

**UNION #28 JOINT SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, January 18, 2017**  
**Final Minutes**

**Present:** Johanna Bartlett, Lauren Thomas-Paquin, Fred Steinberg, Sarah Dolven, Dick Baldwin, Bethany Seeger, Carla Halpern, Breta Petraccia, Tara Acker, Renee Tela; Dan Hayes, Chair; Prudence Marsh, Director of Student Support Services; Stephen Cass, Interim Director of Finance and Operations; Jennifer Haggerty, Superintendent.

**1. Meeting Called to Order by Dan at 6:01 P.M.**

**2. Public Hearings: None**

**3. Approval of the Minutes from September 19, 2016**

**TARA MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2016. DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS. (ONE ABSTENTION.)**

**4. Budget & Personnel Committee Update**

FY18 Union #28 Budget: Stephen updated JSC on the impact of increasing the Director of Finance and Operations salary to the top of its range (\$100,000); this would increase the overall budget by 2.42%. Dan explained that the B&P Committee recommended this increase. Renee wondered whether it was wise to have the salary so relatively low; it's lower than the other U#28 positions, and also seems low in comparison to surrounding districts, as confirmed by figures provided by Jennifer. Sarah noted that we're a small district; on the other hand, Jennifer pointed out that our Director prepares four End-of-Year Reports and attends numerous monthly meetings. Johanna agreed with Renee. Bethany thought the salary was suitable for the Valley, but also felt that there's a lot of driving over a big geographic area involved as well. Johanna thought people choose jobs as much for culture as for salary.

Dan asked Stephen what an increase to \$102K would mean for our budget: 2.77%. Dick noted that Aaron's salary apparently wasn't high enough to keep him here; Bethany and Dan replied that their impression was that Aaron left in great part because he was excited by the growth potential of the new position. Sarah said there have been four Directors since she's been involved; what might we be doing wrong to fail to keep people here? On the other hand, Leverett is experiencing significant financial stress now, so it's hard to simply advocate for a higher salary. Jennifer said there are other compensations we could offer that wouldn't have a financial impact. Dan asked if there might be \$2K somewhere in the budget we could cut to increase the salary without an overall impact. Jennifer said there might be some of that in the rent line; we've budgeted more than what rent has been for two years running.

Sarah said the change to the range sounded reasonable; it's important to try to attract the right person for the long term. Dick said we're kicking the can down the road financially; we'll have to address our problem with declining enrollment at some point. Johanna said the West Quabbin Regional School plan sounds like a dream, and a potential solution to these problems because we could attract out-of-district students with a farm and forestry program.

**JOHANNA MOVED TO CHANGE THE SALARY RANGE FOR THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS TO \$95K TO \$102K. DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

Dan asked whether reducing the rent line to its actual figure for the last two years would take us down to a 2.6% increase. Sarah wondered whether we still needed to budget for a postage meter rental; JSC commented that things are tough when you think of cutting postage. Stephen said reducing postage by \$500 and rent from \$7K to \$6K gets us to 2.51%. Jennifer explained U#28's 5-year IT plan, which includes updating equipment like routers and a server.

**JOHANNA MOVED TO APPROVE THE FY18 UNION #28 BUDGET AT \$579,002. DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

**5. Substitute Rates**

Jennifer said that each school has been talking about increasing substitute rates to make them more attractive. Rates would be changed as follows: non-certified teachers from \$70 to \$80, certified teachers from \$80 to \$90, retired teachers from \$80 to \$90, nurses \$120 to \$150 (also discussed \$130). B&P voted to increase \$10 across the board. ESC and SSC have voted the \$10 increase across the board, while SRSC and LSC have been waiting for more budget information. Jennifer insisted that no school district within U#28 should be paying more than the others; that would go against our culture.

**6. Director of Finance and Operations Search Process**

Dan noted that we kept a record of the past search process since we thought it was very successful. Johanna suggested that we might want to consider being not as all-inclusive as we were before, since it's hard to get such a large committee together (she admitted she was a primary advocate for the larger, all-inclusive committee last time). Dan said people seemed to feel good about the process, and that it wasn't all that unwieldy. Breta suggested that different configurations of representatives might operate at different stages of the process. Last time, the pool started with eight candidates that were narrowed down to three. Bethany asked whether the candidates offer a short presentation. Jennifer said that in a search committee she was familiar with, the second interview round consisted of candidates preparing entry plans and taking questions; we might suggest a different kind of presentation as we see fit.

**7. Director of Finance and Operations Search Committee**

Dan asked for volunteers to sit on the search committee. Johanna wondered whether school committees couldn't do the screening; that would reduce the challenges to getting the committee together for the interview process. Dan asked for volunteers to carry out the screening process at Central Offices. Lauren, Dick, Sarah, and Renee volunteered. JSC will decide on a ranking mechanism for this process. Bethany suggested that Principals be given the opportunity to weigh in on the candidates as well. Jennifer said one Principal could sit on the interview committee and share out the proceedings at the semiweekly Leadership Team meetings. Dan expressed misgivings about opening up the process too much, which would make the process unwieldy. Breta asked how closely the position works with town boards; Jennifer said not on a

daily or weekly basis, but significantly during the budget process. Dan confirmed that school committee chairs will work to find town representatives to sit on the interview committee, while Jennifer will work to get administrative representatives. Jennifer will also set up the timeline. The interview process will take 4-6 evenings. The job description has been extensively reviewed by B&P, Jen, and Aaron before he left.

## **8. Superintendent's Goals**

Jennifer presented JSC with her goals; she follows the same process that teachers and Principals follow, based on a state standards. Her goals focus on four items: universal design for learning, developing a strategic plan, working with Chip Wood on building adult communities in schools, and participating in the Rural Schools Coalition lobbying group.

Universal design for learning helps address learner variability in the classroom; it focuses on the why, what, and how of learning to tailor education to the needs of individual students. Crafting a strategic plan will provide a unified set of goals as well as tools to measure progress toward them, like a roadmap for the Union. Building adult community is a training- and coaching-based professional development model that is based on the idea that the quality of social relationships among adults working in the school is critical to delivering effective education. Finally, rural schools face unique challenges and offer unique opportunities to students, and rural Superintendents are starting to make these known at the state level through advocacy.

Johanna said that ever since Jennifer started working here, Jennifer's goals have been held dear by the school committees; they reflect our culture and our values, and Johanna thanked her for her hard work and commitment. Prudy echoed this sentiment by praising Jennifer for the ways she makes herself approachable and supportive in each of the schools; she's very hands-on and human.

**JOHANNA MOVED TO ACCEPT JENNIFER'S GOALS. CARLA SECONDED.  
UNANIMOUS.**

## **9. School Updates**

Dan plugged the Collaborative for Educational Services.

Wendell / New Salem: Carla said SRS had a presentation on alternative seating recently; several grades are adopting this to help learning for individual students. Also, students having trouble with fidgeting are starting to use squeeze balls, elastic bars at the bottom of the desk, and even gum to help them focus. Our budget looks comfortable, and we just moved to standard space report cards. We also had a beautiful Winter Concert that was well attended and very moving; it was standing room only. The instrumental music program is expanding, including a Swift River Chorale. Christine Heard has been coming back to do a cooking class with Preschoolers, and our 100-Mile Club is still going strong. The Rabbit Run might become a school-sponsored event next year.

Leverett: Tara said that LES updated its Social Media Policy recently; we have to prepare to manage and control content on social media accounts associated with the school. The Talent

Show is coming up next Friday. Sarah reported they held a Peace and Community Building assembly recently that focused on service to community. There's some money available from the DCR for trail improvements around the school. Exciting school projects are coming up soon in several grades.

Shutesbury: Lauren reported that Circus Smirkus came to SES for the Artist-in-Residence program; they taught kids some fun physical skills. There are a lot of MCBA activities going on now, including a lunchtime book club. We also have alternative seating in several grades. Fred said we haven't discussed social media policy yet because Shutesbury still lacks broadband. (Bethany noted that LES had to update one of its policies so that G-Suite could be used in the school.) Dan said the moose mascot is going strong and we have new playground equipment. Lauren said the newsletter always carries news of moose sightings.

Erving: Renee reported that the 100-Mile Club has started at EES; they're going to start taking trips to some of the numerous DCR trails in the area, and walking times are expanding. The Cookie Exchange, a big deal in Erving, was a great success. The Fifth Grade is doing a lot of Math Nights, talking about new learning strategies with families. Scott Bastarache added that this is a fantastic event; the students were the teachers modeling what they learn in the classroom for their parents. Teachers from the Gill-Montague school district have been reaching out to collaborate on this event and on the math teaching at EES.

Jennifer reported that she and Prudy took a class recently out in Dunstable and received high praise for what the U#28 schools are doing. Prudy added that she's been working with Polly Wagner and other teachers to develop a course called the Equitable Math Class that complements the principles of universal design for learning. There's a core group of teacher participants who are learning how to shift the approach to mathematics – not the curriculum, which is already excellent – so that every child feels important and the focus is on true learning.

## **10. BDDA – Emergency Appointment of Acting Superintendent Policy**

Dan noted that B&P will be looking at negotiating Jennifer's next contract; the current one expires in 2018.

Dan then explained that this policy establishes a plan for continuance of leadership in case something happens to the Superintendent. Jennifer explained several minor changes to the policy as originally written, including that there need be no more specific definition of incapacitation, and that a majority of the JSC can declare an emergency.

Carla noted that we are changing “his or her” in this policy to “their” to be gender inclusive.

**CARLA MOVED TO REVISE POLICY BDDA – EMERGENCY APPOINTMENT OF ACTING SUPERINTENDENT POLICY TO READ AS PRESENTED BY JENNIFER. DICK SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**

## **11. Future Items**

- a. Next Meeting Date – March 20, May 15

Dan thanked the Leverett representatives for their civil and sincere efforts to work through the disagreement with Shutesbury on the assessment method.

Jennifer reported that the buzzer system has been installed, a critter problem has been dealt with, and other small maintenance has been done by U#28 and Erving personnel. It's important to watch the growth of the bittersweet over the side entrance. She also explained the work that Chip Wood does with the teachers and other school personnel to help us build trusting adult communities.

Dan thanked Stephen for all his work on the budget and for answering JSC's complicated questions on the fly. Jennifer said he was a trooper; he's been fantastic at learning on the go.

## **12. Adjournment**

**SARAH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 8:05. BETHANY SECONDED. UNANIMOUS.**