

MINUTES
MONT VERNON SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 14, 2009
MONT VERNON VILLAGE SCHOOL LIBRARY

Dr. Mary Jennings called the Organizational Meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:

ATTENDANCE

Mont Vernon School Board: Jayson Darula, Trevor Girard
Kim Roberge, Bruce Schmidt, and Leo White

Administrative Team: Nicole Heimarck, Dr. Mary
Jennings, Renea Sparks, and Gail Westergren

Public: Ann Bailey, Howard Brown, Adele Desrosiers,
Wilmerlee Findlay, Nancy Foster, Lori Hayes, Anglea
Hazen, Michelle Lamar, Paul Laverty, Sarah Lawrence,
David Lindsey, Stephanie Lindsey, Nicole Martin, Leslie
McCann, Linda Narducci, John Quinlan, Jayma Robinson,
Pat Savo, Pietro Savo, LeeAnne Steenhoek, Heather Stine
Stephanie Tabit, Stephanie Vore Apple, Jessica Weisburg,
and Maureen Wilson

Faculty/School Administration: Danielle Costa, Cheryl
Galan, Alma Garcia, Amy St. Hilaire, Jan Mattie, Meghan
Libby, Sue Casey

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

- A. Chairman – Dr. Jennings called for nominations to
serve as Chair of the Mont Vernon School Board.

**II. ELECTION OF SCHOOL
BOARD OFFICERS**

Bruce Schmidt nominated Leo White to serve as Chairman
of the Board. Trevor Girard seconded the nomination.

Dr. Jennings asked if there were any other nominations
however, there were none.

**A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to nominate Leo
White to serve as Chairman of the Mont Vernon School
Board. Trevor Girard seconded the motion. All**

FINAL Minutes of May 14, 2009, Mont Vernon School Board Meeting

members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Leo White took over the meeting.

B. Vice Chairman – Leo White called for nominations to serve as Vice Chairman of the Mont Vernon School Board.

Jayson Darula nominated Kim Roberge to serve as Vice Chairman of the Board. Trevor Girard seconded the motion. Leo asked if there were any other nominations however, there were none.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to elect Kim Roberge to serve as Vice Chairman of the Board. Trevor Girard seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

C. Secretary – Leo White called for nominations to serve as Secretary of the Mont Vernon School Board. Jayson Darula nominated Bruce Schmidt to serve as Secretary. Trevor Girard seconded the nomination.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to elect Bruce Schmidt to serve as Secretary of the Board. Trevor Girard seconded the nomination. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Leo White told board members they would defer committee assignments to the end of the meeting.

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn the Organizational Meeting. Kim Roberge seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of adjourning the Organizational Meeting. The Organizational Meeting was adjourned at 6:13 p.m. (5-

0-0)

III. Committee Assignments

Bruce Schmidt and Trevor Girard volunteered to approve manifests. Jayson Darula agreed to be a back up if needed.

Budget Committee – Kim Roberge – Town
Bruce Schmidt – SAU

Budget Committee Liaison – District – Trevor Girard

Policy – SAU Wide – Jayson Darula

Transportation – Kim Roberge

Leo White called the board meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

I. REGULAR MEETING

A. Principal's Report – Board members received a copy of the Principal's Report dated May 14, 2009.

II. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Gail told board members there is a group of parents that are interested in "greening" the school. Gail said currently they just recycle paper, some plastics and bottles.

Bruce Schmidt said in the past when he has approved the manifests, he recalls spending quite a bit of money on getting our recyclables picked up by an outside vendor.

John Quinlan said the town could pick up the school's recyclables.

Gail agreed to follow through with the town regarding them picking up the Village School's recyclables. Gail is also going to speak with Jim Miner.

Dr. Jennings said this topic would be put on as a future agenda item.

Bruce Schmidt asked if Gail would look at the date of the

FINAL Minutes of May 14, 2009, Mont Vernon School Board Meeting

June Board Meeting to confirm if the board meeting is on the same night as the Kindergarten play. If so, he requested the meeting be pushed back by half an hour. Gail agreed to check on the date of the play.

B. MVVS Action Group Report – Board members received a handout entitled Action Team, Mont Vernon Village School, Report, 5.14.09, in their board packets.

Dr. Jennings explained the faculty had requested a meeting with the superintendent and as a result of this meeting, an Action Team of five teachers and one support staff was formed to meet with the principal and the superintendent. The purpose of the group initially was to communicate clearly about educational issues in the building that were of concern.

The members that were chosen for this group include: Jan Mattie, Charline Brown, Charlotte Jameson, Meghan Libby, Barry Jordan, and Danielle Costa.

The Action Team met with Gail and Dr. Jennings on May 7th. In the meeting, all members expressed their concerns about the leadership of the building and how everyone could work to improve things. The group decided they would serve as advisors to the principal and also would help design upcoming late start discussions to put a plan of action in place.

At the next late start day, May 12, 2009 the Action Team conducted a full staff meeting. The issues that were discussed the previous week were listed along with an expectation that at the next late start meeting, small groups would work to define major goals for the rest of the year and next. The meeting was positive and upbeat with an emphasis on collaboration and communication.

Dr. Jennings said she is very pleased with how positive the faculty is with this process.

FINAL Minutes of May 14, 2009, Mont Vernon School Board Meeting

C. Superintendent Report – Dr. Jennings wanted to discuss the issue regarding mold at the Village School.

Dr. Jennings said a citizen told an evening custodian that there was a mold issue. The custodian did not tell the day custodian and the proper chain of command was not followed.

Dr. Jennings said Jim Miner was on vacation at the time the issue was brought to their attention however, upon his return, he also addressed the issue. Jim Miner looked at the ice dam and did not find any mold. The area was cleaned with bleach and is being monitored.

Leo White asked if there were any comments from the public however, none were forthcoming.

III. PUBLIC TIME

The A. Minutes 1. April 9, 2009, were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to approve Consent Agenda Items B. Treasurer's Report 1. March 2009, C. Manifest, D. Authorization to sign 1. Tuition Agreement, 2. MVEA Agreement and E. Personnel – New Hire. Kim Roberge seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to approve the A. Minutes 1. April 9, 2009, as presented. Jayson Darula seconded the motion. Four board members voted in favor of the motion and one board member abstained, Leo White. (4-0-1)

Dr. Jennings told board members the same materials that were in the last agenda packet were also provided at this meeting. Dr. Jennings explained there are five possible areas the board can take action on tonight.

V. ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Jennings said it is not clear whether Spanish should be a .4 position or a .6 position. Dr. Jennings said Spanish, as a Special requires a .4 position not a .6 position. The difference in the position is \$10,449.

Gail Westergren said her preference is to have Spanish as a Special. Gail said Alma Garcia is an exceptional Spanish teacher, the best teacher they've ever had. Gail said they would like to keep her at the Village School. Gail said the board's vote tonight could either keep her here or not.

Gail explained a .4 teacher next year would involve less Spanish instruction than they are getting this year. Gail said a .6 Spanish instructor would actually give the students more Spanish next year than this year. Gail said if Spanish were taught as a special, students in grades 1-6 would receive instruction, however, it would exclude Kindergarten.

Currently, specials are forty-five minutes long.

Gail said Guidance is currently a special but she said she would like to see it integrated into the curriculum.

Gail explained if Spanish is a .6 position, students would receive 45 minutes of instruction one week and the next week they would receive 90 minutes. In other words, students would receive Spanish twice one week and then once the following week. If Spanish were a .4 position students would receive 45 minutes of Spanish per week, and this could possibly be changing to 40 minutes per week.

Gail said currently, the 1st-4th graders receive 1 hour of Spanish per week and the 5th and 6th graders receive 75 minutes every two weeks. If Spanish goes to a .4 position, 1st – 4th graders will lose 15 minutes of instruction and the 5th and 6th graders would go from 75 minutes to 90 minutes

of instruction.

Gail said Guidance would remain exactly the way it is if Spanish became a .4 position. If Spanish became a .6 position, Guidance would be integrated.

Dr. Jennings said her concern is that the current Spanish curriculum doesn't align with the 7th and 8th grade curriculum at the Amherst Middle School. Dr. Jennings said by having a .6 Spanish instructor at the Village School the students will still receive significantly more instruction than the Amherst students and they will be far more advanced in 7th grade than Amherst students.

LeeAnne Steenhoek, a resident of Mont Vernon and a teacher at the Amherst Middle School spoke about the value of Spanish in the younger grades.

Kim Roberge said she finds it tough to have a discussion about a staff member, on a personal basis. The discussion should center on whether Spanish should be a .4 or .6 position.

Jayson Darula said it is a matter of whether or not they want to have a foreign language taught at the Village School. Jayson said he wants a foreign language taught, to the kids at the Village School because there is academic value to teaching students another language at a young age. Jayson said if we are committed to teaching Spanish at the Village School then, we need to commit to it.

Members of the public were given an opportunity to comment on a .4 versus a .6 Spanish teacher at the Village School.

Sue Casey said she was confused because at the Town Meeting, Kim Roberge spoke in support of a full time Spanish teacher and now, she is not sure if she supports a .4 versus a .6 teacher.

Laurie Hayes asked if members of the audience could get the handouts that were provided to them at the last board meeting. Laurie said she was confused because she thought at the last board meeting she didn't think they were making a decision as to whether Spanish would be a .4 or a .6 position next year however, she learned at the end of the meeting the board voted to award Alma Garcia a .4 teaching contract for the 2009-2010 school year.

Dr. Jennings explained the district must present contracts to the faculty by April 15th and the decision as to whether the position would be a .4 or .6 position would be decided this evening however, they needed to present what would be minimally awarded to the position.

Laurie Hayes said she was confused because at the Town Meeting she understood the vote to be for a .6 Spanish teacher not a .4 position and the vote difference was only one vote so she is not sure why this discussion is even taking place.

Jessica Weisberg said she has a son in Kindergarten and a daughter in 2nd grade. Jessica said every night her kids talk to her in Spanish. Jessica said one of the reasons her family moved to Mont Vernon from Amherst was the fact that Spanish was taught at the Village School. Jessica said she would hate to lose the Spanish program at the Village School.

Jayma Robinson said she has a third grader at the Village School and she is a teacher at the Middle School. She said you are either for the Spanish program or not. Jayma said having Spanish at the Village School is an awesome opportunity and she would love to see it back as a full time position.

LeeAnne Steenhoek said according to research children who are taught a second or multiple language develop more

overall vocabulary and mastery of the first language, demonstrate superior academic performance in other curricular areas, perform better on standardized tests, have better problem-solving skills, have better flexibility in their thinking, use critical thinking skills effectively, have a better cultural and social sense, are more competitive in the work force and are more flexible thinkers.

LeeAnne said as language teachers, they are taught that the key to learning second or multiple languages is consistency of comprehensible input over time. Students need regular exposure to language and the quantity needs to be present along with the quality of instruction. LeeAnne said they collaborate as a department and provide quality instruction.

LeeAnne said the difference between twice a week and once per week is significant towards these goals.

LeeAnne said learning a second or multiple languages supports district goals including improved standardized test performance, math skills, decoding skills, phonemic awareness, word recognition, writing and reading.

LeeAnne said student who return to her say they are using their language skills and they are at universities, graduate programs, Market Basket, World Business and Building 19. LeeAnne said we need to prepare our children for the future.

Stephanie Tabit said she supports the Spanish position and would support the position full time if she could.

Angela Hazen asked for clarification on the amount of Spanish instruction if the position was a .4 position versus a .6 position.

Angela said she was strongly in favor of the position being a .6 position.

Michelle Lamar said she has a kindergartner and a first grader and she regrets not being at the Town Meeting in March so that she could have voted for the full time position. Michelle said she speaks two languages (English and Spanish), and went to college. She said we need to think about the future and plan for our kids. Michelle said if we cut Spanish we will be making a terrible mistake. Michelle said the current instruction the students receive is absolutely outstanding.

Michelle said if she could go back, and have been able to attend the March meeting she definitely would have voted to keep the Spanish program as a full time position.

Sarah Lawrence said she has a first grader and one child who will be in kindergarten in 2011. Sarah said she is strongly in favor of the Spanish teacher being full time however because it can't be right now, she would want the position to be a .6 position.

Stephanie Apple said she would advocate the kids receive Spanish more frequently because repetition is key. Stephanie said few minutes, multiple times per week is better.

Peter Savo said he is in favor of Spanish being taught as a .6 position. Peter said he works for the Department of Defense and he is a strong advocate of having Spanish at the Village School and he supports it being a full time position.

Peter said he has a 3rd grader and a 5th grader and speaks Spanish to them. Peter said having a second language is very important to kids at this age.

Alma Garcia, the Spanish Teacher at the Village School said the more she sees her students, the more they learn and the less time she spends with them, the less they retain. Alma said she loves to work with her co-workers, children

and the public.

Nicole Martin said she fought for French four years ago and now they are cutting the Spanish program and she is back doing the same thing. Nicole said if they had babysitters at the meeting in March, her husband would have been able to go to the meeting and they wouldn't be having this discussion tonight. Nicole said she supports the position being full time but if she had to choose tonight, she definitely supports a .6 position.

Heather Stine said it was a close vote at the Town Meeting in March, a difference of one vote. She said to honor the towns voice, she thinks it would be reasonable if they make the position a .7 or .8 position.

Leo White explained since the position was budgeted as a .6 position, they only needed to vote if the board wanted to make a motion to change the position from a .6 to a .4.

The board made no motions and the Spanish position remains at a .6 position for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Dr. Jennings said the next Budget Consideration the board needed to discuss was Textbooks. Dr. Jennings said the entire line was eliminated at the meeting in March. Dr. Jennings said she is seeking the board's guidance. Dr. Jennings suggested in order to keep the line item in the budget the board should vote to leave a \$1 in the line so as to not eliminate all future textbooks.

Bruce Schmidt asked if the administration could provide a list of textbooks needed for next year. Bruce said he just wanted a list of books that needed replacement, not the Scott Foresman books. Bruce suggested using current funds and purchasing the books by June 30th.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to keep the textbooks line by funding it with a \$1. Kim Roberge

FINAL Minutes of May 14, 2009, Mont Vernon School Board Meeting

seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Dr. Jennings told board members the Co-Curricular line was reduced by \$1,160 and not related to any known positions. Dr. Jennings said she is seeking guidance as to what positions they should eliminate.

Kim said since they are reducing the salary increases for the non-union positions, they can fund the co-curricular shortfall through a budget transfer utilizing the savings from the Non-CBA Salaries.

Dr. Jennings told board members some salaries were cut from 3.5% to 3%, however, not all lines were reduced consistently. Dr. Jennings asked for some guidance from the board.

Bruce Schmidt said to be consistent, they should reduce the Non-CBA salaries to 3% as well.

A motion was made by Trevor Girard to reduce the Non-CBA Salary increases from 3.5% to 3% to be consistent. Bruce Schmidt seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0)

Dr. Jennings told board members Staff Development was reduced according to past usage of the line item. Dr. Jennings explained new CBA language allows full access to these funds. With one fewer position, literacy position, \$23,600 is needed and they have it funded at \$14,000, a difference of \$9,600. Dr. Jennings asked for input from the board as to where the funds could come from.

Trevor Girard questioned the need for teachers to receive continuing education/professional development.

Nicole Heimareck said she values continuing education as very significant.

The Board asked the Union Representative, Gretchen Dunn, if the Union would have a problem if they fund the account as needed and Gretchen said no.

Bruce Schmidt said he had sent an e-mail to see if something could be done to improve volunteering at the Village School.

VI. DISCUSSION

Bruce said he did not believe volunteers were as well coordinated as they could be and suggested they try to improve.

Leo White recommended reinvigorating the volunteer coordinator position.

Gail said she would survey the staff as to where they could use volunteers.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to enter into Non-Public Session per RSA 91 A:3 II (a) for the purpose of discussion contracts. Kim Roberge seconded the motion. By roll call vote, Schmidt – yes; Roberge-yes; White-yes; Darula –yes; and Girard-yes, the board entered into Non-Public session at 8:46 p.m.

VII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION

The Board discussed the Principal's contract.

A motion was made by Jayson Darula to come out of Non-Public Session per RSA 91 A:3 II (a). Jayson Darula seconded the motion. By roll call vote, Schmidt – yes; Roberge-yes; White-yes; Darula –yes; and Girard-yes, the board came out of Non-Public session at 9:10 p.m.

A motion was made by Bruce Schmidt to adjourn the meeting. Jayson Darula seconded the motion. The

VII. REVIEW OF MEETING/ADJOURN

motion passed unanimously. (5-0-0) The meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.