

Vergennes Union High School Board Meeting  
**Monday, November 9, 2009**  
Vergennes Union High School Library

Minutes

**Board**

K. Bristow  
L. Gutowski  
C. Cousineau  
N. Kamman  
R. Kerschner  
C. Wyckoff

**Administration**

C. Spencer  
E. Webbley  
P. Reynolds  
K. Cannon

**Guests/Visitors**

Karen Spear    Kaci Spear  
Lisa Rowell    Dan Rowell  
Lee Hodsden   Peter Maneen  
Bill Scott      Jay Stetzel  
J. Spear        D. Spear

**Call to Order** – The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m., by K. Bristow, Chair

**Minutes** of the October 12, 2009, meeting were approved as amended on a motion by N. Kamman and seconded by C. Cousineau. So voted and the motion carried. The amendment, under the Superintendent's report, is to correct the title of the VT Council on Rural Development.

**Public Communication:** Karen Spear spoke to the board regarding an issue with a letter she received concerning possible truancy of her daughter, Jazmin, who had been excused for five days due to a family matter. Chair Bristow suggested that an Executive Session be called but Mrs. Spear indicated that she was fine with discussing the issue in open session.

Mr. Webbley explained that the state requires letters be sent and is done as part of the tracking of student attendance. He indicated that the letter concerning Jazmin should have been “flagged” and not sent, and he apologized for the oversight. Discussion ensued. Chair Bristow suggested that Mrs. Spear talk with the administrators privately.

**Board Communication(s):** Chair Bristow reported that she and Superintendent O'Brien attended a Summit on Local Governance in Barre, which was sponsored by the VT Superintendents Association, the VT School Boards Association and the VT League of Cities and Towns. She noted that it was an interesting discussion and great to have all interested groups participating.

R. Kerschner indicated that he and others attended the VSBA Annual Conference last month. One of the speakers grew up in China and spoke about his research into public education in this country vs. Asian countries. He as authored a book that Mr. Kerschner has a copy of that he would be willing to lend to people, if interested.

N. Kamman commented that perhaps with the current number of student and staff absences, some thought be given to the two days prior to Thanksgiving. If there was no school those days it would give everyone time to get away from the building and everyone that might be ill. Business Manager Cannon indicated that numbers are being monitored daily and some conversation has taken place regarding that very idea.

**Cooperative Football Proposal:** K. Cannon distributed information concerning the proposed cooperative football team between VUHS and MAUHS for the fall of 2010. Peter Maneen explained that VPA has come up with the term “Cooperative Team” for small schools to join together for the purpose of fielding football (or any other sport) teams for next year. Mount Abraham is interested and they have the infrastructure in place, they just do not have enough students to continue fielding their teams. This would be a two-year commitment, should the Board approve the idea. VUHS would be responsible for transporting and supervising our students. A fee of \$5,000 would need to be paid for next year.

Mr. Maneen explained that if the proposal is approved by both boards, he will meet with Jeff Stetson, the A/D at Mount Abraham, to work out the details and send the proposal on the VPA for their approval. Discussion ensued relative to the \$5,000 and why it is needed, since the board does not pay for our students to play at Winooski. Chair Bristow indicated that a member-to-member agreement is different than this “cooperative” team. Mr. Maneen indicated that the intent is to give our students the opportunity to play and the program will be reviewed year to year. The fee would never be more than 50% of the program budget. Chair Bristow indicated that she would like an estimate of transportation costs and the \$5,000 is much less than the initial football proposal. She indicated that the board is in the same position as before, that the budget cannot support anything additional. L. Hodsdon distributed information from the Palmer’s concerning the conditioning program they ran this summer. He noted that he sees this proposal as a very positive step. R. Kerschner indicated that we need to look at fielding another sport in order to be in compliance with Title IX requirements. D. Rowell indicated that the group is 100% behind this proposal and indicated that the support is there.

**Reports to the Board: Student Representatives:** No students present this evening.

**Principals’ Reports** – Mr. Reynolds reported that Team Odyssey is ending its first Expedition this week with the UVM medical students. Team Millennium recently did its “hunger banquet” at the Parish Hall for the second year.

Student attendance has been down due to fevers/flu symptoms and staffing has been difficult because many of the substitutes also work in the other area school districts.

Two Middle School paraeducators have recently resigned; Nate Twichell has taken a position as Assistant Scientist Coordinator with the Sea Education Association and Ashley Bessette has opted not to return from maternity leave given the cost of daycare. Advertising has been done and interviews are taking place this week.

Mr. Webbley distributed copies of the VUHS Comprehensive School-wide Action Plan, which has increased in the number of pages due to the Title I requirements. The Title I requirements are listed on page one of the Plan. The Action Plan ties to the Process Monitoring and Program & Process Evaluation, which was also distributed. Mr. Webbley explained that both of these documents tie to the AYP piece. He reviewed the second document, explaining that the purpose is to establish the criteria for progress monitoring and program evaluation. Dr. Spencer commented that Power School will allow us to track cohorts. Discussion ensued relative to the answers to question #5 – “How do we link programs we have, outcomes from those programs, and the results we intend to get?” Dr. Spencer explained that we want to measure the results of all that we are doing. Mr. Webbley indicated that the plan is that student portfolios will be web-based, and that parents will have regular access to them. He pointed out the NEASC does not think the same way that we do. Dr. Spencer commented that we do not have the time or resources to do both the NEASC process and monitor our prioritized results regularly. Discussion ensued relative to NEASC vs. HSOM (High Schools On the Move). Mr. Webbley indicated that he had spoken to Dan Fogel, President of UVM and who is also Chair of the NEASC Board, and students will continue to be accepted without the NEASC accreditation. Discussion ensued. R. Kerschner indicated that he wants to have information on the web site and out to the community about this change and we need to show what we are replacing NEASC with! He asked that Mr. Webbley summarize the reasons for withdrawing from NEASC and provide a description of what we will do instead before the next meeting. Simply put, we will measure our results ourselves every year instead of having someone from outside come in every ten years. Chair Bristow indicated that the Board will vote on this issue in December. Mr. Kerschner indicated that he wants the public have the opportunity for input before the Board makes its decision.

In response to a question from R. Kerschner, Mr. Reynolds indicated that the 2009-2010 Student Handbook is still in the works.

C. Cousineau suggested that because of the play this weekend, the custodial staff spend some extra time in the lobby bathroom, since there is a hinge that needs replacing and some other issues.

**Hannaford Career Center Report:** C. Wyckoff reported that the Assistant Director is retiring in December and plans to consult part-time. The Board is hoping to find the funds to have a full-time Director.

**Approval of Bills:** Motion by L. Gutowski, seconded by N. Kamman, to approve bills in the amount of \$ 691,460.84. Ms. Gutowski reviewed the bills, prior to the board meeting. So voted and the motion carried.

**Checking Account for Athletic Department:** K. Cannon explained that Vergennes Variety needs to have a special account set up to deposit the money from the pull ticket sales into and then the money can be transferred into the Student Activities Account. This is just a formality to comply with the rules from the VT Liquor Control Board. Mr. Webbley commented that Peter Maneen did an excellent job over the weekend with the Region III soccer playoff game, which we hosted.

Motion by N. Kamman, seconded by L. Gutowski, to approve opening the account. So voted that the motion carried.

**Signature Changes Needed:** K. Cannon indicated that there are some signatures on the school lunch account from awhile ago and asked for permission to replace the names with the appropriate people, i.e. Ed Webbley and herself.

Motion by R. Kerschner, seconded by N. Kamman, to approve changing the signatures on the school lunch account. So voted and the motion carried.

**Wellness Policy/School Nutrition Guidelines & Implementation:** Copies of the Wellness Policy and the School Nutrition Guidelines (which have both been adopted) were distributed. Mr. Kerschner explained that they need to be implemented at each school. There is a Nutrition Assessment survey for each of the programs, based on the Guidelines that is in progress. The Wellness Committee is working on compiling the results and continues to meet every other month. On the off months, the food service staff from each of the building will meet. The goal is to get a baseline assessment and provide better nutrition for our students.

**Personnel: Approval of Winter Coaches**

Motion by L. Gutowski, seconded by N. Kamman, to approve the list of winter coaches as presented. So voted and the motion carried.

**Supervisor of Buildings & Grounds**

P. Reynolds reported that the position had been advertised, interviews conducted and the position offered today to Robert Worley, Sr.

Motion by R. Kerschner, seconded by L. Gutowski, to approve the hiring of Robert Worley as outlined. So voted and the motion carried.

**First Draft of FY '11 Budget:** K. Cannon distributed copies of the first draft of the budget, indicated that it contains staff salary and benefits ONLY, with the increases as follows: teachers were given a step increase according to where they are on the scale; support staff are at 4.25% (the last year of their contract); 4.25% for BC/BS, 10% for dental insurance, and administrators are at 2%. Ms. Cannon indicated that she is looking for direction from the Board as to how to proceed.

Discussion ensued relative to the second question. Chair Bristow indicated that she would like to hear input from the administrators relative to the affect of last year's actions on the current year. She asked that Ms. Cannon e-mail any pertinent information to the board.

Mr. Webbley spoke about scheduling and sharing teachers at both levels. Mr. Reynolds noted that the exploratories have about 25 students this year. In response to the question, Mr. Reynolds noted that teachers at both levels have one, seventy-five minute block per day without students.

**Special Meeting:** K. Bristow suggested that the board hold a budget meeting prior to the next regular board meeting. Discussion ensued and the meeting was scheduled for Monday, November 30 at 6:00 PM at the VUHS Library.

Chair Bristow reminded board members of the ANWSU Board meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup> at 7:00. The National Honor Society Induction is at 6:00 PM and all are invited to attend. It was requested that the NHS selection process be sent to the Board.

**Adjournment:** The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Sally A. Bushey  
Recording Secretary