

**NORTH COUNTRY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2006 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE NCUHS LIBRARY**

**Board Members Present:** June Rosenberg (Chair), Arne Amalixsen, Steve Brochu, Vince Buttice, Ken Canning, Richard Cartee, Rick Geisel, Rose Mary Mayhew, Elaine Morin, Harold Morse, Muriel O’Gorman, James Privee

**Board Members Absent:** Susan Davis (Newport City), Tammy LaCourse (Morgan), Peter Moskovites (Charleston)

**Administrators:** Bill Rivard, Bob Fitts, Glenn Hankinson, Eileen Illuzzi

**Faculty Forum:** Trish Buttice

**Student Council:** none

**Media:** NEK-TV; Joseph Cresser, The Chronicle; Daniel Staples, The Newport Daily Express

**Guests:** Frank Davis, Brent Hilliard, Bill Crenshaw, Jeff Everett, Grant Spates, Bill Stenger, Tom Bailey, Joe Aja, Rick Burroughs, Karen Weller, Richard Baraw, Ray Ash, Bernie Henault, others

J. Rosenberg, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:39 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. S. Brochu asked the board to suspend reading of the December 6<sup>th</sup> minutes. **S. Brochu moved the board approve the minutes of January 3, 2006. The motion was approved (S. Brochu/K. Canning). A. Amalixsen and E. Morin abstained.**

J. Rosenberg noted she had revised the agenda and asked for a motion to approve it. S. Brochu asked that another item be added to the agenda, which was to take a moment of silence for Tina Fontaine. **S. Brochu moved the board accept the revised agenda. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/A. Amalixsen).**

S. Brochu called for a moment of silence in memory of Tina Fontaine who had been a substitute teacher and had passed away.

**Public Relations Committee**

R. Geisel noted the board procedure calls it the public relations committee, adding he refers to it as the community relations committee. It was noted that changes to procedures need to go to the school committee before going to the full board for approval. R. Geisel suggested that since everyone was here that the change be made. **R. Geisel moved the board formally approve changing the name to community relations committee. The motion was unanimously approved (R. Geisel/E. Morin).** The revised procedure will be included in the next board packet.

R. Geisel reported he and J. Privee attended a VSBA session at VIT on passing school budgets. He also reported between now and Town Meeting the committee would be working on positively presenting the budgets, and J. Privee had drafted a form they would continue to review before bringing to the full board. R. Geisel reported that J. Privee had also drafted another policy/procedure they may want to adopt, adding these issues would be discussed tomorrow night at 6:30.

J. Rosenberg noted they had 2 other boards here and asked Grant Spates to introduce the NCCC Regional Advisory Board members present. Mr. Spates introduced Jeff Everett, Rose Mary Mayhew and Elaine Morin. He reported the board had been working with Mr. Fitts for about one and a half years; that they had reviewed the NCCC budget, which included a 1.75 reduction in staff; and were now looking to see where the WDC was and work to support their goal.

### **Career Center Director, Bob Fitts**

#### **NCCC Budget**

Mr. Fitts reported the budget had been presented to the RAB; that they had made some recommendations and changes to the budget, which he made. He noted it had been presented to the NCUHS finance/operation's committee last week and was now before this board for approval.

A. Amalixsen reported the finance/operation's committee did review the budget; that there was a big item they would like the board to recognize, which is a 4% reduction in spending from the prior year; that the one item that got the most attention was the reduction in culinary arts due to a reduction in the number of students. Mr. Fitts noted in the past expenses included in the Carl Perkins fund were included in the local budget, but that this year because of how budgets are approved they had broken those funds out, adding they would do the Perkins funds in the spring. A. Amalixsen stated the committee was pleased to have Grant Spates and Mr. Fitts at their meeting to present the budget, adding the committee voted 5 to 1 to recommend to the full board that the budget be approved. **A. Amalixsen moved the NCCC budget for 2006-2007 be approved for \$2,004,089.00, seconded by S. Brochu.**

R. Cartee asked if this would be an open session item or executive session as it would be a discussion on personnel. J. Rosenberg asked if it would be a person or a position. R. Cartee stated it would be a position. J. Rosenberg stated it could be discussed in open session. R. Cartee gave his opinion on the situation and asked that the position not be rified; that he understood the population was down; he asked that they give this position another year to try to encourage kids to become chefs in culinary arts; adding that without the instructor there the kids won't learn. J. Privee stated it seemed to him that the culinary arts position would not have a financially devastating impact on the budget.

Mr. Fitts reported when they had this discussion at the RAB that position was included in his budget; that when they looked at the numbers they had employed 2 chefs when they had 60 students, adding today they had 22 students; that after looking at numbers in all programs the board asked why they had 2 teachers for 22 students; that they asked him to

take one out; that after more discussion he convinced them to leave in a 25% position to do intro to culinary arts; that it was not a curriculum discussion; but a money discussion; that their funds were generated by enrollments; that the lower the enrollments the higher the cost of the program was; adding that the marketing program subsidizes some of the other programs.

R.M. Mayhew reported in doing the NCUHS budget the finance/operation's committee asked all administrators to come forward with what they needed; that the RAB board asked Mr. Fitts to do the same. She noted that department had been overstaffed for a couple of years; that they told Mr. Fitts the board would support administrative recommendations; that they talked for months about being fiscally responsible; adding the administrator was saying they didn't need the extra position. V. Buttice asked if they had a staff member here who would work the 25% position; and how difficult it would be to hire someone for that position and if they had someone else capable of teaching hospitality. Mr. Fitts stated that person would need to be licensed. E. Morin stated she agreed with R.M. Mayhew; that if there were only 22 students she couldn't see asking the tax payers to fund a position that was not necessary; that if enrollment grows the board would meet that challenge, but they should put out a budget that meets current needs. A. Amalixsen again stated the finance/operation's committee voted 5 to 1 to accept the reductions. The board discussed the numbers over the past years; Mr. Fitts stated that 7 years ago the number of students enrolled in culinary arts was 60; that 2 years ago when the numbers were 28 he proposed they didn't need 2 teachers and since then the numbers have gotten smaller.

Mr. Spates reported the RAB reviewed enrollments as well; and that 7 years ago there were 271 students enrolled in CC classes; now there were 428; adding there were trends in enrollment and if they need another culinary teacher next year they would get one. He added they should get the trends of students and the demands of the markets and track data to justify where the programs are going. M. O'Gorman asked what the ideal number was for one teacher in culinary; Mr. Fitts reported the maximum number in a program is 16; and with a level I and level II class that would be 32. R. Geisel noted the administration had made a difficult, but necessary decision. F. Davis asked the board to wait, before making any decisions, until registration takes place; stating the board shouldn't be relying on instinct or anecdotes to make a decision; that registration was coming up next month. J. Rosenberg asked if he was saying there are no accurate numbers for next fall. F. Davis reported that guidance is now starting to register students for classes next year. A. Amalixsen noted that was always the problem with building a budget; that they had to make assumptions and can't wait for actual enrollments; that Mr. Fitts did a good job of studying the numbers and would make sure funds were there to cover it if changes were to happen.

R. Cartee moved to amend the original motion to include in that budget the .75 proposed culinary rified position, seconded by J. Privee. Mr. Spates noted that last year Mr. Fitts kept the 2 positions; that in 2004-2005 there were 30 students and they wanted to give it another try, then it dropped to 24 students.

S. Brochu noted that in the past years NCUHS had to rif positions on the academic side; that if the students were not there he didn't see why they couldn't do the same thing on the NCCC side. He noted they had to rif an art teacher; then the next year they had to hire another full time teacher; adding that right now they didn't have the numbers and shouldn't have the positions. Further discussion ensued. A vote was held on the motion to amend the original motion: V. Buttice, R. Cartee and J. Privee voted in favor of amending the motion; all others voted against it. The amended motion failed. **A vote was held on the original motion: V. Buttice and R. Cartee voted against the original motion; with all others present voting in favor. The original motion carried (A. Amalixsen/S. Brochu).**

### **VIT Lease**

Mr. Fitts referred to the lease included in the board packet, adding they would like to renew their lease for 3 years. **E. Morin moved the board approve the VIT lease, seconded by M. O'Gorman.** S. Brochu asked how that would fit in with the additions to the building. Mr. Fitts reported in the plans was space for VIT and PEG Access. R. Cartee noted the agreement stated the school would pay for heat, lights, janitorial services and make copying services available; adding that was a lot of services for the \$1.00 contract; that if the board was talking about being fiscally responsible this was not. **A vote was held on the motion: R. Cartee voted against the motion; all other board members voted in favor. The motion passed (E. Morin/M. O'Gorman).**

### **Introduce Adult Services Coordinator**

Mr. Fitts introduced Dr. Bill Crenshaw, of NEKLS, and Eileen Illuzzi the new adult services coordinator to the board. Ms. Illuzzi thanked Mr. Fitts and Ms. Randall, noting they had a great transition team, and also thanked Dr. Crenshaw. She reported they were getting the classes going; that they had a list of things to do; with their main priority getting the students in. J. Rosenberg asked if there would be a monthly report. Ms. Illuzzi asked if they wanted a written report or if they wanted her to be here. J. Rosenberg suggested they submit a written report at the second meeting of the board each month, which would be due to central office by Thursday before that meeting; adding if she had something she wanted to present she would have to bring it to the planning committee. S. Brochu stated they couldn't direct Ms. Illuzzi; that they would have to direct Bill Crenshaw, as stated in the contract. Dr. Crenshaw stated they would be directed by the board; adding they wanted to provide the information the board needed.

### **Workforce Development Center - Bill Stenger**

Bill Stenger, chair of the WDC board, distributed information to the board, which included the vision, site plan and construction phasing schedule for the WDC. He gave a brief synopsis of the work done to date; and reviewed the proposed academies with the board. Rick Burroughs, of Black River Design, reviewed the site plan with the board; and also gave them an overview of the Land Lab. He stated they would keep the buses pretty much where they were. A. Amalixsen asked Mr. Burroughs if he was assuming the bus garage would be removed and Mr. Burroughs stated he was. Mr. Burroughs reviewed the construction phasing schedule with the board; stated it was now more feasible to do the Land Lab first. S. Brochu asked if the bond vote goes through and they

follow this schedule how much disruption there would be to students during the school day. Mr. Burroughs said there would be some; that they hadn't yet planning with Mr. Fitts as to how the construction would work; but they would work to have a minimal amount of inconvenience. Mr. Fitts reported he met with the director at Brattleboro who said their programs have moved up to 6 times in 2 years. S. Brochu asked if air quality would be affected during construction. Mr. Burroughs reported there were guidelines contractors have to adhere to. S. Brochu asked Mr. Fitts, with the impact on scheduling, if he had done any budgeting for transporting student. Mr. Fitts stated they had not, but did put a substantial increase in transportation.

Mr. Stenger reviewed the funding for the WDC and asked for the board's support of the project. He noted the difference between the cost and the states' 100% funding of the project was about \$6.3 million. Mr. Hankinson distributed a sheet of tax rates showing the impact for towns based on fiscal year 2006; he noted Act 68 is being modified by Act 130 but there was no idea how it would impact individual towns in the future. Mr. Spates asked Mr. Stenger if he had discussions with legislators about possibly paying more each year. Mr. Stenger stated he met with area legislators about a month ago; that he thinks there is more money that can be gotten; but that he would rather be conservative.

Mr. Stenger noted they had surveyed the community, students, businesses and the state to encompass the needs of the students, adult learners and businesses. He stated this was an intelligent construction project, which would be done as least intrusively as possible. Mr. Stenger stated they would not have this opportunity again, as others were looking to do this; that if this is not supported they wouldn't get the 100% funding again and that was political reality in Montpelier. S. Brochu asked if the was a percentage built in for overruns. Mr. Burroughs stated they had a cost estimator do it, adding the DOE recommends they count on a 10% contingency. Mr. Stenger stated this was probably the most beneficial educational opportunity this area has had for the last 20 or 30 years and perhaps the next 50. He stated he appreciated the opportunity to speak to the board; that they had good questions and showed sincere support.

**R. Cartee moved the board supports the efforts of the WDC 100%. The motion was unanimously approved (R. Cartee/S. Brochu).**

Mr. Spates stated the RAB was totally behind the project and would do everything they could to sell it to the public.

**S. Brochu moved the board hold a special meeting next Tuesday, January 24, 2006 at 6:30 p.m. in the NCUHS library to sign the documents needed for the WDC and conduct any other business. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/R. Cartee).**

S. Brochu stated the board didn't approve the public relations committee minutes. **R. Geisel moved the board approve the public relations minutes of November 28, 2005. The motion was unanimously approved (R. Geisel/S. Brochu).**

### Administrative Report, Bill Rivard

J. Rosenberg stated in lieu of the superintendent's report Mr. Rivard would have a short report. Mr. Rivard reported they finished the first semester; that mid-terms finished today; and that they start the second semester tomorrow. T. Buttice reported that the teachers had completed a monumental task of completing e-grades; that they put them right on the computer; that they were not all equally inept with computer skills but they had all done it. She stated it would be wonderful to have the board acknowledge the teachers for doing it and understanding how the system works. Mr. Rivard reported the Brian Hampton had spent a lot of time working with the staff in getting this ready.

Mr. Rivard reported he sent an email to all staff concerning senior citizens attending school functions reminding them they will not be charged; he asked the board to let him know if they hear of anyone being charged.

### Finance/Operation's Committee

#### Approve/Sign 2006-2007 Annual Meeting Warning

A. Amalixsen reported they took last year's warning and worked on it to change wording for this year. A. Amalixsen read the articles to the board and noted Articles 5, 6 and 7 would be by Australian ballot; he stated there was no space for a bus garage or storage facility with the new WDC plans; that it would cost around a 1/3 of a percent on the budget for the next 10 years to get a bus maintenance/storage facility. The committee had researched options for a bus parking garage.

**S. Brochu moved the board allow Article 5 be approved by the board for a maximum of \$300,000 for a bus maintenance/storage facility, seconded by K. Canning. Discussion ensued as to the exact wording of the motion. S. Brochu agreed to add: Article 5 which is part of the warning for the annual meeting for the NCUHS district to be voted on in it's entirety on March 7, 2006. K. Canning agreed to the change. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/K. Canning).**

H. Morse stated he read in the OENSU minutes where S. Brochu said it would also be for the district. S. Brochu stated they had to take it into consideration when looking for space and land, in case North Troy or another school wanted NCUHS to do their maintenance they would have to have space to do it. S. Brochu stated this board would have to approve such changes, but they needed to be sure they had the necessary space. H. Morse stated NCUHS should not work on any other buses but their own. S. Brochu reported they had 9 different prospective sites; that it would have to go out to bid; and that they know what range they could work in now.

A. Amalixsen again reviewed the budget numbers with the board; noting there was a 3.5% increase in regular education and a 17% increase for special education. He noted that when comparing expenditures from year to year they were holding the line. Mr. Hankinson noted this is the first year the assessment id done by equalized pupils; in the past it had been done by FTE's enrolled.

Mr. Hankinson noted he made another change from what he changed this afternoon. A. Amalixsen stated the finance/operation's committee would re-work the warning and hold a vote at next week's board meeting. He noted that article 8 is new this year; that they were looking at roof repairs or other capital improvements; adding it was best to have funds set aside if the roof does give out in its' normal life. The board discussed the deficit after the issue was raised by B. Henault.

A. Amalixsen noted there was also an item where they were concerned if there any dollars left to authorize the directors to place any unexpended funds in a capital improvement fund, according to article 8. He added it would be best for the school to have funds set aside for major expenses. **A. Amalixsen moved the board include Article 8 in the warning. The motion was unanimously approved (A. Amalixsen/S. Brochu).** B. Henault stated there should be a dollar amount mentioned. A. Amalixsen stated he felt it was not prudent to just throw numbers around, but they want to have the authority, if they have funds available, to reserve them for a capital purpose.

Discussion on this topic ensued. A. Amalixsen stated they would have a new warning for the next meeting. F. Davis stated the board needed to re-vote as their first vote on Article 8 was wrong.

**A. Amalixsen moved the warning should read "shall the electorate authorize the board of school directors to place any unexpended funds for the year 2005-2006 as determined by an audit in a capital improvement fund. The motion was unanimously approved (A. Amalixsen/S. Brochu).**

**S. Brochu moved the board delete their first motion made on Article 8. The motion was unanimously approved (S. Brochu/A. Amalixsen).**

#### **2006-2007 Tuition Rate**

A. Amalixsen reviewed the process for setting the tuition. **A. Amalixsen moved the board set the 2006-2007 tuition rate at \$7,178. The motion was unanimously approved (A. Amalixsen/S. Brochu).** A. Amalixsen noted it was a bargain for students to attend NCUHS. Mr. Hankinson stated this was the maximum allowable tuition.

#### **School Committee**

**K. Canning moved the board approve common board policy E.24: Environmental Health for first reading. The motion was unanimously approved (K. Canning/S. Brochu).**

**K. Canning moved the board approve common board policy F.20: Pupil Privacy Rights: Student Surveys for first reading. The motion was unanimously approved (K. Canning/S. Brochu).**

K. Canning reported changes to NCUHS policy E.10: Parking Regulations – Senior High had been requested by the administration, as they needed more space for faculty parking. S. Brochu asked why more faculty spaces were needed. Mr. Rivard reviewed the parking

issues with the board, adding they need more spaces for visitors as well. **K. Canning moved the board approve E.10 for first reading. The motion was unanimously approved (K. Canning/S. Brochu).**

**Negotiation's Committee**

M. O'Gorman reported she reviewed a letter sent by Dr. Weston to a faculty member. She reported there was another letter that had been sent to the personnel committee.

V. Buttice reported the personnel committee would meet on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. to review administrative evaluations.

**Old Business**

**Board Letter for Annual Report**

J. Rosenberg distributed the letter to the board.

**There being no further business to conduct the board unanimously agreed to adjourn at 9:35 p.m. (S. Brochu/K. Canning).**

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Rubino  
Recording Secretary