

Missisquoi Valley School District Board Meeting
Highgate Elementary School Library
Tuesday January 28, 2025
6:00 PM

Location:

The MVSD Board and Administration participated in the Highgate Elementary School Library for this meeting. The meeting was held hybrid with remote access for the community and other interested persons.

Date: January 28, 2025

Board Members Present

Jen Chevalier, Elaine Nester, Joanne Johnston, Peter Magnant, Don Collins, Pierrette Bouchard, Stephanie Gagne, Renick Darnell-Martin, Meaghan Conly (participating remotely)

Absent Board Members

None

Administration and Visitors Present

Julie Regimbal, Superintendent, Lora McAllister, Director of Finance and Operations, Bonnie Moulton, Director of Human Resources, Yeshua Pastina, School Principal, Philip Bauchan, MVSD Technology along with Northwest Access Cameraperson, Swanton teachers/NEA members Kirsten Belrose, Jennifer Mitchell, and Christine Depatie joined to present, School Principals Joyce Hakey, Chris Dodge, and Jessica Bourbeau joined remotely.

1. Call Meeting to Order (6:00)

Jen Chevalier called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

2. Correspondence, Visitors, and Public Comments

None

3. Agenda Review

None

4. Approval of the Minutes (Action)

a. [Budget Input Meeting](#)

b. A motion was made by Renick Darnell-Martin, seconded by Elaine Nester, to approve the Budget Input Meeting minutes. Motion carried 9-0.

c. [January 14, 2025](#)

d. A motion was made by Renick Darnell-Martin, seconded by Don Collins to approve January 14, 2025, minutes. Motion carried 9-0.

Missisquoi Valley School District Board Meeting
Highgate Elementary School Library
Tuesday January 28, 2025
6:00 PM

5. Administrative Reports: [Franklin](#), [Highgate](#), [Swanton](#)

- a. Jen Chevalier asked Joyce Hakey to highlight her administrative report. A 3rd grade student was honored for her accomplishment in the Robert Howe Fire Safety calendar art contest. Math professional development took place and was helpful. The January in-service was productive with data review and left with next steps for all Franklin students.
- b. Jen Chevalier asked Yeshua Pastina for Highgate highlights. Inservice was productive at Highgate as well, where data could be reviewed and a positive trend noted. Sarah Ward recently visited Highgate and suggestions were implemented, having a positive impact on students.
- c. Jen Chevalier asked Chris Dodge for Swanton highlights. There is new work around Special Education and alignment with the ARC reading program, Wendy Cunningham has been assisting with the work. Administration has been conducting probationary teachers' second observation of the year, with this one focusing on math, where the first of the year focused on literacy. The ski program is starting this week which has been overwhelmingly received by families. Don Collins asked about cuts to the after-school programs. Chris Dodge shared that they were not cut due to funding, they were cut due to staffing numbers. The decision was made with the program director to offer high quality, safe programming rather than a high number of different offerings.

6. Presentations and Discussion Items:

- a. MVSD Association Listen and Learn Presentation

Kirsten Belrose (MVSD NEA President), joined by Jennifer Mitchell and Christine Depatie, presented on the Methodology of their Listening Tour and the feedback received from professional staff in all MVSD buildings. Data was collected from approximately 50% of professional staff. Educators who were interviewed indicated the most positive part of their working environment are colleagues and students. The most common challenges found in the workplace were staff shortages (and lack of substitutes), lack of administrative support, and behavior protocols/student behavior. Information was also shared on what Swanton staff would be looking for in their next leader. Don Collins asked what the board can do to support building administrators in finding substitutes. It was suggested that more pay and additional training could be helpful. Meaghan Conly asked about the requirements for administrators to be present in buildings and classrooms. Renick Darnell-Martin asked what the balance is with the current climate versus the desires of staff. Joanne Johnston asked when this tour took place (September/October) and what would happen next.

- b. Legislative Update (Julie)

Julie Regimbal shared information on the Governor's proposal to transform public education. Sharing the Governor's concept to redistrict VT public schools from 52 Supervisory Unions and 115 School Districts down to 5 school districts. The Board engaged in conversation regarding the proposal.

Missisquoi Valley School District Board Meeting
Highgate Elementary School Library
Tuesday January 28, 2025
6:00 PM

c. [MVU and Swanton Stormwater Projects](#) (Action)

A motion was made by Stephanie Gagne, seconded by Don Collins, to accept the EEC revised bid for the MVU Stormwater Project at \$164,945 with the local share of \$16,495. Motion carried 9-0.

A motion was made by Elaine Nester, seconded by Peter Magnant, to accept the bid by Courtland Construction for the Swanton Stormwater Bid at \$410,408 with the local share of \$41,005. Motion carried 9-0.

7. FY 26 Budget Adoption (Action)

a. [Budget Draft](#)

Lora McAllister presented budget draft 6, demonstrating small changes and still noting an average tax rate decrease across all three towns. Lora McAllister also shared the sample ballot language highlighting the change required for this year.

b. FY26 Budget Adoption (Action)

A motion was made by Renick Darnell-Martin, seconded by Stephanie Gagne, to adopt the FY26 budget in the amount of \$50,956,879. Motion carried 9-0.

c. Approval of FY26 [Warning](#) (Action)

A motion was made by Renick Darnell-Martin, seconded by Jen Chevalier, to approve the Annual Meeting Warning as read. Motion carried 9-0.

8. Committee Updates for the month

Joanne Johnston provided an update on the Student Success Committee. At the most recent meeting Beth Ann Miller presented to the committee on the after-school programs and information on receiving grants. Information was shared with the committee on staffing issues affecting the programs. Jenn DeSorgher and Julie Regimbal shared information on the VSAC survey results with the committee. A lot of successes and some items that still need work. The next meeting will take place on February 12, 2025.

Peter Magnant provided an update on the Facilities Committee. The MVU roof project needed to be scaled back due to budget considerations. A different section than originally planned will be worked on. Eight million dollars' worth of projects are scheduled to be completed over the summer.

Renick Darnell-Martin provided an update on the Finance Committee. The budget is now adopted. The informational meeting will take place on February 11, 2025. JR Cox is continuing to work on budget videos and information.

Missisquoi Valley School District Board Meeting
Highgate Elementary School Library
Tuesday January 28, 2025
6:00 PM

9. Statement from Board Chair

Jen Chevalier informed the board that she will be stepping down from the board, with her last meeting being February 18, 2025. For transparency, any member of the Highgate community interested in filling the remaining two years of the term should submit a letter of interest to Julie Regimbal, Superintendent.

Peter Magnant thanked Jen Chevalier for her time as the school board chair for the last two years and for her dedicated service to the board for several years. Renick Darnell-Martin echoed the sentiments thanking Jen Chevalier for all she has devoted to the community.

10. Future Agenda Items: Field Studies Presentation, Negotiations updates, Legislative updates, MVU Aspirations

11. [Future Board Meeting:](#)

- a. February 4, 2025 in the MVU Library at 6:00 p.m.

12. Leave of Absence Request (Action) Possible Finding for executive session

A motion was made by Peter Magnant, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin, that this topic (and the following topic, number 13) is appropriate to be discussed in an executive session. Motion carried 9-0.

13. Swanton Principal Candidate Interview (Action) Finding for executive session

See Above

14. Potential Executive session for, Leave of Absence request and Interview: as premature public knowledge would put one or more parties at a substantial disadvantage

A motion was made by Peter Magnant, seconded by Jen Chevalier, to enter an executive session inviting Julie Regimbal, also inviting Bonnie Moulton and Yeshua Pastina for portions, to discuss the leave of absence request and the Swanton Principal Candidate Interview. Motion carried 9-0.

- a. Entered executive session at 7:42pm.
- b. Exit executive session at 9:02pm.
- c. A motion was made by Peter Magnant, seconded by Elaine Nester, to approve the leave of absence as presented. Motion carries 9-0.
- d. A motion was made by Elaine Nester, seconded by Renick Darnell-Martin, to approve the requested assignment of Yeshua Pastina to the role of Swanton Elementary Principal for the 2025-2026 school year. Motion carried 9-0.

15. Adjourn Meeting (8:00)

A motion was made by Peter Magnant, seconded by Stephanie Gagne, to adjourn. Motion carries 9-0. Meeting adjourned at 9:04pm.