**Present:** Beth McDonald, Russ Cumming, Carolyn Partridge, William Anton, Laurie Garland, Mickey Parker Jennings, Gail Wyman, Crystal Corriveau, Erin Kehoe, Bridgette Blanchard, Bridget Corby, Lisa Beshay, Howard Ires, Eileen Widger, Tom Widger, Emily Goyette,

**Call to Order:** 4:03 PM

**Additions and Correction to Agenda:** None

**Minutes and Correspondence:**

Carolyn motioned to approve the March 1st minutes with corrections, Beth 2nd, motion passed.

**Bills and Pau Orders:**

Carolyn motioned to approve orders 32-34 after a clarification discussion. Beth 2nd, motion passed.

**Public Comments:**

Howard Ires asked to read into the record an email sent by a board member to a select few recipients (7) after the results of the Australian ballot on March 2nd 2021. The email is attached. Howard claimed to be on the school board for 20 years, not realizing he is the reprehensive to the Leland & Gray Middle and High School board not the Windham School Board. Howard further expressed his concern that one member of the board was intent on bringing down the school. Russ commented that he appreciated Howard bringing this to the public’s attention so they know where he stands. Russ commented that if you go to the VLCT (Vermont League of Cities and Towns) web site and look at the responsibilities of school board members one of the responsibilities to provide the best education for our children, (see attached list of VLCT School Directors duties). Russ commented that there are 98 or more individuals who feel the same way that he does and hopes it will be a very open and frank discussion on this subject.

Crystal C. commented that, yes, there is an email group of parents who are discussing the school choice subject. She concluded that someone in that initial group of 7 had forwarded the email to individuals who were not on the original list of recipients. She further expressed her disappointment that one of her email comments about Mickey’s demeanor in the last school board meeting was also forwarded to Mickey. It concerned her as she had expressed her intent in the email to address the issue directly with Mickey. She expressed disappointment that someone had forwarded her comments to Mickey before she had had a chance to speak directly with him on that subject. In summary Crystal feels it is between the parents and the staff member to discuss issues that concern them without it becoming a public email thread and creating unwarranted stress between individuals. Crystal also noted that Russ is responsible to both sides of the school choice issue. Some tax payers are asking for the board to consider school choice and some do not want it and Russ is the one openly discussing the subject. If some parents want to go in that direction and a vote is needed then that it is their right to have that vote.

**Principal’s Report:**  See attached report

Mickey apologized for his demeanor at the last school board meeting. He stated that he does get upset when the criticism is directed at the education the children are receiving at the school, he takes it personally.

**Superintendent’s Report:** See attached report

Russ asked Bill about the Audit report from last year, in that it was 9 months from the close of that school year. He also asked about the clean air and the PCP testing that was motioned for and approved at a school board meeting last fall. Laurie G. answered that she was also frustrated with the audit issue and was hopeful she would have the audit completed by the next school board meeting in May. Russ pointed out there was a discussion of a possible surplus and it would be helpful to know the amount so a budget issue like paying down the loan form past years special education costs could be addressed.

Superintendent’s report discussion continued

Bridget C. asked Bill about his plans to work with other SU’s to combine forces to develop new services. Bill responded that working with one SU and 1000 students’ verses 9 other SU’s they collectively would be better suited to offer a program like an autism based service program as an example. He noted that this practice is common in both Connecticut and Massachusetts where there are larger student populations. Bill noted that there were several superintendent’s in Vermont who had experience in both Connecticut and Massachusetts with this type of program. They provide professional development and services for students, guidance and creative solutions. Bill noted this was a project in the works and he would report back as thing progressed.

**Old Busniss:**

There was a robust discussion concerning the best day of the week and time of day for future school board meetings. Comments were made that 4 pm was not a good time for many parents who wanted to participate in the meetings. The consensus arrived at a new day and time being the Third Tuesday of the months at 6 pm.

Carolyn offered a motion to change the School Board meetings to the Third Tuesday of the month at 6 pm. Beth 2nd, motion passed.

**New business:**

Subject: Board Norms and training. Bill suggested there may be several alternative ways to accomplish this goal. Bill noted some boards like to do it themselves, while others invite the Vermont School Board Association (VSBA) to facilitate the discussions. Bill suggested that Beth make the contact with the VSBA to set up a training session.

Subject: Residency. Russ noted that a few weeks ago there was an inquiry from the elementary school in Chester about the residency of a Pre-K student requesting tuition for the Mountain Top School. It was determined that the child in question was the grandchild of the property owner and their daughter was living with them at their home in Windham with a Chester Postal Zip code. Therefore the confusion as to who was responsible for the tuition obligation. Windham is responsible for the tuition payment.

Russ also noted that there are situations currently where there is a(re) student(s) who are attending WES and they are not legal residents of Windham but are residents of another nearby town. He feels there needs to be a clear policy for determining residency and eligibility for attending the Windham School. 16 V.S.A 1075 is the statute that guides residency. Bill feels it is a good idea to develop a residency policy for the board to adopt. Bill stated that if there is a concern about residency the common practice is for it is directed to the Principal and then in consult with the Superintendent a decision would be rendered. If the result is to be challenged then the School Board may express an opinion that it was not a good determination. This would then be discussed in executive session to its conclusion. Further remedies and appeal would follow through a designated process.

The next School Board meeting will be May 18, 2021 via Zoom

**Adjourned:** 5:29 pm

Respectfully submitted

Russ Cumming, Clerk

Attachments:

Content of March 3, 2021 email

VLCT’s Board of School Directors duties

Principal’s Report

Superintendent’s report