UNION #39 SCHOOL BOARD
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 15, 2006
Mount Holly Elementary School Library
7:00 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER- ROLL CALL and WELCOME

Board: Diana Chimbolo, Chair, Ralph Pace, David Slivka, Brent Karner, Randy Bixby, Allen Seiple

Staff: James Frail, Principal; Michael Ripley, Assist. Principal; Donna MacDonald, Librarian; Carol Ballou, English Teacher; Edie Lou Cole, Business Manager

Public: Melissa Goraj, Chantel Marechaux

Ms. Chimbolo called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. COMMUNICATIONS:

A. Oral: Mr. Pace stated that he has received calls from parents and residents regarding school security in particular the recent bomb threats. Mr. Seiple stated that he, too, had received similar calls and explained to the callers what the crisis response team is doing. Ms. Chimbolo stated that the team showed a good commitment to the plan and good communication.

B. Written: Ms. Chimbolo received an email from Bruce Schmit wanting to know why there were no administrators at the sports banquet. She explained that due to the date being changed (due to the recent bomb threat) most of the administrators had prior commitments but that Mr. Ripley did attend part of the banquet.

Ms. Chimbolo had also spoken to parents and residents about recent security issues and advised them to give suggestions to the board in writing.

III. STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES:

Student Representatives, Melissa Goraj and Chantel Marechaux reported that the Student Council is still planning the Winter Carnival and they have a Locks of Love meeting tomorrow. They have advertised the Locks of Love event in the community letting the public know that anyone can participate provided he/she has at least 10 inches of hair to donate.

They also reported that the NHS has shaved Mr. Ripley's, Mr. Pinkez's, and Nate Barnes heads to raise money that they have donated to the Kurn Hattin Home. There is a play this weekend and NHS is doing a bake sale.

Miss Goraj also reported that Interact is planning a "Stuff a Bus" event on December 9. The group will also go Caroling the following week.

Mr. Seiple asked the students what their feeling is about the bomb threats and what the general feeling of the students is. They stated that the students don't seem to know who is making the threats and it sounds like most of the students are fed up with the threats and are concerned with the make up days, particularly if they are going to be scheduled during vacations. Mr. Seiple stated that he believed that the students being irritated with the bomb threats may actually be a deterrent to the person(s) doing it.

IV. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

A. Para-educator contracts:

Ms. Chimbolo listed new contracts awaiting approval: David DeChamp as a para-educator at a rate of $10.50 per hour, 7 hours per day; Amber Wilson as board recording secretary at a rate of $80.00 per meeting; Isabelle Montgomery as a mentor with a

$1000.00 stipend; and Marjorie Salmon as a mentor with a $1000.00 stipend. Ms. Chimbolo asked for a motion regarding the contracts.

Mr. Slivka **moved** to approve the contracts as presented. Mr. Karner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Crisis Plan Update

Mr. Frail distributed the results from the survey he conducted on 10/24. There was discussion about the results. Mr. Karner asked Mr. Frail if he and/or the crisis team have addressed the safety issues that the majority of the students find most important. Mr. Frail stated that they are still working on those issues, such as possibly having a counselor come in to discuss bullying/harassment issues. Mr. Karner asked if there have been lockdowns at the school since there is concern with someone coming into the school. The internal classrooms do not lock internally and the external doors have to be locked manually, and the front door needs to remain unlocked for wheelchair/elevator access. Mr. Frail and the crisis team will work on alternative lockdown options.

Mr. Frail distributed the crisis plan update. There was discussion and clarification about specific sections of the plan. The camera being offered by Okemo in Section 8 is a loan, not a donation. It is wireless so it could potentially be moved to more critical areas. The permanent caller ID trap listed in Section 13 is a feature provide at no charge by the telephone company. They will need a police case number and then the police request the trapped information and use it to process the complaint. Section 3 of the procedures should also state that students are not allowed on school grounds during an official wait period. This change is due to a situation with students waiting on school grounds for a bus to Springfield after the most recent bomb threat. Mr. Ripley stated that that situation was rectified that day. In Section 6 of the procedures parents of Mt. Holly students can make their request that the students be dropped off at Mt. Holly School.

Mr. Seiple thanked Mr. Frail and the crisis team for the letter sent home explaining the Crisis Plan. Mr. Slivka suggested that letters such as this be sent to both parents if there are two different households. Ms. Chimbolo suggested sending the letters to the board members.

Ms. Chimbolo spoke of the VSBA website (www.vtsba.org) and the fact stated by the Secret Service and the State Police that there is no profile of a student who makes bomb threats. It could be anyone. Mr. Frail stated that he spoke at the assembly warning students of consequences and that if the threats continue, the students will have to be more restricted, and that he would like the students to help him solve this problem.

C. Act 176

Act 176 is a high school completion plan, an individualized program for people age 16-21 who have dropped out of school to return to school to earn a diploma. Mr. Frail attended at workshop on Act 176. Mr. Frail reported that there is some financial support available to these individuals, and that the student has to work with adult education services. Mr. Frail and Kelly Ryan will contact the basic education program, set a plan for the students, and draft a letter to be sent to the known eligible individuals.

D. Principal's Report

Mr. Frail distributed his written report and there was discussion about topics listed. In regards to section one about the Girls' Soccer Team, the Board congratulated the Team on their Championship. Mr. Seiple also stated that the 3 varsity teams won a Sportsmanship Award.

Mr. Frail also attended the Rediker Workshop and the trainers will be coming on December 5th. He and Mr. Seiple attended the Community Dialogue Night sponsored by

BRACC. Mr. Seiple reported that the dialogue went well, that the community was allowed to speak and ask questions and then the administration and the board addressed those concerns. Mr. Frail is working with BRACC on beginning a "Let's Do Lunch" mentoring program. The program pairs professional community members with students who would benefit from having a mentor. The mentoring begins by the two meeting for lunch.

The After School Program received a grant for $2960.00 for Sports, Play & Active Recreation for Kids. Mr. Frail will give plans for using the grant at the next meeting. He also attended the first VT Lead It meeting in which participants discussed education, economic, and technology trends. He distributed an article on Digital Natives to the board and asked that they read it. The article essentially states the educators need to be aware of the different type of learners present today (who solve by trial and error) versus those in the past (who solve systematically).

Mr. Frail reported that the last day for NECAP testing would be 11/16. Mr. Slivka suggested offering incentives for scoring well on the next round of NECAP testing, such as ½ of an elective credit. There was discussion about the advantages of the school as a whole scoring well versus scoring poorly on the NECAP tests, such as funding for a poorly scoring school or colleges regarding BRHS as a top school for scoring well. Mr. Frail suggested that the student representatives bring the incentive idea to their next student council meeting to get an idea of whether or not an incentive would encourage the students to do their best and, if so, what types of incentives would work for them.

E. Action Plan Adoption

Mr. Frail didn't bring the Action Plan with him, but will go over written responses and suggestions, and faculty comments. Mr. Frail recommended that the Action Plan needs to be more simple and streamlined. He will bring it, along with comments and suggestions, in addition to faculty comments, with him to the next meeting.

Mr. Seiple began a discussion about the school not challenging students enough at the high school level and their feeling of being unprepared for college. He stated that there seems to be as great difference between BRHS students' GPA and their SAT scores and indicated that this difference might indicate a problem with the curriculum. Mr. Slivka reported that he has many students that don't achieve superior grades in his classes but are being challenged. He suggested that the board look at the curriculum, but that a comparison between GPA and SAT scores is not necessarily accurate. Ms. Chimbolo suggested that some students test poorly and that since the SAT is a snapshot of one day of testing and the GPA is a cumulative measurement, comparison between the two may not be accurate.

Mr. Seiple suggested bringing college freshmen and sophomores to the board meeting to get their opinion on whether or not they felt prepared for college, if they felt challenged in high school, and whether or not they felt curriculum changes would have helped. Mr. Karner suggested that in order to get more accurate responses that there should be a lot of students involved and possibly students who attended other high schools. Ms. Chimbolo suggested that very few students feel prepared for college possibly because it is their first experience living away from home.

Mr. Slivka reminded Mr. Seiple and the board that the school's mission statement is to teach everyone, some students are difficult to challenge, and there are many issues involved in student development. He also reminded the board that not all students want to go on to college. The school's job is to make sure the students have the skills needed to go to college OR into the work force. Mr. Karner reminded the board that more money in the budget is spent on students who will probably not attend college than on those who likely will attend.

Mr. Slivka suggested inviting last year's seniors to speak with current senior about being prepared for college. Ms. Chimbolo questioned the definition of "being challenged" and "being prepared for college". She stated that the school's goal was to create lifelong learners of every student, not just those who go on to college.

Mr. Frail recommended that the Action Plan needs to be more simple and streamlined. Ms. Chimbolo asked for a motion regarding the Action Plan. Mr. Karner said he would accept it with the understanding that it would continue to be worked on. Mr. Slivka reminded Mr. Frail that the Action Plan must be in place by 12/31/2006. Ms. Chimbolo advised that if approved, this plan would be in place and would be in place until a replacement is approved.

Mr. Bixby **moved** to accept the Action Plan as written. Mr. Karner seconded and the motion passed with 4 votes in the affirmative, 1 vote in the negative and 1 abstention.

F. Snow Board Coach

Mr. Frail reported that he has been actively trying to recruit (via newspaper advertisements and word of mouth) a new snow board coach. As yet there are no candidates. Mr. Seiple stated that he was concerned that the athletic department's due diligence in trying to recruit a new snow boarding coach, specifically since no ads were run until he sent an email to the administration. Mr. Seiple stated that he and Bob Fortuna would be volunteering and starting the snow boarding program until a coach is hired, and have also spoken with Wendy Neal at OMS to help with the training portion. Ms. Chimbolo suggested that Mr. Frail speak with Mr. Fortuna to try to persuade him to apply for the position. Mr. Karner reminded the board that the State Championships would be held at Okemo this year. There was discussion about the relative newness of the sport and the difficulty in finding a coach.

V. HDEC/RVTC REPORT

Mr. Karner distributed copies of the newsletter that HDEC/RVTC publishes for the students. He also distributed a proposed budget analysis. He stated that the HDEC director would like to come to one of the meetings and give a presentation about the budget. Mr. Karner stated that the new budget would be approximately 3% higher than last year.

Mr. Seiple asked about the BC/BS group rate increase of 25-30%. Ms. Cole advised that that increase was only for VT League of Cities and Towns. The School pools are anticipated to increase only 8-10%. She anticipates receiving the "not to exceed" numbers in December.

Mr. Karner spoke about an automotive program at HDEC/RVTC. The board has decided to put it off another year. At this point it would be too costly to implement. Carl Mock has put together two options (on-site and off-site) for cost comparisons. The teachers have also surveyed the students and it appears that the automotive class would be full, but enrollment in other classes would decrease. There was discussion about the sending schools (with the exception of Springfield) all have another option for automotive education—for example Black River students could go to Rutland for automotive education. There was also discussion about using the machine tool shop for the automotive department. There was some controversy since Springfield has a history of machining. Also there are some adult education classes in machining. Mr. Slivka stated that serving the community was good, but that the kids' education was the priority.

Mr. Karner stated that enrollment is up—45 more students this year than last year. There was also discussion about the Governance. Mr. Karner will need to meet with Ulla Cook and Sue Covalla from Mt. Holly to meet deadlines in order to get on the ballot in March.

VI. BUSINESS ITEMS

A. Minutes: October 25, 2006, Regular Meeting

Ms. Chimbolo stated that she had made a change to the minutes submitted by the recording secretary (i.e. she added the names of the winter coaches) and sent those changes back to the recording secretary.

Mr. Pace **moved** to accept the minutes as corrected. Mr. Slivka seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

B. Approval of Orders: A/P #'s 14, 15, 16 and P/R #11

Mr. Pace asked about the Kindle Farm. Ms. Cole advised that it was an out of district special education placement.

Mr. Slivka **moved** to approve A/P #'s 14, 15, 16 and P/R 11. Mr. Bixby seconded and the motion passed unanimously

VII. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

There was no Superintendent's Report due to Mr. Perotti's family situation. He is expected to return tomorrow (November 16).

VIII. BUDGET

Mr. Karner thanked Ms. Cole for the expense variance analysis. Mr. Pace asked if the Okemo grants were still active. Ms. Cole replied that they are active and that there is at least one grant in place in each of the schools in the Supervisory Union, and three at the high school. The RWSU packet lists all the grants.

Mr. Pace noted that in the budget proposal the non-union employees will be getting a 4.1% cost of living increase in salary. He suggested a review of personnel or performance review so that non-union salary increases were merit based, not the same across the board. Mr. Slivka suggested that before doing so, the board should advise those affected that the salary increases would be merit based and give those employees the standards by which they would be measured. There was discussion about beginning that process, however it was determined to be too late in the budget planning stage to do so for the upcoming budget. The evaluation should be done by the superintendent. Ms. Chimbolo requested that Mr. Frail prepare job descriptions for the December meeting to begin this process. She also requested that questions and suggestions regarding the job descriptions be forwarded to Mr. Frail.

There was discussion on budget items related to Security issues being separated from Plant Operation and Maintenance and being placed as a separate warning for voter aproval. No action was taken.

The Budget Committee will meet on November 28, 2006 at 6:30p.m. at Black River High School in Mr. Frail's office.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS

A. Old Business: None

B. New Business:

Mr. Slivka suggestion adding a section on the monthly agenda about curriculum such as teacher presentations, literacy, test results, etc. The board agreed to the addition. Mr. Slivka also suggested referring to "Oral Communications" as "Citizen's Comments" so the public would know that they could come to the meetings and voice their concerns.

Mr. Slivka commented on the Maintenance Reports stating that it was helpful to know what was fixed and why. However going into budget season it would be helpful to know the status of the facility, for example life spans of major systems and anticipated time frames (and costs) of repairs/replacements. In addition with the security issues of late, it would be beneficial to know anticipated costs of possible security plans.

Ms. Chimbolo also presented the VT School Board Insurance Trusts annual report for board members to review if they chose.

X. POLICY

2nd Reading: Weapons; Student Records; Grade Advancement: Retention, Promotion & Acceleration of Students

A. Grade Advancement: Ms. Trimboli at LES is looking at their policy and bringing the VSBA policy to LES. Ms. Chimbolo asked why use this proposed policy over the RWSU policy. Mr. Frail replied that BRHS doesn't currently have a policy. He will investigate and compare the proposed U39 policy to the RWSU policy

B. Weapons: Mr. Pace questioned the reference to Title 18, Section 921 of the US Code, wondering if the definition of weapon listed there should be spelled out or just referenced (as written). He was advised that the reference was sufficient. There was also discussion about the RWSU policy not listing as many specific weapon possibilities as the U39 proposed policy, and it was determined that listing more possibilities reduces "gray area"

Ms. Chimbolo advised that there would be a 3rd reading at the meeting in December.

XI. EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

XII. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pace **moved** to adjourn at 8:58p.m. Mr. Karner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

NEXT MEETING:

Budget Committee Meeting, Tuesday, November 28, 2006 at 6:30p.m., Black River High School Library

Joint Board Meeting, Executive Session regarding Teacher Negotiations, Wednesday, November 29, 2006 at 6:30p.m., Black River High School Library

Regular Meeting, Wednesday, December 20, 2006 at 7:00p.m., Black River High School Library

Respectfully submitted,

Amber Wilson
Board Recording Secretary