

Where are we as a board? As we work to build consensus around norms for how we operate and for board member behavior, one thing we might agree upon right now is that many questions have arisen since we last met. In an effort to help answer some, I will briefly describe my process for working on agendas. At our next meeting, our board will be working on a variety of issues. I have attached relevant materials, which I hope can aid our discussions.

Agendas:

Generally, I meet with Brigid to discuss the agenda before it is finalized. We look at the major topical items the board needs to address moving forward. We reflect on past meetings in an effort to identify other issues that we believe should be considered or reconsidered by the group. We also take input from board members regarding topics they would like to see on the agenda.

After our last meeting I received several follow up emails suggesting items for the agenda.

1. Garrett asked a second time that we discuss having Harwood student council representatives sit in our meetings once a month. The last time they attended was during the budget process and they have not returned because “they were taken aback by the behaviors of board members and audience at meetings.”
2. Peter emailed to ask that we address public comment. I have had several other people ask about this topic. Given that we want to allow for public comment without derailing the rest of our agenda at meetings, when should it appear on the agenda and what is the expectation for how board members handle this segment of the meeting?
3. Maureen asked that we discuss board roles.
4. Alex asked that we discuss the recent emails and how we set agendas.
5. There were several requests for follow up on PBL reporting.

Brigid and I had already decided to include many of these topics on the agenda for our next meeting.

HUUSD policy covers many of these subjects. I've listed what seem to be the most relevant below. I have referenced other materials that might provide further clarification.

Pertaining to 1 & 2 above: Policy C3 (Public Participation at Board Meetings) and Robert's Rules of Order (RONR), which were written to encourage civil debate. A document from The Vermont League of Cities on Towns provides guidance on public comment.

Pertaining to 3 above: Policy C10 (Board Standing Committees), C5 (Board Relations with School Personnel), and the VSBA code of ethics, which most of us recently agreed to adopt. RONR state that recommendations coming from committees must be formally moved and voted upon. All this and other policies should be considered by the board in terms of its process, especially as concerns many topics: public meeting laws, subcommittees, individual board member requests for information from administration, how the resulting information is disseminated, how we handle information researched on an unsolicited basis and produced by individual board members or members of the public, local councils, and PBL reporting.

Pertaining to 4 above: Policy C1 (Board Meeting Agenda Preparation and Distribution). The following is from the Vermont Secretary of State's Guide to Open Meeting Laws, “In 2014 the Vermont legislature clarified that a public body is not meeting if members are exchanging emails “for the purpose of scheduling a meeting, organizing an agenda, or distributing materials to

discuss at a meeting, . . . Two members of a five-person board may meet without the need for public notice.” How does our group feel about side discussions? How do they impact full board discussion? So that everyone at the table has the same information, I have attached the text of the emails traded last week, including ones on which not all board members were CC’d. Additionally, the administration was not privy to this discussion, yet they work with us in the board room. One issue raised by these emails is: how do we treat communications we get as individuals from community members? If there is a uniform expectation, what is it?

Regarding PBL reporting, in addition to the policies already mentioned, policy G1 (Curriculum Development and Coordination) and H2 (Parental Involvement). This is a topic we know we will be discussing in greater depth and with more time at a May meeting.

Document List:

Policies C1, C3, C5, C10, G1, H2

Vermont Secretary of State Guide to Open Meeting Laws

(<https://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/786069/oml-rev-sept-2016.pdf>)

VLCT News Reprint, “How Much Public Comment Must We Allow Under the Open Meeting Law?” (<http://www.vlct.org/assets/Resource/ATL/2015/ATL-public-comment.pdf>)