

BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL BOARD

GARVIN LIBRARY

June 20, 2018

Present:

Board Members: Brent Abare, Sara Dennis, Paul Hazel, Julie Oliver, Wade Parker, Kelsey Root-Winchester, Bruce Stevens, Angeline Alley, Chair

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Scott Blood, Lori Blood

Members of the Public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 6:10 PM by Angeline Alley, Chair
- II. School Board Training by Vermont School Boards Association
 - A. Susan Holson, VSBA Director of Education Services, led Board Members in a Board Training entitled "Oversight or Overstep: Roles & Responsibilities"
 1. Roles: Board, Superintendent, Principal
- III. School Board Discussion of Options Moving Forward Under Act 46 (facilitated by third party mediator, Jennifer Knauer)
 - A. Understanding the Issues at Hand
 1. What is within this Board's power, and what decisions will the State Board be making?
 2. How do protect ourselves down the road?
 3. What does it mean in the short term, and what are the long-term risks for BMU as part of OESU?
 4. What should the Board's response be to the May 18th Secretary's proposal?
 5. Angeline Alley stated that BMU would like to keep our own Board under the SU
 6. Would like to challenge the Secretary's proposal
 7. If we are forced to merge, how do we work to keep those things that have been working?
 8. Would like to control our budget as much as possible
 9. What are the liabilities, the benefits, and what are the percentages of being successful in each path that we might want to fight for?
 10. To merge or to push back against this proposal?
 11. We want to keep our own district under the union district. Is this possible?
 12. This is the first of several meetings to try to figure this out
 13. How do we assess the risk of losing the high school? Other schools later on?
 14. If we accept the proposal, we lose the option of school choice
 15. If we reject the proposal, we can explore the option of school choice
 - a. Does this really make sense, because we'd be losing what is really important to us—a PreK-12 school/local access?
 16. Rejecting the proposal could entail school choice or develop an alternative
 - a. Keep our own district under the SU/keep our own Board and power

i. How would the State see this option?

ii. On August 15, 2018 this Board will go to the State Board to present our plan

b. How sustainable is this option?

c. If BMU went with choice, the State could join us with other choice districts, and we might not have our own Board

d. If we gamble and we lose, we don't have another recourse

17. If we accept the Secretary's proposal, what might the fall-out be? What do we think we might lose? Budget, high school, impact to the community, transportation, who would move here if no high school? What is lost to the community? Would other schools be prepared to take our students? Other regional impacts? What happens to 18/19 contracts?

18. Could request that the State Board take action at their July 18th meeting regarding whether BMU would be allowed to pursue school choice

B. Obtaining public input

1. On all of the options

2. Get input on would you support school choice or not? What are you worried the fall-out will be?

3. What do the partnerships look like if we accept the proposal? What do they look like if we don't?

4. What's best for the kids educationally? Holistically?

5. What options are really feasible?

C. What next?

1. Information on various items will be delegated to Board members at the next meeting

IV. Public Comment

A. What's best for our kids is keeping them together

B. We'd have a strong plan to present and highlight strengths in our plan

C. Timeline for school choice? Consider option of deferred school choice

D. What lawyers are available aside from the State Board?

E. If we opt for school choice, can we change our minds later? If we opt to go into OESU, would there be another chance to consider school choice? Disband Blue Mountain Union and reconstitute to PreK-8?

F. What happens to our Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors if they have school choice? What if they don't have enough credits?

G. How do we preserve our PreK-12? These kids are a community. What's best for our kids is to keep them together.

H. Amended AGS proposals can be submitted at any point in time. We should submit an amended AGS proposal ASAP and address each of the Secretary's points. Get the State Board to look at it before the August meeting. We need to prove that our merger into OESU will not produce the results that Act 46 is intended for. Look at what they chose as points in dismissing our first AGS proposal. If the district is in the process of a preferred structure, will this process be allowed to complete?

I. We will have to accept all the assets and liabilities. What we would have to accept in a unified district?

J. BMU sits on 53 acres, which would go into the unified district. Who would control it?

K. If we focus exclusively on making PreK-12 happen, we will end up with the State making the decision. Should we set up new union PreK-8 with choice high school?

L. Is going private an option? What other options?

M. Do we have a chance to save our whole school, or have we been thrown under the bus?

N. What about the families who cannot transport their children to a school further away?

O. Paul Jewett (Newbury Board Chair)--We need to hang together here. Newbury Elementary School is next on the list. We need to join together. We are trying to put together a meeting of all the Boards in the district. We must hold together. Newbury and BMU need to be allies.

P. Could we be side by side with Danville?

Q. Question to Angeline Alley: What can we do to help you? Answer: We will let you know at the next meeting.

V. Consent Agenda

A. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Kelsey Root-Winchester to approve the Board minutes of June 7, 2018. Motion voted on and carried with one abstention (Brent Abare)

B. No orders

C. Administrative Reports

1. Academic reports were hard to read, and it would be helpful if there were some comments about testing results

VI. Action Items

A. Motion by Paul Hazel, seconded by Julie Oliver to reject the Secretary's Proposed Plan under Act 46. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

B. Take Action on next steps in regards to Secretary's Plan

1. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Julie Oliver that the Board Chair write a letter to the State Board to request to be put on the agenda for the July 18th meeting pursuant to Title 16 706 (n) to request permission to hold a vote to operate as a PreK-8 school with high school choice. After discussion, the motion and second were withdrawn. Submitting an amended AGS will be added to the agenda for the next meeting, as well as a possible list of people who could write it. Angeline Alley will contact the VSBA to see how to proceed with this.

C. Appoint three OESU Board representatives

1. It was agreed by consensus that one person from each town would serve. Angeline Alley, Julie Oliver, and Judy Murray volunteered to serve on the OESU Board and were elected with one abstention (Angeline Alley)

D. Summer Meeting schedule

1. Meeting dates were set for June 27, 2018 with training at 6:00 PM and the Board meeting at 7:00 PM. The Board will also meet on July 11, 2018 at 7:00 PM

- VII. Correspondence—None
- VIII. Executive Session—None
- IX. Old Business: transition planning going forward
- X. Review “To Do List”
 - A. Act 46
- XI. Setting the Next Agenda--Done

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

The minutes are in draft format and are unofficial until formally adopted by the Board at a subsequent meeting.