

Washington West Supervisory Union Executive Committee
“OFFICIAL” Meeting Minutes for November 13, 2013
Washington West Central Office

WWEC Members Present: Doug Mosle (Fayston), Jim Burmester (Moretown), Eva Frankel (Waitsfield), Rob Rosen (Warren), Steve Odefey (Waterbury-Duxbury), and Ben Smith (Waterbury-Duxbury)

Administrators Present: Brigid Scheffert, Sheila Soule, Donarae Dawson, Michelle Baker

Others: Rosemarie White

Eva Frankel called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

1) Action Items:

- a) **Approve minutes of October 9, 2013:** Rob Rosen moved to approve the minutes of October 9, 2013 as written. Steve Odefey seconded the motion which passed unanimously.
- b) **VEHI Health and Dental Agreements** – Ben Smith moved to approve the VEHI health and dental agreements as presented by Michelle Baker. Rob Rosen seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2) Discussion Items

- a) **Health Care Update**– Two documents were shared and reviewed with the group: “Options for Quality Health Benefits for School Employees: 2014 and Beyond” from the VASBO, and “Collective Bargaining in the Context of Health Care Reform”, a presentation from the VSBA. Michelle and Brigid led the discussion. It was emphasized that more frequent negotiations may become the norm given the ongoing uncertainty in health care. Harwood and the WDSO face different issues than the smaller schools because they have > 50 employees. Eva raised the issue of whether people in the community experiencing increasing costs will be concerned about any perceived buffering of that effect on school employees. Further discussion was had on this issue.
- b) **Financial Report** - Ongoing financials were reviewed by Michelle. Current projections show about 1K to be contributed to the fund balance.
- c) **Budget Presentation**- Michelle Baker presented the first draft of the proposed WWSU budget. As currently proposed, expenditures would increase to 1,242,140, a 9.4% increase, which translates to an 11.1% increase in the assessment to member districts. There was general discussion about the size of this increase and how this may be perceived by some in the community. Rob Rosen said that it might be useful to understand how much of the increase over the past several years is related to increasing overhead vs. salary/benefit increases vs. expanded mission. Areas of increased spending were reviewed in detail and justifications were discussed. Assessment changes to each district were reviewed. Brigid then presented comparisons with other supervisory unions, suggesting that our SU remains lean when compared to other SUs, particularly with regard to HR services, negotiations, and searches, which are often contracted out in other areas. The information presented suggests that other similar SUs do a similar amount of work with roughly 17 employees while the WWSU currently has 12-14. Rob stated that citizens may be concerned about the rate of change, and also suggested that unfunded mandates might be part of the problem. Brigid argued that although unfunded mandates are an issue, the proposed investments this year are all for essential needs, for example the very outdated accounting software. Further discussion ensued. Eva suggested that many of the recent investments were technology-related, related to bringing schools into the 21st century. Steve did not share Rob’s concern about the rate of increase, and felt that it reflects an effort to extract maximum value from the work the SU does. Rob worried about community concern over increasing costs that could be perceived to be centralized. Suggested he would look back over a few years and try to describe and articulate some trends, which might help in advocacy and be useful to the board.
- d) **Meeting dates for WWSU Full Board** – Set for Monday January 6 at 6pm for budget, March 31st at 6pm for reorganization
- e) **WWSU Action Plan** – Sheila Soule presented the updated version of the WWSU Action Plan in detail, including details about how ongoing PD is tied to action plan goals. Issues around common core, multi-tiered systems of support, and overarching goals of this work were discussed. As part of the presentation,

a TED video of Sir Ken Robinson entitled “Education’s Death Valley” was viewed and discussed. Steve Odefey moved to endorse and approve the WWSU Action Plan for FY 2014 as presented. Eva Frankel seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

- f) **Statewide Calendar Plan** – a discussion was briefly opened regarding next month’s planned executive committee meeting on statewide and school calendar issues. Brigid said that a statewide calendar may offer some benefits, in particular so that professional development could be offloaded from the school year in the future so teachers could spend more time in class with kids. There was also some discussion about the agrarian calendar, and discussion of the failure of a planned change to this calendar recently in Chittenden County.

- 3) **Other Business** - there was none.

- 4) **Adjournment** – Rob Rosen moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:35 p.m. Steve Odefey seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Minutes recorded by Ben Smith