

HYDE PARK SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
HYDE PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIBRARY
MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010

Board members present: Brian Marshall, Kalee Roberts, Jim Lipinski, Dan Regan, Henri Moser.

Others: Michelle Mathias, Debra Taylor.

Note: All votes taken are unanimous unless otherwise noted.

Items highlighted for follow-up are shown like this.

1. Call to Order

B. Marshall called the meeting to order at 7:57.

2. Review and Approve Agenda

M. Mathias said if D. Taylor comes she will probably have a hiring recommendation for a long-term sub.

3. Approve Consent Agenda (Minutes – January 18, 2010, Principal’s Report, Central Office Report, Directors’ Orders)

B. Marshall moved to approve the consent agenda including directors’ orders in the amount of \$31,001.29, seconded by J. Lipinski, and the motion was passed.

4. Discuss Preparations for Town Meeting

B. Marshall said the select board will go first this year. The select board wanted to do some things differently this year. They wanted to have speakers in the hallway so people out there could hear and come back in to vote, and they wanted to control access to the room to make for less confusion. Kim Moulton asked M. Frederick if we wanted a projector and screen, and he imagines M. Frederick responded yes. B. Marshall asked who should give the speech, and it was agreed that he should do it. D. Regan asked if there might be greater difficulty in going second this year, since many people, especially those with kids, may leave before the school vote. B. Marshall said if we went first, he thinks the discussion of our budget would disadvantage the town budget, but he’s not sure the reverse would be true. M. Mathias asked what kind of press release we want to put out, or whether we are just going to wait for the town report to come out. She said there is some good news, such as the fact that per pupil cost is about the same as last year. J. Lipinski agreed that is important to mention. M. Mathias said we can also explain that the increase is the result of changes in Montpelier. D. Regan suggested we practice the town meeting presentation on the Monday before town meeting, even if no members of the public come to hear the information.

M. Mathias said we are obligated to present NECAP results at town meeting. She hasn’t gotten them yet. J. Lipinski suggested not talking about kids who were almost proficient. He thinks that blows credibility. M. Mathias said standard error makes the cut point arbitrary. D. Regan said he thinks town meeting will be a good opportunity to present NECAP results but also say that the board’s real commitment is to progress of individual learners. M. Mathias said we may want to include some AIMSweb data. J. Lipinski

suggested it would be good to come right and out and say we have made the decision not to teach to the test. B. Marshall said we will want to talk some about facilities.

5. Discuss Charge(s) For Facilities/Planning/Vision Committee(s)

B. Marshall said the board has to figure out what we are going to have for facilities committees, and what we want them to do. J. Lipinski said he doesn't think we should use the name "facilities committee," because that focuses on the building and not education. M. Mathias said maybe the long term group could come up with a list of questions we would want a study to focus on. B. Marshall said he thinks we would like some group to really explore some out of the box ideas that may be different from what A. Vilaseca is talking about. Maybe we could go to the commissioner and ask to be kept out of any redistricting plan so we could explore another plan.

J. Lipinski said he would like to explore what we pay for local control. If someone did a good study on what local control costs, he wonders how many would go for it if they saw it represented as a dollar value. It would make for interesting discussion. M. Mathias said it may be that local control has resulted in a savings here, though that may not be true other towns. Our per pupil cost is lower than average. B. Marshall said board members provide a lot of services for free, as W. Sander mentioned at the LNSU board meeting.

D. Regan said we need a clear calculation of the costs or benefits of any consolidation solution. He can imagine some kinds of consolidation may not end up saving anything at all. If our biggest expense is staffing and we just maintain the same levels, we are not saving anything. But we may save if we aggregate in larger entities and purchase supplies together. M. Mathias said we could do that tomorrow. We already do almost all LNSU bus transportation together. There is a lot we and other districts are already doing. D. Regan said maybe we could expand that. M. Mathias said the SU's that send to GMTCC are already doing a lot of work to coordinate professional development. A study found that when SU's get bigger, it only saves 4% if they get over 3000 students. If she had had to compete for S. Cano's time on a recent student issue, it would have been worse for our school. She can't imagine having 20 districts competing for one director. We would have to have more vertical layers. B. Marshall said he has a friend on the Essex board who says the \$600K that could supposedly be saved if Essex and Chittenden Central combined is bogus. He said the voters of Vermont have consistently said they want what we have, even though they know it costs a lot. According to TurboTax, his tax burden is less than the national average for his income. (D. Taylor arrived at 8:22.) D. Taylor said Richard Westman talked about the growing burden on property tax, and how people are seeing their taxes go up even though school spending hasn't gone up so much. The problem is how funds are being collected and allocated. Different states fund education differently. B. Marshall said he would like to see how the total tax burden for the same income and property value compares from state to state. D. Taylor said in her experience, it is higher in other places. M. Mathias said the VT state constitution says the taxes to fund education will be paid in proportion to the ability of the individual to pay, which would justify using income tax rather than property tax.

J. Lipinski said it is important to have our charge for the long term committee down.

6. Discuss Retreat Follow-Up

B. Marshall asked if there should be another retreat to shift our focus more toward planning and vision. Before we go out and recruit people for a committee, we need to know what we're asking them to do. D. Regan said he thought that was a good idea. He said we have to devote time at upcoming meetings to discussing guiding principles as a regular agenda item. He said he thinks planning and vision lead the charge and infrastructural implications flow from planning goals. So he thinks we need a retreat for planning. J. Lipinski suggested a community retreat. He said he thinks town meeting would be a good time to promote it, so we should figure out a date before that. It could be in conjunction with some school activity. H. Moser said there is a group of parents that would be very interested in discussing the future of the school. J. Lipinski will come up with an idea and email it around, and maybe by the next meeting the board can come up with something.

B. Marshall said we agreed to do a policy piece at every meeting, but he forgot to include it on the agenda. He said we probably we need to go back to the minutes and see what we did previously regarding policies.

7. Discuss Charge(s) For Facilities/Planning/Vision Committee(s)

B. Marshall said the short term facilities committee recommended a small group to deal with near term issues. The vision was 3-4 people including Brian Rafferty, meeting on a monthly basis. J. Lipinski said he doesn't like that idea at all. If we need that, we're paying B. Rafferty way too much. M. Mathias said B. Rafferty does a great job. H. Moser said if we bring a couple of people in to be on a committee, they'll gain ownership of the school's problems. J. Lipinski said he thinks the reservoir of community participation is limited. We're paying someone we picked because he is very talented, and he trusts B. Rafferty's decisions. That may not be the best place to use up the community resource, at least not monthly. B. Marshall said he thought maybe there had been a little frustration on the part of committee members because they realized a lot of information they needed was right there, but not being reported systematically and regularly to the board. J. Lipinski said maybe B. Rafferty could do a monthly report. M.

Mathias said that wouldn't be a bad thing. She noted that the building is understaffed from a maintenance and custodial standpoint. D. Regan said for said little day-to-day things, he is happy for B. Rafferty to just inform M. Mathias, who can inform the board. He wouldn't mind having community members join B. Rafferty to make recommendations about deferred maintenance and sustainability measures. The magnitude of those issues is larger, and there are significant choices to be made. M. Mathias suggested perhaps that could happen every quarter. J. Lipinski said a report from B. Rafferty doesn't necessarily have to be to the board; it could just go in a binder for people who eventually want it to refer to.

8. Other

D. Taylor said she had met with Leslie Thompson, and recommends hiring her as a long-term sub for preschool, then kindergarten. D. Regan asked, does a long term sub like that get connected to other kindergarten teachers in a regular way? M. Mathias said yes, they all work together and have team meetings. She'll get a lot of support. All long-term subs do regular collaboration.

D. Taylor said M. Frederick wanted secretaries from all the schools to view copiers from the different vendors who bid for the copier contract. (D. Taylor left at 8:45.)

B. Marshall the said grant funding ax has started to fall. M. Mathias said the social services situation is going to profoundly impact schools. There will be a complete transfer of costs, which will impact general education kids massively. B. Marshall said he thinks agency heads are making cuts now ahead of whatever the legislature may do, because they are running out of money. M. Mathias said if mental health services for kids are shifted to schools, kids will not get better that way. Schools are not equipped to help kids who need serious psychiatric help. And such a shift has a profound impact on the rest of the organization. There was discussion about getting the message to Montpelier.

9. Discuss Charge(s) For Facilities/Planning/Vision Committee(s)

D. Regan returned to the subject of the role of B. Rafferty and/or community members in making facilities reports to the board. His sense was that for day-to-day repair needs we would be content with B. Rafferty continuing to convey the needs to M. Mathias, who would convey them to the board, but that we are considering bringing community members to join B. Rafferty in a small committee that might advise the board on what? Deferred maintenance and sustainability? B. Marshall said they could also advise on the parking lot. D. Regan said the steps B. Rafferty and others have taken to improve the parking lot have resulted in an enormous change for the better. B. Marshall said the board wants to hear from B. Rafferty if he sees a potential problem that will cost money in the future. M. Mathias said he knows that. She said she will ask B. Rafferty to give her a list of maintenance issues. Maybe once every 3 months would be often enough for a small group to talk about deferred maintenance kinds of issues. H. Moser said there is huge value in people knowing how much we're spending on maintenance.

10. Executive Session - Negotiations

J. Lipinski moved to enter executive session to discuss contract negotiations, and the motion was seconded and passed at 9:10. (K. Roberts arrived during the executive session.) The board consented out of session at 9:29.

11. Other

K. Roberts said she will be in Washington next week with Leahy, Sanders, and Welch for the VSBA's annual federal relations conference. She asked, is there anything we want to relay to them? M. Mathias said she will give K. Roberts an executive summary of her findings. K. Roberts said there will also be a legislative breakfast at GMTCC on Feb. 1. It is important that even if we don't speak as a single voice we go and say the proposals on the table are untenable. M. Mathias said she asked the tax commissioner, if our funding is going to be cut, which mandates are they going to take out? Will there be a moratorium on mandatory increases in AYP? It does not make sense to make us go up an additional 10% while dropping resources.

12. Adjourn

It was moved and seconded to adjourn at 9:38, and the motion was passed.

Items highlighted for follow-up:

D. Regan suggested we practice the town meeting presentation on the Monday before town meeting, even if no members of the public come to hear the information.

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UNAPPROVED