

**RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS REGULAR MEETING OF  
THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS AND RETREAT**

**February 12, 2019 - Amended**

**School Board Members Present:**

Dick Courcelle  
Rob Kurchena  
Michael Blow  
Hurley Cavacas  
Dena Goldberg  
Kam Johnston  
Alison Notte  
Matthew Olewnik  
Joanne Pencak  
Charlene Seward  
Erin Shimp

**Also Present:**

CFO Peter Amons  
Marie Gilmond, Facilitator

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

**CALL TO  
ORDER**

It was noted that all Commissioners are in attendance.

Motion by Cavacas/Seward to accept the updated voting ballot language as follows:

**MOTION:  
UPDATED  
VOTING  
BALLOT  
LANGUAGE**

*Shall the voters of Rutland City School District approve the school board to expend \$54,779,194 which is the amount the school board determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$15,240 per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 3.5% higher than spending for the current year.*

Amons explained that the software changes made by the vendor for the Infinite Campus system introduced an error which in certain circumstances dropped student counts. The error, found by the school system registrar, resulted in more children being counted and included in the cost per pupil formula.

**BOARD  
RETREAT**

The motion passed unanimously.

Dick Courcelle introduced Marie Gilmond who would act as facilitator that evening. He also informed that the agenda topics for the evening would not include the last item of AOE Integrated Field Review and Performance Excellence Initiative (PEI).

Dick Courcelle then explained the key roles of school boards in Vermont and discussed micro-managing and “macro-managing”. He further stated the history of the mission statement and the PEI process. He offered that he would not moderate the discussion going forward as typically conducted during board meetings and that people should offer ideas and opinions as they see fit.

Marie Gilmond then invited participants to comment on what they considered their roles as board members to be. Comments included:

- Being out in the community listening to citizens
- Would like Board to contribute to academic innovation

- Would like Board to develop tool to oversee Superintendent to know and to achieve his goals
- PEI work needs shoring up and closer ties to school system performance. Administration reports need to be more closely tied to PEI
- More monitoring and enforcement of goals are needed
- PEI needs to be systematized
- Board has not been getting aspirational direction or measureable outcomes – management's job
- PEI work was useful in searching for the new superintendent
- Board should not be a rubber stamp
- Some people feel they cannot speak freely at meetings. TV recording might contribute to that
- Board members often ask questions that they feel audience would want to know
- TV inhibits cross-examination
- Meetings a couple times per year without TV (like this evening) would be desirable
- Board needs a legislative component. Maybe a method of communicating with other boards

Marie Gilmond then asked the group to comment on how the board might contribute more to the district. These comments were offered:

- Committee work is valuable. Building, staff relations, policy
- Board should help control costs
- Board can try to get the public more interested in school system
- Board can develop a meaningful tool to evaluate superintendent
- Board should try and find out what people at building level are thinking and what is happening in
- Schools. Engage employees. What are their days like?
- Collect anonymous information from employees through surveys.
- Undertake exit interviews with key employees. Possibly use HR Manager for that purpose
- Figure out ways to better communicate with the public
- Give more direction to administration on presentations and agendas at meetings
- Building leaders should speak more at meetings
- Same meeting reports year after year should not be shown; more year over year metrics
- Introduce new items for agenda topics. Presentations are redundant. Add more new information
- New format for School Improvement Plans was well received
- Member cited her during-the-day attendance at a School Improvement meeting as very useful

Marie Gilmond asked the group to comment on what they see as challenges and opportunities or suggestions in the 3-5 years ahead. These comments were offered:

- There will be more budget financial pressures
- Declining population
- Maybe have board meetings out in the schools at times
- Evaluate any churn of administrators/exit interviews
- Develop more student voice in the future
- Consider closer tie-in with the municipality for growth
- Board should exercise more muscle over the superintendent and administration
- Board needs to outline what goals and outcomes they want from superintendent and administration

Marie Gilmond asked the group to comment on what they saw as the next steps. These comments were offered:

**BOARD  
RETREAT  
(CONT.)**

- Collect and set expectations for the superintendent position
- Establish tool for evaluation of superintendent's performance
- Provide more specific onboard training of new board members
- PEI is large and unwieldy; tune it up to be more useable

Motion by Cavacas/Kurchena to adjourn at 8:00 pm.

**ADJOURN**

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,  
Peter Amons, CFO