

**DORSET BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 27, 2009 – 6:00 P.M.
THE DORSET SCHOOL LIBRARY**

11/24/09
moved: Allen
second: Salsgiver
As Corrected /
Addended

DORSET BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS:

Robert Allen: 768-8065; Liz Berard: 362-2949; Stephanie Breed, Clerk: 867-2531; David Chandler, Chairperson: 867-5533; James Salsgiver: 867-4115; James Merryman, Principal: 362-2602; BRSU Superintendent Daniel French: 362-2452

Regular scheduled meetings held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noticed.

PRESENT: Board Members: Robert Allen, Liz Berard, Stephanie Breed, David Chandler, and James Salsgiver; Principal Jim Merryman, BRSU Supt. Dan French

ABSENT: None

AUDIENCE: Jennifer Allen Andres, Renee Bornstein, Dean Davis, Beth Eyre, Vickie Haskins, Laura McCostis, Amy Panetta, Cindy Tosone, and Nancy Wise

Chairperson David Chandler called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m. in the library at The Dorset School.

AGENDA ITEMS:

- **MEETING MINUTES:**
Meeting Minutes of September 22, 2009 were approved as corrected – Moved by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Salsgiver, and so moved unanimously.
- **Special Meeting Minutes of October 9, 2009 were approved as printed – Moved by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Salsgiver, and so moved unanimously.**

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:

Mr. French reported on the following:

- ▶ **The superintendent reviewed the report submitted to him by Sue Wilborn, BRSU Business Manager. This report contained a review of the current Dorset accounting system, as well as exploring the possibility of bringing the accounting work of the District back to the central office of the BRSU. Her report also contained a list of specific recommendations that Ms. Wilborn suggested would save time and money, provide better accuracy and controls, and resolve some outstanding fund issues. Superintendent French added additional points of interest to this document, as well as his reasons why he was recommending that these changes be made, especially prior to school budget preparations for the 2010-2011 school year. The board members continued discussion on this issue, including several reasons why the current method of accounting be continued “in-house.” The board members agreed that this issue needed further discussion and exploration, at which point a suggestion was made by Mr. Chandler that the board members hold some type of “retreat” to discuss this issue, as well as other important issues prior to beginning the budget development process for the 2010-2011 school budget.**

► **Special Education Programs:** As part of the superintendent's cost analysis for BRSU budget preparations for the 2010-2011 school year, Mr. French explained that he has been exploring cost concepts for special education services within the BRSU. He further explained that because there are no secondary public schools within the school districts of the BRSU, special education students continuing to receive specialized services at that level must still have BRSU LEA representation at any IEP or evaluation plan meetings on the secondary level. A second area of current concerns within the BRSU Special Education Department, is to look at the feasibility of developing an alternative program for special needs students at the secondary level. Mr. French acknowledged that many of these special needs students need a classic alternative vocational/technology school program, but transportation issues currently come into play as a large budget area. Another area of this special education issue is the increasing need for specialized programs for students with autism spectrum disorders and the lack of a centralized educational facility for these students to attend. Currently, many parents have to drive long distances to obtain the educational services needed for these students, which is costly in time and money. Mr. French reinforced this issue by stating ideally students are kept within their own schools in order to mainstream them with their peers. However, without a specialized program available locally for those students whose needs go beyond the normal curve, many students have to travel far outside their own area for services. During further discussion about these needs at the BRSU level, Mr. French stated that perhaps one solution would be to lease or purchase a facility to begin a BRSU-wide program to meet these needs, and to use school vans for transportation to a centralized BRSU location. Mr. Salsgiver inquired if part of a centralized plan, could be to have a part of the Special Education team from the BRSU become a "virtual" partner in these meetings. Mr. French replied that many of these students required behavioral modification intervention plans, medications, etc. and there is no easy solution in requiring district special education LEA's to be present for these important Team meetings.

► Mr. French reported on the "ENDS POLICY" presentation given by David Ford during a recent in-service training day. He continued by stating that now it was up to the board as how to proceed in developing a Policy for Dorset. Mr. Chandler stated that he was not sure how the superintendent wanted the board to proceed, at least at this point in time. Superintendent French replied that all the five school districts within the BRSU were presently in different places in the plan for their district and asked if Dorset is still interested in developing their own plan. Mrs. Breed indicated that she strongly believed that the board members needed to have a "brainstorming" meeting, not a regular board meeting, to discuss the proposed "ENDS POLICY" prior to accepting any Policy at a regular board meeting. She further indicated that perhaps this in-depth discussion

of an "ENDS POLICY" could occur at the same board retreat where the board would be discussing the financial proposal for the Dorset School proposed by the BRSU Business Manager and Superintendent French. Further discussion on the "ENDS POLICY" included a Statement by the superintendent, that the board needs to develop a "draft" of their ideas, and then release these ideas to the community to identify what the constituency feels is required. Mrs. Berard commented that this sounded as if it would be a long process, to which the Superintendent replied that it was, and it should be a thorough process. Mr. Salsgiver recommended that the board provide the framework of the Policy, break it down and then create the process. Superintendent French volunteered to provide board members with sample copies of "ENDS POLICIES" from several other school districts and he will include them in the board members' packets for the next board meeting in November. It was then the consensus of the board members to plan a mutually agreeable time, date and place to hold a special executive board meeting "retreat" for board members to work on developing the framework for a Dorset "ENDS POLICY," as well as investigating further pros and cons of moving the financial operations to the BRSU Central Office, as well as beginning the first phase of discussion for the budget preparation for the 2010-2011. This executive board meeting retreat will be duly Warned as soon as a mutually acceptable date, time and place have been selected.

● **REPORT OF THE PRINCIPAL:**

Mr. Merryman reported on the following items:

- ▶ A H1N1 flu clinic will be held at the school on Wednesday, October 28, 2009. Previously, permission slips were distributed and at the present time, 88 signed slips had been received. Exact numbers had to be obtained and no walk-in flu shots will be administered. Some parents have stated that they have had their own physician administer the flu shots for their child(ren). Some students were absent during the time frame when the NECAPS were given, but no provisions had been given for extending the NECAP testing period because of student illnesses.
- ▶ A local in-service training day for Writing and Writing Development, presented by Karen Kurzman, was held for The Dorset School staff on Wednesday, 10/21/09. This topic and presenter will be part of the staff during Tuesday afternoons JISP workshop presentations, beginning in January 2010.
- ▶ A new Vermont E-Learning Grant application for The Dorset School has been sent to UVM and VPA for consideration and approval. The goal of this grant is to obtain additional technology for students to use and have the school's staff comfortable utilizing these tools within the school's classroom environment.
- ▶ Mr. Merryman expressed his appreciation to Renee Bornstein and Jennifer Allen-Andres for their hard work in developing and filing The Four Winds Grant, which is ready for Mr. Merryman's

Signature. Ms. Allen-Andres explained the purpose of this Grant is to create a natural habitat environment within the school grounds. Some of the money from this grant would be used to create four more raised beds on the school grounds, install new sunflower and Monarch butterfly gardens, plant a fruit tree orchard, which would reduce lawn mowing, and create an outside learning lab. Part of this outside learning lab would entail the refurbishing of the greenhouse currently at the rear of the school.

- ▶ **Ms. Allen-Andres also spoke about another grant, the Farm-to-School Grant, which was applied for and would give the school \$1,500 to plan to purchase more fresh local produce to be used by the school's cafeteria. Another benefit of obtaining this money from the Grant would be to create local contacts with local resources in the immediate communities in and around Dorset, as well as extending the classroom outside the school. Mr. Merryman also expressed his appreciation to Ms. Bornstein and Ms. Allen-Andres for the time spent on creating and completing this grant application. The two in-school contacts for this grant are Linda Mitchell and Betty Young.**

- ▶ **Discussion ensued concerning a spreadsheet created for the board by Mr. Merryman outlining the expenses from last year and anticipated expenses for this year from the school's Supplemental Fund. Many changes were made from last year's expenses, some due to inclusion of several areas into the regular school budget, individual outside funding, as well as under-budget spending in several budget lines. Mr. Merryman continued by outlining where the proposed money will come from, including Medicaid reimbursement monies, increased number of tuition students, and having students begin fund raising for the 6th and 8th grade trips. Mr. Allen inquired if more of these areas would be paid for when the budget for the FY 2010-2011 school year was presented to the town voters, and he was told that some of these areas would be recommended for inclusion in the upcoming school year's budget.**

Mr. Merryman reported that he had heard that there was a possibility that the Smokey House Project would not be operating next year due to the Project's lack of funding. Mr. Chandler will make a phone call to discuss this with the Director of Smokey House and get back to Mr. Merryman about the situation. As a back-up plan, Mr. Merryman stated he had been in touch with Merck Forest personnel about a possible alternative student plan for next Spring. Further discussion on this topic took place, including current status of SEED and whether or not this was still an active group. Mr. Allen replied that SEED was still an alive and active group but a new board needed to be chosen.

- ▶ **It was also suggested by board members that the building principal have a printed Principal's Report available to board members before the actual meeting, and if possible, include this with the meeting packet sent to board member prior to each meeting. This would**

allow board members to have an idea of what will be presented at each meeting. It also was suggested by the board, that in the future the building principal include a standard set of bullet point items in his printed report to the board, i.e. • Energy.

ACCOUNT MANAGERS REPORT:

Mr. Cepela had prepared the Warrant for the board's approval and the following report for September 23 – October 26, 2009:

REVENUE RECEIVED:

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| HOT LUNCH REVENUE | 4,214.00 |
| BREAKFAST REVENUE | 343.00 |
| MILK MONEY | 181.00 |
| EDUCATION SPENDING | 1,475,111.00 |
| ARRA PAYMENT | 263.00 |
| TUITION – STRATTON | 7,836.00 |
| TUITION – DANBY | 7,333.00 |
| 8 TH GRADE FUNDRAISER | 2,106.00 |
| STUDENT COUNCIL DANCE | 350.00 |
| VT SPED PAYMENT | 26,155.00 |
| ADOPT-A-CLASS | 925.00 |
| VT EFFICIENCY REBATE (FREEZER) | 125.00 |
| AFTER SCHOOL | 20.00 |
| IN-MEMORY DONATIONS | 4,360.00 |
| TOTAL | 1,529,322.00 |

WARRANT SUMMARY:

| FUND ACCT # | 100 | 100-200 | 106 | 108 | 115 | 700 | TOTAL WARRANT |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| FUND NAME | GENERAL | HOT LUNCH | SUPP FUND | ADOPT A CLASS | TECH FUND | 8 TH GRADE | |
| PAYROLL AP WARRANT: 9/21/09 | 15,567.09 | | | | | | 15,567.00 |
| PAYROLL WARRANT 10/02/09 | 50,746.98 | | | | | | 50,746.98 |
| PAYROLL AP WARRANT 10/05/09 | 16,584.12 | | | | | | 16,584.12 |
| AP WARRANT 10/14/09 | 640,115.06 | 1,011.71 | 476.73 | | | | 641,603.50 |
| PAYROLL AP WARRANT 10/19/09 | 21,577.76 | | | | | | 21,577.76 |
| PAYROLL WARRANT 10/16/09 | 48,487.29 | | | | 1,413.00 | | 49,900.29 |
| AP WARRANT 10/28/09 | 185,869.64 | 4,873.10 | | | | 1,396.00 | 192,138.74 |
| TOTAL | 978,947.94 | 5,884.81 | 476.73 | 0.00 | 1,413.00 | | 988,118.48 |

The Warrant was approved and signed.

- **NEW BUSINESS:**

- ▶ As part of the Dorset School's theme for 2009-2010 "Working Today for Tomorrow," Mr. Merryman presented the board with a copy of The Dorset School "Building and Grounds Five Year Plan." The Plan was broken down year-by-year and included several energy saving items, as well as including items within the school requiring replacement and/or refurbishing. The board asked several questions and received substantiating answers from Mr. Merryman. Among items requested to be replaced or refurbished for the 2009-2010 school year included but were not limited to:
 - Replacing four doors with new R-9 insulated doors;
 - Replacement of three (3) uni-vent unit heaters, starting with oldest units first and one per year after initial three are replaced.
 - Purchasing the three uni-vents @ \$8,000 this school year would cost approximately \$24,000.

The main thrust of the 2009-2010 Buildings and Grounds Plan was replacement of the roof sections over the stairwell, the nurse's office, and math and science classrooms. This would bring the entire roof up to par prior to the winter snowfall. A Motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mrs. Breed, to replace the sections of roof over the stairwell, nurse's office, math and science classrooms, including insulation, and put it out to bid for an amount of between \$30,000 and not to exceed \$40,000, and so moved unanimously. This will be advertised seeking bids as soon as possible.

- ▶ **Employment Recommendation:** Superintendent French made a recommendation to hire Betty Young as a 40% special education paraeducator for the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year, beginning on October 26, 2009. Ms. Young is currently employed at The Dorset School as a .6 FTE Math and Science teacher for grades K-8. Mr. Allen made a Motion to hire Betty Young as a 40% special education paraeducator in Benefit Category "C" at \$10.00 per hour, seconded by Mrs. Breed, and so Moved unanimously.

- **OTHER BUSINESS:**

- ▶ Audience member, Beth Eyre, addressed the board about her concerns and suggestions for restructuring the current model used for Back-to-School Nights. She stated that she has found the entire process chaotic, with students coming in and out of classrooms and in the halls. She continued by stating that it was her understanding the purpose of the Back-To-School Night program was meant to introduce parents to teachers and find out the expectations of that classroom teacher for the year. Ms. Eyre stated she had previously written a letter to the building principal two years ago after attending her first Back-To-School Night at The Dorset School outlining her concerns and made suggestions for a change in the format. She addressed the

board in hopes of “opening a dialogue to make this a more meaningful, less chaotic evening for parents.” It was suggested by Mrs. Breed that perhaps Ms. Eyre should contact the DPV to explore the possibility of establishing a baby-sitting plan in the multi-purpose room at the school for that night, perhaps as a fund raising project for 8th grade students. Mr. Chandler inquired if Ms. Eyres had attempted to personally schedule an appointment with the building principal to begin a positive dialogue on this topic. He further stated that he felt this was an area to discuss directly with the building principal first and not the school board, but requested that she pursue this suggestion and follow-up by indicating to the board what had transpired after taking this first step directly with the building principal and not the board.

- Mr. Salsgiver outlined the progress he and Ms. Tosone had made in their quest to find a better way to acknowledge the Dorset teachers upon their retirement. Staff members have responded by questionnaires and suggested the following ideas:
1. Appropriate plaques be purchased by the school and appropriately engraved with the names of those retired teachers, from 2005 to the present, and then installed in a suitable spot in the front foyer of the school. After that has been done, those teachers listed on the plaques could be sent letters and a picture of the plaque bearing their name.
 2. Another suggestion on the returned questionnaires was to name 8th Grade Graduation Awards after retired teachers.
 3. Begin scheduling retirement dinners/get-togethers. Purchase a meaningful retirement gift for retiring teacher(s) .
 4. Have a thank-you note to the retiring teacher(s) from the school board members printed in the local newspapers.

Mr. Salsgiver thanked Ms. Tosone for her efforts.

At 8:05, a Motion was made to go into Executive Session for matters pertaining to Personnel. Motion was made by Mr. Salsgiver, seconded by Ms. Breed, and so moved unanimously. The board came out of Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. No further action was taken.

There being no further business to come before the board, Chairperson David Chandler adjourned the meeting at 8:47 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty Morsch
11/0209