

## Middletown Springs Board of School Directors (Regular) Meeting

Date: January 20, 2015--Time: 6:00PM

Place: Middletown Springs Elementary School

---

### UNOFFICIAL MINUTES

Present: Clarence Haynes (Chair), Meredith Morgan (Vice-Chair), Christopher Smid, Jennelle Carr (Members). Also Present: Joan Paustian (Supt.), Rick Beal (Principal), Susan Rosso (Recording Secretary). Harry Frank (Associate Director of the VSBA) arrived at 6:57PM.

Public Present: None

1. Call to Order (**Action**)

Clarence Haynes called the meeting to order at 6:12 PM.

2. Additions, Deletions, Changes to Agenda (**Action**)

Personnel items need to be added under #10 per Supt. Paustian.

3. Consent Agenda: (**Action**)

- Approval of Minutes –December 2014

Jennelle Carr moved to approve the meeting minutes of Dec. 15 2014, with the following correction: Chris Smid is *not* the Clerk, Sarah Haley is, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 4-0.

- Superintendent's Report

Supt. Joan Paustian distributed a report of secondary students as requested by Bob Bruttomesso. Supt. Paustian also shared information she sent to Mr. Bruttomesso with the Board regarding the handling of inappropriate behavior by students; including harassment and bullying. Supt. Paustian distributed copies of the Education Finance Working Group's Final Report to Speaker of the House, Shap Smith. The Supt. needs to change her goals; she will bring this up at the next SU meeting. The required "School Report Cards" for the state will be compiled in an SU-wide "Report Card" to maintain student confidentiality for the small schools.

- Principal's Report

Principal Rick Beal shared that the first Winter Sports day was very successful. The students had a great time and staff used the time to review the standards-based report cards and how they relate to Proficiency Based Learning (PBL). He sent the board the list of 10 overarching principles of PBL. Our computer network is working well so we should be in good shape when the students take the SBACs this spring (online computer-based assessments). Wall padding has been installed in the MPR to improve student safety (funded by VSBIT grant funds). Mr. Smid has located another company that sells platform lifts to address accessibility to the upper floor; information will be gathered. Grades 4-6 went to the Weston Theatre to see an operatic performance of "The Secret Garden." Local farmers were here in December to visit the classrooms and have lunch with the students as part of our Farm to School Grant. We had a very successful Winter Concert. The parents greatly enjoyed it and the students did a wonderful job. Mr. Smid asked how K/1 class instruction is working. Refinements to the K/1 pairing are being made; it is challenging to implement the reading and math programs; with such a wide range of student development.

- Business Manager's Report

- Financial Statements

Louis Milazzo was not in attendance; he sent the third draft of the budget for '15-'16.

Christopher Smid moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Clarence Haynes seconded; motion carried 4-0.

4. Approve Warrants: **(Action)**

- a. Warrant #201 in the amount of \$58,296.56 dated 12/10/2014
- b. Warrant #202 in the amount of \$26,798.66 dated 12/24/14
- c. Warrant # 203 in the amount of \$5,996.75 dated 1/7/15

Clarence Haynes moved to approve Warrant #201 in the amount of \$58,296.56 dated 12/10/2014, Warrant #202 in the amount of \$26,798.66 dated 12/24/14, and Warrant #203 in the amount of \$5,996.75 dated 1/7/15, Christopher Smid seconded; motion carried 4-0.

5. Mr. Harry Frank from the Vermont School Boards Association will be present for a discussion regarding the *Path Ahead*.

Mr. Frank from the VSBA is here to assist the Board and discuss options to help control costs while providing a quality education in the face of changing expectations and financial pressures. He would like to start a conversation about educational aspirations and financial concerns. ADM (Average Daily Membership for students) has gone up for Middletown Springs over the past decade. We are fairly consistent with our student numbers; we have a high poverty level and significant student needs. We have multi-grade classrooms to save money, but some of the new curriculum requires instruction on each individual grade level. We have had numerous years in which our budget has failed to pass; some people feel that education is just too expensive and although the elementary school budget has been basically level-funded, middle/high school tuition and special education costs continue to rise—these are two costs the Board cannot control. We have a highly educated and experienced staff; which is a positive attribute but does result in higher salaries.

Our small school offers some great things; we have strong technology with 1:1 computing, we offer 20 weekly hours of Pre-K for both three and four year olds, we utilize a .20 teacher so that grade levels can be taught reading and math separately. Mr. Beal provides enrichment to students as a .80 Principal/.20 Teacher. He has worked with students on such diverse as building musical instruments, making cheese, working with electricity and engineering principles. MSES is one of the few schools in the state who has not been on an improvement plan prior to this year. We are participating in the beginning phase of implementation of PBL (Performance Based Learning).

Because we don't provide bus transportation, staff has the opportunity to see parents and grandparents in person at pick-up and dismissal time. We provide an active afterschool program with homework assistance, Odyssey of the Mind, gardening/nature clubs, and sports programs such as soccer and basketball. We see the school as the heart of our community. One current idea for controlling (and potentially reducing) costs is potentially joining with another school to divide up grade levels to increase class sizes; such as having a Pre-K to Grade 2 school and/or a Grade 3-6 or 3-8 school. We continue to collaborate with Tinmouth School for winter sports and basketball. We share itinerants such as PE, Art, and Music with Tinmouth; we share our Counselor and School Nurse with Wells.

Being a small school, our students are not exposed to as many other children as we would like; to help them learn to work with others and to prepare them for the higher enrollments in middle and high school. We'd like to add foreign language instruction but we don't have the financial latitude to do this. We try to utilize grant funds whenever possible for school programs and for building maintenance/improvements. For example, we painted the building in its original colors instead of white to qualify for historic building grant funds. We wanted to update/add a drip edge to our roof, but agreed not to do so to obtain a grant for the recently installed slate roof.

Mr. Frank shared that resources are available to support work in investigating restructuring, collaborating, and/or consolidation. Financial incentives are being given to schools by the state as long as there are two entities at the table discussing consolidation/collaboration/restructuring. We need to talk to our neighbor schools about combining to increase our student numbers/class sizes. We will need to begin gathering data to build a preliminary proposal. Mr. Frank states that schools

and districts who chart their own course seem to do well; rather than waiting for a mandated reassignment. If initiative is taken, there are supports and structure in place to help. Mr. Frank will draft a timeline proposing a few scenarios; then follow up with the Board. The Board thanked Mr. Frank for his assistance. Mr. Frank left the meeting at this point.

6. General Public Comments (**Listen & Defer Action to Future Meeting**)

None

7. Old Business: (**Itemize Subjects for Deliberation & Possible Action**)

a. Budget FY16 (discussion and approval)

Supt. Paustian presented the third draft of the budget. The Board reviewed and discussed it. Supt. Paustian informed the Board that last year's deficit is required to be listed as an expense. Next year's budget is \$2,380,731 (with the amount of \$2,104,283 to be raised by taxes). This represents a 3.97% increase from last year. Clarence Haynes moved to approve the 2015-2016 budget of \$2,380,731. Christopher Smid seconded; motion carried 4-0.

b. Approve Warning and Authorize Signature

There are some issues we need to check on: voting location, the length of the Treasurer and Clerk's terms (should be three years; not one) before the warning is finalized. When finalized, Board members will come to the school to sign the Warning. Clarence Haynes moved to approve the Warning with the stipulation that we determine the place of voting, check the terms of the Clerk & Treasurer, as well as the status of any potential added articles (dependent upon legal advice), and to authorize signature of the Warrant by the Board. Meredith Morgan seconded; motion carried.

c. Planning for Town Meeting

The Board discussed the upcoming Town Meeting to be held on March 2; with voting on March 3. A budget information meeting for community members will be held on February 10 at 7:00PM at MSES. Various ways of getting the meeting date/time out to the public were discussed.

d. Odyssey of the Mind

Odyssey of the Mind Coaching contracts for Rick Beal, Bob Bruttomesso, and Julia Kreilkamp will be discussed under #10 Personnel (Action).

e. Approve and sign MOA #2 (Teachers' CBA)

Signing of MOA is tabled by consensus until the next SU meeting on January 26, 2015.

f. Update – Henderson Scholarship

Mr. Haynes reports that the Trustees of Public Monies are still determining the availability of funds.

8. New Business: (**Receive Information & Possible Action**):

a. The School Board reviewed a petition addressed to the Select Board.

b. Discussion of response to posts on Front Porch Forum.

9. Policies: (**for input**)

a. G-1 Curriculum Development & Coordination (revised – for input)

b. G-1A Curriculum Coordinating Council (to be rescinded)

c. G-1B Curriculum Management & Adoption (to be rescinded)

d. D-2 Professional Development (new/revised); D-2R procedure to be rescinded

e. D-205 Nursing Mothers in the Workplace (new for input)

f. C-2 Board Meetings (revised – for input)

The Board reviewed and discussed the above policies. The Board has no input at this time.

10. Action on Personnel Contract **(Action)** (if applicable)

Contracts are proposed for Odyssey of the Mind Coaches: Rick Beal, Bob Bruttomesso, and Julia Kreilkamp and After-School Counselor, Regina Murphy. We have MAC grant funds available to extend additional services to students in need for the counselor contract.

Clarence Haynes moved to approve the hiring of the three OTM coaches: Rick Beal, Bob Bruttomesso, and Julia Kreilkamp, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 4-0.

Chris Smid moved to approve the hiring of Regina Murphy as After-School Counselor, Jennelle Carr seconded; motion carried 3-0. Clarence Haynes abstained.

11. Set Next Board Meeting (Regular) & Agenda Building: (Anticipated February 23, 2015 6PM at PHS – Carousel Meeting)

By consensus, it was decided to postpone the Carousel Meeting until April. The next MSD Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 6:00PM at MSES.

12. Executive Session 1 VSA § 313 (1-9) (a) (b) if warranted **(Discussion & Possible Action)**

None

13. Other Lawful Business **(Information Gathering Only)**

- a. Clarence Haynes informed the Board that a handbook on student representation at VSBA is available online.

14. Adjournment **(Action)**

Meredith Morgan moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:28PM, Christopher Smid seconded, motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Susan Rosso*