

**NORTH COUNTRY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOARD MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2007 AT 6:30 P.M. IN THE NCUHS LIBRARY**

Board Members Present: Arne Amalixsen (Chair), Steve Brochu, Richard Cartee, Rick Geisel, Rose Mary Mayhew, Peter Moskovites, Muriel O’Gorman, James Privee, June Rosenberg, Mary Roy

Board Members Absent: Ken Canning (Lowell), Tim DelaBruere (Newport City), Joe Gregersen (Newport Town), Harold Morse (Jay), Holland Rep

Administration: Bill Rivard, Jeff Place, Eileen Illuzzi, Brent Hilliard, Dr. Robert Kern

Media: Steve Blake: The Newport Daily Express; Robin Smith: The Caledonian-Record; Joseph Gresser: The Chronicle

Student Council: Tyler Uhlendorf

Faculty Forum: Helen Poulin

Guests: Alan Lane, Keith Wooster, ROTC Cadets: Tom Nelson, Robin Taylor and Thomas Stevens

A. Amalixsen, Chair, called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. **He asked for approval of the minutes of October 2, 2007. The minutes were unanimously approved as submitted (R. Cartee/R. Geisel).**

Recognition Presentation

Mr. Rivard introduced Keith Wooster and Alan Lane, along with 3 students to the board. Written information about the JROTC program was distributed to the board. Keith Wooster stated it was always a pleasure to present information to the board; noting they were going into their 11th year; that the program’s success has depended on the students, support from the administration and community.

Battalion Commander Tom Nelson led the discussion and reviewed the brochure with the board. Cadet Executive Officer Robin Taylor reviewed the competitive events report and formal events report. Battalion Operations Cadet Thomas Stevens reviewed the color guard activities.

Alan Lane reported they were the largest school in the state, averaging about 120 students participating in the program. A. Amalixsen thanked them for their presentation.

Superintendent’s Report: Dr. Robert Kern

Strategic Planning

Dr. Kern reported he had to re-think this due to a number of pressing issues; adding he had to find an effective facilitator to help with this process. He noted that right now most boards were engaged in developing their budgets; adding he would move strategic

planning to after the budget process, as he was working on a 09/10 timeline. Dr. Kern reported they were working with schools providing enrollment projections and budget issues.

NCS/OENSU Budget

Dr. Kern reported he would bring the supervisory union budget to the full board in November, checking to be sure it was inclusive; that he was working on one issue of looking to develop an alternative program for elementary and junior high students for next year; adding this would go to the full NCS/OENSU board for review.

Administrative Reports

Principal: Bill Rivard

Mr. Rivard asked the board if it would okay to move Jeff Place up first. The board concurred.

Special Programs Coordinator: Jeff Place

Mr. Place noted he was asked to give the board an update on the special programs at NCUHS; adding this was the start of his 3rd year at NCUHS and that he particularly likes the change of the multiple pathways. Mr. Place reported they had reduced their reliance on alternative educational resources; adding it was his goal to significantly decrease it. He informed the board that last year there were 40 students were off campus last year; and so far this year only 16 were.

Mr. Place distributed copies of the NCUHS Multiple Pathways report to the board; adding it was modeled after one at People's Academy. He informed the board it would be a nice looking brochure, as it was going to NCCC to be polished up and have pictures included. He reported the program was based on VT Standards; that they were looking to add to their menu of options for students; that it was being run as a pilot program this year through their Action Plan; and that he had plans to move it into the regular education arena next year.

Mr. Place noted when he first arrived at NCUHS the special program department was pretty much self-contained; that they had a separate content area; reporting they now have no self-contained classes. He reported the charge of the staff for multiple pathways was to work closely with individual students and families to design a whole program to engage them, keep them here at the high school. J. Rosenberg asked if the CC would be an option in multiple pathways and Mr. Place said it absolutely would be.

Mr. Place informed the board he pulled back Sherie Lucas from NCSAP, Jim Graves from the Tutorial Program; that Matt McFarlane was already at the high school and pulled from the last self-contained program. R. Cartee asked how this has helped his budget. Mr. Place reported he was already in the development stage of the service plans, but that he had put considerably less in the tuition line item. He reported they started the 06/07 year with 203 special education students and ended it with 166 on their caseload.

Mr. Place reported the staff and students in multiple pathways would like to come to the board and tell some of their stories. A. Amalixsen asked what one big challenge was that the board should be aware of. Mr. Place reported their biggest challenge and the one he pays most attention to was improving programming so they were serving their students to the best of their ability. A. Amalixsen stated he was looking for a negative; and Mr. Place reported that would be difficult to state.

P. Moskovites reported he was on the hiring committee when Mr. Place was hired; adding he had addressed every issue talked about at that time.

Principal: Bill Rivard

Action Plan

Mr. Rivard distributed his written report to the board. He reported since September they had finalized the Action Plan, noting a copy had been included in the board packet. He noted the plan had been broken down into 4 areas: over arching challenges, focus areas, goals and actions. He reported they discussed how to measure their plan and agreed to have 4 meetings a year; with specific individuals responsible for areas of the plan. Mr. Rivard reported the administration would meet monthly with those specific individuals to be sure the goals and objectives of the action plan were being met. Mr. Rivard distributed a cover page for the Action Plan, along with a revised page 7. Mr. Rivard stated the board would need to approve and accept this amendable Action Plan; adding some challenges faced by the school may cause them to change their direction.

P. Moskovites noted the Education Committee reviewed the Plan once and asked Mr. Rivard if he wanted the board to take action tonight. Mr. Rivard stated if the board felt it was ready to take action they could, or they could send it back to the committee. P. Moskovites stated he would prefer to be able to thoroughly read the document. Mr. Rivard stated the board could approve the Action Plan at their December meeting.

Web Grade Pilot

Mr. Rivard reported they began the pilot during the week of October 17th; that 11 teachers were participating in the pilot; that they were asked to select one class and create a user name and password. He noted they can monitor and take feedback from users. He reported they were receiving some positive feedback from users. Ms. Poulin stated it is encouraging students; adding teachers can also make comments along with entering the grades. She stated they hoped to add more parents to the pilot for the second semester. Mr. Rivard reported they would run the pilot through the second semester, so that next year when they send out the student mailing every parent would be issued a password. Mr. Rivard reported teachers were already asking to have more classes involved.

Other Information

Mr. Rivard reported they had held 2 crisis drills so far this year; one to clear the hallways and the other to secure the building. He reported one drill included the new Newport City Policy drug dog.

Mr. Rivard reported that last Thursday was the annual Parent/Teacher Open House; that culinary provided cookies and punch and NCCC had displays out. He reported the Fall band concert was held immediately following the open house and was well attended.

Mr. Rivard informed the board that the German Exchange Students left this Sunday and the French Exchange Students left today; adding they would be back between November 17th and 19th. He noted this was the first time both groups had gone in the fall. He informed the board that the German students were here during Maniatty Week and the French students would be here at the end of April.

Mr. Rivard reported he had copies of the draft budget for the finance chair; adding they would begin the review process tomorrow night.

Tyler reported he got stuck in a hall during the lock down and had to enter a class other than the one he was supposed to be in; and asked if there was a way for a teacher to call another teacher if a student was stuck in another room to let them know the student was okay, just in another class. Mr. Rivard reported phones were not in every classroom; adding teachers were not supposed to use the intercom unless it was an emergency; adding that Tyler did the right thing by remaining in that room for that period. S. Brochu asked how this type of problem could be resolved and Mr. Rivard stated he would speak with Tyler later.

Operation's Coordinator: Brent Hilliard

Mr. Hilliard reported he was filling in for Mr. Fitts who could not attend tonight's meeting. He reported the Ad-hoc NCCC Building Committee met tonight before this meeting; that Joe Aja was there and reviewed the project to date; that it was on track and they were heading towards their goal of complete of Phase I; then they would move classes downstairs and begin work on the second floor. Mr. Hilliard reported Phase I was originally expected to be completed by February break, but that goal was upped to December.

Mr. Hilliard noted their electrical contractors did close their doors; that they were meeting today with a bonding company and Mike's Electric; adding Mike's was moving on site tomorrow to pick up where the other contractor left off, as the people on site already know where the conduits were and would be available for Mike's people. A. Amalixsen reported he talked to them; there were no red flags and were staying on schedule. Mr. Hilliard noted the board took a tour tonight and would do another in December or shortly thereafter.

A. Amalixsen reported there had been a request to visit the Land Lab and encouraged the administration to pick a time when the board could take a walk through it. Mr. Hilliard reported that Mr. Fitts said it would be fine if board members wanted to visit, but requested that they call ahead.

Mr. Hilliard reported the bus garage had been relocated; adding that Ms. Buchanan was very appreciative. He stated that project enabled them to fulfill one of Mr. Chaffee's

wishes, which was to replace the feed system for the wood chip furnace. He reported that they were able to do that when they added a new fuel system; adding this was now an auger system. A. Amalixsen stated with the wood chip furnace here and now at NCUJHS energy costs would be reduced.

Adult Services Coordinator: Eileen Illuzzi

Ms. Illuzzi distributed the programs goals for FY08 to the board; reporting these were draft goals that included feedback from employers. She reported they only offered 16 classes this semester due to the construction project; adding they were using the C-wing available classes, the computer lab and the Land Lab. She reported there were not enough enrollments to hold a welding class; and not enough for one of their medical programs; adding they try not to run classes at a loss. She reported they were still making money as far as the classes go that were running.

Ms. Illuzzi reported they had been working with the local WIB; adding that Grant Spates had taken the bull by the horn on this one. She noted the WIB had been notorious for not getting things done; but now they would be able to deal more responsibly with the needs for area employers. She reported she would be the liaison between the NCCC and the WIB. Ms. Illuzzi reported she was trying to develop more relationships with business people and develop training for them; adding soft skills training is needed.

Ms. Illuzzi reported Next Generation Commission Grant funds were available; adding the Department of Labor hadn't yet decided how to divvy up the funds. She reported the area adult education coordinators want to develop a service plan. She reported she wants to develop a flow chart for when people come in they can see a career pathway and the training needed for where they want to get.

A. Amalixsen noted this was not a profit making operation, but they needed to meet the expenses of running the program.

Faculty & Student Council Representatives

Ms. Poulin reported she was happy about the web grades pilot underway. She thanked J. Rosenberg for being on the state school calendar committee; noting a lot of issues were covered at the state meeting held at NCUHS; adding it was a necessary and well attended meeting. Tyler reported he wasn't able to attend the meeting, but others from the student council did and they appreciated the thank you note from J. Rosenberg. He added the council was drafting a letter to send to local legislators; J. Rosenberg stated they should also send it to Carol King at the DOE. Tyler reported there were about 900 students at the Halloween Dance; that about 85 people, per night, attended the school play last week, which was written by Travis Barrett.

Tyler reported the seniors are upset about the parking situation; adding he had been told if someone was parked in a no parking space they would be towed; that people without permits were parking there for free and juniors were parking in the senior lot. He reported seniors felt if people were parking there for free, those seniors who paid should be reimbursed. P. Moskovites stated if they wanted the rules enforced they should speak

to the administration. Mr. Hilliard reported if students don't have their parking permit displayed their cars could be towed. Mr. Rivard stated parking has been his most pleasurable experience this fall; adding "enough said".

Comments from Guests

There were none.

Finance/Operation's Committee

R. Cartee moved the minutes of October 16, 2007 be approved as submitted. The motion was unanimously approved (R. Cartee/P. Moskovites).

Audit

R. Cartee reported he had a chat with Mr. Hankinson this afternoon and asked where the audit was; that Mr. Hankinson said he didn't know; that he was asked for more information, which he sent about 3 weeks ago; that Besaw's office called with questions and now Besaw says he can't find the information. R. Cartee noted the board can't work on the budget until they get the audit. Mr. Hilliard reported they could work on next year's expenditure budget. P. Moskovites suggested this be on the finance/operation's agenda tomorrow night; A. Amalixsen concurred.

Empower Finance/Operation's Committee to Open & Act Upon Snow Plow Bids

A. Amalixsen asked why this was necessary; S. Brochu noted the bids were not being opened until tomorrow. R. Cartee stated there was a possibility that his son would be submitting a bid; adding if he did he would excuse himself from the process.

P. Moskovites moved the board empower the finance/operation's committee to open, accept and award the bid. The motion was unanimously approved (P. Moskovites/M. O'Gorman).

A. Amalixsen reported he would create an agenda for tomorrow's finance/operation's meeting.

Education Committee

Position & Response to School Budget Cap

P. Moskovites stated whatever actions the board takes on this should go to the community relations committee. He added the board should respond to the school budget caps; adding unless this and other boards begin to get politically involved there is no way they can respond to school budgets. P. Moskovites reported there had been comments from both the governor and the legislators chastising boards for not doing their jobs stating that voters should elect board members who can cut the budget. He noted given the issue of mandates; and the shifting of costs to schools from human services it was making it difficult for boards to have control of the budgets; adding they have the audacity to say boards have to cap increases.

P. Moskovites noted every year at budget time boards take into consideration the needs of the students, the taxpayers, the administration and teachers; adding they argue about

where they can cut a dime here or there; adding boards can't afford state and federal mandates. A. Amalixsen noted for the legislature and governor to make these changes change the denominators involved in the budget process; adding he would like to see other boards take a proactive stance. A. Amalixsen noted that P. Moskovites brought this resolution to the OENSU board as well; P. Moskovites stated he did, adding he would like to see more outrage.

J. Rosenberg reported that P. Moskovites gave her permission to bring his resolution to the VSA/VSBA annual resolution meeting; adding a resolution was passed and the VSBA would bring it forward; adding also that local schools were encouraged to take a position on this issue. A. Amalixsen stated he thought P. Moskovites was looking for a response from this board to his proposed resolution; adding this board had a community relations committee to bring this forward to the community. R. Geisel stated other OENSU schools should be following this board's lead; and get information out to community members. A. Amalixsen stated they had to communicate that they represent the voters in their communities and their students were entrusted to them; adding they also had to communicate that with their legislators.

P. Moskovites stated he would like to put the legislature in the position of cutting this budget, but doing it legally and not cutting any of their mandates. The resolution as proposed read "We invite the Governor and the Legislature to focus their attention on the important issue of school costs – that of school funding. The punitive school cap law passed by our state government completely ignores this school funding issue and the equally important question of what the cost drivers are in the school budgets. The school cap law is an insult to all school boards and to the intelligence of the taxpayers. In effect, it states that the duly elected representatives that serve on the school boards are incapable of doing their jobs. It is clear that the Governor and the Legislature feel that we are incompetent, and to redress this incompetence: The North Country Union High School Board (NCUHS) invites the Governor and the Legislature to review our school budget for the current year and inform us as to the excessive spending that we can trim."

P. Moskovites moved the board accept this as a resolution of this board, seconded by J. Rosenberg. A vote was held: J. Privee and S. Brochu voted against the motion; all others voted in favor. The motion carried (P. Moskovites/J. Rosenberg).

A. Amalixsen noted that Bill Mathias read the riot act to them at the VSBA conference; adding there were many items school board's had to do by law and putting caps in was putting in a hamstring. He commended P. Moskovites for stepping forward with this resolution; adding R. Geisel and the community relations committee would carry the baton forward.

Personnel Committee

Approve Minutes

M. O'Gorman moved the board accept the October 2, 2007 minutes. The motion was unanimously approved (M. O'Gorman/R. Geisel). M. O'Gorman noted she had reported on the October 2nd meeting at that evening's board meeting. She noted

interviews were held for the math position, but that all references were not in; adding she would rather not have a vote on that position yet.

M. O’Gorman moved that Jeanne Dickinson be offered the Title’s Math Tutor position for the remainder of this school year. The motion was unanimously approved (M. O’Gorman/S. Brochu).

M. O’Gorman reported the committee was to have met tonight but didn’t have a quorum; adding Mr. Rivard updated them on what was going on. She reported Mr. Matson would need to get an emergency license to continue as a sub teaching math; and the other candidate’s references were being checked.

Resignations

M. O’Gorman reported 2 teachers had resigned and asked to be released from their contracts; noting their letters had been included in the board packets.

R. Geisel moved the board accept the resignation of Linda Trockel and release her from her contract. The motion was unanimously approved (R. Geisel/P. Moskovites).

M. O’Gorman moved the board accept the resignation of Mandy Degre with permission given to the personnel committee to interview and hire a successor, seconded by R. Geisel. M. O’Gorman reported that Ms. Fitts and Mr. Rivard would screen candidates before bringing them to the personnel committee. Mr. Rivard reported in his conversation with the nurse he told her it does leave the school in a bad spot, but due to the circumstances he recommended the board accept her resignation. **A vote was held: R. Cartee voted against the motion; all others voted in favor. The motion carried (M. O’Gorman/R. Geisel).**

Math Position

Mr. Rivard reported they had a competent sub at the moment; adding he would like to check references thoroughly on all candidates before moving forward. Mr. Rivard stated he would like to bring potential candidates in to teach a class, so they could be observed.

Any Other Business

There was none.

Old Business

There was none.

Negotiations’ Committee

R.M. Mayhew stated she had information to be discussed in executive session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by S. Brochu, seconded by R.M. Mayhew, to go into Executive Session at 8:25 p.m. with adoption of the following resolution:

RESOLVED that pursuant to Title 1 §313.1 of the Open Public Meetings Act, the public shall be excluded from that portion of the meeting involving discussion of: **Personnel/Negotiation's Issues.**

FURTHER RESOLVED that discussion of such subject matter in Executive Session can be disclosed to the public, if appropriate, at such time as formal action, if any, is taken by the Board, either at conclusion of the Executive Session, or at a public session at some later date. **MOTION CARRIED.**

OPEN SESSION

Moved by P. Moskovites, seconded by S. Brochu to go into Open Session at 8:45 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED**

R.M. Mayhew moved the board ratify the agreement between with the NCUEA for 2007-2010. The motion was unanimously approved (R.M. Mayhew/S. Brochu).

There being no further business to discuss the board unanimously agreed to adjourn at 8:49 p.m. (S. Brochu/R. Cartee).

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Rubino
Recording Secretary