

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

Wednesday, May 23, 2007

**SAU Office
7:00 p.m.**

MINUTES

Attendees: Stewart Brock, Tom Welden, Craig Hicks, Mary Loftis, Mary Allen, Marian Alese, Linda Potter

Stewart Brock called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. He thanked everyone for attending tonight's meeting.

1. Goals for 2007

Stewart said that he wanted to talk about the goals as well as what the Communications Sub-committees role is.

He said that last night at the Education Committee, a post high school survey was spoken of. Communications could help here.

Mary Loftis asked what the protocol was for Board meetings relative to the communication that Principals relay. Stewart explained the process. It was suggested that each school be given a specific month to report in.

Marian said that if we designate a month per school it might be difficult to come up with something. She thought that it was better that it be provided to Dick Bergeron and be pushed out from there. Mary Allen said that she likes visiting the schools. When visiting the schools she finds it valuable to obtain information such as Temple provided. They conducted a presentation on how they implement and use technology in their school. She wanted to see what the schools were doing in a form similar to what Temple put together rather than a student production, as nice as they are.

Linda Potter said that there are a lot of initiatives in the district that she would like to see the Board view. Stewart asked if the Principals have ever been told what the Board would like to see. He said that he likes the show-and-tell portion and would also like to see what the schools are working on.

Marian said that if the Board lets the Principals know what the visit should look like the students can be involved as well. Stewart said that a balance is important.

Tom Welden agreed that the Board needs to frame what the meetings should look like. The schools should be allowed to show us what they feel special at.

Craig said that he would like to see the good and the bad. We don't know what needs help if we don't know about it.

Marian said that the Superintendent needs to know what needs help. The door would be opened for jumping the process otherwise.

Craig said that an open format is nice aside from issues such as personnel where there is a protocol.

Mary Allen said that Dick will be on the road and producing a newsletter.

Craig said that all of the traveling around is distracting from the work of the Board.

Tom Welden said that it is important to get around to all of the schools. If we frame what the expectations are we won't be disappointed by what we get. It was enlightening to go on the field trip to the high school. We don't bypass the chain of command, we want to have a feeling that their can be open communications. It doesn't mean that we can't have dialogues. We need both.

Mary Loftis said that it is one thing to learn that TES is using technology but we were also made aware of what they are doing with antiquated computer equipment.

Marian said that use of equipment depends on the abilities of the staff in the building.

Mary Allen said that all of the schools are doing something great. It would be helpful to see it and know it.

Marian said that because we are getting a new Superintendent a lot of the stuff that is happening will be brought to the forefront because Dick will be asking for it.

Stewart proposed that we change the format of the meetings at the schools. Secondly, from behind the scenes a school might be asked to show the Board something specific that has come to their attention.

Marian said that she recognizes that the Board members are out a lot of nights. Some Board members refuse to attend events that they have been invited to.

Stewart said that it might be one of the rotating responsibilities that we ask members to do. Mary Allen said that we might just lay it out that it is an expectation for Board members to attend events.

Craig said that our Tuesday meetings are a huge conflict with events taking place in the schools.

Stewart said that the quarterly meetings in the towns should continue to take place. He explained the forums for Mary Loftis and what the quarterly meetings looked like.

2. School Board Report Card – Next Steps

Mary Allen said that it was a very good exercise. She felt that no questions needed tweaking.

Stewart said that he would like to continue to do this. Communications can be responsible for the process. Stewart said that it would be conducted again in February. It would take place at the end of the tenure of the current Board.

Mary Loftis asked who produced the report card. Mary Allen said that Stewart produced the report card. Stewart was commended for the work and enormity of it. Stewart said that it was important to try to see the gaps.

Craig asked if thank you notes have been sent out for donations. Marian said that they have been. Marian said that the community does not realize unless they read the Board minutes how generous the community is.

Stewart said that we need to communicate to new people at a Board meeting what takes place. He said that a greeter of sorts could mingle at the meetings. Stewart said that

when people want to communicate at meetings there is a process. They need to “pre-register” what they wish to discuss prior to a meeting.

Marian said that there is public comment at the beginning of a meeting. The Board has discussion about their agenda items then additional public comment is allowed.

Stewart said that it is really easy to comment at meetings if they follow the process.

He said that he will sum up the goal to communicate better than we have in the past. We want to celebrate successes.

Marian asked if he wanted something to be put together about the job fair. Linda said that Carrie will be attending the fair and will put something together.

Linda asked that goals be measurable when we develop them.

3. Communications to the Press and the Public

- How often, what format, when, and by whom

Stewart said that we do a lot of great things and we need to figure out how we would like to get this communication out. He said that a check list might be considered.

Stewart said that the press is pretty good. Kerry has been accurate and asks for clarification. She attends activities within the district.

Stewart asked if we should do things more routinely. If the answer is yes, we should do that. If the Board decides to do something big, should there be a release?

Mary Loftis asked aside from the Ledger-Transcript how information gets to the Keene Sentinel.

Tom said that we have very good minutes taken during the meetings. If someone cannot attend a meeting, minutes are detailed and accessible. Tom said that the public has access to these notes. Very good information is available. He reminds Selectmen that should they need information that minutes are available on the web. We are taking minutes more uniformly.

Marian said that the minutes were once given to the town halls and posted in the town halls so that a hard copy was made available in each of the towns.

Stewart said that this could be sent out to each of the towns and they could be posted.

Mary Allen said that when there is big news, it is useful to put a release together and provided to the press.

Craig said that we have something good with Kerry. She is underpaid. He would like to budget press releases for Kerry to do. Mary Allen said that Kerry is free-lancing now.

Kerry can't produce press releases and write articles. Kerry is free-lancing for the Ledger therefore she could not do this.

Stewart said that a press release is a strategic way to get the information out the way we want it to. Tom said that one of the best things that we put together was the brochure for the Superintendent search.

Mary Allen said that a press release is a statement about a piece of news that is written in a concrete style. It never gets printed in its entirety. It may spawn a total free lance article.

Craig said that we don't have the time to put out press releases. Stewart said that we have to actively decide what is important enough to take action on. The Communications Committee will have to decide what looks important from other committee meetings to dig up and put out there.

Craig said that we are on the up swing. We are going to have some new staffing. We have had a lot of positive with the Ocean Bowl, robotics, etc. Craig said that he gets a lot of positive feedback while out in the community. He would like someone to flood the good stuff out.

Mary Allen said that Building Principals put out information such as Ocean Bowl etc. The Board stuff ought to be hiring people, major personnel shifts, bomb threats, bullying, a bond, etc.

Marian said that the Milford Cabinet devotes a section each week to the schools. The district lets the paper know what they want published.

Stewart said that he thinks Dick Bergeron will want his own "corner of the paper". He said that information around budget time needs to get pushed out very early.

Mary Loftis said that Keene has Board notes and special events from each of the Keene schools published quarterly in the paper and goes out to each of the staff.

Craig asked how we want our district communicated. We need to make sure what we want out of our people.

Marian said that we are talking about a Public Relations position.

Stewart said that he thought that we could find a student who might be interested in writing articles for credit.

Marian said that she has a friend who might be interested at no cost to help us get the word out. Stewart said that he would be interested in speaking to her to further discuss.

Marian said that a media list would have to be generated. The news will be out and ConVal will be a common name.

Marian said that we have a lot of information on the web. Sometimes it is cumbersome to get the information. She said that people in Milford read the newspaper.

Stewart said that we should keep the information on the web and branch out. We have to hit both channels.

Craig said that he will gladly spend money on someone who will help us. Stewart said that we have had someone who has volunteered, we should start there.

Tom Welden said that he thought that each Board member should have their own paradigm.

We need to talk about it, think about it and then act said Stewart.

Linda Potter said that we have a tendency to admire the problem.

Linda said that there is a job fair at Franklin Pierce tomorrow where interview skills will be practiced. Students not continuing on to school after high school can seek a job at this fair.

Marian said that this is an opportunity for students who will not be going on to secondary education to interview for positions.

Stewart said that something like this that might slip through the cracks should come up at the next Board meeting. In addition, it should be in the press.

Stewart asked if the District calendar would be the place to submit this information.

Mary told Craig that the responsibility of communication is going to fall on one of the people who are not here yet. It is going to happen. It is too fast moving to have an outside person hired. Craig said that he is now beyond the outside person.

Mary Loftis said that Dick will make communication happen. She said that one should not worry. Stewart said that it will be presented to Dick to determine the best way to move forward.

Marian said that conversations have taken place about what is going to happen at the SAU. The SAU has to have a conversation, which has begun, about redistributing responsibilities. She agreed that public relations may be a sole job for the district. It is important. She said that she doesn't know if people can take this on as an additional responsibility. More and more districts are recognizing that this position is one to have. Craig said that he is suggesting how we can be more proactive with communication. It is important enough so that we can get our budget passed. He wants to do a good job getting the word out.

Marian said that we need to put the spin on the information.

Craig said that we will allow Dick to pursue alternatives for communication whether it is in-house and open to the idea to spend some money on it.

4. General Business

Highlighting all of the positives is a goal. Marian said that in the interview with Dick she thought that one of his expectations is that the Administrators would produce a report on a regular basis and then it would present from there. Craig said that Dick ships out a district letter weekly with both the positive and negative.

Stewart thanked everyone for attending. He proposed that they meet monthly. Stewart said that they will meet next at 6:00 on June 18th.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok