

**HARWOOD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2017 6:00-9:30 P.M.
HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY**

Amended & Approved Minutes

Attending Members: Christine Sullivan, Jill Ellis, Peter Langella, Maureen McCracken, Rosemarie White, Garrett MacCurtain, Alex Thomsen, Jim Casey, Alycia Biondo, Gabriel Gilman, Sam Jackson, Rob Williams, Heidi Spear, Caitlin Hollister.

Central Office Admin: Brigid Nease, Michelle Baker

Public: Denise Goodnow, Tom Drake, Jean Berthieume, Stephanie Hudak, Tammy Kolbe, Kim Laidlaw, Chris Keating, Valerie Bigalow, Kathleen Dempsey Clough, Marie Schmukal, Doug Mosle, Justina Boyden, Liz Belknap, Jean Goldhammer. Lisa Atwood, Ray Daigle, Donarae Dawson, Duane Pierson, Tammy Koller, Mark Fleckenstein, Jessie Veres, Beth Abbott-Koch, Jeremy Gulley, Marie Schmukal,

1. Meeting called to order by Chair Christine Sullivan at 6:15.
2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda:

Alycia asked that letter written to the HUUB from Tammy Kolbe be included with the minutes. Also letter from Warren Board member to be presented to board. Would like to have opportunity to discuss issues brought by Brigid at the last meeting.

Discuss budget as a whole, allow discussion from Board and debate, and then allow public comments. Deliberate on each of the items and then vote.

Would like clarification on open meeting rules - could be handled under work group reports.

Put unfinished business on agenda at top of the next agenda.

Suggestion to have public comment at beginning of discussion.

3. Action Items

A. Approve Meeting Minutes of 1/4/2017. (Change "Heidi's letter" in the minutes to "the Fayston's School Board Letter".) **Rosemarie moved to approve minutes as appended, seconded by Alycia. Motion carried.**

4. Discussion Items

A. FY18 Budget Discussion Continued: Review Expenditures, Revenues and make decisions based on the List of Undecided Items

Christine discussion on process: suggest board spend time processing and reflecting and how hard change is; work on ways to make meetings more civil. Board Discussion: generally work from recommendation or motion. During discussions, work around the table, set time limits based on discussion, people wishing to speak should wait for last person to finish. Comments to be limited to two rounds. Should be acting as a unit, board business only be discussed at table. Votes from members for different towns carry a different weight in approving.

Public: Stand, state name, two minutes, stick to topics being discussed, respectful and appropriate tone. Purpose of comments is to have items clarified

Michelle report of budgets: changes in staffing, in level service budget. Retirement notifications included in this budget are two teachers and another staff member from Waterbury. Result for level service is 1.5% instead of 1.6%. See Budget information on the HUUSD tab of the Central Office website.

Discussion of fund balance:

Michelle discussed this with Attorney Paul Giuliani. If the voters take no action, by default it is put into next year's budget. Since there is no local budget to put this in, any fund balances can be assumed by HUUSD. Voters could ask that fund balances divert to other uses. Case can be made that these fund balances are charged to the HUUSD with no vote from individual towns. Administration recommends that this amount of the fund balances be given to the HUUSD for Maintenance Reserve. This will have no affect on tax rate. Funds in reserve not spent are carried forward each year.

Level Service Budget combined comes to \$35,730,555. With changes proposed - combined total comes to \$36,144,313 or 2.7% results in Estimated Homestead Tax rate of 1.65, with incentive, will be 1.55. Results in savings for towns. Also includes detailed revenues. Concludes overall picture at this time.

Brigid review of proposed changes to level service budget by Administration: Vt. Law is specific about what her job is. Superintendant makes no decisions alone. Every issue is deliberated and agreed upon by the Board. Class size policy is from Vermont Law.

In response to Warren Board, discussion of class size in the 5/6 grades to reduce teacher. Also have a full time special educator devoted to these classes. In Fayston, reduction making a 1-2 classroom of 19; have support educators, SLP and special educator devoted to working with these children also. Also, on-staff sub issue – because towns merged, this position will have to be part of the union support staff salary and benefits. No longer cost effective. Position has turned

over 8 times since 2007. Showed data on when teachers are out and other subs were needed. Also data sheet on Student Service Staff Summary. If some special jobs are not full time, teacher is shared with other schools in the district.

Boards do not staff schools. VSBA teaching guide and other organizations and boards pass the bottom number. They do not approve teacher by teacher or support staff by support staff.

Board Response:

Gabe: need more information on Gateway Science expense:

Sheila to speak to this question: K-12 science program (k-5 already implemented) – Gateway is in the 3rd phase of implementing. Addresses next generation science standards. Blended curriculum, delivered through on-line modules. **Gateway program:** program needs PCs as platform to operate, can't use Chrome Books because some things will not work. Cost includes 20 PC carts and devices needed to operate program. May be able to bring costs down a little later on. Projected out to 5 years. Durable supplies that need to be purchased \$2800, consumable \$9100 and computer needs, \$11000. Training costs covered by grant. Nine levels to be implemented over the next 5 years, includes teacher training and professional development. Nationally implemented, highly regarded, counts towards Professional Development hours for teachers. All training costs come through the grant funding. At K-5, program addresses all science standards. May need more at the high school level. Teachers seem happy with the program.

Garrett: 1.6 language position in the original budget. Where did this go? Need to do research study to explore best practices, etc. and use data to drive this decision. **Discussion:** May need to hear from middle school teachers to learn how effective this would be. Need to explore this issue for equity of opportunity for all schools. More in favor of pooling and sharing. Can add a resource to get to implement this by next year? Whole schedule would need to change. Harwood has had to make adjustments in curriculum for students coming from CBMS and children from Valley. Thinks this needs to be addressed. CBMS has kids starting from a disadvantage. This is an inequity and needs to be fixed correctly. Best action would be to advise Brigid to create a study to bring back information. Interesting to have data in general on the language issue and class size, and how kids in different schools compare as they come to Harwood. Show data on the website as each school compares. Suggest admin work on equity at middle schools in general and in language in particular. CBMS would have to work on change in schedule. Address all inequities – music, language, etc. – suggest that right now is not the time to do this.

Maureen: encouraged by what tax rates look like. Also getting the benefit of the incentives. Wanting to go lightly on major cuts but not wanting to go lightly on things that are needed. Not inclined to level service.

Rob: If this were normal budget year, would be ecstatic with these numbers.

Christine: concern when board needs to make the staff cut and they don't do it, what happens when it's another year, a cut is needed, and another district says, "Fayston got a pass last year and why can't we." The only way to afford this is by taking cuts when they are needed,

Heidi: moving forward with good intentions, hope to continue with this. Fayston School is an HUSD school and community. Concern is using this particular lens to make resource cuts. If prepare for declining enrollment, will get declining enrollment. Making cuts by school, a slippery slope. Not looking to undermine the interests of other students. Undermining quality is an issue in our country, stay open minded. Does not make sense to cut anything in Fayston School at this time based on equity or resources. If only look at class size, very misleading. Not all students require the same resources. Have two schools with the fewest resources – Fayston and Warren. Spending less per pupil. Without developing plan and strategy, can't keep eye on the prize. Taxes are determined by total expenditures. Need to boost enrollment and not short change any of our students.

Jill: Brigid is here to provide information and make recommendations. Board is responsible for voting on budget – board is taxed to make informed decisions. Need to find out best practices from all schools. Our responsibility is that we make decisions but we have to do this with limited information. Need to show communities that we are a unified board and that we don't make a decision that is lacking thought.

Rob: leading with a scarcity mentality, not with an abundance mentality. What if focus is on school choice and the ability to bring new students from the south? Think about the abundance.

Alycia: Line between what we're doing locally and what we're doing on this HUUSB. All want what's best – advisory board will be formed in each town – trying to figure out what is best. Alycia read letter from Warren School Board: concern with staff cuts for 2017, concern for future. Look at stories behind the numbers. Survey numbers should not be part of FY18 budget numbers. Urge new board to reflect what this school represents.

Public Comment:

Kim Laidlaw: has clarifying question: if 5 families move into Fayston or if more kids come in would a new teacher be hired? Yes. Revolving comment about teachers coming and going. Have awesome teachers – would be hard to replace. Was told that there would not be any drastic changes or cuts made.

Tammy Koller: letter to all, discussion about equity. Equity not reduced to one metric. Need more time to respond to everything. Stand back and develop

framework for making hard decisions that community can support. Short changing selves if not taking the issue of equity seriously.

Brigid: respect any decision that board will make. Not even enough time to discuss everything. May have to change perspective based on board decisions. Have spoken little about Harwood Union HS. Facility in great need in repair. Need to address things for the next budget year – will have many issues. Will be paying more than just interest on Warren bond next year so expenses will be higher. Will have to be addressing more issues of budget as we go forward.

Motion made by Garrett to add 1 FTE for world language program moving forward, seconded by Maureen. Discussion: Garrett has discussed this issue as he is on Harwood board. There is an inequity of kids entering Harwood depending on whether coming from CBMS or from the Valley. Kids entering Harwood should come with the same background. Tom Drake: 5,6,7,8 kids have trimester in Spanish. Also difference in 5th and 6th grades coming into CBMS. What gets taken out of schedule? Send kids to ski from CBMS, but Harwood has drama – equity different in many areas. **Tom Drake:** Adding language is doable, would have to think about it. **Heidi:** differences in sustainability program, is it about priorities, equity, etc.? 1/6th of the year (split with tech ed.) Replaced family consumer sciences; it's a science extension. Not a replacement for language. **Jill:** to implement anything new need to time to establish. Would it be more fiscally responsible to put together the data and vision and plan this out? **Tom:** Need more time to put this together – start in TBPS. **Peter:** need to come from bottom up (ask administration what is best). Should come from Curriculum team. **Maureen:** it's a core thing and really necessary. **Jim:** this was brought up in the original budget. Agree that it is important. Need to start in TBPS. Agree with Garrett and Maureen. **Alex:** it's an easy thing to address. Need a comprehensive program but next year will have kids going into Harwood unprepared. It's a clear equity issue and could be addressed in a workable way. **Motion failed.**

Christine moved to task administration with an eye towards doing research on World Language for TBPS & CBMS. Maureen second. Motion carried.

Gabriel move to add budget for Granville Bus, Alycia seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

Rosemarie moved to include the Gateway Science Program as part of the fy17 budget, seconded by Garrett. Gabe: suggest think about things not thoroughly explored. Could defer and see if this could be less expensive later. **Christine:** improving educational opportunities. Administration has done their research. **Gateway Piece:** Harwood ready to move on this and held off last year because CBMS was not able to do so. Waited for this year for CBMS to get on

board. **Heidi:** falls into bucket of strategic opportunity. **Motion passed unanimously.**

Gabe moved to add technology line item to Warren School, seconded by Caitlin. Motion Carried.

Alycia moved to reduce Warren .5 FTE in Music Art program, seconded by Alex . Two nays votes (Rosemarie and Alycia), approved by balance of board. Motion carried.

Alex moved to increase .10 FTE Warren School Nurse, seconded by Maureen. Motion carried.

Alex moved to add 1 FTE Grounds Maintenance for Valley Schools, Rosemarie seconded. Motion carried.

Rob moved to increase .37 FTE at Valley Schools, Maureen seconded. Amended that amount to be allocated as needed. **Motion carried.**

Maureen moved to have Maintenance monies budgeted as presented, seconded by Caitlin. Because of inequity of quality of buildings, concerned about schools. Work will be done on Warren school by bond. **Motion carried unanimously.**

Garrett moved to reduce budget by 2 FTE elementary school teachers, Jim seconded. Maureen: offered support to keeping teachers this year but do strongly feel that education is personal and hard to replace teachers who have been in the system and may well be brought back on. Giving more information on school choices that could change school dynamics. **Jill:** advocate for this first year – let's do the visioning and get all the right data. Don't make this decision at this moment. **Rob:** tasked as a board with delivering best education to the largest number of students – it's a community process and it's a critical time. Have received so many heartfelt letters. Go slow and gather more information. Have great teachers. **Caitlin:** 10% bonus from this process buys us time. Need to put in work to make this happen. To increase credibility, buys us the time that is so important at this time. **Peter:** teachers at the Warren and Fayston schools might not be the ones that are reduced, bad move to sign contract when reduction is not known. **Garrett:** big push to save money, affordability is a reality. Owe to taxpayers to save money and some schools are overstaffed. **Jim:** Agree with Garrett. Have responsibilities – this is very hard for kids and teachers but it is difficult to justify spending salary and money for 2 teachers to teach 8 or 9 kids. Need to work budget with all administrators. With a heavy heart think need to approve this. Best interest for tax payers? **Sam:** also feeling torn, tax breaks give us more time to move. Doesn't look likely that there will be more kids. Sentiment coming out of Fayston very clear but folks that Garrett has been talking with also have a great point. **Alex:** torn because of trust issue in Fayston community but also challenging because everyone has a different memory of what was promised. Felt ways to save money was also promised. Money could be put in other areas.

Feel letting down people in our district if we don't look at the money issue. No evidence that these teachers are needed for a particular reason except they are very valuable to the school. **Heidi:** not about the 1-2 class, it's about the total equity in the system. Don't have the support staff and other types of resources that others have. No opportunity in school to grow. **Rosemarie:** slow down. Have opportunity to rethink this and make educated changes. Need to learn before we make the cuts – do think nine students too small. **Christine:** in sense we're under new management but also under old management. Ones who are in a position to make these recommendations, make them. Have issue with small class size; data already shown that staffing is in excess. Don't enjoy cutting teachers but knowing that down the road will have to make hard decisions. Have to start building a cushion for selves for future. If it turns out that we will need those teachers, will trust admin to do this. Changing positions, but not losing jobs. Retaining the money put in for professional development and not adding young, inexperienced teachers. **Gabe:** if central office had not put forth these recommendations, they would not be doing their job. The local boards probably would be making the same decisions. There is a way of looking at this. In the Act 46 process, we asked the school to trust us. Something to be said about us as an employer. Very close question – sticky slope argument, in future years must correct ratios. If we can't do this, will fail. Don't see a reason to do it at this time. Can't be a model for future obligations. Stay as is. **Alycia:** not in favor. **Alex:** be aware of those not in the room but be careful to listen to all voices. For future discussion, ask how to hear these voices. **Maureen:** Is there another motion to get a task force going to handle these issues. Class Size? Equity? Know where going 6 months from now. Develop a dashboard. **Alex:** need to get more information on equity. **Jim:** listening to some of the comments, walking away feeling that we're doing this out of goodwill instead of doing what's right for tax payers. We were elected to take care of 800 people – look at big picture for the HS and the other schools. Not fiscally responsible. Doing this because don't want to upset people. **Rosemarie:** totally get this. People trust us to deliberate thoughtfully and make decisions not based on good will. **Motion failed** – Members who voted for motion: Alex Thompson, Garrett MacCurtain, Jim Casey, Sam Jackson

Rosemarie moved to approve warning a second article to create a Maintenance Reserve fund and contribute to HUUSB maintenance reserve fund of \$302,108, seconded by Maureen. Alex: Hard decision without talking to own board since ½ of the money would be Waterbury/Duxbury. More discussion of Maintenance Reserve Fund by all. **Motion carried.**

Rosemarie – showed that board all worked together and everyone spoke their minds.

B. Workgroup Reports – table for next time

- i. Communications
- ii. Facilities
- iii. Negotiations
- iv. Policy

5. Superintendent's Report

6. Public Comments (see above)

7. Other Business

8. Alycia moved to adjourn, Rob seconded. Motion carried. Adjournment at 10:35 pm

Next meeting: January 18, 2017. 6-9:30 – start with unfinished business first.

Need to vote on final HUUSD budget