

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

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

**Tuesday, February 6, 2007
SAU Office**

**6 p.m.
Communications Committee
(Minutes under separate cover)**

**6:30 p.m.
Personnel
(Minutes under separate cover)**

**School Board Meeting
7 p.m.**

MINUTES

Board

Mary Allen, Beverly Bacon,
Stewart Brock, Ray Cote,
Gail Cromwell, Butch Estey,
Bart Goodeve, Christy Greene,
Craig Hicks, Bill McKinnon,
Tom Welden

Administration

Keith Burke, Supt.
Marian Alese, B.A.
Linda Potter, SpEd.
Dick Dunning, SMS
Gib West, GBS
Jeanie West, SMS
Sue Copley, PES
Sue Dell, CVHS
Pamela Matthews, BES
May Clark, DCS
Tim Iwanowicz, GES
Deb Lesure, AES

1. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Tom Welden called the meeting to order at 7:06 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

2. Minutes (Board Vote Required)

a. January 23, 2007 (Pgs. 1-34)

Butch Estey moved to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2007 meeting. Craig Hicks second. Stewart abstained. All else in favor.

3. Public Comment

None.

4. Superintendent's Report and Presentation of Business

a. NHSBA Presentation

Keith said that he was pleased tonight to have Dr. Ted Comstock from New Hampshire School Boards Association (NHSBA) present tonight to discuss how he might help in our Superintendent search.

Dr. Comstock thanked the Board for inviting him here tonight. He said that we have been fortunate to have Mr. Burke for a number of years. He was here tonight to tell the Board about NHSBA and ask what the expectations from the Board are. NHSBA has a unique perspective on policy and legislative relations. We need to determine what we are looking for. We need to decide how we are going to go about finding that and then determining how we are going to make a final decision. The big difference is the perspective that is brought to the Board. Dr. Comstock asked the Board what their expectations are of a search consultant. Gail Cromwell asked what the width of their search capabilities is. Dr. Comstock said that it is important to receive a wide pool of applicants. He said that they conduct national searches. Stewart Brock said that support via sample questions for candidates is important. Butch Estey said that checking the background

of a candidate is important. Craig Hicks said that he wants NHSBA to do all of the work and advise the Board as to which is the best candidate. Gail added by asking if NHSBA is more N.H. or New England oriented when searching for an applicant. Dr. Comstock said that they recruit nationally through the web and brochures. They focus their efforts only on New Hampshire but the net that is thrown out is a national one. He said that their network is broad. Bart Goodeve asked him to expand on their services with regard to advertising. Dr. Comstock said that they advertise in Education Week as well as in Superintendent's and Principal's publications. Bart asked his opinion about the Union Leader, Boston Globe, and New York Times. Dr. Comstock said that they have advertised in those locations and found that they did not get the applicant pool they hoped for. It is expensive and the goal is to get the most for their buck. Bart asked about the extensive mailing listed under NHSBA capabilities. Dr. Comstock said that it would go out to all education schools. He could not overemphasize the on-line features. Most of the candidates that we are seeing are seeing our openings on-line. They post the Superintendent openings on multiple sights. They find the on-line services to be well used and overexposed with low or no costs.

Ray Cote asked for examples of searches where candidates have been brought in from businesses rather than academia. Dr. Comstock said that it is a different strategy. Once we decide what we are looking for we will have an idea what this individual will look like. We would go to trade magazines and other sources.

Stewart Brock asked what the thoughts and strategies are on recruiting talent. Dr. Comstock said that we have an active pool of candidates that have expressed an interest in New Hampshire openings. In addition, there are N.H. people interested in these positions. We do not intend to steal away other districts Superintendents as NHSBA's competitor does. NHSBA just does not do that. They will make available and make spot calls to those who have expressed an interest. All Superintendent's and Assistant Superintendent's will get the information about this opening. Craig asked if NHSBA had a problem with it if it was their call. Dr. Comstock said that it is different if the applicant initiates the interest. He added that the information becomes public when finalists are named.

Bart said that it never occurred to him since they are part of NHSBA if there was reluctance to make an application because there is concern that the information might be revealed to the applicant's Board. Dr. Comstock said that confidentiality is respected. Keith added that he has never heard that it is a problem.

Bart asked how many searches NHSBA is currently conducting. Dr. Comstock said that there are currently three. He said that they typically see between twelve and fifteen completed applications for an open position. Of those, eight are probably viable candidates depending on what the Board is looking for. Semi-finalists are determined from there and then two or three finalists. Dr. Comstock said that he directs all searches. In addition, some consultants are hired to help. Five

people at any given time will work on the search. Ray asked about the background of these five. Dr. Comstock said that retired Superintendent's as well as Principals make up the five. He said that NHSBA does not take on more than they can handle. They will be present before, during, and after the search is complete. A list of references is provided in the NHSBA packet provided tonight.

Stewart asked about capacity. How many searches can NHSBA handle. Dr. Comstock said that they can handle nine or ten. Not all searches are done on the same timeline. The state that we are approaching is advertisement and recruiting. He added that they are proud to do approximately 90% of the searches in the state. Stewart asked if they were involved in the Nashua search. Dr. Comstock said that they made a presentation to the Nashua Board. The bid was substantially less than the firm that conducted the search out of Chicago.

Mary Allen asked what the break up of the searches are in terms of position. Dr. Comstock said that a Principal search is being conducted and the remaining are Superintendent's with one Assistant Superintendent.

Dr. Comstock said that if you don't attract enough candidates then we fall behind. It is a seller's market right now. It is very difficult to attract Superintendent's. NHSBA has a network which is very important. The support involved in a search is critical as well. For example, sample press releases will be drafted when the finalists are determined. In addition, sample questions for those finalists are provided. Everything that is needed to conduct a search is done by NHSBA. The background search is the responsibility of the SAU. References are checked by NHSBA. Thorough background checks are conducted before finalists are named. There is no additional charge for this. NHSBA said that the decision of determining who the next Superintendent will be is difficult enough without worrying about the process.

Stewart asked what the percentage of candidates that were hired were retained. How good the people that are being passed through and how happy are is the district? Dr. Comstock said that a contract is usually for three years. On only one occasion, a candidate did not stay for the contract. He added that the Superintendent in Keene did not stay for the contract duration. The history is that when the Superintendent announced their retirement many other members of the SAU announced their retirement as well. It was very difficult to get a pool of candidates. The thing absent in the Keene SAU was a good foundation because of the turnover. As a result, it did not work out for the candidate.

Dr. Comstock said that a proposed time line is laid out in the packet provided tonight. The recruitment phase takes six weeks. The first step is to name a search committee if one will be used. The next step is setting up interviews. This can be challenging when consulting schedules. The finalist process would conclude in mid to late May. A comprehensive search takes three to four months. The other thing that NHSBA does is that they will negotiate on the districts behalf the terms of the contract. In addition, NHSBA wants the relationship with the new Superintendent to be a long lasting one. Therefore, a training session with workshops is built in for the new Superintendent and Board among others. A good grounding in New Hampshire school law is gained by this workshop.

Dr. Comstock said that if we decided to conduct a search ourselves they will help free of charge. He said that they value us as a member of NHSBA.

Tom Welden thanked Dr. Comstock for the information he provided. He appreciated outlining the details. Tom added that the survey for community members and staff is now on-line to provide input about what people are looking for in a Superintendent. He said that they look forward to getting this information back quickly.

Dr. Comstock thanked Tom and the Board for inviting him out tonight to speak. It is a very important decision he said. He encouraged the Board to call NHSBA references.

b. Monadnock Area Teen Health (M.A.T.H.)

Keith Burke asked that this discussion be postponed because the representative was unable to attend tonight.

c. Request to Accept a Gift or Donation (Board Vote Required) (Pg. 35)

1. Hancock Elementary School has received from Box Tops for Education a gift of \$125.20 to support student programs and activities

Keith read the donation as listed.

Ray Cote motioned to accept the donation as read. Stewart Brock second Unanimous.

d. Personnel (Board Vote Required) (Please Bring your Agenda with You)

Keith said that the Personnel committee met tonight before this meeting. He asks permission to sign an application for Mia Manning-Osborn for the Christa McAuliffe sabbatical.

Stewart Brock moved to accept the nominations as listed of Jason Lambert, Christ Tutak and Richard Simoneau for CVHS Adult Diploma Program and the sabbatical.

Butch Estey second. Unanimous.

e. Monthly Events Calendar (Pg. 36)

Keith Burke said that the Monthly Events Calendar is included in tonight's packet.

Gail said that the Board approved the use last fall for dogs to search schools and asked if this had been done yet. Sue Dell said that late last year dogs were used for a bomb threat. To date, dogs have not been in to search for drugs. A request has been made of the Peterborough Police Chief. Keith thought that it was more of a scheduling issue. Sue added that she did hear back from the Chief and it was not possible to make it happen quite yet.

Gail added that Education for February 12th is not present on the calendar. It was added.

5. Reports

a. Teacher

None.

b. Student

Emmy Callahan said that final exams just ended and Drama fest has started. Hannah Schaefer said that Spirit week is in the planning as well as a Blood Drive. Hannah Schaefer was introduced.

c. Education

Christy Greene said that Education met on the 31st of January. Three items were on the agenda. World Language review was discussed. The committee was charged with "why world language". It is an important piece of the curriculum. Justification can be seen in the minutes of that meeting. Concrete agreement and consensus was arrived at. Continuing discussion will take place. The next meeting will take place on February 12th.

d. Budget and Property

Craig said that they have been meeting. District Meeting is tomorrow night and he encouraged everyone to attend. Craig referenced a handout titled "Teachers contract: proposed/actual snapshot" (see attachment #1) He said that we are within \$227,530 of what was proposed. We are within 10% of what we proposed.

Gail said that people don't always know what percentage the teachers are. Having a three year contract allows people to be unaware of what we are talking about. Hollis-Brookline has a one year contract. Gail felt that we needed to look at this. Conditions change from year to year. We can't give an accurate estimate to let the voter vote accurately.

Tom Welden said that this is informational. Craig said that he doesn't want to reinvent the wheel. He said that we are pretty close to what we told the voters we would do.

Tom assigned warrant articles to Board members. He said that the Board member assigned will have to move the article. He will second them.

Tom said that the Annual Report provides a lot of really good information that highlights many questions raised around teaching staff, enrollment trends, funding support from different entities as well as much more valuable information. Color pictures of our students are included.

Christy said that the front cover statement is crucial to what we do.

e. Personnel

Personnel met tonight before the Board meeting.

f. Staff Development

Gail said that they met all day today. Linda Potter said that they worked on major components of the plan. The mission statement has been developed.

g. Communications

Stewart said that Communications met tonight before Personnel. A one page communication on the budget was derived. It will be made available in the towns and libraries. They briefly reviewed a draft letter requesting action from Legislators. A one page informational sheet that voters can bring into the voting booth was also discussed.

h. Drug Policy Committee

Butch Estey said that they have been meeting regularly. Bart met with SMS and Arthur with GBS. What we are looking for is inclusion that we can't have a one policy fits all because of the strength differences in the message. A LADC has been discussed. It is in the budget for the district meeting. Butch added that Portsmouth has a policy that deals with athletics which includes co-curricular activities. It requires students to sign off on a pledge. Sometimes kids of age are mentioned in the paper and those that are not are left out. It is the consensus of the committee to look at enforcement issues. We can put a policy in place but if it is not being used it does no good. Bart said that his meeting with Dick Dunning and staff was quite informative. The middle school situation is quite different from the high school. Where students are in their development makes a one size fits all policy impossible. "Knowingly in the presence of" might be difficult to work on a day to day basis. In many ways the middle school might be tougher than the drug policy committee. They will get back together to decide how they will move forth with the two different institutions. The handbooks and district policy will be further reviewed.

Butch said that after meeting with the Principal's it is realized that the March 1st "deadline" would be impossible but absolutely before the end of the school year.

Tom Welden thanked everyone for their efforts.

Tom made a change to page five of the January 23rd School Board minutes. Tom actually made a motion to eliminate one position in GBS and not in Antrim as the minutes state. Butch Estey second that motion. Unanimous.

6. Old Business

a. Aramark Contract

Craig said that we have been discussing maintenance for several months now. Craig said that his feeling is that perhaps now is not the time to change what we are doing. We do have some

alternatives. He proposed to settle that we will extend the Aramark contract for one year so that we can get everything put together. He is asking for approval that we seek and come to an agreement on a one year contract. He would like to finalize that we won't be looking for a maintenance manager this year. Bart said that was a great idea.

Craig Hicks motioned to extend Aramark's contract for one year and bring back the terms for further discussion. The terms will be voted on subsequent to this. Gail said that we do know that we will be asked to pay a 5% difference. Will we be buying the equipment now or next year. If we bought it next year then the 23 would be down one more year and it would be cheaper. Craig said that Gail has done a lot of leg work and he thanked her for that.
Christy Greene second. Unanimous.

b. High School Graduation

Tom asked for a five minute break before further discussion. They had been meeting since 6:00. The meeting continued at 8:36 p.m.
Tom said that Bart had sent out information to Christy who will forward it to the Board. Tom said that a brief discussion about the core (16) credits took place.
Christy said that a fair amount of discussion has taken place about the strengthening of our core requirements.

Christy Greene motioned to raise the core requirement credits from 14 to 16 credits. Ray clarified that this included the two new classes. Stewart Brock second. Bart said that we agreed to unbundle this. He moved the question. Unanimous.

Craig asked how we would introduce what constitutes what a credit is. Bart said that we need a different meeting with a fresh thought.
Craig asked how it might work. We need to raise the bar on what constitutes that credit. He requested that the Superintendent bring thoughts forward. Ray asked which graduating class this begins with. Craig said that we should leave it on the agenda.
Gail said that we have changed the 14 to 16 and therefore still have electives to look at. We don't know which class this begins with. She regrets that we did not have policy IKF in front of us when looking at this. She said that she assumed that we did not raise the current credit requirement for graduation to 28 with the 16 credit core requirement plus the current 12 credit electives required. It was agreed that the credit requirement did not just rise to 28.

Craig referred to The Boston Globe handout. (see attachment #2). There are other factors in the dropout rate. There are costs when we don't put as good a product out. There are social costs and other costs associated with an undereducated student. He thought that it was interesting.
Keith said that the annual drop out report is different from the cumulative drop out rate. It is determined from where a student starts in ninth grade to the number of students who end in twelfth. Currently there is no absolute way to track students who leave ConVal and go somewhere else. They are counted as a drop out if we lose track of what took place after ConVal.
Bart asked if it was possible to record the students that leave yearly. Keith said that we do and it is 1.8%. Some of those kids might end up in another school in another state. If there is no way to determine where they ended up they are considered a drop out.
Marian said that it has happened in the past where a student left school and could not be tracked. There is now a process in place where we do know where a student ends up after they leave ConVal. Every student is given a SASID number to track them.

c. Select Entity for Superintendent Search

Tom Welden said that the Board had asked him to check on the NESDEC references. He spoke with three different groups. One completely finished the search. In general, he got three different answers. The north country said that everything came out exactly as they expected. The job was

done extremely well. Another search revealed fairly high references. The first round of screening should have been done more thoroughly was one comment. The third reference was less than glowing. The person that Tom spoke with did not sit on a committee. Because NESDEC is made up of mostly of Superintendent's the thought is that we must be very clear about our expectations. Tom said that there are three different ways to pursue this. We can get outside help by going with either NESDEC or NHSBA. Tom asked for thoughts.

Craig said that he was very impressed with NESDEC. He doesn't want to wait any longer. We could still use the NHSBA for contractual information. He is concerned that the individual that presented tonight has an ongoing working relationship with every single Superintendent in the State. Craig thought that separation might be a good thing.

Bart said that it is important how widespread the net can be cast. The network is important. We want to get out of the closed shop environment. Bart felt that there was a conflict with NHSBA out looking for Superintendent's.

Christy said that we have two qualified candidates tonight and would not like to look for other search companies. She would not like to conduct the search ourselves. Christy agreed that if we poach other Superintendent's from other districts that it makes us fair game for the same.

Stewart said that he believed if we go to NESDEC that we will still reap the benefits of NHSBA as well. It would benefit to have both at our disposal.

Ray Cote said that NESDEC gave a strong presentation.

Craig Hicks moved to choose NESDEC as our Superintendent search firm. Mary Allen second. Unanimous.

Tom said that he will contact NESDEC. We still need to discuss how we will move forward. Keith had a handout about non-traditional candidates. (see attachment #3).

Gail had a new business item. She distributed a handout titled "A clash of rights in education". (see attachment #4). She said that we should read the article and discuss as soon as possible. She requested that Linda Potter come back to provide information of how we would respond to this. Gail requested a report in the future of how we assess our dangers.

Christy gave many thanks to May Clark for helping foster a community member discussion at a recent Dublin forum. Many topics were discussed. How community members can come to meetings as well as PBIS and a host of other information was discussed.

Tom Welden said that he would like the Board to meet next Tuesday night to help further formulate the Superintendent search. He said that we need to expedite the process so that we can help NESDEC move forward.

A copy of the "Time Line – Short List" (see attachment #5) was distributed.

7. Approval of Manifests (Board Vote Required)

Marian certified that manifests 79 – 84 totaling \$ 454,176.88 and Sub Run 121 and 122 totaling \$ 33,714.36 and Payroll 16 totaling \$ 798,071.00 have been reviewed by me and found to be proper charges against the Contoocook Valley School District for goods and/or services received and have been properly processed prior to the submittal to the School Board.

Craig Hicks motioned to accept the approval of the manifests as read. Bart Goodeve second. Unanimous.

8. Non-Public Session: RSA 91-A:3,IIc
None.

Tom Welden motioned to adjourn at 9:06 p.m. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Marschok