurer made a motion to adopt the VSBA Code of Ethics, seconded by Tom Cheney.

In discussion, Edye Graning pointed out that these are the bare minimum, and that MMUUSD exceeds these guidelines in many ways, with greater rigor. New board members have reviewed this information prior to this meeting. **The board unanimously voted in favor. Motion approved.**

8:05 pm **Other business:**

On a request from Tara Arneson, the Chair clarified for new members what is involved in yes/no votes and abstentions.

The new calendar for next school year will be approved in April.

MMUHS has had several major successes in the Winter Sports programs, including excellent results for the Nordic ski teams, both as individuals and in overall team standings.

Next Meeting: 3/21 at 6:30pm This will be an equity training for the Board members rather than a public meeting. A members' "Get to know you" will follow.

Next public board meeting: 4/11. Including Golden Apple awards - Katie Nelson will step up to join Andrew Pond in reviewing nominations from schools.

Adjourned at 8:13 pm

Respectfully submitted by Pat Straughan

Upcoming Meetings: To view meeting agendas & minutes go to mmuusd.org

Attachment 1: Covid Update:

March 4, 2022

Dear MMUUSD School Community,

On March 3rd, Governor Scott and Secretary of Education, Daniel French announced that the state is changing its masking guidance for Vermont schools. Specifically, starting March 14th, masks are optional in preK-12 schools regardless of vaccination status. Accordingly, beginning March 14, 2022, masks for students, staff members and individuals entering MMUUSD school buildings will be optional. The change in guidance represents improving COVID conditions in our area and state, high vaccination rates, wide availability of testing options and advancements in COVID treatment options. This is good news for our state and school community as we enter spring. In addition to masking, the following are other COVID procedural updates that will take effect on March 14th:

- Visitors have access to all MMUUSD school buildings. Masking for visitors is optional. Masks will continue to be available at schools.

- Lunch, recess, grouping of students, activities and gatherings will return to traditional school-based routines.
- Masks on school buses and vans are optional.
- Schools will continue to offer the Test at Home program with daily notification of school communities with presumed contacts. The District has a strong supply of test kits to support the continuation of this program.
- Daily health checks should continue at home. Students and staff who are sick should stay home.
- MMUUSD will follow COVID practices as recommended by the Vermont Principal Association for sports and co-curricular activities.

Throughout the pandemic MMUUSD has made a concerted effort to follow guidance from the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE). This has supported our ability to keep our schools open for in-person instruction throughout this school year and optimize safety for students, staff and our communities. Our COVID updates and modifications reflect the consistent and unified approach the District has taken during the pandemic. Making the changes March 14th also offers some time for us to answer questions and to support students, staff members and families with these adjustments.

As we make the transition to a mask optional school and workplace, we anticipate that many MMUUSD students and staff will continue to wear masks. It is vital that our school community respect each individual's choice as they consider their personal comfort and level of risk. Vaccination remains a key mitigation measure and we encourage eligible individuals to get vaccinated and a booster.

Please note that information, conditions and guidance from the state and federal governments can change, thus, our plans may need to as well. We will communicate any adjustments to the school community as soon as possible.

Thank you for supporting our schools. We look forward to a safe and successful spring.

Best regards,
John Alberghini, Superintendent
Tara McMahon, RN, COVID Coordinator

Attachment 2: BRMS Principal Report:

MMUUSD Principal Report

Date: March 7, 2022

MMUUSD Administrator: Principal, Kevin Hamilton and Assistant Principal, Rebecca Marsh

School: Browns River Middle School

Enrollment: 5th-8th Grade Total 354

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Licensed Personnel (this includes full and part-time staff): 39

Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Education Support Personnel: 16

Number of Students on IEPs: 59

Number of 504 Students: 23

Number of Students with an Educational Support Team (EST) Plan: 47

Parent Involvement:

The Browns River Action Group (BRAG) continues to meet on a monthly basis and they have been a consistent positive support group for both our staff and students at BRMS. This year BRAG took on the initiative to become a 501c(3) organization and developed clearer organizational expectations for the group structure. Throughout the school year parents organized several fundraising activities including snack shacks at outdoor sporting events and silent auctions. The funds raised from these events have been used to support many different morale boosting activities for both our students and staff during this school year. Additionally, the funds have been used to support student activities like the BRMS science fair and the Spectrum Night Out. In the past the funds have also been used to sponsor our 5th/6th Parties and we are hoping to restart that opportunity for our students this spring. Our monthly meetings continue to be a wonderful opportunity for our families to connect with our administrators and staff on a regular basis. We greatly appreciate all of the work and support of our BRAG families!

Student Voice:

In the beginning of our school year we had planned to introduce a multi-grade level advisory group to help develop the emotional growth of our student community and to increase our student voice at BRMS. Due to guidelines preventing mixing grade levels we have put that plan on hold until next school year. Our staff members are excited about the opportunity to introduce this advisory plan next fall.

The BRMS community service club brought over 3,000 items of food to our local food shelf and students are currently organizing and fundraising for the Spectrum Sleep Out. Last year our students raised over \$15,000 dollars for youth services and this year we have raised \$10,000 with three weeks left to go!

The Pride Club at BRMS meets on a weekly basis to support our LBGTQ community. Students participate in a wide variety of self-esteem building activities and find peer support with this group. Additionally, students are able to connect with caring adults and administrators to address any concerns or issues that may come up throughout the school year.

Program/Innovation/Curricular Initiative:

Academically, BRMS teachers worked with our coaches in coordination with CHMS teachers to adjust our curriculum in order to meet the needs of our students as we returned to full in person instruction. The needs of our students are varied due to the loss of instructional time over the past two years. We are working closely with all of our teachers and support staff to meet the students where they are at academically. As a school we were fortunate to avoid any extended disruption of instruction due to COVID quarantines or staff issues. Due to our flexibility with remote learning, we were able to continue with instruction while some academic teams had to briefly quarantine. We quickly recognized the importance of keeping our students in school, not only for their academics, but just as importantly for their social and emotional development as adolescents. BRMS staff members have continued to receive professional development for trauma informed instruction in our classrooms.

Although we were not able to get back to all of our normal routines and traditions, our staff and students were able to step up to the challenges that presented themselves through the first half of the school year. We continued to offer many of our clubs, activities and athletic opportunities to our students. BRMS students had a full schedule in soccer, field hockey, cross country and basketball. Our music program hosted concerts internally for their grade level peers and they were able to live stream the event for BRMS families. After school club offerings have included writing, Magic the Gathering, Make Your Mark, Dungeons & Dragons, chess club, cooking club, math club, outdoor club, and coding club. Unfortunately, we were unable to provide a drama program to our students this year, but we plan to have that opportunity again in the 2022/23 school year. Traditionally, we have had as many as 60 students participating in the production of fall and spring performances.

We are looking forward to the spring and the possibility of reintroducing other traditions including our 7/8 dances and our 5/6 parties!

Attachment 3- Approved Minutes:

MT. MANSFIELD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT INFORMATIONAL MEETING MINUTES

February 24, 2022, 6:00 PM

This meeting was held remotely.

In attendance: Tara Arneson, Kevin Campbell and Edye Graning

Administrators: John Alberghini, Chris Sumner and Jeff Wallis for technical support.

6:32 pm Edye Graning called the meeting to order and reviewed the agenda. She acted as the moderator for the meeting. All attendees were invited to ask questions at any time, given that this is an informational meeting and not a regular board meeting.

Review and discuss Article 1: To elect the following officers (To be voted by Australian ballot)

a. Moderator for one year.

b. Clerk for one year

c. Treasurer for one year

Dr. John Alberghini noted that Dave Clark will be on the ballot for both Moderator and Treasurer, and Pat Straughan will stand for Clerk. Both have served in these positions for several years.

Review and discuss Article 2:

Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District authorize the school board under 16 V.S.A. 562 (9) to borrow money by issuance of bonds or notes not in excess of anticipated revenue for the school year? *(To be voted by Australian ballot)*.

Chris Sumner explained that this Article allows the district to have appropriate cash flow from July 1, at the beginning of the fiscal year, until mid September, when state aid revenues come in.

Review and discuss Article 3: Shall the voters of the Mount Mansfield School District authorize the Board of School Directors to allocate its current fund balance (surplus), without effect upon the District tax rate, as follows: assign \$1,675,000 of the school district's current fund balance as revenue for the 2022-2023 operating budget, and assign the remaining balance of \$875,011 as revenue for future budgets? *(To be voted by Australian ballot)*

Chris Sumner explained that in past school budgets, the revenue section had included a line called Prior Year Surplus, which is in the budget due to State statutes requiring districts to offset future school budgets using whatever surplus is available. In the past year, MMUUSD accrued a surplus of over \$2 million, primarily due to pandemic circumstances and federal pandemic funds. Rather than apply all of this to the upcoming year, MMUUSD asks voters to apply \$1,675,000 to the FY22-23 budget, and allow the balance of the surplus to be applied to a future budget. Approving this article will reduce future requests from the Education Fund and reduce future tax rates.

Edye Graning noted this was a practice commonly used in other districts to stabilize tax rates.

Public review of the 2022-23 proposed budget (for discussion purposes only).

A recording of the February 17th proposed 2022-23 budget informational meeting is available: [link](#).

Dr. Alberghini thanked the Finance Committee and the entire MMUUSD Board for all their work throughout the year, and specifically in the preparation of this budget. He shared an abbreviated version of the budget presentation, assisted by Chris Sumner. Additional information remains available on the MMUUSD website. Edye Graning noted that the surplus creates a very positive opportunity for the upcoming year or two.

No questions were asked.

Other school business: None.

6:29pm Meeting adjourned on a seconded motion.