

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Communications Sub-Committee

**Monday, July 23, 2007
SAU Office**

6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendees: Stewart Brock, Craig Hicks, Tom Welden, Ray Cote, Mary Loftis, Marian Alese, Linda Potter, Dick Bergeron

1. Minute Review

- a. May 23, 2007**
- b. June 18, 2007**

Craig Hicks moved to accept the minutes of both the May 23, 2007 and June 18, 2007 meetings. Tom Welden second. Ray Cote abstained for both meeting minutes. Tom Welden abstained for May 23rd. All else in favor.

2. Continue Development of Communications Plan

Stewart distributed a copy of the Communications Committee 2007 – 2008 Goals. (See attachment #1). He highlighted various areas of this document.

Stewart said that the best way to communicate out and who to ask if the Board is communicating out should be determined. He said that other Boards have very comprehensive plans.

Marian said that people do not know about the Senate Bill II process (SB2). In addition, she said that people do not know what District Meeting Part I is about and what it allows them to do.

Under the caption “Budget” Craig said that a timeline piece is missing. Marian said that the timeline is driven by the Department of Revenue. Stewart said that it is important to put the timeline out so that all can see and make comments and ask questions.

Marian said that there is a more comprehensive timeline that identifies different times and activities that must take place under the Department of Revenue website. Stewart said that he wants to own pieces that he feels are his responsibilities. Information will constantly filter out.

Dick Bergeron said that he as a taxpayer would want to know when he would be allowed to give input. Internal and external influences would be identified.

Craig asked Dick if he would put something out at the Leadership Meeting about budgeting. Dick confirmed.

Ray said that historical context in terms of what has taken place in cycles is valuable. “What has revenue and expenses looked like for the past five years”

would be valuable information to communicate. Ray said that it will be interesting to look at information that can be looked at every year rather than recreated.

Stewart said that the Principals will be asked to put together a press packet. We want to actively manage that piece. The little local newspapers should be contacted by us to release information. He added that there are critical pieces relative to the budget that we want to always be talking about. It may be easier to get dollars passed if the public hears over and over and understands what we are trying to accomplish. For example, if we want to purchase computers we say over and over that we want to push on technology. When the vote comes it might be easier to pass.

Dick said that when we talk about fixed costs he does not envision having a discussion. Once it becomes public and understood it may dramatically change the direction we move in with the budget publicity. Everything will be influenced once we get the information out there. Dick said that once we remove every discretionary item from the budget it might be apparent that it doesn't make a difference in the tax dollar.

Tom said that it is a matter of choices. We can cut 10% of our staff and increase student population per class. We can close down schools etc. We do have the ability to affect the change. There is a radical cost. Tom said that he would like to be proactive and let the public know what the choices are. We can increase classroom size by cutting back on staff. The public has to know what the impact will be. Tom said that we have an administration that can identify what the cost will be in value and quality. This is where statistics come in.

Marian wondered if the beginning of budget communication is where Tom's conversation on choices comes in. She thought we might start with this conversation first.

Craig said we need to have the conversations about issues such as combined classrooms, Artist in Residence, closing a building etc and get the argument over with.

Stewart said that the discussion can be identified for each meeting so that the public will know what the concern is and can identify concerns themselves.

Mary Loftis asked how the word will get out.

Stewart said that we push the information out by press release, website information, mailers, list serve etc. Time lines can be identified as well as topics. We publicize the topic and if they don't come we can identify that there are no concerns.

Ray said that it will be interesting to focus on large discussions. He suggested that we focus on the large ticket items.

Marian said that we have never done a follow-up conversation with the towns once the budget has passed. We have never gone back out to ask the community about what just happened.

Ray said that information could be gained at the first SAC meeting after the vote.

Marian said that it is important to get back to the people to acknowledge the vote.

Stewart said that under the "Accomplishments" heading that the Board recognizes accomplishments. He is looking for ways to thank people for doing a good job.

Ray said that we should get the accomplishments out on the web and identify what we are acknowledging. He said that it is more important than a certificate.

Dick said that Principals might nominate special achievements to the Board for certificates.

Tom said that he would like to have Dick bring it forward so that the ball is not dropped. He did not think that it was a Board responsibility. Tom said that we can get more consistent recognition through the administration.

Ray said that we should identify these accomplishments as “achievements”. Frequency and volume of what is going on should be communicated. We are a dynamic district that does things.

Stewart said that he sees the role for Mary Allen as one that would ask certain designees what they have and she will communicate it for them. We will not track them down.

Ray said that we have to look at technology when considering this communication. The load can be reduced with technology.

Under “Goals”, Stewart said that they will be current and updated. A review will take place.

Mary Loftis said that one thing she has been thinking about is that she would like to see some type of print vehicle on a quarterly basis. The Superintendent might have a quarterly column in the paper. Accomplishments in the schools could be highlighted. Mary said that she would love to see something in the newspapers regularly. It would be a vehicle to communicate and promote what is going on in the schools as well as promote the budget. In terms of “Fun Facts” she sees interesting facts about what is going on in the various schools. Mary said that it is a lot of work. It sees it as a separate publication.

Stewart said that we have to look at communicating through as many channels as possible.

Tom said that one of the things that we don’t utilize well are the resources in the district. We have successful authors, artists and business people in the area that we don’t tap into. We have people with tremendous accomplishments that live within our community and they could come into our classrooms to share what they have done in their lives. Tom asked how we bring these people to the forefront.

Stewart said that he is passionate about all of these things. People love to see their name in print. Other people may step up.

Dick said that in Nashua a student reports on a specific school that is published in the paper every Sunday. Dick added that he has requested of the editor to allow him to do a monthly piece. He is more than willing to do a piece.

Mary Loftis asked Dick if he has read the column that Tim Clark writes on a regular basis.

Stewart said that with regard to “Fun Facts” that the goal is to engage everyone. Connections can be made.

Marian asked if one person will be responsible to make sure that this information gets to the district website and to the newspaper.

Stewart said that the individual person would be responsible for a specific section. For example, in his outline it would be Mary Allen, Mary Loftis or Stewart. Stewart said that he won’t go out and get the information, it will be provided to him. He added that he has not thought out the whole plan through. Further thought is needed.

Marian said that one person should be responsible for consistency purposes.

Ray said that the process of having to hand this information to someone is too slow. Marian said that the web page can be updated within a couple of hours. Ray said that it is still too slow.

Stewart asked if in the short run it would be reasonable to ask Carol Mamczak to do this.

Marian said that her experience is that she does not believe that this will be an inordinate amount of work for Carol. She maintains the School Board and SAU website already.

Stewart said that much of the information will not change. For example goals will remain somewhat constant. Several of the sections would need routine updates.

Marian asked if we shouldn't put out a release to the public informing them that the Board is trying to communicate in new ways.

Craig said that the newspapers are looking for news. The paper varies in size from one week to the next. He thought that they would be open to the information.

Mary said that she feels that the paper will look favorably on the Superintendents desire to have a column.

Mary suggested that the "Fun Facts" have a focus.

Stewart thanked everyone for their input. He said that we are five more steps forward. He will work with both Mary Allen and Mary Loftis.

Stewart proposed that the next Communications meeting take place in September but that he and Mary and Mary meet in August.

Meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok