

**HARWOOD UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT  
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2016, 6 – 9:30  
HARWOOD UNION HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY**

**Approved Minutes**

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

**Administration:** Brigid Nease, Michelle Baker

1. Call to Order: Meeting called to order by Christine Sullivan at 6:05 p.m.
2. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda – see item #5.
3. Approve Meeting Minutes of 11/9/2016 – Rob Williams moved to accept minutes, seconded by Alex Thomsen. Minutes approved.

4. FOR DISCUSSION:

A. Discussion with Attorney Paul Giuliani regarding Transition Agreement.

The purpose of the Transition Agreement is to give school districts and new unified boards a chance to understand the agreement and the issues that are of particular concern to the board. Input of the local boards is critical at this point because they will need to have answers for voters at their town meetings.

As of July 1, 2017, all land, etc. passes to the new union district, with whatever issues are on it, keeping an unbroken chain on the old school districts to the new union district.

The risk of trying to identify issues of each lot of the old school system could be problematic. Something could be left out and it would be a huge undertaking if it surfaced again. Whatever issues exist, the UU district would have to handle anything that came up.

What would it cost to do a title search on the 6 districts?  
The cost would be around \$5 or \$6,000, up to \$10,000. Some members thought that the board should consider this but others felt it was a waste of money. Rosemarie White suggested we pole the room –

Motion to authorize the board to move forward with Attorney Giuliani's original recommendation in the Transition Agreement, seconded by Heidi Spear.

What are other boards doing? Time line still goes forward on July 1. Attorney Giuliani doesn't think that there is anything out there in the agreement that is a bear trap that would cause a total level of failure. Maureen McCracken moved to move the question, seconded by Alycia Biondo. Motion approved.

**B. Budget Work:** Michelle – To start the budget process, Michelle created a level service budget that has the same staffing and programs as this year. In addition, taking a look at some recommendations for additions from the administration. The first draft of expenditures, offset by revenues, is divided by equalized pupil that becomes the major driver of the tax rate. This level service budget shows about a 1.6% tax rate increase.

**Review of assumptions for level funding budget** (see complete List of Level Service Budget Assumptions – page 1, 2, 3, 4 of Michelle's report), same FTE as currently employed, same level of contribution to food service, same level of audit expense, bus transportation cost 3<sup>rd</sup> year of a 3 year contract, special ed expenses, board/treasurer stipends, Moretown MECA program, Pre-K tuition based on FY17 budget, tuition to Vocational Schools same as last year, same Title I/Feb Grant funded positions, professional development, teacher retirement payments, special revenue funds, long term debt, etc.

Maintenance Reserve fund discussion – to decide if \$500,000 could be a start for the HUUSD maintenance reserve fund. All current local Maintenance Reserve Funds of each school will be kept with the local schools.

**Discussion of new items and various comments:** None of these amounts are in the level funded budget. School by school list in report. Process question: recommend that the board hears whole report, then ask questions.

Maintenance issue for small items – need a Short-term Maintenance budget item in HUUSB future budget.

Discussion of new science curriculum for all grades district wide.

Technology – 5 – 12 grades is 1-1 with technology (chrome books or ipad).

Need clarity about relative need and equity for all of these items for each school. Challenge is the time line that we are on. For every item, there are many layers behind them. Board does not want to agree to these new items until they have the whole picture.

Suggest we make use the level service budget, then discuss the equity of all the new items. Brigid and Michelle brings information for board to make decisions (don't have a good process or criteria yet – are we going to set criteria? Do we move the Warren Bond off the items?

Consider maintenance and need criteria around equity issue. How to handle these things this year? From Jan on, build on visualizing work and goal setting, and budget accordingly. Disappointing that we would have to move forward with a budget that we don't really believe in.

For example, there could be equity by passing issues of technology request on to the IT person (with all the information about age of equipment, numbers, etc.). Get a district-wide plan for technology in the future.

Need to do all of this right – deciding on a sum of money (have x amount of money and then divide it).

The capital improvement and staffing issues are going to be the most critical in this budget.

Need a transition bridge and will have to leave some messy issues this year in order to start all of these plans.

In the future will present a Pre-K to 12 technology plan.

Some feel that equity still is the issue. Need guidelines about how to make these decisions.

Start with level service and put the other items in bullets and general bucket fund generally.

The way the Science group was decided was the best way to go

Michelle and Brigid will talk to each of the administrators in each school and play “convince me “with the items they are requesting. Will bring results to the board to discuss. Facilities would do the overall maintenance plan for each of the schools. Need to find operational ways to handle all departments. Have a rational argument for new items that can’t wait that are above the level service budget. Put various options in front of the board.

Doesn’t matter which schools have the line items, it’s now one district. (Need to look at Hancock/Granville students.)

Total of new items is \$884,913, would increase the budget by 2.5%.

C: Review of school choice report – Brigid shared results, showing no real impact on staffing. Need to create a policy. Nothing alarming in the report at this time.

#### D. Workgroup Reports

Facilities committee can help with prioritizing, especially the Warren project.

E. Consideration of Joining the Act 46 Implementation Project: Gabe strongly opposes this. No incentive to join, too much money. Suggest we pass on it.

#### 5. Other Business

Would like to know about bus debacle. Bridge sent note to everyone,

There is a policy on public complaints. Parents need to follow this and come forward. Talk about the reality of things that can happen.

Road crews didn't sand roads in this last storm. There was a timing situation. Its never 100% in predictable these emergencies. Parents have to make their own personal choice for their child on whether to send them or not. Policy is on website.

How are kids at HS doing after tragedy – parent forums, great job by the admin at Harwood. Sensory processing activities, drumming, yoga – to help regulate brain waves to see which students might need more services. Therapy dogs still coming in. Faculty has 6-week wellness needs offered.

Putting out news release – a student did a EFP for proposals to NE conference – internship with Principal, student engagement and types of learning environments through eyes of the student instead of the teacher.

Welcome Caitlin Hollister new Waterbury rep.

6. Moved to adjourn

Next meeting: Wednesday, December 7, 6 p.m.

Submitted by Freya Chaffee