

ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
REGULAR MEETING  
TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2019 – 6:30 PM  
@ STOCKBRIDGE CAMPUS  
DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order
  - 1.1. Meeting called to order by Carl Groppe at 6:33pm
  - 1.2. In attendance were school board members Carl Groppe, Janie Feinberg, Amy Wildt, Megan Payne, Ethan Bowen, and Jenny Austin; administration Lindy Stetson; SU representation Bruce Labs, Tara Weatherell, and Mary Ellen Simmons; four members of the public; and videotaping by Mason Wade.
  
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
  - 2.1. Ethan – scholarship money in Rochester – added as 8.2
  
3. Public Comment – noted within respective sections
  
4. Consent Agenda
  - 4.1. Approve Minutes of Tuesday, April 2, 2019 (Regular)
  - 4.2. Approve Minutes of Monday, April 8, 2019 (Special)
  - 4.3. Amy made a motion to accept above minutes. Carl seconded. Minutes approved.
  
5. Board Comment
  - 5.1. Megan asked if there are any merger fund grants left that can be used towards merger studies, etc. She noted that she had been asked this by a community member. Bruce commented that there was approximately \$82K left within the SU. Bruce noted that the money has been put the money away for student use, but it has not been decided how it gets divvied out to the various schools in the SU. Carl noted the executive board had asked a prior business manager come up with some sort of system to decide how the money gets divvied out to the various schools. The mechanism to decide how the money gets distributed needs to be established by the full SU board.
  
6. Black River Design presentation
  - 6.1. Polly of Black River Design (BRD) presented an updated status of where they are with development of the facilities assessment study. They have taken a preliminary look at each building within RSUD (2 buildings at Rochester and 1 at Stockbridge) to assess what each has and estimating what the recommended space needs are based on discussions with the administration, through State space needs guidelines, and based on best practices given our student populations).
  - 6.2. Stockbridge campus

- 6.2.1. Space analyses by BRD preliminary results estimate that SCS needs an additional 2,128 square feet (sf) of space, in addition to the existing 7,798 sf.
- 6.3. Rochester campus
  - 6.3.1. More complicated because there are two buildings. Polly noted that a lot of equipment at the Rochester elementary building is at the end of its' useful life.
  - 6.3.2. Rochester elementary building - Preliminary findings by BRD suggest if we use just the elementary school it suggests an addition of 3,500 sf. *[it was not recorded what the existing square footage was for the Rochester buildings]*
  - 6.3.3. Rochester high school used as elementary building – Preliminary findings by BRD suggest that if the high school building is used as the elementary school that no addition is needed, and there is a little bit of extra room. BRD will be looking at what changes would need to be made to the high school building in order to convert into an elementary school use so that they can come up with a recommendation as to which building BRD would recommend as an elementary school facility.
- 6.4. Revit models have been developed for each of the three buildings as there are no current, complete layout plans of any of the buildings. BRD compared existing spaces to estimated space needs and estimated how additional space needs could be placed at both campuses and showed an example placement.
- 6.5. Questions to BRD / Other Discussion
  - 6.5.1. Carl asked if the scenario where the high school was used as an elementary building if this includes conversion within the current high school building to include the kitchen. Polly said that they are showing that the kitchen could be located where the shop and art room is. The cafeteria and gym would still be a multi-use space.
  - 6.5.2. Polly noted there have been no life-threatening code violations identified. There may be ADA code violations.
- 6.6. Additional steps
  - 6.6.1. BRD will be looking at cost comparisons between keeping Rochester elementary versus Rochester elementary moving into the high school.
  - 6.6.2. Completed buildings assessment study expected the end of May.
  - 6.6.3. Administration looking into getting a review of whether there is asbestos in the buildings at the end of June. There are no concerns regarding asbestos. This is just a measure to determine whether it is present in buildings or not.
  - 6.6.4. Lindy noted we could have a committee meeting first (committee that met with BRD at the beginning of their study) and then have BRD come back at a Board meeting to present the report. This was agreed to by the Board.
- 6.7. Public comment
  - 6.7.1. Public comment (Kim Robertson) – why do we need additional space at SCS; we have always made due with what we have? Carl gave background of the study and what was being studied by BRD. Carl noted that this is a Study only and that no decisions are being made as part of the BRD study. The Board had indicated last year that we would take a look at the facilities to help come up with an assessment of the schools and this is what we are currently doing. Kim noted that we used to have higher populations at SCS and made it work. Carl

noted we are not making decisions but instead are looking for information in order to assist with decision making. It was noted that there will be many more discussions to be had regarding the facilities and what happens after the Study. Carl had noted that at one point in SCS's past that there was a major safety violation when art was being taught upstairs and we had to make a change to meet standards. This is a Study only to take a look at existing facilities and get independent input on space utilization.

- 6.7.2. Public comment (Joanne Mills) – does study factor in population decrease. Polly stated that they are considering it but doesn't think it will have a major impact on what the results will be.
- 6.7.3. Amy noted that we will be able to make better informed decisions to make improvements for long-term. Megan noted that this will also give us a baseline.
- 6.7.4. Ethan asked whether this study is making recommendations or just presenting analyses. Carl noted that BRD is showing analyses of all the buildings, looking at best practices, and making note of potential adaptations to meet best practices for student populations of our sizes.

## 7. Reports to the Board

### 7.1. Superintendent's Report

- 7.1.1. Bruce noted that the Town of Sharon is in the process of interviewing for a principal for next year.
- 7.1.2. The SU is through approval of 46 policy adoptions at the SU. There are a couple policies that need finalization, one of which is regarding facility use.
- 7.1.3. The Royalton-Bethel budget revote will be next week. The first budget was passed with a slim margin, and there was low turnout at the first vote meeting.
- 7.1.4. There is a Board chair training coming up, but it is open to any Board member.

### 7.2. Principal's Report

- 7.2.1. Grades 5/6 just got back from Camp Keewaydin.
- 7.2.2. Grade 4 at both campuses got together to go to a ropes course recently.
- 7.2.3. There is a fifth-grade forum organized by an SU wellness committee coming up at Rochester. This is as an opportunity for all 5<sup>th</sup> graders in the SU (157 students total) to get together to participate in wellness related tasks.
- 7.2.4. Standardized testing has been going on at both schools.
- 7.2.5. There will be a fundraiser on May 18<sup>th</sup> at Ted Green Ford where for every test drive the schools get \$20. This will be a fundraiser for both Rochester and Stockbridge, and there will be a joint bake sale by both Rochester and Stockbridge PTOs.

### 7.3. Business Manager's Report - FY20 Draft Budget

- 7.3.1. Bruce gave recognition to Tara for stepping up in learning all that is needed for her role as business manager.
- 7.3.2. Public comment (Joanne) – In the past Stockbridge has had about \$8K-\$10K come from the Board of Trustees of Public Funds (Public Funds), and the Rochester has, in the past, given somewhere in the range of \$40K to the Rochester School. Stockbridge Board of Trustees of Public Funds is giving \$9K this year. Why isn't Rochester contributing? If Rochester's Public Funds doesn't

contribute, why should Stockbridge Public Funds contribute? Amy noted that this year the Rochester Public Funds have not given out monies to any organizations, including none to the Town, this year. At the last Board meeting Barb of the Rochester Public Funds had noted that they decide their funds for the next year in December. Joanne noted she does not think it is right that Stockbridge is giving public funds money but Rochester is not giving an equivalent amount of funds. She is concerned that this could be a slippery slope and worried that funds could be tilted toward one Towns' direction if there is not adequate oversight. Jenny noted that next year we need to approach the Rochester board of trustees earlier in the year, now that we know what their schedule is. Carl noted that the Board did not approach the Stockbridge Public Funds; instead the Stockbridge Trustees approached the Board and said that they were giving \$9K to the school district for FY19-20.

- 7.3.3. Public comment (Joanne) – can excess funds be spent on reducing the Rochester doubt? Carl noted that we had asked a prior business manager to get information to better understand the rate of the bond, how it can be paid, understanding the rate of the loan, and how the loan works. Carl noted that depending on the details of the loan it may or may not be better to hold on to the bond to pay for ongoing expenses over time. Amy noted that Rochester is also paying for the cost of the generator of Stockbridge, and that there are going to be expenses on both sides. Janie commented that there is going to be back and forth as the years go on.
- 7.3.4. Public comment (Kim) – Kim commented that one Town is paying for the debt of another town. Carl noted there are other considerations to consider, such as the grand list numbers for Rochester compared to Stockbridge, which are 60/40.

#### 7.4. Literacy - Janie Feinberg

- 7.4.1. Janie noted that she wants the Board to be a knowledgeable school board as it relates to (1) professional development, and (2) instructional tools. Research is a meta-analysis: it is not “one school” or “one classroom”, it refers to a controlled study to know the before and after results. Janie comments that the last standardized testing indicating 44% at grade level (based on the one, latest standardized testing), we are struggling in student achievement.
- 7.4.2. Janie presented an article by Joyce & Showers titled *Additional Evidence for Integrated and Compensatory Components*. This article discusses the clinical coaching process.
- 7.4.3. Public comment (Leslie Begin) – Leslie asked if SCS now has trained special educators, and noted that the school should be teaching the Wilson program. Bruce noted that one of Deb Matthews goals is to get more teachers teaching the Wilson program. Leslie noted this is a highly effective method.
- 7.4.4. Janie noted that we need professional development (PD), but not all PD is effective. Effective PD is an investment, not an expenditure – where with an investment we see the return. The four training components include: (1) theory and discussion, (2) demonstration in training, (3) practice & feedback in training, and (4) coaching in clinical setting. Janie noted that research shows

that the only time there is success is when there is coaching in clinical setting. She presented findings from a study with two teacher subsets, one with coaching and one without. Teachers with coaching had 12 months of gain whereas other group had 4 months of progress. A second research example included a group of kids at 50<sup>th</sup> percentile and checked where they would be after two years. Average school with average teacher: 50<sup>th</sup> %ile, least effective school/teacher: 3<sup>rd</sup> %ile, most effective school/least effective teacher: 37<sup>th</sup> %ile, most effective school/teacher: 96<sup>th</sup> %ile, least effective school/most effective teacher: 63<sup>rd</sup> %ile. The critical piece here is the quality of the teacher.

- 7.4.5. Mary Ellen had noted that her and Janie have had conversations and will continue to and both agree that reading is a keystone for students' success.
- 7.4.6. Public comment (Joanne) – will the new PD follow this program? Lindy noted that there is someone retiring that will be working for the SU and will also be in Stockbridge part-time with the retirement of Deb Rice.
- 7.4.7. Ethan asked if we could see a coaching plan and how it is going to be implemented, as well as being able to get feedback from teachers to see if this is effective. It was noted that Janie has noted in the past the concern with the P&F program, and now there is we can do at this point regarding the purchase/program, but we need to make sure that it is working successfully. Mary Ellen commented that the F&P program addresses tier 1, but Janie has concerns that our populations have a high number of tier 2 and tier 3 students. Mary Ellen noted there are free online webinars and the SU got a reduced training fee. The teachers will still need to change their practices to react to their students. Bruce noted that we are following a “cookbook” method of another location in Washington state that was in worse shape than SU. Bruce noted this is an incremental process, and we are just getting started.
- 7.4.8. The staff member coming to work at the SU, and in Stockbridge with the retirement of Deb Rice, Amy has prior P&F experience. Mary Ellen noted that the SU has a plan where three times a year there will be progress reports, and additional reporting as needed.
- 7.4.9. Ethan asked if the teachers are enthusiastic about the plan moving forward. Lindy noted that both schools are very enthusiastic.
- 7.4.10. Public comment (Joanne) – Was curriculum purchased for the entire SU? Yes. Joanne asked if the remaining merger grant funds of \$83K can be used towards this initiative? That could be an option. The curriculum material purchase was paid for by federal Medicaid funds. Bruce noted that this is not money that comes out of the budget.
- 7.4.11. Public comment (Joanne) – Now that our school district gets bigger will our standardized testing scores (e.g. SBAC) be big enough to get numbers reported. No one present knows if the scores will be reported per school district or per school. Bruce noted that the State is coming out with a “report card” for schools.
- 7.4.12. Public comment (Kim) – Kim asked what the number of students are for next year. Carl noted that this is one item we need for the school budget book.

7.4.13. Public comment (Joanne) – Joanne asked how field trips are being funded this year. Lindy noted that they are being paid the same for each campus, that the budget includes costs for field trips. The SCS PTO has paid for them in the past at Stockbridge. Jenny noted that this year the SCS PTO has covered primarily individual teacher requests, or, as Lindy noted, individual classroom field trips that were not anticipated in the budget.

## 8. Discussion Items

8.1. Education – see other items

8.2. Scholarship funds / Awards

8.2.1. Ethan commented that he has been asked by the community if there are scholarships available to Rochester students like there has been in the past. Amy noted that in the past at Rochester there would be money given to graduating seniors at graduation. Amy noted that previously the high school teachers decided who got the scholarships. It was noted that now students would need to get the information from the high school that they are attending. Scholarships would be given out at their receiving high school.

8.2.2. Ethan noted that there are existing Rochester scholarship funds and not sure what is being done to get these out. Need an application, description, and send the information to high schools. Bruce suggested to send letters to the parents. Ethan asked who is administering the scholarships? Megan noted that Lisa has a binder with scholarship information. Ethan to contact Lisa to see what she can find regarding scholarships for graduating Rochester students.

## 9. Action Items

9.1. Review and approve 2018 Audit

9.1.1. Amy made a motion to approve the 2018 audit as presented, Jenny seconded. 2018 audit is accepted.

9.2. Final preparations for Annual Meeting

9.2.1. Need to get Grade 7-12 annual tuition grid for next year from SU for both campuses together. Lindy to send to Amy by tomorrow morning.

9.2.2. Cover – Megan to put together a cover. Principals have checked that students' pictures to put on the cover have all been approved by parents.

9.2.3. Jenny gave some hand-written comments on the narrative to Carl.

9.2.4. Mailings – Stockbridge gets stickers to put on the label. Carl commented that a fair number of residents in Stockbridge that get their mail in Bethel, Pittsfield, and other places. Carl will get stickers from Cathy Brown. Amy noted that they have to be mailed from the Rochester Post Office. Megan and Ethan noted that they are available to help put stickers on the books.

9.2.5. Amy noted that last year we ordered 1,050 booklets, and it seemed like we had a lot of extra. Carl suggested to order 1,000 this year. If we see any at the Post Office we can grab to hand out at the annual meeting. Jenny to check with Stockbridge Postmaster to collect extras as she sees them not being taken.

9.2.6. Amy to finalize the budget book.

## 10. Building and Use Policy

- 10.1. The two policies that RSUD amended are now brought up the chain to the SU level. Carl suggested that the SU approve our policies.

## 11. Other

- 11.1. Generator – Lindy stated that only one bid came in for a generator. Lindy asked if we should approach the Town to see if the school is or can be an emergency shelter. No one seems to know for sure if the School is currently considered a warming station or emergency shelter or neither. Rochester has an emergency team. Lindy noted that to be an emergency shelter that there needs to be an emergency team.
- 11.2. Public comment (Mason Wade) – Has an alternate to a generator been considered for Stockbridge. No, it has not been considered, but all agreed it should be looked into. Carl will send information to Lindy regarding a potential contact for an alternate. Lindy noted that when administration met with Black River Design that they had discussed matters of sustainability. The study will have some level of detail looking into energy efficiency, but not as much as one of the other proposals there were received.
- 11.3. Megan suggested that we have a school board calendar. All thought this was a good idea.
- 11.4. Public comment (Mason) – Mason asked what happened to the marquee that used to be in front of Rochester school, and what is going to happen to it? We will talk to Bonnie for a recommendation of where it can be put.

## 12. Executive session

- 12.1. Entered into executive session at 9:10pm
- 12.2. Entered into public session at 9:15pm

## 13. Next Meeting Date

- 13.1. Tuesday, May 28, 2019 @ Stockbridge Campus - Annual Meeting, 6:30pm
- 13.2. Tuesday, June 4, 2019 @ Rochester Campus - Regular Meeting, 6:30pm

## 14. Adjourn

- 14.1. Meeting adjourned 9:15pm

Respectfully submitted,  
Jenny Austin