

BLUE MOUNTAIN UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

GARVIN LIBRARY

September 5, 2018

Present:

Board Members: Angeline Alley, Chair; Sara Dennis; Paul Hazel; Judy Murray, Julie Oliver; Wade Parker; Bruce Stevens

Administration: Emilie Knisley, Lori Blood,

Members of the Public

- I. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Angeline Alley, Chair
- II. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Judy Murray to approve the minutes of August 22nd with the following correction: that Section V, J should read “\$67” instead of “over \$60”. Motion voted on and approved unanimously as corrected
- III. Presentation—Brian Emerson
 - A. Last year 5 BMU students received \$10,900 in scholarships from River Bend for more technical schooling, tools, etc.
 - B. All programs at River Bend lead to jobs, helping to keep people in the community, and make a good living
 - C. River Bend uses statistics from the State to offer programs that are needed in VT
 - D. A new program this year is teacher prep/teacher education because there is a projected teacher shortage in the near future
 - E. Several local business people spoke in support of River Bend
 1. Erik Volk, Executive Director of Cohase Chamber of Commerce
 2. Jeff Moore, General Manager of W R Chevrolet
 3. William Graves, Building Construction company
 4. Kevin Lawrence, Work Based Learning Coordinator at River Bend
 5. Paul Beaulieu, advisory board, business owner, and strong supporter
- IV. Correspondence
 - A. Letter from Jennifer Dube expressing concern about inappropriate behavior of a Board member (see attachment)
- V. Executive Session 313 a. (4)
 - A. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Sara Dennis to move into Executive Session at 7:25 PM. Motion voted on and approved unanimously
 - B. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Sara Dennis to exit Executive Session at 7:44 PM. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

VI. Action

A. Motion by Bruce Stevens, seconded by Judy Murray to publicly censure Brent Abare for violating the Board code of conduct and ethics and personal threats to Board members. We invite a public discussion regarding Mr. Abare's actions with him at the next meeting. Motion voted on and approved unanimously

VII. Administrative Reports

A. We will be transitioning to State mandated software at no direct cost to the School district. Cost will be spread throughout the state.

B. Angeline Alley commented on how nice the new cooler is

C. Special Ed services will be under the OESU in '19-'20. We have to make some decisions by October 15th as to what the model will look like. When we budget for '19-'20, it will be covered under OESU

VIII. Presentation by Chelsea students

A. Parrish Eiskamp and several students, formerly from Chelsea High School, spoke to the Board on how school choice has affected them

B. Chelsea students are now spread out over at least 6 schools and at VT Academy of Science and Technology at VTC

C. About two of these schools provide transportation from the center of town.

D. There has been a drop-off of the number of students, who are participating in after-school activities. For some, transportation is the issue.

E. Have found that more class options are available. However, getting recommendations for college are difficult to get at the new school because the teachers have only known them for a very short time.

F. Transportation was a reason why some students weren't able to go to the school of their first choice.

G. The closeness in the community is missing.

IX. Update on Act 46

A. Angeline Alley has reached out to State Board of Education Chair Krista Huling several times, but she has not responded

B. Angeline Alley share a Sept. 1st e-mail from Margaret McLean, suggesting next steps for fighting forced merger as a group. At this time, there is no cost to the district to be a part of this group. If the State agrees to leave us as a district, we can pull out at no cost. If our AGS is denied, the cost of litigation will be spread out over the alliance. Angeline will share the e-mail with Board members, and it will be discussed at the next meeting and action will be taken.

X. Public Participation

A. Community members shared their points of view

B. Concerns about debt and property

C. Appreciation expressed by several community members to Board members. Two community members also spoke, who did not agree with the Board's actions

D. Suggestion that parents of out-of-district students should be polled on their feelings

XI. Other Business

A. Over 360 came to Open House

B. Praised Beth Fraser's kinesthetic classroom, the only one in the state of VT. She also purchased some tables and chairs for her classroom with her own money. Beth is in the running for VT Teacher of the Year.

XII. Setting the Next Agenda

A. Policy Committee will meet on September 19th at 6:00 PM to discuss graduation requirements

B. Start discussion on debt and property

C. Discussion on the Alliance

The meeting adjourned at 8:37 PM

Respectfully submitted:

Nancy Perkins, Minutes Clerk

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

September 2, 2018

Angeline Alley
BMU School Board, Chair
2420 Rte 302
Wells River, VT 05081

Dear Angeline,

I am writing this letter to inform the Blue Mountain Union School Board Members of concerns I have with the actions of one of the BMU School Board Members, Brent Abare.

I am a parent of two high school students who have been enrolled at BMU since preschool. In the past year I have attended various BMU School Board meetings, as well as a recent Groton Select Board meeting. At each meeting I have personally observed many areas of concern with Mr. Abare. I have watched him degrade other school board members, report negative opinions to the public about school board actions or intentions, refuse to allow them speak in turn and aggressively yell at fellow board members, as well as community members. The specific incidences are numerous. I have been appalled at the lack of professionalism, blatant disrespect, manipulation of fact and opinion and inability (or unwillingness) to work cooperatively with his fellow board members.

In my opinion, it is imperative that each school board member work hard to represent their community, including our students. There are many situations that can, and will, arise where people will have differing opinions. However, it is essential that the process be respectful and productive in an effort to generate the most beneficial outcomes. Students are attending these meetings and experiencing this highly disrespectful behavior. My hope is that there can be some type of mediation so that these behaviors no longer continue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer Dube". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jennifer Dube