

Brookline-Newfane School Board

Thursday, March 18, 2010
6:30 P.M. at Brookline Elementary School

Minutes

In attendance : Amy Jo Cable, recorder; Kim Colligan, Bruce Garrow, Newfane Principal; Ken McFadden, Kim Friedman, Steven John, Superintendent, WCSU; Pam Meihak, Lee Anne Parker, Brandy Pickering, Bettyann Runge, Brookline Principal; Dan Seiden, April Wellman.

Members of the public present: Shelly Bostrom, Emily Bullock, Jim Henderson, Joyce Van Pamelan.

Steven John called the meeting to order at 6:37 PM.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chair: Steven called for nominations for chair. Lee Anne Parker nominated Kim Friedman. Ken McFadden nominated April Wellman. April declined. Kim Friedman's nomination was seconded. Kim Friedman was approved unanimously.

Vice Chair: Kim F. asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Ken McFadden nominated Lee Anne Parker. Nomination was seconded. Lee Anne Parker was approved unanimously.

Clerk: (keeps tracks of minutes) Kim Colligan volunteered and nominated herself for clerk. Lee Anne Parker seconded. Kim Colligan was approved unanimously.

Tickler: May--appoint treasurer for joint board.

Representative to WCSU Policy Committee: Kim Friedman nominated Ken McFadden to represent joint board on the WCSU Policy Committee. Nomination seconded. Ken McFadden was approved unanimously.

Authorized signatures for vendor pay orders and payroll

Lee Anne Parker and April Wellman volunteered for Brookline, along with Dan Seiden as alternate. Pam Meihak and Ken McFadden volunteered for Newfane, along with Kim Colligan as alternate. All nominations were seconded and approved unanimously.

Kim Friedman made a motion to appoint joint authorized signatures for vendor pay orders and payroll effective July 1, 2010 (Two from Brookline with an alternate and two from Newfane also with an alternate.) Dan Seiden seconded the motion. The motion passed with all in favor.

Ken McFadden made a motion that whenever possible, vendor pay orders and payrolls include an authorized signature from both school districts. Pam Meihak seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Paper of Record: Kim Friedman reaffirmed that the *Brattleboro Reformer* is the board's Paper of Record.

Meeting schedule: The board reaffirmed that it will continue to meet the third Thursday of the month from 6:30-8:30 P.M. (Allowances will be made if more or less time is needed for the meeting.)

Newfane Bulletin Board (will be joint Newfane/Brookline Bulletin Board this Fall): Brandy Pickering and April Wellman will work on the bulletin board.

Agenda review: No additions or revisions to the agenda were requested.

Members of the public: Kim Friedman welcomed the members of the public and thanked them for attending.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes: Kim Friedman stated that the board's goal is to have all minutes in hand and ready for approval by the next meeting.

Tickler: April-- approve all outstanding minutes.

Task: Kim Colligan will pull them together and distribute them in advance of the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Evaluation of the School Board: Board member came to the meeting with a completed assessment, which included 29 items regarding the general practices of the school board. The Board discussed the results. In general, the board agreed that the two main areas needing more attention by the board are accountability and advocacy. Specifically, the board identified several areas where there is room for improvement:

1. Need to spend more time thinking/talking about student learning;
2. Delegate more responsibility for implementing policy to administrators; administrators are encouraged to point out to the board opportunities for doing so
3. Shorten meetings by doing more self-regulation and using consent agenda whenever possible
4. Increase communication from the board to the broader community
5. Increase our understanding of student progress and professional development needs/activities

Ticklers:

- Review as a board WCSU's strategic plan. Use this and existing documents from both schools to reaffirm the school's vision and core values.
- Action Plan: amend to reflect integration/consolidation of schools and staff
- Learn more about policy governance as a way to increase our understanding of student progress and professional development needs/activities.
- Increased local and state advocacy (for board retreat)

Tasks:

- Ken will consolidate and store VT School Boards Assoc. materials in one place for easier access
- Kim C. and Brandy will bring ideas to the May meeting regarding ways to improve communication.
- Everyone: Read *Leadership Duties Under Vermont Law 16 VSA* as it pertains to policy governance discussion.

Looking Forward: Our Hopes for 2010-2011

Highlights of the discussion included:

- Bring two communities together
- Keep our focus on the big picture
- Shorten budget development process
- Find a wonderful use for the Brookline building
- Reduce the amount we have to cut from the FY11 budget

Tasks

- Bruce/Bettyann: Bring to April meeting an integration plan to explain where they're at and what their next steps are. Include in the Principal's report a discussion of joint board's role in integration of two schools.

Ticklers

- April: determine transparent process for communicating with Brookline community re. building's use

Proposal to change school's name: Kim Friedman made a motion to change the name of the *Newfane Elementary School* to *Newbrook Elementary School*. Brandy Pickering seconded. A discussion resulted in which concerns were expressed about the process by which a new name would be chosen (if a new name would in fact be chosen) and also concerns about the new name itself. Members of the public present took part in this conversation. The board defeated Kim F.'s motion to re-name the *Newfane Elementary School* to *Newbrook Elementary School*.

Kim then made appointed April Wellman, Pam Meihak and Dan Seiden to develop a process for re-naming the *Newfane Elementary School*.

Tickler: April—discuss proposal for re-naming school

Discuss possibility of holding BNSB retreat: Kim Friedman noted that it was a little late in the evening to be talking about a Joint Board retreat. Kim asked if anyone objected to waiting to have this discussion until the beginning of our April meeting. No objections.

Reports/Information-Sharing/Short items

- The Superintendent’s Report, along with the Principal’s Reports for both Newfane and Brookline, were sent to the Board members prior to this meeting.
- Policies
 - Steven John and Kim Friedman thanked Ken for the care and time he spent working on the policies and told him it was appreciated by all.
 - *Tasks*
 - Ken: Email everyone F9 (transportation) & F21 (weapons).
 - Everyone: Read these policies before next board meeting.

Open Meeting Law as it pertains to communication (verbal and electronic) among Board members between meetings: Steven John discussed the *Open Meeting Law* and answered questions pertaining to the law. A discussion ensued. Highlights included:

- Board members shouldn’t discuss Board matters with other Board members between meetings, with the exception of the Chair.
- Information can only be shared between meetings to provide background information.
- Any matter can be discussed with individuals who are not on the Board.
- Board members’ questions should be directed to the Chair rather than the Superintendent. The Chair will consult with the administration as needed.

Preparation of contracts: Steven John advised that he would like to issue contracts and presumed that the Board wanted to direct him to issue contracts based on the recommendations of Principals and the budget plan. Steven noted that he was obliged to issue contracts no later than April 15th and that his target is to get them out by April 1st. Steven clarified that this only pertains to contracts for professional and para-professional staff.

Dan Seiden moved that Steven John prepare the contracts consistent with the Principal’s recommendation for renewal and with the approved FY11 budget. Lee Anne Parker seconded. No discussion followed. Ken McFadden abstained. All other Board members approved. The motion was approved.

2011 Joint School Districts' Annual Meeting

Tickler: April-warn a meeting in May to determine the date of the 2011 Joint School Districts' Annual Meeting.

Tasks

- Steven will draft the warning.
- Kim C. will follow up with Steven on this matter.

Kim Friedman asked if there was any other business to be discussed before moving into Executive Session. No other discussions were requested.

Executive Session #1

Entered Executive Session at 9:35 P.M. Left Executive Session at 9:40 PM.

Kim Friedman moved that the board direct Steven John to amend Bruce Garrow's current contract consistent with the FY11 budget. Ken seconded the motion. No further discussion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Executive Session #2

Entered Executive Session at 9:50 PM. Left Executive Session at 10:16 PM.

The Board completed its evaluation of the Superintendent. Kim F. will forward the results to Rich Werner, Windham Central Supervisory Union Board Chair.

Dan moved to adjourn the meeting. Brandy seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:17 PM.

