

**DRAFT**  
**Union #39 School Board**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Wednesday, May 17, 2006**  
**Mt. Holly Elementary School**  
**7:00 p.m.**

**Present:**

Board: Diana Chimbolo, Chair, David Slivka, Ralph Pace, Allen Seiple, Brent Karner  
Staff: Frank Perotti, Superintendent; John Barth, Principal  
Public: Duncan Love, Laura Lienhard, Scott Farr, Bob Bickford

**I. Call to Order:**

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

**II. Consent Agenda:**

- A. Minutes: April 26, 2006**
- B. Approval of Orders (A/P#31; P/R#23)**
- C. Financial Report**
- D. Department Reports**

Mr. Karner **moved** to accept the consent agenda. Mr. Slivka seconded and the motion carried unanimously

**III. Communications:**

E. Oral: Ms. Lienhard expressed concern as a parent about rumors that the high school may be closed. Mr. Karner asked Ms. Lienhard what the board can do to encourage residents to vote on the budget next week. Ms. Lienhard suggested that the board have parents make calls to remind residents to vote. Ms. Lienhard also suggested calling former Black River Middle and High School students that are home from college. Mr. Barth stated that flyers went out about the budget vote at the middle school showcase and will go out at the high school showcase next week. Mr. Slivka noted that moving the vote back to town meeting day will bring more people out to vote.

Mr. Slivka stated that he thinks voters are stating that they want the school to be more fiscally responsible when the budget is voted down. Mr. Slivka stated that not voting is a way to vote no. Mr. Karner stated that the board needs to communicate that they are being fiscally responsible. Mr. Seiple stated that there is a lot of overhead in a small school. Mr. Seiple stated that voters know that the Superintendent's office budget is increasing while enrollment is declining. Mr. Seiple also stated that some residents have the opinion that the school should be shut down.

Ms. Chimbolo spoke about the survey and how it will help to have community feedback about a unified district. Mr. Slivka questioned that a unified district will save a substantial amount of money. Mr. Pace stated that, according to the U.S. Census Bureau,

the enrollment projection shows a 17.7% decline in the next five years in the Vermont teenage population.

Mr. Pace stated that there is not a way to attract the number of students that Black River Middle and High School will need to stay afloat. Ms. Lienhard noted that the Mt. Holly Elementary school enrollment is increasing. Mr. Perotti noted that enrollment has about leveled off in Mt Holly. Mr. Perotti stated that the boards may have to look at options like appealing to families to move here, affordable housing, etc. to increase enrollment. Mr. Perotti noted that not every community in Vermont has a declining enrollment. Mr. Slivka stated that Black River Middle and High School is competing against great area high schools and the pool of students is getting smaller. Mr. Slivka stated that the cost of housing is a major factor in buying a house or choosing a location.

Ms. Chimbolo discussed Mr. Hutt Vater's suggestion from the joint board meeting. Mr. Hutt Vater suggested that Mt. Holly Elementary could teach pre-k to 6<sup>th</sup> grade, Ludlow Elementary School could teach pre-k to 8<sup>th</sup> grade with Mt Holly 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and Black River High School could be grades 9-12. It was the consensus of the board to further discuss governance at the board retreat.

#### **IV. Student Representative:** Tabled

#### **V. Business Items:** Tabled

#### **VI. HDEC/RVTC Report:**

Mr. Bob Bickford and Mr. Scott Farr presented information about the River Valley Technical Center (RVTC). They discussed the new governance structure and presented a draft of by-laws to seek input from board. A regional school district governance was selected for the RVTC. The make-up of the governing board is set by statute but the RVTC board agreed that there will be weighted representation based on a per 100 student average by a sending school. There must be an interstate compact between Vermont and New Hampshire to allow the Fall Mountain School District to participate. Sixty percent of the RVTC board will be elected and forty percent will be appointed.

Ms. Chimbolo stated that board representation by student count will be an issue. Ms. Chimbolo stated that, according to the Vermont Department of Education, the representation should be based on town population, not student count. Mr. Bickford will check with the Vermont Department of Education legal office about that. Mr. Bickford stated that the Fall Mountain School District is working on designating RVTC as their tech center and it should be resolved in the next few months.

Mr. Bickford reported that the RVTC board decided that each sending school district should vote on the RVTC budget. The votes will be co-mingled. Mr. Karner worried that voters will vote for the RVTC budget and not the Black River Middle and High School budget out of confusion. Mr. Slivka stated that it will have to just be clear that

there will be three budgets to vote on, the elementary school, Black River Middle and High School, and the RVTC budget.

Mr. Bickford stated that RVTC's current governance structure was a pilot program that was set to expire this year. Mr. Bickford noted that the disposing of equipment was an issue as well as the owning of property. The Bellows Falls school district would like a clear dollar amount instead of "nominal" when referring to equipment. Mr. Bickford stated that the facility itself was funded through state grants and there is concern that the Springfield school district will charge RVTC rent. The Bellows Falls school district would like to see the title of the RVTC building turned over to the RVTC or have a 25 year lease signed between RVTC and the Springfield school district. Mr. Bickford noted that operating costs are split between RVTC and Springfield High School based on square footage.

There was a discussion about the need for additional space at RVTC for two programs. Mr. Pace asked what the total value of RVTC assets were and assumed that the value would be the basis of the definition of nominal.

Mr. Bickford stated that another issue was collective bargaining agreements and existing contracts. Current contracts will remain valid and teachers may choose to remain part of the Springfield bargaining unit but have a different contract. The RVTC board will negotiate with teachers separately from the Springfield School Board.

Sending schools will still be required to transport students to the tech center.

Mr. Bickford stated that the goal is to have the RVTC plan for formation and by-laws completed so that voters of the service areas may vote on the agreement on Election Day, November 7, 2006. Mr. Bickford also noted that the next draft of the by-laws will be changed to eliminate the treasurer's office.

The Union #39 board supported the structure of a regional school district. The board asked that the next draft of the by-laws highlight any changes. Mr. Bickford stated that the board will probably have the next draft for their June meeting. Mr. Bickford stated that he hopes to have state board approval in August.

Mr. Bickford reported that Wright Construction and All Seasons Construction are working with the RVTC to upgrade its carpentry program. Mr. Bickford stated that carpentry is their most popular program and there will be an all day senior program that will include English and Math. RVTC will be lease space from Fellows Corp. Wright Construction and All Seasons Construction will buy equipment to start the program. The cost of the program will be grant funded in the first year for the \$97,000 in start up costs. If the grant is not received then the tech center will deficit spend for the program. Mr. Bickford stated that the RVTC is one of the few tech centers that are looking to add programs so they will probably receive the grant. There will be eight students enrolled. The Perkins grant is also available for funding and \$35,000 from this will be allocated to

the carpentry program. Mr. Bickford stated that the RVTC will have unanticipated revenue from thirteen students attending that were not planned for.

Mr. Bickford reported that enrollment has been off for the internet program and those courses will be dropped. There was discussion that students are not exposed to enough computer program options. There was discussion that the half day program kept some students from enrolling as they would be missing core classes at their sending school. The electronics program is growing significantly. RVTC is also working on establishing an automotive program.

The board returned to Written Communications:

F. Written: Ms. Chimbolo presented a letter from Mr. Barth informing the board that he has accepted a principal position at another high school. There is no action required as his contract ends on June 30, 2006. Ms. Chimbolo thanked Mr. Barth for his work.

**IV. Student Representative:** Ms. Chimbolo read a written letter from Allison Gillette regarding spring sports' standings, and updates about the poetry slam, middle and high school showcases, the art show at the town hall, and the prom. Ms. Chimbolo added that BRACC had an after prom party.

#### **V. Business Items:**

Ms. Chimbolo reported that the financial report was in the packet and there were no questions.

Mr. Slivka **moved** to accept the following orders: A/P #32, 33 and 34 and P/R#24. Mr. Karner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Pace asked that Mr. DeLisle provide information to the board about the cost of warranty service on the computers purchased this year.

#### **VIII. Principal's Report:**

I. Action Plan Committee: Mr. Barth reported that the action plan committee will meet one more time on the in-service day, May 26<sup>th</sup>. They will complete the plan, have it approved by the faculty and present it to the board at the June meeting for their approval.

Mr. Barth will also present an extra-curricular activity policy for approval at the June regular meeting. The policy will require all students involved in extra-curricular activities, not just sports, to sign an agreement that they will be alcohol and drug free all school year. Mr. Seiple asked about the action plan committee's survey about school climate. Mr. Barth reported that they received a great return of surveys and the data is currently being organized and tabulated. He hopes to present the survey results to the board at their June meeting.

J. Graduation/Senior Class Plans: Mr. Barth reviewed graduation plans and senior class plans. Bernie Sanders will be the guest speaker at graduation.

Mr. Barth asked the board about activities that would or would not be allowed on the senior class trip, i.e. jet skiing, parasailing, kayaking. He asked for board direction about allowable activities. There was discussion that there are companies that are reputable, have insurance, and train students before engaging them in the activity. Ms. Chimbolo stated that jet skiing is an issue because of lack of supervision while on the jet ski. Parents will sign a release and an agreement about expected behavior. Mr. Barth stated that the agreement will read that any student who is returned early from the trip due to inappropriate behavior will not be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies. Ms. Chimbolo suggested that Mr. Barth talk with parents about acceptable activities at his meeting with them on May 18<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Barth stated that the senior class is still \$3,000 short of their financial goals for the trip.

Mr. Barth presented coaching contracts for coaches that Joe Gurdak has recommended.

Mr. Bixby **moved** to approve the following contracts:

Jeff Billings, Middle School Girls' Soccer  
Bruce Schmidt, Middle School Boys' Soccer  
Tony Valente, Boys' Varsity Soccer  
Ron Wood, JV Boys' Soccer  
Pat Pullinen, Varsity Girls' Soccer  
Pete Josselyn, JV Girls' Soccer  
Lisa Hammond, Varsity Cross Country

Mr. Pace seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

K. End of Year Activities: Mr. Barth stated that the middle school showcase and the poetry slam were great.

### **VIII. Superintendent's Report:**

L. Strategic Plan: Mr. Perotti asked the board to watch "For Kids' Sake" on LPCTV, a video about redesigning schools.

M. Staff Development Update: Mr. Perotti reported that May 26<sup>th</sup> is an in-service day. The in-service day will be spent working on the last piece of basic work from the staff evaluation committee and the Charlotte Danielson model. In the afternoon teachers will go back to their buildings to allow for building centered work.

N. RWSU Report: Mr. Perotti reported on the Rutland Windsor Supervisory meeting last week. All employee contracts were approved at the meeting; the policy book is being worked on and should be completed soon with a goal for a single policy book for all districts. The teacher mentoring program was approved for new teachers and those

recommended for the program due to supervision and evaluation issues. Mr. Perotti will make a presentation to each board about this program. There was also a first reading on the wellness policy.

O. Fuel Oil: Mr. Perotti reported that Mt. Holly, Plymouth, and Ludlow towns and schools are bidding with the RWSU. The Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union went ahead on their own for a fuel oil bid. Mr. Perotti estimated that the bid will be for 80,000 gallons of fuel oil. Frank Heald is researching prices but Mr. Perotti does not want to wait too long to go out to bid.

**X. Policy:**

**Q. 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Wellness Policy:** The wellness committee will meet on Monday, May 22nd at noon.

Ms. Chimbolo asked the board how they want to go forward with an interim principal search. Mr. Perotti has posted ads for an interim principal. Mr. Slivka asked if there should be an interim principal or a principal, and maybe a vice-principal depending on the budget outcome. Mr. Slivka stated that good candidates might not be interested in an interim position. Mr. Perotti stated that because there may be a governance change the position should be interim. Mr. Slivka noted that a k-12 district will require a unique individual as the principal and they will probably request a much higher salary that the school has been offering. Ms. Chimbolo stated that the board may choose to keep the interim principal on after an interim period. There was discussion about marketing the position to make it the most attractive while being truthful about the potential for governance changes. It was the consensus of the board to remove the word “interim” from advertisements.

**IX. Other Business:**

P. Board Retreat: The board retreat will be held on May 25, 2006, at 6:00 p.m. at Clear Lake Furniture.

**XI. TO-DO List:** Action plan for adoption – June

**XII. Executive Session:**

Mr. Slivka **moved** to enter executive session to discuss an academic record at 9:18 p.m. Mr. Pace seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The board returned from executive session at 9:22 p.m.

Mr. Slivka **moved** to award a veteran’s diploma on graduation day. Mr. Pace seconded and the motion carried unanimously

**XIII. Adjournment:**

Mr. Pace **moved** to adjourn at 9:23 p.m. Mr. Karner seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**XIV. Next Meeting:** May 23, 2006, Budget Information Meeting  
May 25, 2006, U39 Board Retreat  
June 21, 2006, Regular Meeting, Black River High School

Respectfully submitted,

Christine Balch  
Board Recording Secretary