

DATE: May 24, 2011

KIND OF MEETING: Special Meeting with St. Regis Falls Central School District

LOCATION: St. Regis Falls Central School

MEMBERS PRESENT: Robert Devins            David Dufrane            Valerie Dunning  
Dennis Egan            George Martin            Melissa Mills  
Stephen Perry            Tracy Warren

MEMBER ABSENT: Valerie Pelkey

OTHERS PRESENT: Steven Grenville, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Beverly Ouderkirk, SRF, Interim Superintendent of Schools  
Michelle Brockway    Thomas O'Bryan    Karen Wilson  
Donna Bailey            Matthew Goodrow    Erin Brockway

CALL TO ORDER: The Special Meeting of the Brushton-Moira Central School District's Board of Education was called to order.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Members of the Board and those present rose and said the Pledge of Allegiance.

SHARED TRANSPORTATION SERVICES: A discussion occurred regarding the 2008-2009 Study for F-E-H Shared Transportation Services which has all districts in the F-E-H BOCES. Issues both schools could face are substitute bus drivers in short demand and mechanics frequently have to leave the shop to drive bus. Some solutions were to share the list of bus drivers between the districts and to divide BMC's Mechanic, Frank Snyder, to 3 hours per day at SRF and the remainder of the day at BMC but be flexible enough to alternate if needed.

Contractual conflicts would be a guaranteed workday is shorter in one school and pay rates are different. Some short term solutions would be for substitute bus drivers to be paid the rate each school pays while at that school.

BMC, President, Dave Dufrane asked if putting it under a BOCES umbrella would make it easier.

District Superintendent, Stephen Shafer indicated it is just two districts; with it only being two districts, it makes sense to just have an agreement between the two districts. If other districts were to get involved then BOCES would get involved.

SRF, Interim Superintendent, Beverly Ouderkirk indicated that at this point we will not call other district subs unless we are in a bind; we want to be fair and have this work for everyone.

Mr. Grenville indicated that we're not talking about anyone who is a unit member crossing over into another district with the exception of Mr. Snyder.

Michelle Brockway indicated that as long as units understand that we will be calling on our own list first, then unless it's needed not call upon other district's sub pool, it's good for both.

Ms. Ouderkirk stated that it wasn't necessary at this point to beef up the sub list for the remainder of the year, but hopefully we can aim for that in time. Suggestions could be made to new drivers to put their name on both lists. We will soon need to put numbers in Agreement for Shared Services of Mechanic and Transportation Supervisor.

The St. Regis Falls Board of Education approved a motion to authorize the administration to pursue a shared transportation agreement with BMC.

APPROVE AGREEMENT  
FOR SHARED  
TRANSPORTATION  
SERVICES:

Motion made by Dennis Egan, and seconded by Melissa Mills, that the Board of Education shall authorize the administration to pursue a shared transportation agreement with SRF until a more formal agreement is finalized. Motion voted and carried.

8-Yes

0-No

DISCUSSION ON  
SHARED  
SUPERINTENDENT:

A straw poll of BOE Members interest in pursuing a shared superintendent began with BMC: Dennis Egan-yes, Tracy Warren-yes, Bob Devins-yes, State will be pushing, Dave Dufrane-has questions on some issues, but he thinks that the right person could manage both schools, the complexity of meetings etc. would make it difficult. He would like to support the concept.

Mr. Shafer indicated that the rest of the State is sitting back and watching; he is not aware of any other districts at same state we are. Both districts are facing financial pressures and that will continue for about 2 more years and potentially longer. As both districts experience ongoing financial pressure, there will be a need to continue sharing. This will be a challenge budget wise, but we have a unique opportunity because both districts have interim superintendents and we have someone who wants to try it. Search is not necessarily complete at this point, there is some level of comfort with Ms. Ouderkirk. Realistic expectations will be necessary, competent support people at both districts are in place. In both schools on the financial budget preparation, you have people who have been doing this for some time for both districts. At this point, you may not have these unique set of circumstances again to get this done. If you step back from it now, you may not be able to recreate this unique set of circumstances.

Mr. Dufrane indicated that a tax cap that is being discussed in Albany would be suicide for BMC.

Mr. Shafer stated that it is certainly going to create some potential challenges. There will be times that 2% will not meet contingency. At the Senate version there is an override provision that a 60% majority vote could exceed a 2% property tax cap. There is real opposition at wealthier

districts, the State should butt out. It will be interesting to see how the state will iron these things out.

Ms. Ouderkirk indicated that she realized some of the concerns about what the challenges will be. She thought quite a bit about it and she doesn't think that they are that different than what any good superintendent may face. She doesn't want to face a split BOE (meaning both BOEs). When people don't give her a head's up prior to a BOE meeting; she would like to be prepared at a meeting. A little bit of a head's up would be appreciated. She doesn't need micromanaging. This could be unintentional, but it can have bad consequences, we need to have clear expectations. We need to know who is strong in our districts and who we can trust to delegate to. There will have to be a little bit of patience on the SRF side as she will have to spend more time at BMC initially as she learns the district.

Mr. Dufrane asked what will happen when Ms. Ouderkirk retires? Will this position be appealing to someone beyond Ms. Ouderkirk?

Mr. Shafer indicated that there may not be a huge pool but if you set your price point right, which is not the only factor, and if word of mouth is smooth then the candidate pool will be larger.

BMC, Board Member Valerie Dunning indicated that she is not against a shared superintendency. She feels it's too quick, we have two separate districts and two sets of personnel. She foresees a lot of difficulty if we do it too quickly. Can we make a sound agreement between districts? She's very leery of it, and doesn't want to go into it for the wrong reasons, maybe five years down the road.

Mr. Shafer stated that valid points were raised, but five years from now it may not be possible. He indicated that he's not pushing, his job is to provide as much support regardless to both districts, to work with the districts, and provide the highest quality support from the BOCES. There's never going to be a perfect time, or perfect answer. He does think we have a unique set of circumstances.

BMC, Board Member Stephen Perry agreed with going ahead now. A lot of things were forced on us. Like any leader, we have to represent constituents, but not follow waves of constituency. To err on the side of caution, but we have the support structure here, but an interim basis is good. We are not being shoved off a cliff. This is an opportunity to be a role model.

BMC, Board Member George Martin was leery about the fact that although we have confidence in Ms. Ouderkirk, but the search pool for superintendent is very small. However, who will replace Ms. Ouderkirk? People have families and they're not going to spend 24/7 in both districts. Also, how much of a savings will we see if the salary is raised to make it more appealing?

Mr. Shafer stated that when factoring in health insurance costs, this one move will not financially save the districts. There will be some savings, but it won't save the day. Hopefully if you are in this, it will generate more sharing which in turn will generate further savings and there may be some kind of aid down the road.

Mr. Martin stated that other services we can share first, too much on the plate for both districts.

Mr. Dufrane asked if in implementing more shared services; would it make more sense to try those first or superintendency first?

Mr. Shafer indicated that the two districts have shared for a long time. There are some pieces that may come together easier, things that you might not be going to BOCES for. Potentially a little more ease in putting those things together.

Ms. Ouderkirk thought that having the opportunity to tackle the transportation piece has been a great opportunity to test our ability to work together. We have a good start. The next couple of things that she would like to personally see, share CSE, food services model already in place. She is anxious to get to sharing the student piece. Good things will happen for kids because of it. Transportation was a tough nut to crack. Negotiations of contract and research has proven that we can do it. Zooy time just got a little "zooier".

BMC Board Member, Melissa Mills is very much in favor. She feels that our pool isn't very big because we are such a small district. What we would pay is not enough to draw in people. If we add more money to that it will open the door a little more for a broader pool to pick from. She also thought the superintendent will be core to keep everything on the same page.

Mr. Dufrane felt that he would be more comfortable to authorize a blueprint for what this would look like.

Ms. Ouderkirk indicated that she has played around with strong superintendent articles. She would not want to lock in a portion of the day, but rotate so mornings for a certain time in one district and afternoons in another. She has worked on blending the two schedules. Administrative cabinet meets regularly with union leaders. Because her family is grown, she doesn't have the same obligations as someone else might have.

The St. Regis Falls Board Members all agreed that this was going to be a good move and everyone was looking forward to it.

The SRF Board voted to proceed with implementation of the interim shared superintendent.

APPROVE MOTION FOR  
SHARED INTERIM  
SUPERINTENDENT:

Motion made by Dennis Egan, and seconded by Stephen Perry, that the Board of Education shall proceed with the implementation of the shared interim superintendent for the period of July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012. Motion voted and carried.

7-Yes

1-No-Valerie Dunning

SET MEETING:

A meeting with the two BOE Presidents, Mr. Shafer and Ms. Ouderkirk will be held on June 8, 2011 at 7:00 p.m. at BMC.

AJDOURNMENT:

Motion made by George Martin, and seconded by Tracy Warren, to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Board of Education.

8-Yes

0-No

Minutes approved by:

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Clerk of the Board