

RUTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

February 9, 2021

School Board Members Present:

Alison Notte, President
Joanne Pencak, Clerk (6:34 pm)
Brittany Cavacas
Hurley Cavacas, Jr.
Ann Dages
Dena Goldberg
Kevin Kiefaber
Matthew Olewnik
Charlene Seward (7:15 pm)
Erin Shimp
Cathy Solsaa
Hannah Solimano, Student Representative
Isabella LaFemina, Student Representative

Also Present:

Superintendent Bill Olsen
Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss
Director of Finance Ted Plemenos
Director of Technology Patricia Aigner
Kerry Coarse
Susanne Engels
Loren Pepe
Pam Reed
Glenn Scott

President Notte called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Chair Notte noted all commissioners are in attendance except for Commissioners Pencak (6:34 pm) and Seward (7:15 pm.)

**CALL TO
ODER**

Motion by Cavacas, Hurley/Kiefaber to approve the agenda.

**MOTION:
AGENDA**

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Consent Agenda – Motion by Cavacas/Hurley/Kiefaber to approve the consent agenda as written which includes:

**MOTION:
CONSENT
AGENDA**

A. Minutes of Previous Meetings

1. Regular Board Meeting – 1/12/2021
2. Building Committee Meeting – 1/26/2021
3. Policy Committee Meeting – 1/26/2021

B. Personnel Memo #618 (Attached)

Motion passed unanimously by all those in attendance.

Communication – Public Input – None.

**COMMUNICA-
ION**

School Program Update – Student Representatives’ Report – RIS is celebrating Kindness/PBIS theme and celebrating School Spirit with an activity each day. A reading challenge is taking place for all students this month culminating on Dr. Seuss’ birthday. RIS is partnering with the Vermont Food Bank to provide a food pantry in the building. Northeast and Northwest students are making handmade valentines for downtown storefronts. Northwest students worked to earn a “Silly Hat and Hair Day” combined with a sledding party as part of a PBIS celebration. Northeast has been learning about winter animals, cooperation, hibernation and snow. Both Northeast and Northwest are celebrating their learning with a Winter Carnival this week. RMS Youth Council has begun with eight dedicated students who will work to identify grants for innovative school projects. The group will work with councils across the Sate and is sponsored by the Vermont Youth Project. A group of teachers is working to develop modifications to benchmark assessments and make changes to Tier 1 and Tier 2 practices. February Fun is planned for Thursday and Friday and will include indoor and outdoor activities for both in person and remote students. RMS will attempt to schedule a winter carnival while following COVID 19 Guidelines. RHS participated in the first Virtual State Speech Championship. Congratulations to Abed Alawi for placing first in

**SCHOOL
PROGRAM
UPDATE –
STUDENT
REPS’
REPORT**

Impromptu, John Cotter for placing second in extemporaneous and Ben Honsinger for placing second in the radio division. Three sports teams have been quarantined following a positive COVID 19 case. State guidelines are being followed. Congratulations to Hannah Solimano and Joe Anderson on receiving the 2021 School Athlete Award. Congratulations to John Cotter, Alicia Caputo and Giovanni Falco on receiving the Presidential Scholar Awards and to Brady Geisler for his success audition for the All Eastern Jazz Ensemble.

**SCHOOL
PROGRAM
UPDATE –
STUDENT
REPS’
REPORT**

School Improvement Plans – District Overview – Assistant Superintendent Bliss presented the District’s Continuous Improvement Plan highlighting: a community Success in a pandemic, recovery efforts, Goals (K-12 Curriculum Realignment, RMS Advisory and Transitions and a trauma intelligent system.) He also provided an update from the Agency of Education and reminded the community to vote and reviewed options for voting. Discussion included current truancy levels and how it is being addressed. Partially engaged kids, resources for current seniors for credit recovery and support from the Tarrant Institute.

**SCHOOL
IMPROVE-
MENT PLANS**

PreK-2 and RIS School Update – Northeast Principal, Susanne Engels reviewed goals/basics and goal areas (literacy K-2, literacy and numeracy 3-6) and social emotional. She provided information regarding data points for assessment based on 5 models of learning, noting the need for flexibility, changing safety routines and also noting the implementation of a new K-6 Math program and a new K-2 Writing program that were initiated pre-pandemic.

Northwest Principal, Loren Pepe provided snapshots of things that are happening, noting that despite all odds, teachers, support staff and parents are providing productive learning. Mask wearing has not been an issue. Implementation of online learning practices, with two-way communication, even for children who don’t yet know how to read and write has been successful. She noted professional development, trauma informed strategies/tools and the Pierpoint Personalized Learning Center/PPLC.

Rutland Intermediate School Principal, Kerry Coarse spoke regarding PBIS team activities and rewards, shifting fund raising efforts by the PTO, physical distancing guidelines, materials, space, in person and remote learning surveys, classroom adjustments and learning preference surveys. She spoke about the practice of starting each day with a community block to keep all students connected, restorative practices, decreases in out of room interventions and the partnership with the Vermont Food Bank to open a food pantry at RIS.

Discussion included clarification of a multiage classroom (alternative program outside the Gen. Ed. Classroom, with a Special Educator) and the RIS Food Pantry (soft opening – not set up to receive donations currently.)

Central Office Reports – Superintendent’s Report – Superintendent Olsen provided an update on COVID 19 cases and contact tracing, noting the effort to be conservative while erring on the side of caution. He noted that we have not seen in school spread and asked for vigilance from the community. He gave credit to Encore Theatre for working hard to create a normal school situation in the middle of a pandemic. This has been a successful year in spite of all the challenges. He thanked the entire staff for flexibility, innovation and commitment, noting that we have the highest percentage of in person learning in the State. He thanked student and families for their flexibility and patience with contact tracing. Director of Finance, Ted Plemenos has been presenting budget information at Rotary meetings. Ted is available for phone calls and to speak with groups regarding the RCPS budget. An informational meeting will be held on March 1, 2021 (Zoom format.) He provided a Legislative update, including plans for education and how we can leverage distance learning to help kids in the future. On January 19, 2021 the General Assembly Economist provided a new forecast and it is not anticipated that the education fund will be deficit by the end of the year. There will be ESSER II funds available for recovery. Superintendent Olson recognized Pam Reed and Patricia Aigner for providing professional development

**CENTRAL
OFFICE
SUPERINTEN-
DENT’S
REPORT**

opportunities for paraeducators. He noted that five students recently graduated from the Grove Street Program and the 2021 GIN Conference will be held on April 1st, for the 8th year in a row and will be held remotely.

**CENTRAL
OFFICE
SUPERINTEN-
DENT'S
REPORT**

President Notte noted that the link to register for the informational meeting is on the RCPS website.

Committee Reports – Staff Relations Committee – Commissioner Goldberg advised that things are moving along all fronts, good progress is being made and hopefully some outcomes will be announced soon.

**COMMITTEE
REPORTS –
STAFF RELA-
TIONS**

Building Committee Report – Commissioner Shimp announced the hiring of the Director of Buildings, Grounds and Transportation, Glenn Scott. Assistant Superintendent Bliss promoted Mr. Scott to a panelist and Mr. Scott was introduced and welcomed.

**BUILDING
COMMITTEE**

Policy Committee Report – Commissioner Olewnik advised of the Committee's continued cyclical review, noting overlap of Policy 1345 and the Code of Conduct.

**POLICY
COMMITTEE**

Discussion included the noting of “roll call” missing in the list of order of business in regards to Policy 1540 and overlap of Policy 1345 and the Code of Conduct.

Motion by Shimp/Cavacas, Hurley to table Policy 1345 for first reading and return it to the Policy Committee.

**MOITION:
POLICY
FIRST
READING**

Motion by Olewnik/Kiefaber to accept 1500 series policies for first reading with change noted:

First Reading Policies:

1. Policy #1510 – Public Sessions
2. Policy #1520 – Regular Board Meetings
3. Policy #1530 – Quorum and Attendance
4. Policy #1540 – Order of Business (note – add roll call)
5. Policy #1550 – Special Board Meetings
6. Policy #1560 – Annual Organizational Meetings
7. Policy #1570 – Board Minutes
8. Policy #1580 – Board Executive Session

Discussion ensued and included: adding “roll call” to Policy #1540 Order of Business, language related to date/Annual Organizational Meetings (#1560 – first regular meeting following March 15th.)

Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Olewnik will send a general invite/email to all Board Members regarding the next Policy Committee Meeting.

Old and New Business – Superintendent Evaluation – Commissioners Pencak and Olewnik will be compiling a report to give to President Notte and she or her designee will meet with Superintendent Olsen to review results which will be presented to the Board in executive session at the next regular meeting. Responses were entered anonymously, but were labeled as Board or Administration.

**OLD/NEW
BUSINESS
SUPERINTEN-
DENT EVAL.**

Weighting Study Coalition – Director of Finance, Ted Plemenos provided a summary of the UVM Weighting Study including background and current direction, simulation results and proposed weighting factors. He concluded that the original mandate has not been modified in more than 20

**WEIGHTING
STUDY
COALITION**

years and has not kept up with changes that have occurred. Two bills are pending (H 54 and S 13.) If bills pass, a plan of action would be required by December 15th with a phase in over 3 years. Results of one of several simulations, if applied, would result in significant savings for Rutland City Tax Payers (about a 20% drop.) About two thirds of the 77 districts in Vermont would recognize an average drop of about 18 cents in the homestead tax rate, while other districts would see an average increase of about 16 cents.

**WEIGHTING
STUDY
COALITION**

President Notte advised the Board that potentially approving money to help the Coalition and mission to get the Legislature take up the issue would be advantageous to Rutland City.

Motion by Pencak/Solsaa on reliance of the email received from the Agency of Education to allocate \$3,000 to support the Weighting Coalition.

**MOTION:
WEIGHTING
STUDY
CONTRIBU-
TION**

Discussion ensued and included: contribution amounts from other districts, where the money would be going (nonprofit is being formed), what would we be getting for the money (redistribution of money – not a bigger pot), other ways to approach the issue, need for more information, potential of another coalition in opposition of moving forward, urgency (bill needs to cross over by the second week in March or will be dead until next biennium), fiduciary responsibility and the VSBA being spilt on the issue.

Roll Call Vote: Cavacas, Brittany – No, Cavacas, Hurley – Yes, Dages – Yes, Goldberg – Yes, Keifaber – Yes, Shimp – No, Pencak – Yes, Olewnik – Yes, Seward – Yes, Solsaa – Yes.

Motion carries 8-2.

RHS Mascot Proposal – RHS Principal Greg Schillinger and students: Jack Wallace, Caleb Dundas and Kathryn Moore presented the process used for selecting a new mascot which included a complex 3-month long process of weekly meetings, committee formation, criteria development, suggestion and narrowing, student voting and student voting runoff. It was noted that the committee looked at both the positives and negatives of all options and core standards were applied by students on the committee. The recommendation is: The Ravens.

**MASCOTT
PROPOSAL**

Discussion ensued around connotations around religious affiliations and Native American symbolism. Principal Schillinger advised that every single option had a component that someone could argue and that there is myth associated with almost every animal or natural phenomenon. He noted that they were successful in this conclusion in every single case and that due diligence was done. Discussion continued regarding: other references to Native American in options considered, sexual connotation with other options, percentage of write in votes for Raiders and direct reference to human beings living in the community. Student Representative Isabella Lafemina noted that the negative connotation for raiders to people, while animals can have a negative connotation or history. Caleb Dundas explained the criteria for selecting option for the mascot, noting that all options had to do with history, nothing was selected because it was inappropriate or funny. Several Board Members commended students for their work on this project. Commissioner Shimp asked that the email to Board Members from Frederick Adams go on the record.

Motion by Pencak/Dages to accept the new mascot name as presented by Principal Schillinger and the student committee.

**MOTION:
MASCOTT**

Commissioner Solsaa thanked the committee for their work in such a contentious atmosphere. Caleb Dundas noted the need to ensure that, going forward, the new logo does not give negative connotations. Kathryn Moore noted that all of the suggestions came from the public and that the committee just did the work to get to the end conclusion.

Motion by Shimp/Cavacas, Hurley to table the motion for further information.

**MOTION: TO
TABLE
MOTION ON
THE FLOOR**

Roll Call Vote: Cavacas, Brittany – Yes, Cavacas, Hurley – Yes, Dages – No, Goldberge – No, Kiefaber – No, Olewnik – No, Pencak – No, Seward – Yes, Shimp – Yes, Solsaa - No

Motion fails 4 – 6.

Roll Call Vote (Motion on the table - Motion by Pencak/Dages to accept the new mascot name as presented by Principal Schillinger and the student committee.)

Roll Call Vote: Cavacas, Brittany – No, Cavacas, Hurley – No, Dages – Yes, Goldberg – Yes, Kiefaber – Yes, Olewnik – Yes, Pencak – Yes, Seward – No, Shimp – No, Solsaa – Yes.

Motion carries 6 -4.

Motion by Pencak/Kiefaber at 9:25 pm that the Rutland City Board of School Commissioners enter into an executive session with Superintendent Olsen, Assistant Superintendent Bliss and Director of Finance Ted Plemenos for the purposes of discussing negotiations and contract renewal the general public knowledge of it which would clearly place the Board at a substantial disadvantage.

**MOTION:
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion passed unanimously.

**BLISS OUT OF
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss left the executive session at 9:50 pm

The Board came out of executive session at 10:10 pm.

**OUT OF
EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

Motion by Shimp/Dages to accept the contract renewal of Assistant Superintendent Rob Bliss as presented.

**MOTION:
CONTRACT
RENEWAL**

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Cavacas, Hurley/Kiefaber to adjourn at 10:12 pm. Passed.

ADJOURN

Passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,
Betty A. Kapitan, Recording Secretary

TO: Board of Education
 FROM: William K. Olsen, Superintendent
 DATE: February 5, 2021
 RE: Personnel Memorandum – Licensed and Non-Licensed

RESOLVE: That the LICENSED and NON-LICENSED SECTION OF THE PERSONNEL MEMO NO. 618 dated **February 5, 2021**, be approved as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

A. LICENSED SECTION

1. Administrative Appointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Pro-rated Salary</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Glenn Scott	Director of Building, Grounds & Transportation/District	\$40,946.39	2/22/2021

2. Retirement

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Laurie Wilson	Information Technology Instructor/RHS	6/30/2021

3. Resignation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Diana Lee	Engineering Instructor/STC	6/30/2021

4. Transfer

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position From/To</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Allison Griffiths	FROM: Music at RMS TO: Music at NE/NW	8/26/2021

B. NON-LICENSED SECTION

1. Retirement

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Stacia Cavalieri	Administrative Assistant/Longfellow	6/30/2021
Debra Dayton	School Secretary/Northwest Primary School	6/30/2021
Diane Plantier	Paraeducator/RHS	6/30/2021

2. Resignation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Laura Snyder	Library Paraeducator/RMS	2/5/2021
Molly Wasserman	Data Coach/District	2/10/2021

3. Appointment

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/Location</u>	<u>Pro-rated Salary</u>	<u>Effective</u>
Maxwell Battles	Facilities Worker I/RIS	\$23.32/hr.	1/25/2021