

ROCHESTER-STOCKBRIDGE UNIFIED DISTRICT
BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
REGULAR MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2020 – 6:30 PM
@ ROCHESTER CAMPUS
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

1. Call to Order
 - 1.1. Meeting called to order at 6:40pm by Carl Groppe. Attendees include administration Bruce Labs, Lindy Stetson, Bonnie Bourne; One Planet coordinator Carrie McDonnell; school board members Carl Groppe, Amy Wildt, Jenny Austin, Ethan Bowen, and Janie Feinberg; members of the public Joanne Mills, Rachel Cunningham, and Mason Wade; and an Orca Media representative.
2. Adjustments to the Agenda
 - 2.1. Executive session, personnel – Added as #13
3. Assign Times/Time Keeper – Ethan Bowen
4. Public Comment (10 min)
 - 4.1. Mason Wade – Prior to the merger Mason had a question regarding how are we going to transport our children, and would like to see alternative fuel options pursued. Bruce noted we are currently under contract with our transportation provider. Bruce asked Butler if they are open to the concept of alternate fuel options. He believes some school districts that use alternate fuel busses own their own busses.
 - 4.2. Mason asked if the school district still owns an electric trimmer. Bonnie noted that we do not own one anymore, but we do own a gasoline trimmer. Bonnie said that it was here when Bonnie came to Rochester.
 - 4.3. Mason appreciates signage currently up (sandwich board sign). Mason mentioned the potential for putting a base in for a future sign. It was noted that the signage board needs to come in at night in the event it snows and also due to concerns regarding potential vandalism. Ethan asked why the “public skating” sign can be on the pole but not school signs. Bonnie noted that there are issues with potential sign locations blocking the view of bus drivers. Bonnie noted that she has received positive feedback from parents regarding the sandwich board sign.
 - 4.4. Mason asked about updating the spaces to reflect the merger, noting the sports banners in the room. Lindy noted that it isn’t an easy task on removing the sports related items in the buildings. Carl noted that there have been brief conversations regarding the items within buildings and interfacing with the Rochester historical society and Selectboard. This will come up when we start having discussions with the public regarding the facilities.
 - 4.5. Rachel Cunningham handed out a flyer regarding a community engagement opportunity in Rochester. She is part of a community based organization called Envision Rochester, which is currently in the running for a planning grant in a program called Vermont’s

Working Communities Challenge. There is a workshop on Feb. 13th that will feed into the grant process. Amy mentioned that there are a number of initiatives that this could encompass. The group initiating this has been working on prioritizing what it is that we need in the community that would make it competitive.

- 4.6. Carrie McDonnell volunteered to help come up with a matrix of various middle and high schools including student population, transportation choices, etc. to assist families with deciding where to send their child to middle/high school. Bonnie noted there will be another middle school fair and a number of these questions can be answered at the fair. However, Bonnie noted that it would be good to have this information readily available to hand out to parents. Carl noted there used to be a spreadsheet in Stockbridge with this information, including guidance counselor, when there are open houses in the Middle Schools in the spring, etc. Carrie asked about whether we could or should designate a number of middle/high schools and have a waiver policy. Lindy noted this can be difficult and that many parents usually choose school direction based on parent travels and/or transportation choices.

5. Consent Agenda (3 min)

- 5.1. Approve the minutes of Monday, January 6, 2020 (Special)
- 5.2. Approve the minutes of Tuesday, January 7, 2020 (Regular)
- 5.3. Motion made by Janie Feinberg to approve the minutes, seconded by Amy Wildt. Motion approved.

6. Board Comment (3 min)

- 6.1. Carl – Brief mention of an article regarding a pre-K effort in western Kentucky where they outfitted a school bus and took it to communities that are underserved by pre-K. The results were that this engaged families, showing the benefits of pre-k attendance to families that might not otherwise send their kids to.
- 6.2. Carl – Legislature is taking up discussion of reinstating a share of the funding for school reconstruction. One of the items that could be tied to that is for promoting a 5.5:1 staff to student ratio (AOE has a formula for determining how exactly this is calculated). It was noted that our ratio is currently around 3:1. Carl had heard that this would likely be a voluntary measure. There is nothing we have to do about this now, but something that we need to consider in the future.
- 6.3. Amy – Stockbridge Town Clerk had emailed about what to put in the Town Report from the School Board. There was brief discussion of include a one-page information sheet to include in the Town Report to let residents know when the annual meeting would be and that the School Report would be sent out separately. Jenny to draft a one-page information sheet and send around to the Board for review. Amy and Jenny to coordinate and get back to the Stockbridge Town Clerk. Mason recommended adding the page to the Rochester Town Report as well.
- 6.4. Amy – Bonnie has started to work on Senior scholarships.

7. Reports to the Board

- 7.1. Superintendent (5 min)

- 7.1.1. Started a search for the SPED director and have narrowed the search down to 5 candidates. The committee reviewing candidates includes special educators, a school psychologist, two principals, one parent, and others.
- 7.1.2. Conversations taking place across the State about literacy improvements. Bruce feels that there are a number of districts that we are ahead of in these initiatives. We may have future opportunities for grants related to this.
- 7.2. Business Manager
 - 7.2.1. Tara handed out a first draft of the FY21 RSUD school budget. This includes 3% increase in salaries and 12.7% increase average in health (health numbers may not be final). Janie asked if that is the highest health cost increase ever. Tara said this is not the highest she has seen. The budget includes 65% funding of the HRA. The recommendation is to have a minimum of 65%; some districts budget for 100% and create a special reserve fund for HRAs. As of December the SU is projecting 40-45% utilization of HRAs. Tara noted there is generally a 1-2 months lag for this expense.
 - 7.2.2. Tuition expenditures to reflect updated tuition rates that have been provided to date.
 - 7.2.3. Administration have put in requests for funding. The draft as presented includes a budget of \$4,657,214. This is an increase of \$248,652 or 5.64% from last year. The per pupil spending is shown as \$22,949.08, which is over the threshold. Tara noted that \$327,397 needs to be either added to the revenue or cut from expenditures to be under the threshold.
 - 7.2.4. Tara noted that conversations still need to be finalized with the auditors – will now be able to get additional information on fund balances so that in Draft 2 we can have complete information.
 - 7.2.5. Added this year that wasn't in budget last year – both Rochester and Stockbridge are recipients of the Green Mountain Forest Grant, \$6,099 in the revenue.
 - 7.2.6. Trustee of Public Funds monies is shown for Stockbridge only. Carl noted there is not a trustee of public funds for education in Rochester, and that in Rochester instead it is allotted to the Town. Amy and Bonnie sat in on a meeting at the Trustee of Public Funds; Amy noted that she was hoping someone would be here tonight.
 - 7.2.7. Tuition – small increase shown from last year.
 - 7.2.8. Rochester/Stockbridge was awarded a Farm to School Grant! Tara noted we are the only district in the SU that was awarded this grant. RSUD was awarded \$20,000. This is the most that any school district was awarded. This grant will be awarded in increments. One of the key pieces is “how are we going to sustain this?”. Lindy discussed potentially building the Stockbridge physical education teacher into working on nutrition planning, using local foods, and educating kids about healthy options. Lindy noted it has to be sustainable so it wouldn't be a one time/one year means. Bonnie noted that one of the first things we need to do is look into what sort of local providers we have so that we can look to maintain a relationship/network. Bonnie noted a subsequent piece is someone at the school educating kids on nutrition programs, and the schools are hoping to reach out to

families in regards to cooking. Bonnie noted that one advantage we have are the gardens at the Stockbridge school that can be utilized over the summer (hopefully together with the summer One Planet programs) and have kids harvest from the gardens in the fall. Ethan asked Bonnie what sort of quantities the schools are using. There are a lot of producers in the area, each alone may not be able to meet the needs of the schools, but together there could be an opportunity to maintain a sustainable relationship together.

7.2.9. Detailed review of the first draft of the budget was not discussed. This is the first time the principals have seen the compiled budget and it is now back in their court to review the budget and send input to Tara for making revisions.

7.3. Principals Report (5 min)

7.3.1. Lead testing – Bonnie and Lindy discussed the lead testing results at the two campuses. Both campuses have points that have come back above the desired threshold. In Stockbridge this includes the automated sinks, and none testing positive are locations of drinking water. Lindy noted the cost to update these is under \$5K. Bonnie noted in Rochester there are 5 above the threshold: 1 drinking fountain in pre-K has been shut down, 1 drinking fountain in HS which isn't used, a hand-washing sink in art, and 2 sinks. Notification has gone home to parents at both campuses. Both locations are working with plumbers for quotes and fixing. Lindy noted that testing included 2 draws, one immediate and one after 30 seconds of the water running. In all cases the water cleared after 30 seconds, indicating the source likely being right at the sink/fountain, as opposed to up-line of the immediate location. Lindy noted that the State pays a certain amount of the updates, and there will be a retesting process.

7.3.2. Ethan asked about the roof in Rochester. Bonnie stated that so far it is doing fine, no major leaks, one minor leak.

7.3.3. Lindy noted that Vizbit has come to review the Stockbridge campus in regards to safety review. They are coming to Rochester next week. They went over safety concerns, recommendations for safety plans, etc. This is not a requirement, but Lindy noted that the advantage of having them come is that there may be grants available to make updates related to any areas of concern.

7.3.4. Amy complimented the grades 4-6 winter concert and thought it was a great setup.

7.4. Draft #1 Budget

7.4.1. See 7.2 above

8. One Planet - Carrie McDonnell (10 min)

8.1. Both sites have seen an increase in enrollment (Stockbridge with 11 kids daily average, Rochester with 19 kids daily average). There is an average of 25 kids daily in the summer program. So far this year in Stockbridge new are archery, improv, and drama. In Rochester new is mountain biking, film making, and robotics. Partnerships include Finding Our Stride, Orange County Sheriff, RASTA, Vermoney, as well as Green Mountain Bike. We have been offering tutoring as well. Free/reduced rates right now (this fluctuates

frequently): 70% Rochester and 40% Stockbridge. Joanne Mills asked if bussing costs are part of the program. Carrie indicated that bussing costs are included in the program costs. Joanne asked if kids from both schools are together during the summer camp program and where do they go. Carrie responded that kids go to Stockbridge. Rochester kids are dropped off at Rochester and bussed to Stockbridge. During the day they have field trips, the location varying each week of camp. The bussing is in the One Planet budget, not the general school budget.

9. Policy Review – tabled

10. Discussion Items

10.1. Annual Report Update (5 min)

10.1.1. Ethan – There is a difference in cost if we do color copies. Ethan has gotten quotes for what it would cost from Spaulding. Ethan noted that we are looking to have color headings, more informative sections, more school information, more graphics, etc. If reports are in color they will be more costly to produce. Jenny noted we could also print in b/w but have color copies available online. Right now Ethan and Jenny are working on a template of the report. Joanne asked if we can have some pages that are in color, with the rest in black and white. We can also look into whether there is a cheaper way to have it bound. Ethan asked Bonnie and Lindy about getting pictures. It was also suggested that the Board could send out a postcard in advance to have folks let us know if they want a report mailed to them.

10.2. Facility's projects (5 min) – table to next meeting

10.3. Building Committee Update (10 min)

10.3.1. Carl – currently working on pulling together information to pass along. The committee to have one more meeting to discuss. There have been multiple drafts started by committee members. Joanne noted that at one of the committee meetings there was a quorum and agreement on one of the drafts, but that due to committee members that were not present, the process took a step back as those members did not agree with what was in the document that the others had agreed on. Carl and Amy disagreed with this. Ethan suggested, and Jenny seconded, that the committee send around all the drafts to the Board so that the Board can see what was discussed.

10.4. Community Engagement Update (10 min)

10.4.1. Lindy has met with a meeting facilitator who is retired. This individual has been through several public input process. She has given suggestions to Lindy for a potential moderator, and also gave pointers on what to do and not do. Lindy noted that this individual noted that she recommended having more than one public meeting. She suggesting starting out discussing the “vision”, and then add dollar amounts (building committee / report will help). Joanne noted people are going to want to know the big-picture dollar numbers first. Bonnie – maybe administration and one or two board member meets with the facilitators. Ethan

volunteered to help meet with Bonnie and Lindy and interviewees.

11. Action Items – none

12. Public Comment (5 min)

12.1. Rachel Cunningham – Is the next meeting public and is the next building committee meeting public. Yes. Carl will let her know via email when the next building committee meeting is.

13. Executive Session – personnel @ 8:50 pm

Return to regular meeting @ 9:08 pm

Janie is resigning as the alternate member of the SU school board, and will be staying on the Rochester – Stockbridge School District Board. Ethan will be the alternate member.

14. Other

14.1. Ethan noted that he doesn't know if he can be the alternate for Carl to the negotiations meetings. Carl to update Ethan after the next negotiations meeting. Bruce noted that at this time it is "taking what is on the table" and moving forward with it.

14.2. Retreat – looking at March for a doodle poll. Jenny to send out a new Doodle Poll.

15. Future Agenda Items – not discussed

16. Next Meeting Date

16.1. Tuesday, March 3, 2020 @ Stockbridge Campus - Regular Meeting

17. Adjourn @ 9:13pm

Respectfully submitted,
Jenny Austin