

ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2020 – 6:30 PM
@ STOCKBRIDGE CAMPUS
MINUTES - APPROVED

1. Call to Order
 - 1.1. Meeting called to order at 6:31 by Carl Groppe. Attendees include administration Bruce Labs, Lindy Stetson, and Bonnie Bourne; school board members Carl Groppe, Ethan Bowen, Amy Wildt, Janie Feinberg, Megan Payne, and Jenny Austin; members of the public Joanne Mills and Robert Gardner; and an Orca Media representative.
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
 - 2.1. One Planet Program – 9.3
 - 2.2. Stockbridge Generator – 9.4
3. Assign Times/Time Keeper – Ethan
4. Public Comment (10 min) – none
5. Consent Agenda
 - 5.1. Approve the minutes of Tuesday, November 5, 2019 (Regular)
 - 5.1.1. November minutes approved at December meeting
 - 5.2. Approve the minutes of Tuesday, December 3, 2019 (Regular)
 - 5.2.1. Amy suggested modifying 10.1.1 in the Dec. 3rd meeting notes to indicate that when we are requesting funds from the Rochester Trustee of Public Funds it is requesting a disbursement of Town funds, as opposed to school funds. Jenny to revise minutes.
 - 5.3 Megan made a motion to approve meeting minutes with the amended December 3rd meeting minutes. Ethan seconded. Motion approved.
6. Board Comment (10 min)
 - 6.1. Ethan commented about a lack of representation at the executive SU meetings. Ethan noted that he is the alternate and would like to know when Carl cannot attend so that he can attend the executive meeting(s). Carl noted that he has been to the meetings that he has been able to attend. He also noted that an alternate can attend any of the meetings.
 - 6.2. Amy noted that at the special board meeting last night after the SU full board meeting, the tuition for our school district was approved at \$16,444, which is a 3%

increase from last year. Amy noted that this is a similar increase as last years increase and is in line with other schools in our SU.

- 6.3. Megan noted that at the meeting last night Tara Weatherell said she anticipates having a first draft of the RSUD FY21 budget to us around January 20. At the December meeting we discussed tentative special meeting(s) on either or both Jan. 13th and/or Jan. 23rd. The budget won't be ready by Jan. 13 for our discussion, and there is now a policy meeting on Jan. 23rd. Further correspondence to plan a special meeting to discuss the first draft of the budget. Lindy recommended having the next meeting in Stockbridge as the following regular meeting will be at Rochester.

7. Reports to the Board (10 min)

7.1. Superintendent

- 7.1.1. There is a new full-time accountant, Rose Hemond, who is a former Town administrator at Royalton. Ethan asked if this is a new or existing position. Bruce noted that the SU had part of the money already budgeted, and another position staff is leaving, bridging the gap in covering the cost.
- 7.1.2. The SU budget passed last night, up 4.6% from last year largely due to budgeting for HRA's. Bruce indicated he didn't believe these were budgeted accurately the year prior. Carl noted that we set what the HRA is and staff can use up to the allotted amounts, but there could potentially be a surplus. Ethan noted that there was little wiggle-room in the SU budget discussed at the full SU budget last night, and that the HRA was one area of wiggle-room. Bruce noted that Tara is very proficient in this area and Bruce and the SU look to her and others with this knowledge for suggestions.
- 7.1.3. The Special Education budget passed, up 9.2% from last year. Bruce noted the dilemma with developing this budget is that there are many unknowns that could come up with what is actually needed here from year to year. The Special Education budget is reassessed every quarter. Ethan asked if there are any areas in the Special Education budget that can be trimmed. Bruce noted that there are a lot of unknowns with coming up with this budget, and we just don't know at the beginning of the year what actual costs will be. The Bethel restorative program has been expanded, and there is currently a waiting list – all of these kids are from within the SU. Janie asked if we can take out of district students. Bruce noted that we can, and we can make money if we were to do this. However, we have already outgrown the original program space. Bruce noted that our Sus restorative program has been successful. Bruce noted that approximately 41% of the kids that have gone into this program have been able to go back to their original classrooms. Ethan thought he had heard that a new space may be needed.

There are two programs for elementary ages in Royalton: one for grades K-2 and one for grades 3-5. Bonnie said that Deb Matthews has looked at the Rochester campus about a year ago in regards to looking at a potential location for the program, and at the time most of the kids were from the other side of the SU. Amy noted that as of around November there were 5 kids in the K-2 classroom, 6 in grades 3-5, and 5 in the 6-8 program. Bruce noted there is a waiting list for the middle school program and that classroom may be expanding.

- 7.1.4. Megan commented that at the full SU board meeting last night she was pleased with the increase in literacy rates so far with the focus on the literacy program. Bruce noted that at the beginning of the year 42% were at grade level (overall) and are now up into the 50s%.

8. Policy Review (15 min)

8.1 D30, Field Trips

- 8.1.1. Lindy suggested switching the order of bullets #2 and #3.

8.2. C32 – Students Eighteen Years-Old or Older

- 8.2.1. No discussion.

8.3. Therapy Dogs

- 8.3.1. There was general discussion regarding this policy. Bonnie noted that when there are animals outside of therapy dogs this can become an issue for a number of reasons. The policy doesn't include what are the criteria for allowing animals. Lindy suggested having stronger language than the reference to having verbal control of the animal being enough. Joanne Mills commented that with families that are allergic that this could be problematic. Jenny noted that the section on Standards and Procedures only talks about submitting requests for a therapy dog, but does not discuss actual standards and procedures.

- 8.4. Carl noted that we will not be able to take action on these policies because the specific policies were not warned on the agenda. Bruce noted that there will be something put in the paper that will warn these and that they will not be approved until such. The plan is to go through approving all of the policies that have been drafted/ revised at once. Amy noted that the SU is trying to have the same policies SU-wide, but that each school district makes tweaks to some of them. There was discussion that various boards may end up having different policies. Bruce noted it is not a problem if there are different policies between school districts. Bonnie noted that once this process of revising/creating policies is done, the school administrators should have a policy book.

9. Discussion Items

9.1. Building Committee Update (20 min)

- 9.1.1. Lindy noted the building committee has come up with a draft document summarizing their work. Lindy noted that the committee is at the point of a stand-still in regards to committee-only work and efforts. The buildings need work and if we continue at status quo we are going to start to have consequences. Lindy and Bonnie suggest that we get moving on community outreach. Amy noted that there were no glaring answers in the report. There are Town-politics and emotional attachments involved, and we need to have community outreach and find out what both Towns want and value. Carl noted that there is not a way to split bonding such that Rochester would pay for improvements at the Rochester campus versus bonding for Stockbridge where Stockbridge would pay for improvements at the Stockbridge campus.
- 9.1.2. Amy suggested getting Town officials involved to see if they have any interests in any of the Rochester facilities space.
- 9.1.3. Rob Gardner noted that this is tremendously complicated, including the processes involved in the committee meetings. Rob Gardner noted that the committee has been looking into costs for options, but warns that these numbers are too conceptual to be accurate numbers to work with. It was noted that Cricket McKusker and Willis Whitaker cautioned that the numbers could be off and would take finances and time to further get to better numbers. Robert noted that he thinks the merger was rushed and there is no easy solution. Joanne noted that at the end of each building committee meeting there was agreement of what was discussed, and at the end of the last meeting we did have numbers. However, there was a preference by some on the committee that the numbers are not ready yet for distribution. Joanne indicated she thought the information didn't come out the way that certain people wanted to get put out to people.
- 9.1.4. Bruce noted that there was a member of the public that had questioned whether the building committee has gone beyond the charge of the committee level. Bonnie noted that there were a couple of times the building committee went back to reconnect with what the charge was of the committee.
- 9.1.5. Bonnie thinks the building committee needs to have one more meeting and then distribute information. Bonnie noted that she does believe we need to get the Rochester kids into just one building, but does not know how to get there. She noted she thinks the committee can't go much further.
- 9.1.6. Carl noted that updates for the Stockbridge campus were looking to be around 1/10 of what it would cost for Rochester updates, and that this is not in line with the alignment of the numbers of kids in the schools (60/40 split).

- 9.1.7. Ethan noted that we need to come up with questions to ask at public meetings. Joanne noted that one question she has is how much can we handle to add on to the budget? She is also concerned that updating buildings which haven't been maintained will cause on Town's facilities to be subsidized by the other Town.
- 9.1.8. Ethan noted that we don't know what the State will allow us to do if we tried to separate (i.e. unmerge).
- 9.1.9. Jenny asked to get a copy of the draft information that the committee has developed so far.
- 9.1.10. Lindy noted one of her biggest concerns is that we don't want to create a decision out of a crisis.
- 9.1.11. Carl suggested three questions are (1) do we still want to be merged, (2) what can we afford – 2 buildings versus 1 building, and (3) do either of the Towns want full school choice.
- 9.1.12. There was discussion of the arts and music at Rochester, and Joanne noted that Rochester speaks a lot about the arts and music, but it is equally important in Stockbridge.
- 9.1.13. Bonnie noted that her and Lindy know of a mediator and that individual is willing to talk to Bonnie and Lindy about the process and meeting discussion ideas.
- 9.1.14. There was further discussions about the numbers that the committee has come up with so far. Carl noted that the numbers in the draft report of the committee is not accurate. Jenny commented that we need to have some sort of numbers to discuss during public outreach, as this will be the first question that the public asks. Joanne requests that we get the numbers from Tara on what the buildings currently cost for upkeep. Amy to compile a spreadsheet to process this information from Tara.
- 9.1.15. Rob Gardner volunteered to write a narrative for the building committee document.
- 9.2. Annual Report Committee Update (15 min)
 - 9.2.1. Ethan noted two directives for this year's annual report: (1) clarity, and (2) informative. We should provide general information to the public that we as a board may be aware of, but that the general public is not aware of. There was general discussion of potential changes to the Annual Report to provide a more user-friendly report for the public. Megan suggested getting a summary of the key SU budget increases from Bruce to include. Ethan asked Lindy and Bonnie for pictures and artwork to include into the report. Ethan noted by February meeting there should be a layout/template for the Report. Ethan asked if there are any laws as to what is needed in the Report. Amy

believes that there are not many restrictions as to what the report looks like as long as certain information is included. Amy has information from a prior annual report cost information.

9.3. One Planet (Joanne McDonnell) (10 min) – tabled

9.4. Stockbridge Generator (10 min)

9.4.1. Lindy noted that Katelynne McKinstry (a local resident) has given her information regarding a generator that is for sale that is an option for RSUD to purchase. The unit is bigger than what we would need and we can get it for \$6,900. The generator has been used for only one season, is 80kW with 12.5 low hours, and has been inspected within the last year. Lindy noted this unit if new would cost \$20K+. Bruce asked if want to have someone inspect it on our behalf, and suggested Jim Shands. Carl will ask Jim Shands if he can take a look at it for us. Bonnie noted that we need to make sure it can fit into our system. Amy asked if our source for installation would install a used generator. Lindy said her and Jim Shands have looked into the grant option for getting a generator but have had no luck going through that process and getting what they need to pursue. Joanne asked if we could request money from the trustees of public funds since it is a community need as well. Amy said the unit we were looking at buying is 48kW, therefore this unit meets our need. Ethan made a motion for Lindy to move forward with purchasing the generator discussed pending confirmation of approved inspection, compatibility with our electrical system, and pending the price of installation. Motion seconded by Amy. Motion approved.

10. Action Items (0 min) – none

11. Public Comment (10 min) – none

12. Other – none

13. Executive Session – Personnel @ 8:28pm.

14. Return to Public Session @ 9:03 pm

15. Future Agenda Items (5 min) – not discussed

16. Next Meeting Date

16.1. Tuesday, February 4, 2020 @ Rochester Campus - Regular Meeting

17. Adjourn @9:05 pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Austin