

**Middletown Springs Board of School Directors
(Regular & Reorganizational) Meeting
Date: March 5, 2015 Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Middletown Springs Elementary School**

OFFICIAL MINUTES

Present: Clarence Haynes, Meredith Morgan, Christopher Smid, Sarah Haley, Jennelle Carr (Board Members). Also present: Joan Paustian (RSWSU Supt.), Louis Milazzo (Business Mgr.), Susan Rosso (Recording Secretary). Rick Beal (Principal) arrived at 9:10PM. Public Present: Robin Chesnut-Tangerman (left at 8:55PM).

1. Call to Order **(Action)** (The Superintendent calls the meeting to order and requests nominations for Chair; once the Chair is elected, s/he may take over the meeting).
Supt. Paustian called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Changes, Deletions, Additions to the Agenda:

- Add under Executive Session" Discussion of Administrator's Contract Renewal & Personnel Issue.
- Add Discussion with Local Legislator, Robin Chesnut-Tangerman.

3. Reorganization of the Board: **(Please note: All new or re-elected Board Members must be sworn in by the Town Clerk prior to this meeting).**

a. Election of Officers:

i. Chairman

Supt. Paustian requests nominations for Board Chair. Christopher Smid nominated Clarence Haynes for Chair, Sarah Haley seconded; elected 4-0; C. Haynes abstained.

ii. Vice Chairman

Christopher Smid nominated Meredith Morgan for Vice Chair, Sarah Haley seconded; Meredith Morgan elected 4-0; M. Morgan abstained.

iii. Clerk

Meredith Morgan nominated Sarah Haley for Clerk, Christopher Smid seconded; Sarah Haley elected 4-0; S. Haley abstained.

b. Identify Schedule for monthly meetings (*previously the 2nd Thursday at 6PM*)

By consensus, MSD meetings will continue to take place the second Thursday of each month at 6:00PM.

Appoint (3) RSWSU Board Representatives

It was agreed by consensus that Meredith Morgan, Christopher Smid, and Clarence Haynes will serve as Representatives, and that Sarah Haley and Jennelle Carr will serve as Alternates.

c. Appoint RSWSU Subcommittee Representatives:

i. Systems Management

Clarence Haynes agreed to serve on the Systems Management Committee.

ii. Finance

Sarah Haley and Chris Smid agreed to serve on the Finance Committee.

iii. Human Resource

Sarah Haley agreed to serve on the Human Resources Committee.

iv. Act 153

All board members would like to serve on the Act 153 meeting. Meredith Morgan and Chris Smid will serve on the committee; other members may also attend these meetings.

v. Negotiations (Teachers) and (Support Staff)

Clarence Haynes and Meredith Morgan agreed to serve on the Support Staff Negotiations Committee and Jennelle Carr and Clarence Haynes agreed to serve on the Teacher Negotiations Committee.

d. Affirm Roberts Rules of Order *(as required per statute)*

By consensus, it was agreed that the Board will continue to operate under Roberts Rules of Order.

e. Identify Media Sources of Record *(identifies where agendas are sent, previously Rutland Herald, Manchester Newspapers, Peg TV and WVNR)*

Media sources will be *Manchester Newspapers, Peg TV, and WVNR.*

f. Identify locations where warnings/agendas are posted *(previously Town Clerk's Office, School and Post Office – also CO and RSWSU and MSES Website)*

It was agreed by consensus to post warning/agendas at the Town Clerk's Office, the School, and the Post Office, as well as at Central Office and on the RSWSU and MSES websites.

g. Appoint Truant Officer *(if none appointed, defaults to local law enforcement)*

Clarence Haynes agreed to continue serving as Truant Officer.

h. Other Re-Organizational Business *(as appropriate)*

None

Clarence Haynes moved to adopt the actions of the above Reorganization & Appointment items, Sarah Haley seconded; motion carried 5-0.

4. Discussion with Local Legislator, Robin Chesnut-Tangerman

Mr. Tangerman states that the policies being created in the legislature are still open to change due to budgetary, ideological, and other reasons and that he is here to listen and get the Board's perspective. Clarence Haynes states that some of the proposals will hurt our school. The proposed elimination of the Small Schools Grant in particular will have a negative impact. Mr. Haynes stated that when Act 160 came about to provide educational equality; this took into account that small schools cannot be as efficient as larger ones, so the small schools grant was designed to help "level the playing field." Now, small schools are being targeted for their educational spending. We are right on track with everyone else in providing opportunities; our smaller student population results in higher per-pupil costs. Mr. Haynes also mentioned that money is being taken from the State Education Fund to pay for the VT Community High School. Mr. Haynes believes that the cost of educating inmates should be taken from the Corrections budget. Profits from the VT Lottery are also slated to be given to other entities besides the education fund. He also stated that the legislature should know that communities value their schools and school choice. Supt. Paustian states that although consolidation is being pushed by the state, there is no evidence that consolidation will save money. Districts and SUs are trying to be as efficient as possible. We are working to save money now; Mr. Haynes says he doesn't know how forcing consolidation is going to help. Our entire SU does not have the minimum 1,100 students per district being proposed by the state. Our elementary school budget has

remained essentially level-funded for the past three years; the costs for secondary and special education continue to rise and are not controllable at the local level.

Mr. Tangerman stated that last fall when he was campaigning and knocking on doors, he found that around 80% of the people he spoke to believe their property taxes are too high, whether or not they have small or large schools and school choice or designated high schools. Supt. Paustian states that schools now need to support kids in ways that used to be done by families or social agencies. Needs of children coming to school are much greater and we need to work to have them feeling safe, warm, and well-fed before they are ready to learn. Mr. Haynes stated that there has been a shift of costs to the education fund from the general fund. Mr. Tangerman shared that the State administration is trying to respond to taxpayers concerns that taxes are too high—education costs too much; everything costs too much. Supt. Paustian says that enrollment has declined and schools are blamed for this. Families are leaving Vermont for better economic opportunity. She has seen industry and businesses move away from VT; we cannot hope to keep our children here if they (and their families) cannot look forward to jobs. Companies that try to come here face so many problems between Act 250 and all the hoops they must jump through. They can cross the border into NY and have their permits within weeks (not years). We can't keep chasing families away. We need business and jobs in order to attract families and keep them in our state.

Mr. Haynes stated that if the money that used to go into the education fund were to be restored, property taxes would decrease. He also stated that the Board needs to know that merging or consolidating will increase educational opportunities and save money before they act. The notion of education spending being out of control is a fallacy; costs are rising no higher (and sometimes less) than government or other costs. The shifting of costs from human service agencies and churches to schools has increased greatly. Should income taxes pay for education or should property taxes? Mr. Tangerman has been to a number of presentations by Rebecca Holcombe, Deputy of Education. She explained how larger secondary schools can offer more courses and opportunities than small ones so consolidation would benefit the students and reduce costs. There are many options to consider. The Board thanked Mr. Tangerman for coming to meet with the Board. Mr. Tangerman said he was glad to do so and would be returning in the future.

5. Consent Agenda: **(Action)**

i. Approval of Minutes: February 2015

Sarah Haley moved to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2015 Board Meeting, Christopher Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

b. Superintendent's Report

Supt. Paustian distributed copies of an article entitled "Switch & Bait" written by a board member in VT. A former high-ranking NEA employee is now working with school boards to assist them with negotiations. There is a training session being held that she encourages board members to attend. All SU budgets passed.

c. Principal's Report

Mr. Beal shared that he attended a NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) course meeting earlier this evening. He stated that the teachers all participated in the last day of the Winter Sports Program. MSES has applied for a BEST (Act 230) grant which, if received, will be used to implement VTPBIS (VT Positive Behavior Interventions & Support) in the school. A request has been made to have Norm Etkinds complete a feasibility analysis of renewable heating systems.

d. Business Manager's Report

i. Financial Statements

Mr. Milazzo pulled together a good deal of information regarding FY16. The first chart he distributed covered per pupil spending and the estimated tax rate before and after the CLA is applied for all districts in

Rutland County for comparison and discussion. He also handed out a sheet listed our budget amounts, student counts, and educational spending over the past seven years. Discussion on these figures ensued. Clarence Haynes moved to approve the Consent Agenda, Sarah Haley seconded; motion carried 5-0.

6. Approve Warrants: **(Action- read into the minutes as officially approved)**

- a. Warrant #205 in the amount of \$86,048.24 dated 2/4/15
- b. Warrant #206 in the amount of \$35,252.88 dated 2/18/15

Clarence Haynes moved to approve Warrant #205 in the amount of \$86,048.24 dated 2/4/15 and Warrant #206 in the amount of \$35,252.88 dated 2/18/15, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

7. General Public Comments **(Listen & Defer Action to Future Meeting)**

None

8. Old Business: **(Itemize Subjects for Deliberation & Possible Action)**

a. Henderson Fund

Supt Paustian expressed concern about Henderson Fund distributions. As required, she, Clarence Haynes, and Carl Haynes met and selected three students some time ago and recommended payments of \$500 each. The trustees sent a letter to the Supt. stating that they would be awarding \$375 to two students. Supt. Paustian will pursue this with the Trustees.

b. Governance

Chris Smid asked about the last SU meeting with VSBA Representative Harry Frank; and if MSES is still pursuing possible changes to governance. The Supt. will send Chris Smid the meeting minutes. Dr. Paustian advises that we write a grant proposal to do a study of consolidation options. Chris Smid wants the Board to move ahead with a study and be proactive.

9. New Business (Receive Information & Possible Action):

a. FY16 Staffing

Supt. Paustian stated that to comply with the CBA, she needs to advise teachers of RIFs (reductions in force) by April 1, and by statute needs to transfer the Special Educator from MSES to the RSWSU.

Clarence Haynes moved to authorize Supt. Paustian to RIF the .2 Teacher and the Special Educator, Chris Smid seconded; motion carried 5-0.

b. Follow up on Town Meeting

None

10. Policies **(Approval or Input) :**

None

11. Action on Personnel Contract: **(Action, if applicable)**

None

12. Set Next Regular Board Meeting: **(Action)** (Anticipated Carousel meeting, April 27, 2015 at 6 PM at MSES.

By consensus, the next MSD Board Meeting is set for Monday, April 27, 2015 at 6:00PM at MSES. The SU portion of the meeting will take place first, followed by the individual board meetings.

13. Executive Session 1 V.S.A. § 313 (1-9) (a) (b) **(Discussion & Possible Action)** (as warranted) for the Administrator's renewal, and a personnel issue.

Sarah Haley moved to have the Board enter Executive Session at 10:10PM, seconded by Jennelle Carr; motion carried 5-0.

Clarence Haynes moved to have the Board exit Executive Session at 10:34PM, seconded by Sarah Haley; motion carried 5-0.

Jennelle Carr moved to have the Board offer Rick Beal a three year extension of his Principal contract effective 7/1/2015, seconded by Sarah Haley; motion carried 5-0.

14. Other Lawful Business **(Information Gathering Only)**
None

15. Adjournment **(Action)**
Chris Smid moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:36PM, seconded by Sarah Haley; motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Rosso