

**Waitsfield Elementary Board of School Directors
January 18, 2016 Meeting Minutes
7 pm, Waitsfield School Library**

Attending: Eve Frankel, Jonathon Goldhammer, Barclay Rappeport, Christine Sullivan, Helen Kellogg

WES & WWSU Staff: Kaiya Korb, Brigid Scheffert (via phone)

CALL TO ORDER:

Eve Frankel called the meeting to order at 7:05.

DISCUSSION:

Audience and Written communication: none submitted

Educational Legislation & Political Activity Update: Brigid highlighted the affordable growth cap being discussed in Montpelier. At the end of last week, the state announced it would be recalculating the spending cap due to misinterpretation. Waitsfield should expect relatively little impact from this change; it is unclear what other changes the legislature might make in changing or repealing the growth cap. Locally, some communities have brought up withholding payment of taxes for education funding and/or privatization of schools. Brigid notes that holding back taxes is illegal and would lead to the withholding of state and federal reimbursement, likely resulting in significant costs to a town. It is her understanding that it is no longer an option to turn a private school into an independent school. However, it is an option for a town to close its public school and allow a private school to open. In such a scenario, families in that town would have the option to have their child attend any school (just as families in Granville, where there is no school) can elect, including either the private school or any other school. Townspeople would be responsible for paying the costs of tuition to those schools; the town loses the ability to vote on budgets that influence tuition rates. Additionally, state and federal monies are generally not available to private schools.

Board Member applications update: Kaiya shared that Jeremy Gulley will be submitting a petition to run to fill Helen Kellogg's seat.

Review Internal Financial Controls: The board reviewed and responded to a questionnaire of financial controls. The document comes from the state auditor and is an annual process that confirms our financial processes are appropriately managed.

ACTION: Barclay Rappeport made a motion to authorize the board chair to sign, including verification of, the Financial Management Questionnaire. Christine Sullivan seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Approve FY 2017 Budget: Kaiya presented two budget options - one at -5.2% (A) and the other at -7.1%(B) in spending. Our equalized pupil count is down 6.4%. We are at 127.32 equalized pupils.. Last year's cost per pupil was \$15,075. This year we are looking at \$15,859(option A) or \$15,493(option B). Both of these spending per equalized pupil rates are over the spending cap threshold. The \$46.6K reduction in option B would eliminate the contingency line, reduce the maintenance budget, and reduce the technology equipment budget. These would equate to a 4.5% estimated actual homestead tax rate to meet Waitsfield Elementary's costs. Harwood's budget will be voted on Wednesday. We expect the combined tax rate for Waitsfield Elementary and Harwood to be 4.3%. Kaiya noted that electing to make the additional \$46,600 in reductions should be seen as delaying spending that will need to occur in the near future. If consolidation of boards is not approved, Waitsfield School will face addressing these costs next year when meeting the spending threshold will likely be even more challenging. If board consolidation is approved, the law removes the spending threshold penalty.

Eve Frankel made a motion to approve the proposed budget B in the amount of \$2,259,942 with full support for the Act 46 Board Consolidation. Christine Sullivan seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Approve Annual Meeting Warning: Helen Kellogg made a motion to approve the school district warning as presented with the school budget above (\$2,259,942 and an equalized per pupil cost of \$15,493). Eve Frankel seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Establish 2016-17 Tuition Rate: The recommended tuition rate is \$15,600, as calculated by the state. Jonathon Goldhammer made a motion to approve the FY17 annual tuition rate of \$15,600. Barclay Rappeport seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Approve Board Order: Jonathon made a motion to confirm the approval of voucher 1087 - \$4,122.14. Barclay Rappeport seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Eve Frankel made a motion to approve the board order voucher 1094 for \$35,658.48. Jonathon Goldhammer seconded and the motion was unanimously approved.

Approve December 21, 2015 meeting minutes: Eve Frankel made a motion to approve the minutes from December 21, 2015. Barclay Rappeport seconded and the motion was approved. Helen Kellogg abstained as she was not present for the meeting.

REPORTS

Principal's Reports: The winter program has begun thanks to the arrival of the snow and has been successful. This also allows for professional development for the staff that stay behind. The staff are gearing up for SBAC. Keith Puffer has updated all computers to enable the testing process; these assessments will start in March. The food service report was shared out recently. Meals are down from last year, driven by fewer students. The cost of the program is down as well, however, due to staffing changes. Kaiya recommends holding the budget the same.

Waitsfield consumes roughly the same number of meals as Fayston. The actual cost per meal is \$4.04, which is slightly higher than the cost assumed at the beginning of the year. Brigid noted that merging might help spread the fixed cost of the lunch program. Finally, the film 'Most Likely to Succeed', was shown on Thursday. The film is part of an initiative to broadly engage community members in considering their vision and thoughts about education today. The next step of this process is a series of 4 consecutive discussion groups that will occur on Mondays March 7 - 28, 6 p.m., at Harwood. These discussion groups are open to the public, although individuals must commit to attending all four, as the topics build upon one another.

Washington West Representative Report: The full WWSU board meeting was held recently with a focus on Act 46. Eve has one more meeting as the WWSU chair and Waitsfield rep. We will need another candidate to fill that role. Christine Sullivan is currently serving on the Act 46. representative. These roles will need to be revisited in the reorganization of the board after the board reorganizes in March. Eve encourages the Waitsfield Board to talk about our communication plan around Act 46 and to be explicit about the current board's support of school board consolidation.

Act 46 Study Group Report: The first draft of articles of agreement are completed. The second draft will be finalized in February, with legal consultation to address questions that have been raised. Story cards, capturing the key details/messages for each community are being crafted. Brigid laid out a schedule of meetings and forums to engage and prepare voters for the Act 46 vote. Kaiya will include some description of the consolidation discussion in the town report. Christine suggested that we hand out information at the town meeting.

Superintendent's Report: Brigid is involved in the articles, working on the legal questions with Act 46 and working on the story cards.

Executive Session - none needed.

ADJOURNMENT

Eve made a motion to adjourn at 8:46 pm. Barclay Rappeport seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Helen Kellogg
Secretary & Clerk