

**Missisquoi Valley School District
Board Meeting Minutes
Missisquoi Valley Union Middle/High School Library
January 17, 2023 6:30pm**

Location: The MVSD Board and Administration participated at the Missisquoi Valley Union/Middle School Library for this meeting. The meeting was held hybrid with remote access for the community and other interested persons.

Date: January 17, 2023

Board Members Present

Devin Bachelder, Chair, Joanne Johnston, Peter Magnant, Tobias Maguire. Steve Scott, Renick Darnell-Martin and Don Collins, Vice Chair. Terri O'Shea and Jen Chevalier joined remotely.

Absent Board Members None

Administration and Visitors Present

Julie Regimbal, Superintendent, Lora McAllister, Business Manager, MVU Administration Dan Palmer Christine Martin and Jennifer Desorgher, Richard Barwin, (MVU work based learning coordinator), current MVU student Grace Gallagher, and former MVU Graduate student Chase Roy, Derrick Garceau, (Technology Director of MVSD) Northwest Access TV Camera person. Joining remotely, Emily King, (former MVU student graduate) Steven Reynolds, Jason Butler (facility directors from Franklin and Highgate respectively) and Pierrette Bouchard Board Secretary.

Call the Meeting to Order 6:30PM

Devin Bachelder, School Board Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:32 PM
Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

Correspondence, Visitors, and Public Comments - None

Agenda Review

The Lighting Project is tabled and a letter of resignation was added to the agenda.

Public Comments

None

Presentation and Discussion Items

a) Work Based Learning at MVU

Richard Barwin provided an overview of the Work Based Learning Program. It is part of the Flexible Pathways to college and career. The benefits of the work- based learning is it Increases student choice and agency in their education, provides learning and training

opportunities not routinely available in school settings, allows students to network with key employers and professionals, increases student engagement and attendance and provides a head start on a career. They have 35 Student Enrolled (50% increase from 2021-2022) 4 Students in Full Time Career Positions, 30 Students Part Time Employment and 1 Student Unpaid Internship. Each student explained the benefits and experiences of participating in the work-based learning. (Richard Barwin and the students left @ 7:20pm.

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

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

Facility Committee Update

Lighting Project Update – tabled

Peter Magnant provided an update on the facilities projects. He reported that EEI would like to start on the Franklin School Project as soon as school is out in June so that they can get the addition sealed by November 1st and before winter weather begins. EEI believes that they should have a timeline by mid-February. Since the last meeting, they have been advised by EEI that the lighting upgrade will not be cost neutral. EEI has negotiated lower costs with their subcontractors and found the project eligible for rebates from Energy Efficiency of Vermont. Jon Brown of EEI expressed concerns about the boiler and heating efficiency in Highgate. They will need to look at this in the future. EEI will donate a gym scoreboard estimated at a cost of \$4,800 for the Highgate School.

Lora added that they have developed a five-year facilities plan for all the schools and they have prioritized the following for each school next year. Franklin-insulation for the attic, Highgate-camera system, door security & panel, Swanton-Band Room, Actuators, Door System, music room flooring and Central Fire Alarm. MVU-Science classroom and 10 additional unit ventilators for a total of \$417,300. After town meeting day, once the budgets are approved, the facility directors will start to move forward with ordering/preparing for the projects.

Highgate Kitchen Hood Project

Peter Magnant stated that the Highgate kitchen hood project is complicated involving about eight different subcontractors for electrical and mechanical work, a new gas line, structural reinforcement of the roof, and excavating work to name a few. The board felt we should move ahead with this project and use food surplus funds. Lora added that the funds have to be spent by December and this kitchen hood item has been written up by an inspector.

Don Collins moved, seconded by Peter Magnant to approve the contract with EEI for the Highgate Kitchen Hood totaling \$344,500 funded with the food surplus funds. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

Jason Butler thanked the board for the new tractor upgrade for the Swanton School. It works really well and was used last week to clear the snow.

Announced Tuition

Lora McAllister stated that each year by mid-January, the school district must approve the announced tuition for non-resident students attending their regular programs. The calculation must be completed totaling the district's regular education expenses minus special education and transportation expenses divided by the number of students. The Elementary School tuition of \$16,250 and secondary tuition of \$17,500 is recommended for approval.

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin to approve the announced tuition of \$16,250.00 for elementary students and \$17,500 for secondary. The board approved 9-0 vote.

FY24 Budget Discussion and Adoption

- a) FY24 MVSD Budget Draft 6 and
- b) b) FY24 Tax Rate Est.

Lora McAllister went over the revisions from Draft 5 which included increased vocation tuition, reduced professional development and travel lines in Central Office, increased Central Office advertising line and adjustment of the health insurance line to reflect the Central Office employee's actual participation. Lora McAllister stated that the revised budget total is \$44,983,567 minus projected revenues equals a net education spending of \$33,981,083. This results in a pre-k 12 tax rate of 1.2371 which is an increase of .00032 over last year. After the CLA impact, the estimated tax rates are the following for each town: Franklin 1.4769, Highgate 1.4523 and Swanton's is 1.3816. She went over the tax rate impact after the CLA of a \$200,000 homestead value in each town.

Renick Darnell-Martin moved, seconded by Don Collins to approve the budget as proposed totaling \$44,983,567. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

Tobias Maguire commented that the facility upgrades included in this budget will help avoid a future substantial amount of money to redo a whole school. He believes that the facility needs are a reality and he is happy to support the budget and encourages others to do that as well. Terri O'Shea agreed with Tobias and believes this budget addresses concerns for the taxpayers and for the students

- c) Town Meeting Day Article Warning

Lora McAllister stated that the legislators have drafted H42 which will allow school districts to suspend the article language including equalized pupil percentage starting in FY24. It has passed the House of Representatives and Jeff Francis of VSA believes it looks promising to pass the Senate. As a result, she has drafted two town meeting day warning articles, one with the equalized pupil percentage as is in current law and one without it as in the proposed law. The board can only approve one of these articles. If the article warning is passed with the current language, the board will need to have a special meeting if the law is passed to revise the town meeting day article. The school board could have a virtual meeting if needed to have a special meeting. Peter Magnant suggested that they approve the town meeting day article with the H42 language passing and not the current language. The board would need to have a special meeting if H42 does not pass.

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Terri O'Shea to approve the Town Meeting Day Article Warning as presented with H42, unless the law does not change, then the board of directors will have a special meeting to change Article II in accordance with the law. It was noted to add the additional Highgate school board director vacancy for the remaining two years of the three-year term. Peter Magnant agreed to amend his motion, Terri O'Shea seconded to approve the Town Meeting Day Article with H42 language as presented with the addition of the second Highgate School Director position. The board approved the motion on a 9-0 vote.

The board discussed next steps such as the marketing of the budget. Julie Regimbal stated that they are changing the structure of the videos by focusing on topics such as the capital projects and facilities, tax rate and the CLA impact, staffing, budget input meeting. She suggested that we attend selectboard meetings, make phone calls and get information out through fliers. Renick Darnell-Martin suggested an animated video explaining the cost per pupil, the yield, tax rate/CLA impact and breakdown of the budget. Julie stated that a shorter video usually attracts more viewers. Lora stated that they will do an insert in the St. Albans Messenger, launch information on the website and social media. They talked about longer

videos now and in February, do one-minute videos on point topics. Don suggested asking the town electronic communication boards to refer people to the MVSD website for budget information. Lora stated that in the past they sent a summary of the budget through school newsletters. JR Cox had suggested that they create a budget template spoken more from the voice of the principals that they can work with. Don feels that it is important to hear from the principals.

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

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

Letter of Resignation

Julie Regimbal stated that she received a letter of resignation from the Highgate School Nurse effective February 10th so that she can pursue other opportunities in the private sector. It was noted that the school nurse has been an excellent employee and will be missed.

Steve Scott moved, seconded by Joanne Johnston to release the Highgate School Nurse from her contract. The board voted 9-0.

Board Vacancies and Process for Elections

Devin Bachelder stated that there are three school director positions with a three-year term in each town and one director with a two-year term in Highgate. At this time, Steve Scott from Highgate and Terri O'Shea from Swanton have decided not to run again. Joanne Johnston is planning to run again in Franklin. Devin stated that all legal voters can run for the school director positions in their respective towns. The petitions will be available online at the MVSD Website with the following link <https://mvdschools.org/> The completed petition must be returned to the MVSD Central Office in Swanton by January 30th.

Future Agenda Items

ESSER Updates, Swanton School Updates, MVU Data update. Don Collins suggested that when the school director's meeting returns to MVU in four months, that he would like to hear an update from the Math and Science Departments.

Future Board Meeting.

Regular Board Meeting February 7, 2023, at the Swanton Central School Library at 6:00pm.

Executive Session

Peter Magnant moved, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing a contractual issue inviting Julie Regimbal and Lora McAllister. The board approved the motion and entered executive session at 8:32pm.

The board came out of executive session at 8:49. No motions came out of the executive session.

Meeting Adjournment

Peter Magnant moved to adjourn, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin, the motion was approved and the board adjourned at 8:49pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pierrette Bouchard, School Board Secretary