

**Mount Ascutney Board
Draft Minutes
September 9, 2019**

Present: Elizabeth Burrows, Amy McMullen, Beth Carter, Nancy Pedrick, Kris Garnjost, Bill Yates, David Baker, Amanda Yates, Ed Connors

Meeting called to order at 6:32 PM.

Additions/Corrections: Language Department Presentation

Public Participation:

Colleen Harrington mentioned received tax bill and was higher due to school merger. She is inquiring about sending her children to Albert Bridge. Amy McMullen mentioned the board has had several conversations on this and your request needs to go to the Windsor School Principal, Mrs. Riley, who will talk to the Albert Bridge Principal, Mrs. Aldrich, and come to an agreement. Dave Baker mentioned the SU board is taking up a policy. Bill Yates feels not there yet. Amy McMullen mentioned for Mount Ascutney would be a conversation that goes to the home principal. There is no policy at this time. This policy will be different from the SU policy as we are one district. Dave Baker mentioned up until now it was extraordinary circumstances and several requests, and none reached that level. Premature to make a residency request unless talked about how this will work. This may happen in the future, but if open up that door could be very chaotic. The Articles of Agreement say by July 2020 the district will have developed a procedure or request. Unless something extraordinary have not approved any requests. Colleen Harrington wants to know how soon this can happen. We are paying a premium for a school my kids cannot attend. Bill Yates feels it would be good to have the conversation with principals as tuitioning your students to a private school and this could add ADM to this school.

Dave Baker mentioned we have not developed criteria but have for why would not approve. Bill Yates mentioned it is important to remember that not talking about two districts. Trying to encourage an argument to pursue the conversation with the principal. Colleen Harrington asked how fair is it to raise the tax rates inevitably and then say kids cannot attend this school. Bill Yates mentioned the increased tax rate was with the ADM and the state funding policy. When merged, two budgets merged, and Windsor's taxes went up. Eventually it will balance out. Dave Baker mentioned at the principal and administrative level have had a few requests, but the rationale has not been strong. This is one rationale we have not accepted. Colleen Harrington asked what if I moved from out of state but residentially want to go to Albert Bridge. Dave Baker mentioned we are not there yet. We need to be sensitive to requests. Merger was an opportunity to sustain a small school. Kris Garnjost mentioned if working off the feeling that do not like one school and want to go to another, could have big number shifts from year to year. Elizabeth Burrows feels this issue should be thought through efficiently and should be started soon.

Announcements and Celebratory Remarks from Board Members:

Amy McMullen mentioned the in-service for new teachers and whole SU was very nice and upbeat. Nancy Pedrick felt it was a wonderful opening and all the parents were here. Was a good start to the year.

Discussion Items:

World Language: Hannah Claire and Margo Brown

We are proposing a learning opportunity to Spain. Windsor homestay for September 2019 is not happening. Our students will stay with families in April and 20 students are interested. The first night will be in a hotel and then homestay. Open to all students currently enrolled in Spanish 3 or students who passed out of the program. Approximate dates are April 13-24. One week is vacation but will still miss some days of classes. Increased time over past trips and will be at Buen Consejo School for two to three days. We want to minimize the cost by cutting tourist excursions and hotel costs. Current plan is about \$1,500 per student. Homestay families are interested in taking students sightseeing, and homestay families are responsible for all costs into these places.

Expectations:

- Passed out of Spanish 2
- Enrolled in Spanish 3 next year
- Good academic standing this year and next; 2.25 and other classes 2.25
- No behavior referrals to the main office
- Parent/guardian permission
- Updated passport by September 2019

Fundraising:

- Byrne Foundation Grants
- Spanish 2 exhibition night, April 3 (donations)
- Little Caesars pizza kits and cookie dough
- Authentic Latin American meal night (money per table or per seat with BGSC or local restaurant)
- Chocolate Bars
- Genevieve's Gifts
- Yankee Candles
- Concessions at sporting events

Elizabeth Burrows asked why Spain. Margo Brown mentioned that have done this before and have a connection with the high school in Spain. Safe, beautiful, and know will be well taken care of. Elizabeth Burrows asked when take them do you teach them this accent. Hannah Claire mentioned we teach them all dialects. Elizabeth Burrows asked if the students have had any problems understanding the language. Hannah Claire mentioned our students are excited to speak the language and do not feel will have much of an issue with understanding. Tiffany Riley mentioned the students still have access to Hannah and Margo at the school each day. Elizabeth Burrows asked how many students are taking Spanish. Hannah mentioned she has about 35 and Margo has about 40. The student interest is at an all-time high. Margo Brown

mentioned the students are very much immersed and going from school to home and always in the care and watchful eye of a family. Amy McMullen asked if looking for approval. Tiffany Riley mentioned anything with an overnight component needs board approval.

Financials - Ed Connors

Object Summary: West Windsor

Revenue: Act 85 came out and tried to take back some of the money anticipated from health savings. Each school had to pay a portion and this is the last year. West Windsor is \$10,000 in the red for revenue.

Expenditures:

Maintenance and Repair over budget due to furnace (\$16,000 in repairs; window shading as went over grant; and Vermont Life did work on door system). Tuition over by \$21,288. Special Education went over budget this year by more than \$600,000. Excess cost is money set aside for students not on an IEP but getting services not included in tuition charged. There is a deficit of \$88,880 or 3.5 percent. This will enter into new Mount Ascutney school district as beginning balance. Negative revenue could take out note with bank and pay off slowly. Windsor and West Windsor will be added together.

Windsor Budget:

Overall other miscellaneous local revenues which is bill back. All staff for maintenance are Windsor employees and the schools pay Windsor back. Tuitions are \$634,000 more than budgeted and Cornish was less. You are \$53,725 over.

Expenditures:

Did not spend \$93,000 that was budgeted in wages. Contracted services over due to furnace. Over \$43,348 in guidance services due to We R Hope as did not rehire a guidance counselor. We R Hope provides clinical services and have two full time members at the school. Elizabeth Burrows asked about mid management supervision. Ed Connors mentioned this is a state category and position defined. Elizabeth Burrows asked why the travel for Windsor is higher. Dave Baker mentioned teachers and guidance counselors travel to conferences. Special Education overage charged back to Windsor was \$236,000. We budgeted 70,000 gallons for heating oil and used 93,000 and per gallon price went way up. There is a \$43,000 deficit.

This leaves a \$4,115 surplus or .05%.

Next year will take the \$88,000 deficit for West Windsor and add the \$4,115 surplus for Windsor and will start with a deficit of about \$85,000.

Dave Baker asked if the board wanted a subgroup of this board for a budget committee. There might be advantages to looking at it a little more. Could look at more general staffing patterns, class sizes. There should be one from each town.

Ed Connors mentioned when built the 2020 budget had a lot of assumptions and the state wants to see cost by building. We need to build a budget that has Albert Bridge and Windsor as before.

Pre-K Options:

Do we decide as a school district to have in school options? Bill Yates mentioned he brought this up as part of a larger discussion. We are trying to find options for our son and school district has a real need for a Pre-K as very few seats. There are a couple models would like to investigate and discussion of grade placement and is it option to set up an actual Pre-K. Windsor has an award-winning Pre-K and is for students with certain needs. Dave Baker mentioned that program is still very limited and can only serve 20 kids. Bill Yates mentioned there was some discussion of possibly moving the 6th grade to Windsor and as now have another building might be space to create a much wider preschool and ideally at one building. Some models offer a daycare option for parents. Program would encourage parents to move into the area. This would be a great conversation. Dave Baker feels the board should have this conversation. Bill Yates feels the daycare piece draws the parents. Having early education services in one building is a specialty and is a selling point.

Portrait of a Graduate:

Dave Baker thanked both principals and community members and school board member, Elizabeth Burrows, who took on for West Windsor. We have a good list of community members. First meeting is at Windsor. Committee is well balanced between staff, community members, business owners, and some students. There are about 70 people. People need to commit to all four meetings. Elizabeth Burrows asked about childcare. Dave Baker mentioned the Principals did not want to take it on and did not feel could take on at one building and not another. Felt was too much of a liability.

Start of School:

Tiffany Riley mentioned the first week went great and smoothest transition have had. Kindergarteners had their first full day today. Grades 7 and 9 have an orientation every year and did again this year. Gets them accustomed to schedules and is a community building activity.

Dave Baker mentioned he was at Albert Bridge the first few days and it was fun. This building has very special staff members and kids and everyone pitched in to make it go smooth.

Solar:

Dave Baker mentioned he felt the proposals were good and Norwich offered a 15% discount, and over 25-year contract is a fair amount. Nancy Pedrick mentioned she felt they were on top of new technology and felt the locality on Juniper Hill was good. Dave Baker mentioned we are partnering with someone. Recommendation is to award the contract with Norwich. Bill Yates liked their willingness to be part of the educational process and take a risk with the school and give higher savings. Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve a net metering agreement with Norwich Solar. Nancy Pedrick moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost. Beth Carter suggested the educational process be in the contract. Motion passed.

Policy: Interdistrict Choice

Kris Garnjost mentioned this is like a choice. Bill Yates likes the fact that added in stay put option.

Spanish Trip:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion to approve the Spanish trip as discussed earlier. Bill Yates moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost. Amy McMullen mentioned if any changes to let the board know and give an update. The board thanked them for their presentation. Motion passed.

Consent Agenda:

Principals Report and minutes. Amy McMullen asked for a motion. Bill Yates moved; seconded by Kris Garnjost; motion passed with changes to the minutes and one abstention.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Bill Yates asked what the basic plan is to have discussions about schools sharing grade levels. The board could have an additional meeting; such as, a retreat. Kris Garnjost asked how do we feel about it and all get on the same page. Dave Baker feels need a philosophical discussion first. Bill Yates asked do we want to expand middle school to 6th grade. Kris Garnjost asked where would we put Pre-K. Bill Yates mentioned we are talking about the next few years. Kris Garnjost feels should be a separate meeting. Bill Yates feels should be late September or early October.

Amy McMullen asked if a couple of people are interested in looking at the budget. Amy McMullen mentioned she would be interested. Dave Baker will reach out to Elizabeth Burrows to see if she would be interested.

Agenda: October 15

Inter-School District Choice Policy
Pre-K Discussion
Students on the Board
Public Access to Windsor School Playground
Possible Presentation

Adjournment:

Amy McMullen asked for a motion. Beth Carter moved; seconded by Nancy Pedrick; motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Tessier, Board Secretary