

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

February 12, 2019

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” vs. “macro” managing for boards. 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

- Need to develop a performance assessment tool for the Board's evaluation of the Superintendent
- PEI work needs shoring up with 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. It became too wieldy with too many components. It needs to be simplified
- Board has not been getting consistent concrete organizational direction or measureable outcomes – that is management's job
- PEI work was useful in searching for the new superintendent
- Board should not be a rubber stamp for the administration
- Some board members feel they are not comfortable speaking freely at meetings that are televised
- Board members often ask questions that they feel audience would want to know
- Meetings a couple times per year in a retreat format (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, without only relying on the administration solely
- Schools. Engage employees. What are their days like?
- Collect anonymous information from employees through surveys.
- Undertake exit interviews with key employees (i.e. directors, principals). 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
- School Improvement Plans need to be more specific and explain changes
- 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 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.

**BOARD
RETREAT
(CONT.)**

- Evaluate the full results of the employee engagement survey and review the administration's plans for improvement
- Collect and set expectations for the superintendent position
- Establish tool for evaluation of superintendent's performance, and establish expectations
- Provide more specific onboard training of new board members
- PEI is large and unwieldy; tune it up to be more useable

ADJOURN

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

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Peter Amons, CFO