

**Middletown Springs School District Board of School Directors  
(Regular) Meeting**

**Date: May 11, 2015      Time: 6:00 PM**

**Place: Middletown Springs Elementary School**

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**U N O F F I C I A L   M I N U T E S**

Present: Clarence Haynes (Chair), Meredith Morgan (Vice-Chair), Christopher Smid & Jennelle Carr (Members). Also present: Joan Paustian (RSWSU Supt.), Rick Beal (Principal) & Susan Rosso (Recording Secretary). Sara Haley (Clerk) arrived at 6:10PM. Public Present: Kathy Letendre

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

Clarence Haynes called the meeting to order at 6:04PM.

2. Changes, Deletions, Additions to the Agenda:

Add under "New Business" - Teacher Request for Unpaid Leave

3. Kathy Letendre – Creative Economy Project (presentation)

Kathy Letendre is here to address the School Board about the Creative Economy Project being undertaken by the Town. Mrs. Letendre has been hired by the Town and is seeking input from all types of groups on a few questions. She has held ten group meetings in the community so far. She distributed a handout about the project and has three questions to ask. The board members and the Supt. will answer on sticky notes and return these to Kathy:

- What do you regard as the creative assets of Middletown Springs?
- What are the benefits (now or in the future) of our town being known as a creative community?
- What are the challenges of sustaining and growing creative efforts in town?

After the Creative Economy Project questions had been completed, Chris Smid shared that the Board needs to work on obtaining a grant to study school sustainability/consolidation and had spoken about this need with Kathy. Kathy explained to the Board that the most important thing to decide in advance when considering a matter is how the decision will be made and how factors will be weighted. She explained how individuals can become emotionally attached to specific options which can draw out conflict; making it hard to reach a solution. She uses a system that makes clear what the criteria are and how they will be weighted. This will help the participants and Consultant avoid wasting time on non-viable options while making the process more efficient and successful.

Chris asked Kathy to assist after attending the Act 153 meeting; realizing that undertaking a grant proposal with the entire SU makes it much more complex and increases the variables. He feels we first need to do a Middletown Springs study and other towns could do this as well. Supt. Paustian stated that we can only get grant money if we do the study as an SU; not as individual school districts. Clarence Haynes agrees that we need to determine where we want to go and what we want to do before going into the study. One major unknown he sees right now is the outcome of proposed education legislation. One bill says districts must have 1,100 students, the other says 900; and if consolidation is not completed in five years districts will be forced to consolidate by the state (potentially moved to another SU). He states that we won't know what our major goals will be until one or the other bill passes. Kathy estimates it would take an hour and a half per district or about two and a half hours for the entire SU to get all the ideas on the table. Clarence Haynes and Meredith Morgan asked if Mrs. Letendre would be willing to submit a proposal for her services to the Supt. for further consideration. She will do so.

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

i. Approval of Minutes: April 27, 2015 (regular)

Chris Smid moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 27, 2015, Clarence Haynes seconded; motion carried 5-0.

ii. Superintendent's Report

Supt. Paustian reports that she will be writing an SU action plan. VSBIT reports that VEHI will not be providing health insurance plans in the same format after 2017. VSBIT recommends that Boards not enter into any contract agreements extending beyond 2016-2017. After 2017, an excise tax will be charged to districts that offer plans with greater benefits than those on the exchange. H361 has passed the Senate; they have proposed continuing the small schools grant, increasing taxes for higher income Vermonters, and removing the "hold harmless" provision. These measures should be voted on in the House shortly. One proposal would allow districts to request a move to another SU without a study in place.

iii. Principal's Report (no written report due to date of last meeting)

Principal Beal reported that the sixth graders had a great trip to Washington, DC. They got to visit Bernie Sanders' office and had an opportunity to see the Senate in action. They visited the Holocaust and Smithsonian Museums and the War Memorials. Re: the water system, the electrical control panels have been delivered. We are required to send a letter to parents before the end of the year stating that we are out of compliance because the system update was not completed in the allotted time frame. We need to do this even though the water passes all State tests. Mr. Beal has been speaking with the Asst. Fire Marshal and Dr. Paustian is consulting with the SU attorney regarding the need to reinstall a lift/elevator after the old lift failed; a decision is pending. We have received two bids for lawn care; one from Grounds Guys in Poultney and one from Ryan Bishop of Wells. Mr. Beal will review the costs with Louis Milazzo and will check references. Clarence Haynes states that the Board (by consensus) agrees that Principal Beal should make the decision since both companies are as local as we were able to find. The second/third grade teaching position has been posted on the School Spring website. We've received 29 applications; five candidates will be interviewed. Mr. Beal plans to hold the interviews on Friday, May 15. He asked if any board members were interested in serving on the hiring committee. Meredith Morgan and Clarence Haynes will do so.

iv. Update on Financial Statements

Louis Milazzo is not in attendance; no financials this month.

Chris Smid moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, Jennelle Carr seconded; motion carried 5-0.

5. Approve Warrants: **(Action- read into the minutes as officially approved)**

a. Warrant #212 in the amount of \$108,535.03 dated 4/15/15

b. Warrant #214 in the amount of \$63,420.23 dated 4/29/2015

(Please note that due to a software update, AP warrant numbers will no longer be consecutive)

Clarence Haynes moved to approve Warrant #212 in the amount of \$108,535.03 dated 4/15/15 and Warrant #214 in the amount of \$63,420.23 dated 4/29/2015, Sarah Haley seconded; motion carried 5-0.

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

None

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

None

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

a. Teacher Request for Unpaid Leave

Lorraine Wilkins has requested six unpaid leave days for next school year. She is in her last year of service as National District Council Member of the VFW. She is asking to use her three paid personal days in February with additional unpaid leave of two days in February and one in September.

Meredith Morgan moved to approve the requested leave, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

b. Legislator Contact

Clarence Haynes suggested that all board members contact their local legislators regarding H361. Mr. Haynes states that the small schools grant must remain and the cap must be removed in order for him to support it. We should let our representatives know that the state needs to continue to support our public schools; including small schools.

9. Policies **(Approval or Input)** :

None

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

a. Resignation – Bob Bruttomesso – Classroom Teacher, effective 6/30/2015.

Clarence Haynes moved to accept the resignation of Bob Bruttomesso, effective 6/30/2015, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

11. Set Next Regular Board Meeting: **(Action)** (Anticipated, June 11, 2015 at 6:00PM at MSES).  
By consensus, the next MS Board Meeting will be held on June 11 at 6:00PM at MSES.

12. Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1-9) (a) (b) **(Discussion & Possible Action)** (as warranted).

a. Personnel – Exit Interview

Clarence Haynes moved to have the Board enter Executive Session at 7:35PM for personnel issues; an exit interview request and another employee issue, Sarah Haley seconded; motion carried 5-0.

Sarah Haley moved to have the Board exit Executive Session at 8:08PM, Jennelle Carr seconded; motion carried 5-0.

Clarence Haynes moved that the draft letter dated 5/11/15 be approved for signature and sent to Mr. Bruttomesso, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

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

None

14. Adjournment **(Action)**

Chris Smid moved that the meeting be adjourned at 8:11PM, Jennelle Carr seconded; motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Susan Rosso*