

**Missisquoi Valley School District
Board Meeting Minutes
Swanton Central School Library
January 23, 2024 6pm**

Location: The MVSD Board and Administration participated at the Swanton Central School Library for this meeting. The meeting was held hybrid with remote access for the community and other interested persons

Date: January 23, 2024

Board Members Present

Jen Chevalier, Chair, Renick Darnell-Martin, Vice Chair, *(arrived at 6:15pm)* Don Collins, Joanne Johnston, Peter Magnant, Kelly Badeau, Devin Bachelder, Meaghan Conly, Tobias Maguire.

Absent Board Members

Administration and Visitors Present

Julie Regimbal, Superintendent, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, School Principals Chris Dodge with Justina Jennett, Yeshua Pastina, and Joyce Hakey participating remotely, Joanne Allen, Swanton Librarian and Russell Gregory, Technology along with the School Board Secretary and Northwest Access Cameraperson

Call the Meeting to Order 6:00PM

Jen Chevalier, School Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM

Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence, Visitors, and Public Comments

Public Comments

None

Agenda Review None

Approval of January 9, 2024 Board meeting minutes

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve the January 9th board minutes. The board approved 8:0 vote.

Elementary Principal Reports

[Franklin Principal's Report](#)

[Highgate Principal's Report](#)

[Swanton Principal's Report](#)

Jen Chevalier asked if there are questions regarding the elementary school reports starting with Franklin. Jen Chevalier recognized the generous donation of \$1,000 and 16 boxes of food that Franklin School raised for the food bank. In response to a kindergarten question, Joyce explained that Franklin will be going to all day Kindergarten next year due to the increasing complexities of midday transportation. This has made it difficult for a growing number of students to attend the program and to balance morning and afternoon sessions. In response to a classroom temperature inquiry, Yeshua Pastina responded that the temperatures in the

Highgate classrooms have been more evenly distributed and they are set in accordance with the comfort of the classroom. Chris Dodge reported that their staff has been very positive in response to covering one another in classrooms and other necessary positions due to absence. Justina Jennett stated that their substitute coordinator does a great job in juggling people as necessary to cover positions and start over when another position needs to be filled.

Presentations and Discussion Items

a) Swanton CLIF Grant

Joanne Allen, the Swanton Librarian, provided a video of the CLIF Grant that she was instrumental in obtaining for Swanton totaling \$25,000. In order to qualify for this grant, the school must meet certain poverty levels and show data that the student's grades have fallen. Joanne explained that grades went down as a result of the effects of the pandemic. The grant made it possible to have book giveaways, author visits, poetry and storytelling come to the school for the benefit of grades 4-6.

Budget Adoption

Budget Draft 6, and Budget Adoption

Lora McAllister explained prior to going over draft 6 of the FY 25 budget that she had just received a change in the yield from 9171 to 9629. The board discussed the volatility of the changes of the yield and the potential changes to the law especially the 5% tax rate increase cap. The board has received a letter from the Chairs of Way and Means and Finance Committee expressing their concerns about using the 5% threshold to address district issues in a span of a few short years. Renick Darnell-Martin stated that he feels that they have a good budget addressing planned and necessary capital project issues and that there are no luxuries in this budget. Devin Bachelder would like to see the new calculations before approving the budget. Meaghan Conly stated that we are just trying to maintain what we have and bring it up to standard. Julie Regimbal stated that they have been increasing the capital project line items each year and we have facility issues that are urgent to fix. They reviewed the average of the state spending LTW ADM vs the district from the December 1 letter. There is a public joint hearing on Thursday, January 25th. It was suggested that the board delay approving the budget to allow more time to get the latest yield projection and direction the legislators may be going. Lora stated that when MVSD merged, the tax rate was 1.43 and now it is estimated at 1.30. Tobias Maguire inquired about the intervention positions that were added as a result of the pandemic and the additional federal funding. Lora explained that these positions have been added to the budget over time and they have used revenue to offset these positions. Julie added that MVSD has benefitted from the changes in the equalized pupil weights and received more funds as a result of Act 173. Lora has requested an extension to Monday from the printer to submit their information for the annual report. The board expressed their desire for extra time due to the unfolding changes being received from the State.

Tobias Maguire moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to table the action to vote on the budget and the warning to a future board meeting taking place no later than Monday, January 29th. The board voted 9-0 to approve the motion.

The board set a special meeting date of January 29th at 6:30pm in the Swanton Central School Library.

Lora asked what scenarios does the board want her to prepare for Monday night. Devin would like the remaining scenarios updated from Draft 6. Peter Magnant requested seeing a budget closer to the 5% cap as he expressed concerns from the letter received from the Ways and Means Committee. Lora explained that Act 127 did not provide an on ramp. Some board members thought the budget could be moved closer to the average ADM. Devin felt the letter is trying to dissuade the districts from going above the cap this year. It is difficult to navigate this long-term unknown scenario. Peter and Meaghan both would like to see the version

getting closer to 5%. Don Collins felt that this was a good budget and it should not be cut because of the needed capital projects and the little impact it will have on the tax rate. Julie Regimbal requested that the board not implement staff reductions because it will impact the students. Peter suggested that the facilities meet on Thursday night to go over the capital projects. The committee scheduled a meeting for January 25th at 6:30pm at the Central Office.

Board Officers

Jen Chevalier stated that they would like to consider changing the office of treasurer, clerk and moderator from a one-year term to three-year terms. Julie reported that the officers have requested longer terms because they have to obtain signatures for a petition each year and it would be better if they could get a longer term.

Renick Darnell-Martin moved, seconded by Devin Bachelder to approve extending the terms of the offices of Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer from one year to a three-year term.

Don Collins suggests that they stagger the years so that not all offices expire at one time.

Renick and Devin rescinded their motion.

Don Collins moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to request the administration to change the terms of the office of treasurer from one year to three years, clerk from one year to two years and the moderator to a one-year term with the goals of a three-year term for all three officers.

The board voted 9-0 on the motion made by Don Collins.

Approval of FY25 Warning

The board tabled the action in the previous motion.

Business Office

a) Babcock Windows Contract

Lora McAllister stated that the facilities committee had recommended and the board approved \$675,000 to replace all the windows at the Babcock School to come out of the surplus. EEI has submitted a contract for the board's approval and signature so that this project can be completed this summer.

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin to approve the Babcock school window replacement contract with EEI. The board voted to approve the contract on a 9-0 vote.

Lora announced that she has received a message from EEI that they will donate the funds to pay for the scoreboard for the field hockey team at MVU.

Principal Renewals

Julie Regimbal explained to the board that they would like to send a letter of intent to all the principals their intent to renew their contracts which is due February 1st.

Superintendent Contract Renewal

Jen Chevalier stated that they will need to declare a finding for the executive session to discuss the Superintendent's Contract. Don Collins felt that the board did not need to discuss this, that they should offer a letter of intent to the Superintendent.

Don Collins moved, seconded by Meaghan Conly to have the Chair and the Clerk issue the Superintendent a letter of intent offering her a contract for the ensuing year/years. The board voted 9-0.

To hear the full presentation or more details, please follow the link below:

[MVSD Board Meetings on Northwest Access TV](#)

Future Agenda Items

MVU Behavioral Data, Budget Communication, District attendance work, VTCAP results

Future Board Meeting

Next MVSD Board Meeting January 29, 2024 at the Swanton Library at 6:30 pm and February 6th at MVU. The next Facilities Meeting is scheduled for January 25th at 6:30pm at Central Office.

Meeting Adjournment

Peter Magnant moved to adjourn the meeting; Joanne Johnston seconded. Motion carried 9:0.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13pm.