

**WINOOSKI BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES
REGULAR MEETING
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 8, 2015**

MINUTES

Board members present: Michael Decarreau-President, Tori Cleiland, Julian Portilla, Mohamed Abdi, Student Representatives: Rainbow Chen and Ledania Taylor

Board members absent: Jen Corrigan

Others Present: Sean McMannon-Superintendent, Jacie Knapp-Classroom Teacher, David Solomon-Policeman, Ron Jackson-Policeman, Mary O'Rourke-JFK Principal, Robert E. Fletcher Jr. -Lawyer, Joseph S. McLean-Lawyer, Lois Thompson-Classroom Teacher, Nan Johnson-Classroom Teacher, Jamie Willoughby - Classroom Teacher, Regan Charron-Classroom Teacher, see the sign in sheet for additional names.

1. Meeting called to order at 6:37 pm followed by the National Anthem sung by three students and Mindfulness with a student.

2. **Agenda Review and Adjustments:**

Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Descriptions

•Board Develop Open Meeting

Moved under Public Comments.

3. **Focus on Learning:** Project Based Learning – Mary O'Rourke, Elementary Principal opened the discussion on Project Based Learning. Four 1st grade students presented positive feedback from their experience working as a group. Two students from the 5th Grade presented their experience working as a group on Revolutionary War. I-pads were used to get content of the war. Students were given roles and how they wanted to present. They broke into groups and discussed living during that period. Individual research was acquired on whether it was better to be a Rebel or a Loyalist. Many team-building activities took place. They helped each other by developing more specific questions on each role. At the end ideas were shared on what they learned about the Revolutionary War. Julian Portilla asked the students what they liked about this project. Colby thought it was fun making the posters. Tori Cleiland asked the 1st graders if they saw it differently after speaking to an expert. How did doing that kind of project make it more interesting? Sean asked what they learn from how STARS were used. Julian Portilla asked how they liked working as a team? One of the students said it was hard at first because they all wanted different things. They then had to decide to agree on something. Ivy said she liked working on a team and learned how to share. Michael Decarreau asked the students that worked on the Revolutionary War how they felt it would have been different with a teacher teaching it. The students thought the project was more exciting with more choices. One student said it was more productive by taking different roles and learning from each other. Rainbow Chen asked what the students thought of these new things happening in their school? The response was that it was pretty tough doing the research but easier to concentrate in a smaller group. Michael Decarreau asked how they saw their new roles? The teachers agreed it was hard to let go and not be the driver. The teachers agreed it was amazing to see the end results including the ownership and excitement of the students. The teachers agreed there was a lot of problem. The team building with the students and students getting to know each other at the beginning of the school year was productive. Tori Cleiland asked if this type of project reached more learners. The teachers felt that after watching the interviews with an expert, it was neat who took the lead and how they took turns and problem solving. The sharing of each other's talents and helping each other out was beneficial. The discussion concluded that the project was successful but took longer than anticipated. Michael Decarreau thanked the teachers for stepping out of their comfort zone and stated, "There is no failure, only learning"! One of the parents of a participating student said he was very excited about the project and this was probably the most talked about project he has ever worked on. Michael Decarreau then thanked the students for singing, mindfulness and their presentations.

4. **Public Comments:**

Items moved up from the original agenda:

Ron Jackson, a Winooski Police Officer, presented David Solomon as the new School Resource Officer (SRO). David gave an overview of himself and that he has been a Resource Officer in another district in the past. He is looking forward to his new position as SRO and also getting into the classroom. He has family in Winooski and said that "The school is the heart of the community".

Open Meeting Law moved from 6B: Stitzel, Page and Fletcher representatives, Robert Fletcher (Bob) and Joseph McLean (Joe) spoke regarding basic concepts and areas of the law that give rise to questions through electronic means of communication and executive sessions. Joe will speak on electronics. Bob will speak about executive sessions.

In the discussion with Bob he said that the Open Meeting Law provides a general right for the public to attend the meeting and the meetings are open to the public at all times. What is a meeting? Section 310 – Defines a meeting as a quorum of the board. The statute indicates “What is not a Meeting”. The statute does not mean a meeting is an e-mail, phone call, etc. A meeting does not occur when you are dealing with routine scheduling matters. Quasi-Judicial Proceeding – A case in which the legal rights of one or more persons is adjudicated. Situations when you are acting as a judicial capacity you are not subject to the Open Meeting Law. The deliberations of the public body are also exempt from open meeting law requirements. Deliberation and Executive Session – Deliberation of a public body – executive session is an exception to the Open Meeting Law. When you are in executive session you are not inviting in the public, the public is excluded. Michael – Is there any case where a meeting would be open during deliberations? An employee discipline can be open but not a student discipline case. A staff member has the right to ask for a public meeting if that person requests it. You take the evidence, cross examination, documentary evidence and written decision is then issued after the hearing is closed. Be mindful of what you say if you meet publicly. Deliberating privately protects you. Sean asked for clarification of executive session and Quasi-Judicial proceedings. Bob – adjourn the meeting and clear the room of press and public, then you can sit and deliberate. Remember to close all of the doors. Sean asked if the board deliberates that night and do they need to take action? Does that need to be done at another meeting? Bob and Joe answered that a written decision can be decided after a vote is taken. You do not need to have a public meeting to adopt that record. Bob said that a student discipline matter needs two decisions - One that doesn't identify the student and another one that has a detailed description of the facts, findings and decision that will be provided to the parent/guardians. One needs to be in a public document without a student name. Julian asked if it is the board members responsibility to decide if it is public or not. Bob said that a student matter would be in executive session. Joe spoke about what is and what is not a meeting? Recently amended are statutes regarding e-mails, phone, etc. The Statutes make allowances for day to day matters. Urban meeting law about one year ago dictated that e-mail and conduct by electronics means was or was not permissible. Since that time the Legislature has amended that in accordance with open meeting law that electronic means is allowed. Requirements include one or more members of the board may participate electronically with voting having to be a roll call only. The meeting notice must be provided 24 hours prior to the meeting. Post notice of the meeting with public announcement of a physical location. The statute provides that there can be a lawful meeting as long as one staff or member of the public body is present. Bob participated in a city council meeting with a member that Skyped. If you maintain a website, there are now statutory requirements that an agenda and minutes have to be on the website within five days at least in draft form. The use of e-mail communication still has open questions. There is limited guidance in Vermont. Courts look with disfavor. The law defines a meeting as a gathering of a quorum. Serial e-mails could constitute a gathering of a quorum. Be mindful of that. Julian asked if an e-mail could be sent on a one to one basis with other board members? Joe's thoughts were that this situation can be iffy due to not knowing where a court could find that there was some intent to evade the requirements. Michael asked if he receives information from Sean, is it all right to blind copy everyone with no expectations of any communication. Joe did say that distributing materials is fine. Bob spoke about executive session, which is the non-public portion of a public meeting. Executive session is an opportunity to exclude the public and relieve members of taking minutes. A topic is anything that puts an individual or district at a disadvantage from premature knowledge. This could include confidential communications from an attorney, contracts and negotiations, grievances' (not tax-open session), a lawsuit that is going to be filed, discussion of real estate purchase or lease can be an executive session. Only what is in the motion for discussion can be discussed in that executive session. Any action has to be taken once out of executive session. Joe then said that the public is now invited to hear any motion of the results of executive session. Also when entering executive session anyone who is not a member of the board has to be invited through a motion. It could be the superintendent, legal counsel, etc. The other horror story to be mindful of is that members are presenting the administration's case – if the administration carries that weight – that individual should not be invited into executive session. Think about it early on if there needs to be separate legal counsel. You would not want Sean to present the discipline matter and then ask Sean to sit with the judges. Bob – It is not fatal, but close.

5. **Consent Agenda:**

- a) Minutes of Meetings: March 11, 2015
- b) Policy Title: 2.3 Financial Condition and Activities
 - Approval of Bills
 - Quarterly Financial Management Report
- c) Policy Title: 2.7 Compensation and Benefits
 - Approve Support Staff/IA Contract Recommendations
 - Approve Contract Recommendation:
 - Jennifer Teal, Middle/High School Reading Specialist, 2015/16 (1.0 FTE)
 - Kari Maughan, Middle/High School Reading Specialist, 2015/16 (1.0 FTE)
 - Andrea Thibodeau, Middle School Special Educator, 2015/16 (1.0 FTE)
 - Elizabeth Hoffman, ELL Teacher, 2015/16 (1.0 FTE)
- d) Policy Title 2.8 Communication and Support to the Board
 - Superintendent Report
 - Parent for Change Update
- e) Policy Title: 4.2.2 Board Job Description

- Adopt Policy #4117, Hazing
- Adopt Policy #8311, Board Member Conflict of Interest

Motion was made by Julian Portilla to accept the Consent Agenda as presented with a second by Tori Cleiland. Michael asked if there is any other discussion. Tori asked if the Superintendent report was included. She was very pleased with the content of the report. Michael asked if there are less substitutes being used. He felt that it is indicator that the climate is good and people are happier to be here. Sean felt this is an indicator that the approach of wellness is working. Tori asked if using a paraprofessional would change that data. All present in favor.

6. Governance Processes (Policy Section IV):

- a) Policy Title: 4.1.b Governing Style: Encouragement of a Diversity of Views
- Student Report to the Board
Rainbow reported that the PTO Fun Fair happened on March 20th. JFK community reads featured the Mayor reading Disney books and students dressing in Disney character. The librarians are inviting students to the library to help with early development. Ledania said that K-2 graders are working together. There will be a Japanese culture gathering in the cafeteria. New England Conference is being held in Connecticut. On Sunday there was an Aspirations Day. On March 14th four students participated in a Curling event through the Howard Center Rainbow participated in a Pittsfield Field Trip on March 28th to learn what they have learned through Partnership for Change. Drivers Education has started and it is very early in the morning. Parent Teacher Conferences are tomorrow and Friday. Auditions are now over for the Talent Show. The Boston trip of 30 students is next week. Groups of students will participate in events that you would not normally go on. They will go on the Freedom Trail and watch the Celtics. Ledania informed the board members that Rainbow has been asked to apply for a student seat on the State Board of Education. Students have a break in two weeks. Winooski has a student representative participating in the All-state Music Festival in Middlebury on May 9th. The last Pops Concert is May 16th. She also gave an update on spring sports.
- b) Policy Title: 4.2 Board Job Descriptions
- Board Develop Open Meeting - Moved under Public Comments
- c) Policy Title: 4.2.2 Create Written Governing Policies
- Discussion - 1st Reading, Policy #_____, Public Comments – Is not required. Michael asked Sean if there are any models out there. Any changes or adjustments – Sean added at the bottom of page 21 – Change to procedure.
 - Discussion – 1st Reading, Policy #_____, Graduation Requirements – Sean said there should be a Board Policy on Graduation requirements. There doesn't have to be drastic changes.
 - Discussion - 1st Reading, Policy #5110, Attendance – Michael asked what the distinction between local and state policy is. He said his question was more procedure on the Kindergarten age. He likes the local version. Sean recommended in Paragraph 3 – Combine those two.
 - Discussion - 1st Reading, Policy #6160, Educational Support System – Sean said up front this requires a lot of work. Recommends keeping this because it is helpful at a building level to have something like this. Procedures need to be updated. Need to be electronic and all parties need to know how to utilize the information. Keeping the definitions is helpful. Move the statement up and striking the first statement. Michael struggled to understand the concept of this policy. Sean explained that if a teacher is struggling where do they go for support? A team of experts is set up to work with this teacher.
- d) Policy Title: 4.2.4 Advocate for Legislative Change
- Legislative Update – Discussion - They were told they had to stay in Montpelier to work this evening. The discussion involved teachers striking.
- e) Policy Title: 4.5 Agenda Planning
- Board Goals Update -
 - Set Retreat Date - Saturday, August 15, 2015, 8:00 am-1:00 pm – Tori cannot make the August 15th retreat date. It was decided to have the retreat on Saturday, August 8, 2015 from 8:00 am – 1:00 pm. Michael will check with Jen to see if this date works for her. Sean said May 16th is being proposed to meet with Burlington School District. Mohamed said he cannot make this date. Julian suggested space could be available at Champlain College after May 15th.

7. Executive Limitations (Policy Section II):

- a) Policy Title: 2.4 Financial Planning and Budgeting
- Superintendent Monitoring Report – Discussion included the 8th report. Michael suggested an overriding statement of the policy itself, to include a multi-year plan? By not having a multi-year plan is this policy doing what it is supposed to do? Can we mean what we say? Sean made some corrections to the wording.

8. Board-Management Delegation (Policy Section III):

- a) Policy Title: 3.1 Unity of Control
- Discussion included wanting the evidence that says it is actually being done.

9. Community Engagement (Policy 4.2.1):

Recent community activities by board members included the Winooski Partnership that Michael and Julian attended. Jess Bridges gave some good ideas on how to communicate what great things are happening in the Winooski School System. Tori expressed her disappointment with the information she found on the school system on the greatschools.org website and that the website needs to be updated with new information. Julian will attend an Opiate meeting at the O'Brian Community Center on Wednesday, April 15th. Discussion will include how Rutland has worked on this issue, action projects etc.

10. Next Agenda:

11. Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- Parent/Teacher Conferences – Thursday, April 10th, and Friday, April 11th.
- Spring Recess will be April 20th-24th.
- VSBA Workshop @ Winooski on April 25th.
- The next regular Board Meeting is May 13th.

12. Motion by Julian Portilla to enter Executive Session at 9:32 pm to discuss the Superintendent's contract with a second by Tori Cleiland. All present in favor.

13. Possible Action on Executive Session: Executive Session exited at 10:00 pm. Motion to have the Board Chair conclude negotiations with the Superintendent regarding his new contract, by Tori Cleiland, with a second by Julian Portilla. All present in favor.

14. Motion to adjourn at 10:02 pm by Julian Portilla, with a second by Mohamed Abdi. All present in favor.

Respectfully Submitted:

Brenda Steady
Board Recorder