

**MONT VERNON SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 13, 2007**  
**MONT VERNON VILLAGE SCHOOL LIBRARY**

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Leo White called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Present:

**ATTENDANCE**

Mont Vernon School Board: Howard Brown, Peter King (arrived at 6:30 p.m.), John Schwope, and Leo White.

Administrative Team: Dr. Mary Jennings, Lisa Ambrosio, Meredith Nadeau, Elizabeth Shankel and Kathy Skoglund

Budget Committee: Pam Coughlan, Kathy Dobbs

Other: Kim Roberge, Kim Tighe, and Loren Hallett

Minutes Recorder: Lyn Jennings

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- A. Administrators Report - Board members received a copy of the Principal's Report in their board packets dated 2/13/07.

Meredith Nadeau congratulated the Runner Up of the Spelling Bee, Elizabeth White and the Winner of the Spelling Bee, Chandler McKenzie. Meredith told members of the board, Chandler McKenzie would be competing in the Regional Spelling Bee on March 11, 2007.

There were no additional announcements made by Dr. Mary Jennings.

Gerry Griffin, a Mont Vernon Selectmen, asked to address the board as a private citizen.

**PUBLIC TIME**

Gerry wanted to address the board regarding the tax rate. He discussed how it develops the well being and development in town.

Gerry explained out of 234 cities/towns in New Hampshire, what the absolute tax rate number would be with 1 being the lowest and 234 being the highest for Mont Vernon. Gerry said based on his analysis, Mont Vernon was 201 out of 234. Gerry explained the

absolute rate doesn't really matter much what really matters is the equalized rate. Gerry said this is what people look at when they are trying to determine where to live.

Gerry said he encourages members of the school board and administration to do everything they can to hold the line on budgets this year.

John Schwope said the quality of the schools has an impact as to where people choose to live along with the tax rate. John also said there is no commercial base in town to lower the burden of the taxpayer. John asked if the selectmen thought there was an opportunity to have any commercial base in town.

Jack Esposito agreed it would be very difficult for the town to have a commercial base. Jack said the town has no sewer or public water either.

Gerry Griffin said it is a matter of carefully balancing the needs of the town. Gerry said we don't necessarily need to lower our tax rate we just need to let the rest of the towns catch up.

John Schwope asked what was the town budget increase. Jack Esposito said it is up 5%.

All items from the Consent Agenda were pulled for individual approval – A. Acceptance of Donation; B. Minutes 1. January 18, 2007; and B. 2. January 30, 2007.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Peter King and seconded by John Schwope to accept the donation from the Charlotte Ann Boutelle Grant of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation in the amount of \$2,796.74. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by John Schwope and seconded by Peter King to accept Consent Agenda B. 1. Minutes from January 18, 2007 as amended. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by Peter King and seconded by Howard Brown to accept the Consent Agenda B. 2. Minutes from January 30, 2007 as amended. Three members of the board voted in favor of the motion and one member, John Schwope abstained.

## PRESENTATIONS

A. Update – Bus Route Issue - John Schwope updated members of the school board regarding the Mason Road/Spring Hill Road bus issue.

John presented the options discussed along with all the issues for each of the options.

1. Change the bus stop from Mason & Spring Hill Road to John Schwope's driveway.
  - Eliminates the blind corner problem.
  - No extra busing cost involved.
  - Driveway needs a bit of widening and sign must be removed. It is not clear the Town will do this.
  - Who will maintain the driveway – not clear the Town will do this.
  - Regarding liability, it is likely that both First Student and the property owner will each want a waiver from the other.
  
2. Have Special Education bus pick up six students at regular stop on Lovell's Way.
  - Eliminates blind corner problem.
  - Annual cost will be \$12,136.
  - This road is private and we do not have waivers from property owners. First Student indicated they would want waivers in place. Regarding liability, it is likely both First Student and the property owners will each want a waiver from the other.
  - Depending on the mix of kids, a monitor may be needed at an annual cost of approximately \$3,900.
  - Occasionally, this bus will not get to

Mont Vernon until 3:15 p.m. rather than 3:00 p.m.

- If Special Education students are added to this bus, the route may be changed significantly and/or there may not be space for the regular education students.
- This sets a precedent of allowing regular education students on special education buses.

3. Add a seven passenger van or a twenty passenger bus.

- Eliminates blind corner problem.
- Need to find a turn around however requirements for turning these vehicles around are much less than a regular bus.
- The turnaround will need maintenance and again, it is not clear if the Town will take care of this.
- Again, liability for First Student versus property owners may be an issue.

4. Designate Lovell's Way and Bayberry as Town Roads.

- Widening and tree removal, along with proper maintenance, will allow large buses to navigate these roads with a greater degree of safety.

John said he met with the Selectmen last night, February 12, 2007, and he presented the option of allowing the bus to turn around in his driveway.

John said the Selectmen thought this was a good idea but they were looking into it further.

Jack Esposito said he had no objection to the idea, but they need to check into the insurance issue.

Peter King asked if the bus company has done a recent model of the bus routes. Peter explained in the past, we paid the bus company to provide this information.

Betty Shankel said currently, we do not pay a fee for this service. Betty said if board members would like to have an updated model done of the bus routes, she could contact First Student.

- B. Math Curriculum – Board members received a copy of the Math Curriculum / Program Update dated February 13, 2007, submitted by Meredith Nadeau, Principal, Kim Tighe, Math Curriculum Coordinator, and Loren Hallett, Math Consultant.

Meredith provided the following Math Curriculum Update:

- Mont Vernon math curriculum standards are in place for grades K-4; SAU standards in grades 5 and 6.
- Everyday Math implemented in Grades K-4.
- Everyday Math being piloted in Grade 5.
- Everyday Math in Grade 6 – the teacher has gone and observed a class and is working with the consultant to develop a training plan.

Kim Tighe told board members the SAU Math Curriculum Committee meets on a regular basis and began meeting for the first time this year. Kim explained as an SAU, they are continuing to meet to discuss what accelerated math should look like, how to accommodate for accelerated students, and how to identify/assess these students across the schools. Kim said as a committee, they all have the same vision.

End of year assessments are given at the end of grades 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6; pilot assessment to be given in grade 3 this spring.

During the summer Meredith said they hope to work on refining the assessments and utilizing the data from NWEA, NECAP, and local assessments.

Meredith presented the Mont Vernon Village School sixth grade math proposal from July 27, 2006.

Meredith provided an update on the proposal:

- Only students who meet the placement criteria established by the school are eligible for participation in the program, and parental consent will continue to be required.
- The sixth grade advanced curriculum will be offered to qualifying students who choose not to participate in the Alpha program within the regular classroom by MVVS staff.

Meredith provided a slide, which detailed the selection process for Alpha and Advanced courses taken from the July 27, 2006, presentation.

Meredith summarized the placement results at the end of the school year in June 2006.

- MVVS end of Grade 5 assessment results indicated only 2 students met all qualifications for 2006-2007 Alpha or advanced program.
- After completion of beginning of 6<sup>th</sup> grade assessment and inclusion of teacher recommendations, 5 students qualified for Alpha or the advanced program.
- All eligible students elected to participate in the Alpha program (rather than the 6<sup>th</sup> grade advanced program)

Meredith provided an update on the Alpha Math proposal:

- The program schedule will be determined by school administration and class time will be comparable to the mathematics instruction time allotted for other sixth graders.
- The program's instructor will receive

observations and feedback from administration and/or the mathematics curriculum coordinator in a manner similar to that of other members of the instructional staff.

- Scores from in-class exams only will be utilized in AMS placement determinations for Alpha students.
- The programs effectiveness will continue to be monitored (through measures such as student performance in 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics, NECAP and NWEA results, student and parent surveys, etc.)

Meredith presented a slide which detailed the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade classroom work:

- An independent group of 7 students is in place.
  - Eligible students were determined based on end of year test scores, independent work, teacher recommendations, NWEA & NECAP results.
  - To stay in independent group, the student must maintain a 90% on unit tests.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Independent Group is following closely with AMS – planning on the students finishing the 6<sup>th</sup> grade textbook and getting through first half of grade 7 book.
- Enrichment group meets with consultant weekly to focus on problem solving using real life math problems.

John Schwope said he was not feeling as though they were engaging and supporting all learners.

Leo White asked if a student was on Unit 5 in the Independent Math Group and they did not get at least a 90% on the unit test would they then go back to the classroom for Unit 6. Kim said they would be brought back at the appropriate time.

Kim Tighe explained the Independent Math group is receiving enrichment along the way; they receive a broader scope of data rather than just the unit.

Dr. Jennings said by utilizing NWEA, they would like to do flexible grouping, having students be challenged where they need to be challenged week by week.

Dr. Jennings said they would like to get all teachers to be able to teach all levels of children in the classroom. She said they would like to provide the level of education in the classroom that would meet the needs of all children.

John Schwope said last year the goal was to try to bring advanced math within the school curriculum being offered, because they believed a lot more children could benefit from advanced instruction. John said he doesn't feel they have made a lot of progress in this area.

John said he was dissatisfied with the quality of the program in place. John said his concern is they should be engaging and supporting all learners in the program, and he doesn't believe this is being done.

Kim Tighe explained they would like each teacher to be qualified to let kids go on in an advanced math situation.

Loren Hallett, MVVS Math Consultant provided an overview of what she has done as the Mathematics Consultant at the Village School.

Loren said she has provided Enrichment in Grades 2, 3, and 6. Loren explained Grade 2 is involved with Everyday Math enrichment, Grade 3 is using Math Journals with Everyday Math enrichment and Grade 6 is problem solving using real life math problems.

A summary was provided as to what Loren has been involved in as the Mathematics Consultant:

- Collaboration with teachers using Everyday Math.
- Grade 1 organization & Everyday Math assessment/record keeping.
- Grade 2 Everyday Math techniques.
- Grade 5 Everyday Math program specifics,

modifying/leveling materials & homework.

- Pacing, Trouble Shooting, Professional Development.
- Parent Workshops – including two introductory parent nights in September, one fifth grade parent workshop and future workshops include game night, portfolio showcase and an end of the year Q&A, as well as preparation for the next school year.
- Available to teachers weekly to solve problems regarding pacing, student progress, assessment, & Everyday Math program specifics.
- Tracking Everyday Math progress.
- Co-teaching & observation with discussion.

John asked Loren if she was working with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade math teacher. Loren said yes, she was, piloting with her very closely.

Loren said she attended an observation at another school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade Everyday Math.

Peter King said he was concerned the Math Consultant was going to be a long-term position. Peter asked Meredith if she anticipated the need for a Math Consultant next year. Meredith said a Math Consultant would only be needed periodically next year on a part time basis for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students.

- A. Vote – FY08 Operating Budget Warrant – A motion was made by Peter King and seconded by John Schwope to present Article 2 at the Public Hearing on February 15, 2007.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

Article 2 reads as follows: To see if the school district will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of \$4,367,183 for the support of schools, for the salaries of school district officials and agents, and for the payment of statutory obligations of said district. This article does not include appropriations voted in other warrant articles. The school board recommends the passage of this article. Majority vote required to pass.

All members of the board voted in favor of the motion

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and the motion passed.

- B. Vote – Other Warrant Articles – A motion was made by Howard Brown and seconded by John Schwope to present Article 3 at the Public Hearing on February 15, 2007.

Article 3 read as follows: To see if the school district will vote to discontinue the Mont Vernon School Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund established March, 1997, said funds with accumulated interest to the date of withdrawal are to be transferred to the School District's general fund, and further to establish the School Property Maintenance Expendable Trust Fund under the provisions of RSA 198:20-c for the purpose of maintaining, repairing and upgrading both the inside and outside of Mont Vernon school properties, and to raise and appropriate the sum of \$38,287.22 (which is the total amount of funds in the discontinued expendable trust fund plus an additional \$10,000) to be placed in this fund and authorize the use of that amount from the year-end undesignated fund balance (surplus) if available on July 1, 2007, and further to name the School Board as agents to expend this fund. The school board recommends the passage of this article. Majority vote required to pass.

Betty Shankel explained this warrant article gets rid of the old trust fund and creates a new expendable trust, which has a broader purpose.

All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

A motion was made by John Schwope and seconded by Howard Brown to present Article 4 at the Public Hearing on February 15, 2007.

Article 4 read as follows: To see if the school district will vote to create an expendable trust fund under the provisions of RSA 198:20-c, to be known as the Fund for Unfunded Liabilities for Retiring Employees, for the purpose of payment of retirement benefits currently accruing. Furthermore, to raise and appropriate \$30,000

toward this purpose and to name the school board as agents to expend from this fund. The school board recommends the passage of this article. Majority vote required to pass.

Peter King asked for an estimate of their present unfunded liability. Betty explained she didn't have the figure yet, but would in a day or so. Peter said it is important to have this figure for the Public Hearing.

All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

- A. Review of Public Hearing – Tuition and Facilities – Dr. Jennings asked for feedback from members of the school board regarding the Public Hearing. Board members agreed, they thought the format of the meeting was good. Peter King said he was disappointed by the press coverage they received in the *Cabinet*. Peter suggested the board rebut the article. Leo White said he would write a rebuttal and send it to Editor. He said he would write it from the School Board Chair but have the rest of the board review it prior to sending it to the *Cabinet*.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

A motion was made by Peter King and seconded by Howard Brown to have the board continue tuition negotiations with Amherst based upon the direction received from the public at the Public Hearing. All members of the board voted in favor of the motion and the motion passed.

- B. 2007-2008 Calendar Proposal – Board members received a copy of the SAU39 Proposed 2007-2008 School Year Calendar. The draft document was dated 2/8/07.

Dr. Jennings said the administration has seen it once and the Amherst Board and Souhegan Board have seen it as well.

Dr. Jennings said the first day of school for students would be August 29, 2007.

Peter King said he likes the fact the students aren't going to school for three days and then getting two weeks of shorts weeks containing holidays and in service days prior to a full school week schedule.

Howard said he thinks it would be better if Souhegan and Mont Vernon has the same late start days.

Late start days will be the second Tuesday of each month except in October; it will be the third Tuesday of the month.

There will be two full-day in service days for teachers. The tentative last day of school for the Village School is June 12, 2008.

Budget Committee's Feedback – Pam Coughlan, Budget Committee Chair explained the Committee was in support of all proposed School Budget line items with the exception of the following:

**OTHER**

Line #5 Teacher Salaries – Recommend (7-0) to reduce this line by \$5,292.

With additional reductions in the following related line items – Line 168 and line 169 FICA/Medicare \$405.

The committee opposes the addition of PE teaching time. Active time is important and necessary in the students' day, but students would be better served having this time as recess time.

Line # 5 Salaries Teachers – Recommend (6-2) to reduce this line by \$10,098.

With additional reductions in the following related line items –

#163 Health Insurance \$2,993

#164 Dental Insurance \$376

#168 & 169 FICA/Medicare \$772

The committee opposes the addition of a literacy coach to the staff. The value of this position is noted, but its impact on the students does not warrant the addition to the budget.

Line 21 – Computer Software – Recommend 7-0 to reduce this line by \$1,240 (MV Share of the license for CMS)

Line 160 – New Equipment – Technology – Recommend to reduce this line by \$500 (MV portion for the CMS server)

The committee opposes the purchase of Course Management Software and its related costs. This Software system is more suited for older student's (High School, Middle School) needs.

Line 60 – Co-curricular Salaries – Recommend 5-2 to reduce this line by \$1,500.

The committee opposes the addition of band into the school schedule. Parents who want their children to play an instrument should pay for it like other extracurricular sports and activities. In opposition – it is the school's obligation to provide the prerequisite band class that is offered to AMS 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders. (Currently, MV students who cannot afford private instruction are not able to register for band when they enter the middle school.

Line 63 – Guidance Salaries – Recommend 6-1 to reduce this line by \$7,800.

With additional reductions in the following related line items.

Line # 163 Health Insurance \$2,394

Line # 164 Dental Insurance \$300

Line # 168 and #169 FICA/Medicare \$597

The committee opposes (5-1) the addition of guidance hours. The Committee acknowledges the current full schedule of the Guidance Counselor and the strains it puts on the administration, but in considering the overall needs of the students and other expenses facing the town this year, the counselor hours should remain as is.

Line 136 – Repairs and Maintenance – Recommend 7-0 to reduce this line by \$18,000 – door repair/replacement

The Committee does not oppose the “door project” outlined by Jim Miner but after discussions, with Jim, it was decided that not all the items listed were necessary. The Committee would like to see the doors fixed as needed, but for the money to come from the Maintenance Trust Fund with an approximate balance of \$27,000.

Line #179 – Remodeling Building and Grounds – recommend 7-0 to reduce this line item by \$3,500 – stage lighting.

The committee is in agreement that stage lighting would be a valuable addition to the MPR, but funding for such a project should come from other sources, i.e. PTA, school fundraiser, etc.

Discussion amongst Budget Committee Members, meeting attendees and School Board members followed.

Leo explained for the increase in time for the Physical Education position, and Guidance position, the school board was given detailed presentations on why these positions needed an increase in time. He said they also received a presentation from the Administration on why the addition of a Literacy Coach SAU wide was so important.

Pam Coughlan asked how much better the students would actually be served by the increase in Physical Education time. She said the committee discussed how most of the time in physical education they are just standing in line waiting for their turn rather than running around and exercising. She said by letting them outside for a longer recess time, they would have a better opportunity to run and play.

John Schwope said in an effort to address the new Wellness Policy and improve childhood obesity, the board supports the increase in the request for additional physical education teaching time. He said he sees the increase in physical education time as being a benefit to the students and he sees recess time as an opportunity for kids to just stand around rather than exercise.

Peter King commented on the committee's reduction in maintenance and repairs. Peter said the doors being replaced were interior doors and the current approved warrant is for the exterior of the building. Peter said unless the voters approve a change on the warrant, which is being presented on March 16, 2007, this \$27,000 could not be used.

Betty said she checked with Jim Miner to clarify what doors he was replacing and he said they were interior doors.

Betty said after speaking with Jim, some doors need total replacement and some just need hardware.

Peter King asked Betty to get clarification from Jim Miner so they can all come to an agreement.

A letter was sent to the school board by seven of the Village School paraprofessionals. The letter was requesting the board maintain the current health reimbursement process rather than implementing the single-plan coverage for 2007-2008.

Leo White said he believes in order to recruit new paraprofessionals, they need to offer benefits as done in other districts. Leo said in the long run, we will be better serving the needs of the district by offering the single plan coverage and believes this is the way to go.

Meredith agreed, stating to attract new hires, she believed they should offer the single plan coverage.

Meredith said she was not very optimistic they would be getting many of the computers back they lost due to the burst pipe.

Board members asked if the problem had been fixed.

Meredith said Jim has requested bids on a Glycol system to prevent the pipes from freezing.

Betty said it shouldn't have happened and Jim is aware

of the issues but thinks it's time to get the Glycol system.

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Dr. Jennings asked the board if they wanted her to apply for a waiver from the state due to the loss of a school day caused by the burst pipe.

Board members agreed they want Mary Jennings to write a letter to the Board of Education to request a waiver for the day lost due to the burst pipe.

A motion was made by John Schwope to adjourn the meeting. Howard Brown seconded the motion. All board members voted in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**