

February 23, 2017

Jay E. Denault

Retired School Board Chairman; Missisquoi Valley Union High School District #7 ; FNWSU Board  
EXISTING PRE-ACT 46 CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #7  
HOUSE EDUCATION TESTIMONY CHAPTER II

In the FNWSU, the Missisquoi Valley Union High School District #7 is a pre Act 46 consolidated school district created in 1969 by the Towns of Highgate, Swanton, and Franklin. With the passing of time there is without any doubt a growing feeling this decision was a serious mistake. It has been extremely difficult, and frustrating for parents, and taxpayers in dealing with student related issues, school performance issues, and financial issues. In 2001 the Missisquoi Valley Union High School was struggling with student performance issues which resulted in the AOE providing the services of a person by the name of Wendy Hovey, that was 16 years ago. In 2006, M.V.U. became an "Identified School", two years later M.V.U. was placed in "Required Corrective Action" where it stayed to this date. In 2008, the AOE took more aggressive steps by requiring the M.V.U. School Board to enter into a contract to hire a Director of School Improvement for one year, with the State providing \$100,000.00 to fund the position. If the Board refused to cooperate the State informed them the AOE would seize control of the school. (see Vt. Ed. Report M.V.U. mandate documentation)

I asked our Superintendent early in January 2016 for copies of the school's required Continuous Improvement Plan". Three months later I was told, "I couldn't find the "CIP'S", looks like they were never done, and you can't blame me because I've only been here for two years". Shortly thereafter, I attended a M.V.U. school board meeting and asked the members the same following questions. Is there a CIP available, has a school improvement team been created, and if so who are the members? Has the school conducted a comprehensive school wide assessment to better understand the problems, and is there a more aggressive school restructuring plan available, which should have been implemented several years ago? I am still waiting for answers to these questions.

By March of 2016 I had made such an issue of the situation, I surprisingly received a letter from Secretary Holcombe. (see attached letter) She stated, "I wonder if you are expecting to see a label that says Continuous Improvement at the top. Our records indicate that the FNWSU meets this requirement through their (District Wide) Strategic Plan. I assure you the strategic plans are sufficient for meeting the requirements". Secretary Holcombe continues, "the FNWSU has not been able to escape the label of corrective action due to the methodology of no child left behind which now requires us to label every school in which a student does not score as proficient. I agree students are not performing as well as we would like in several schools in the FNWSU. Over time, the school system has implemented several initiatives to improve for example the early intervention program SWIFT.

With all due respect, I have reviewed the District wide Strategic Plan, and it is not an appropriate substitute for a school specific, site based improvement plan. Of the 146 twelfth grade students who began the 2016 school year M.V.U. awarded diplomas to 124 Seniors which represents a 14% drop out rate. M.V.U. is currently experiencing it's highest drop out, and truancy rates in it's entire history. In regards to the implementation of SWIFT, Secretary Holcombe reported January 29, 2016 on Act 179 to the House and Senate Education committees that of the four Supervisory Unions given the opportunity to participate in SWIFT the FNWSU chose NOT to participate in the pilot. (see Report on Act 179 documentation) It's my opinion, Secretary Holcombe did not author this letter, it's more likely someone else did and she simply signed it without completely understanding the situation known to exist within the schools of FNWSU. More recently, the FNWSU hired Dr. Anthony Mohamad to conduct school climate studies which included M.V.U.. While attending a school board meeting I asked for a copy of the study report. I was denied a copy, and when I asked why, I was told that it was confidential. I eventually received a copy several months later but it was the declassified version.

Our Independent Act 46 study committee has noted that student enrollment patterns within our local schools has been stable, with some schools reporting slight increases. This would be consistent with recent census data, reporting Franklin County as one of the fastest growing areas in the State. However, the committee noted a drop in student enrollment at M.V.U.. This phenomenon is partly due to an alarming growth in dissatisfied parents caused by unresolved issues regarding their children. It is proven fact that some families are choosing to sell their homes and relocate, some families are preparing to home school, some families are sending their children to live with relatives, and those who can afford it are paying tuition. We have one M.V.U school board member threatening to resign and pull her children from the school, and other members counting the days to the end of their terms. Senior staff members are demoralized, and also counting the days to their retirement, while junior staff members fearful of speaking out due to retribution.

The M.V.U. administration recently announced the implementation of the “Marzano Foundation of Learning, but in the absence of a legitimate, and detailed school-wide assessment, how can it be determined that such an initiative will accurately address the yet to be identified needs of the school known to be causing the low test scores. I asked, why is M.V.U. not a participating Title I school given the school’s high poverty level and low student performance. I asked this question because M.V.U. generated \$252,229.00 in 2015, and not only would it provide supplemental services, but would substantially increase the pressure for M.V.U to comply with the requirements for failing schools. School Board members have been disconnected from the school due to a perceived threat to the administrative chain of command, leaving them in a position of not being able to respond to concerns even if they wanted to. Consequently, it’s not at all surprising there is a growing number of families in the FNWSU who are desperately hoping for school choice for the sake of their children, making the FNWSU the poster child for school choice.

In 1997 the M.V.U. school board created the “Roof Stabilization Fund” in response to a catastrophic roof failure, for the specific purpose of maintaining the roof on the main building pursuant to 24 VSA 2804. In 2010 however the M.V.U school board seeking more flexibility replaced this “Reserve Fund” with what’s referred to as the “Capitol Renewal Maintenance Projects Fund” with an annual taxpayer request for funding in the amount of \$100,000.00. Unfortunately, I discovered that this new fund does not meet the legal requirements of a legitimate “Reserve Fund” and as a result the M.V.U. school board does not have the authority to keep in it’s possession \$615,000.00 of accumulated taxpayer funding. (\$440,000.00 in a CD, and an additional \$175,000.00 in a savings account. NOTE; Only unused “Reserved Funds” balances are legally allowed to be rolled over from year to year.) In addition, as a result of this confusion, 150% of this fund balance was not reported in 2015 to the State in order to determine an overspending penalty. (see M.V.U. Board meeting minutes May 16, 2016 attached)

As a clear example of the lack of transparency within a consolidated school district, in the development of our upcoming 2017 budget vote, the minutes of the M.V.U. January 3, 2017 school board meeting indicates on the advice of the Superintendent, the board voted to keep in the proposed budget the cost of three retrofitting projects in order to maintain a spending level created by a no longer needed \$125,000.00 bond payment rather than accessing the funds contained in the Capitol Renewal Maintenance Projects Fund already allocated for such expenses. (see attached M.V.U. school board minutes) While at the same time, this year’s warning once again includes another taxpayer request for an additional \$100,000.00 to maintain the “Capitol Renewal Maintenance Projects Fund”. This lack of transparency will place the proposed FY 2017-18 budget in jeopardy, and foster a growing feeling of distrust. (see M.V.U. meeting minutes October 6, 2016, November 9, 2016, November 30, 2016, and January 3, 2017 attached)

A Democratic legislature is in control now, which makes the current initiative surprising.

Here's an elegant solution to what to do with the SBOE should the governor be allowed to appoint the Commissioner of Education: keep the SBOE with the Commissioner as chair. The six-year terms of the SBOE members would ensure that power shifts at the top of state government would be balanced by continuity at the SBOE level. The SBOE could advise the Commissioner and provide a useful link to "average" Vermonters. While the SBOE would no longer have control over hiring the Commissioner of Education, its members would be able to help guide, counsel and provide citizen input to this important staff member.

## NEA: TELL CONGRESS NO MORE VOUCHERS

The National Education Association, the country's largest teacher's union, is advocating that its members call congress to send the clear message: don't let parents take charge of their kids' education.

The NEA sent an email several weeks ago urging members to tell Congress "No more voucher programs." This is because the president's 2009 budget contains money to:

- Create a \$300 million national voucher program, "Pell Grants for Kids." (The NEA calls this a "misleading" name.)
- Convert a successful community grant program to an individual voucher program called "21st Century Opportunity Scholarships."
- Extend the District of Columbia "Opportunity Scholarship Program" scheduled to end this September. (The NEA calls this program "expensive" and "unproven," but DC parents would probably disagree.)

Vermont's congressional delegation is probably sympathetic to the NEA point of view. Nonetheless, it wouldn't hurt for them to hear other viewpoints:

- Senator Bernie Sanders Contact Page: <http://sanders.senate.gov/comments/>
- Senator Patrick Leahy: [senator\\_leahy@leahy.senate.gov](mailto:senator_leahy@leahy.senate.gov)
- Rep. Peter Welch Contact Page: [http://www.house.gov/fomwelch/issue\\_subscribe.htm](http://www.house.gov/fomwelch/issue_subscribe.htm)

## MISSISQUOI'S 100K MANDATE

Will spending nearly \$100,000 a year on a new director of school improvement turn things around at Missisquoi Valley Union High School? The Commissioner and State Board of Education think so. In late February, MVUHS officials signed an agreement with Education Commissioner Richard Cate that directs the school to take several steps in order to improve consistently low student performance. Among the stipulations: hire a director of school improvement, a licensed educator with documented experience turning low-performing schools around, with an annual salary of \$95,000.

The agreement means MVUHS gets to retain control over the school and its improvement process, which they were in danger of having to cede to the State Board of Education because of continual poor performance.

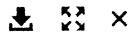
Fewer than 30 percent of MVUHS's students have met state standards in gateway subjects such as math and reading for several years.

The new director will have the authority to evaluate teachers, place recommendations in their files, recommend to the superintendent whether teacher contracts should be renewed, consult with the local school board on teacher reassignments and curriculum changes and more.

[The full agreement can be found here](#)

The following is a letter to the editor of the St. Albans Messenger from the president of the Ethan Allen Institute:

*Vt. Education Report Vol. 8 No 5*



**State of Vermont**  
219 North Main Street, Suite 402  
Barre, VT 05641  
[www.education.vermont.gov](http://www.education.vermont.gov)

[phone] 802-479-1030  
[fax] 802-479-1835

Agency of Education

March 10, 2016

Jay Denault – VIA EMAIL: [jdsbs\\_5@yahoo.com](mailto:jdsbs_5@yahoo.com)

Dear Mr. Denault,

Thank you so much for reaching out.

I will try here to address the questions you raise. I have copied your Superintendent, who may be able to add additional information.

**Issue 1 - Continuous Improvement Plans:** With respect to continuous improvement plans, Vermont requires all schools to have a continuous improvement plan. Local leadership has some flexibility around how it decides to meet this requirement and structure the plan. Our records indicate that FNWSU meets this requirement through their “Strategic Plan” as well as the School Wide Plans they have for some schools. They have used the planning process to coordinate efforts across the SU, which we feel is a wise and efficient decision that enhances impact and ensures a coordinated approach. Superintendent Goodrich tells me that he has provided you with copies of the Strategic Plans over time. I wonder if you are expecting to label that say “Continuous Improvement” at the top? I assure you the strategic plans are sufficient for meeting the requirement.

**Issue 2 - Chronic Underachievement:** I agree that students are not performing as well as we would like in several schools in FNWSU. In fact, I know Superintendent Goodrich agrees on this as well. Over time, the school system has implemented several initiatives to improve. For example:

1. They worked with school improvement coordinators when there was funding available.
2. They implemented professional development to support teachers, and they are now part of the SWIFT program. This is an early intervention program with a strong research base.



FNWSU has not been able to escape the label of corrective action due to the methodology of No Child Left Behind, which now requires every school in which every student does not score as proficient on every test as a “low performing school.” There is not a school in the state at this point that meets that standard. FNWSU is still in corrective action not because it hasn’t shown improvement, but rather because the system itself makes it difficult for schools to “turn



FNWSU has not been able to escape the label of corrective action due to the methodology of No Child Left Behind, which now requires us to label every school in which every student does not score as proficient on every test as a "low performing school." There is not a school in the state at this point that meets that standard. FNWSU is still in corrective action not because it hasn't shown improvement, but rather because the system itself makes it difficult for schools to "turn around" or show enough improvement to avoid sanctions. This fact is one of the primary reasons that the federal government has abandoned NCLB and created a new law, the "Every Student Succeeds Act." It isn't to start over. It is to recalibrate the system so that as schools improve, they can be recognized.

**Issue 3 - Common Core:** Using the Common Core State Standards provides a number of benefits to students in Vermont. It helps us to have high quality learning standards that describe what students know and are able to do, to buy less expensive and aligned instructional materials, and to ensure that our students will be career and college ready. Algebra is taught in almost every grade level in some respect but the advanced standards have been shifted to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. I would encourage you to reach out to Libby Bonesteel, the Curriculum Coordinator, to discuss why FNWSU has opted to follow this path. To be very clear: the Common Core is a set of standards-- it is a description of what students should be able to know and be able to do. It is NOT a curriculum. Local districts design the curriculum that enables them to meet state improvement goals.

Regarding the situation with your agriculture CTE teacher, the determinations related to staffing are those made by the principal based on a wide variety of factors including the demand for seats in those classes and the financial efficiency of continuing to offer them.

Superintendent Goodrich tells me that the climate survey work done by Dr. Mahamad is nearly ready for public release. The materials are being shared first with faculty and then will be shared publically.

I hope this answers your questions.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Holcombe  
Secretary of Education

cc: Winton Goodrich, Superintendent, FNWSU



**Report on Act 179 of 2014**  
**An act relating to making appropriations for**  
**the support of government;**  
**Sec. E.500.7 Special Education Expenditures;**  
**Pilot Program; Report**

**REPORT** | Report/Recommendations to House Education  
January 2016 | and Ways and Means Committees; and Senate  
Education and Finance Committees

**Submitted by Secretary of Education**  
**Rebecca Holcombe**



Intervention and Support system. For students eligible for special education progress towards meeting IEP goals were also measured.

Improved outcomes were seen in several areas. Office Discipline Referrals decreased which resulted in students spending more time engaging in classroom instruction and increasing the time teachers spent instructing rather than managing behaviors. Assessment results indicated that student comprehension of grade level material increased.

This supervisory union saw a decrease in students eligible for special education from 150 (16.11%) in 2014 to 139 (14.99%) in 2015 (-=1%). Enrollment remained essentially the same during this time (931 in SY '15 927 in SY '16). Special education costs decreased in SY '15 by \$452,827 compared to SY '14, a 12% decrease. GISU's special education spending is average for the state. These changes should be interpreted with caution as other factors likely contributed to them.

### **Non- Participants**

#### Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union

Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union (FNWSU) chose not to participate in the pilot after considering the advantages and disadvantages of the funding flexibility. There were two major reasons given for non-participation. One was that the practices the funding might be used for were already underway using current allowable funding. FNWSU has implemented co-teaching as a way to meet IEP requirements and provide benefit to all students. They also take advantage of the allowance for 20% of a special educator's time to be spent providing services to students with 504 or EST plans. The second concern was that using these special education funds for non-special education purposes would result in a shortfall of funds needed to provide the services required by IEPs for special education students.

#### Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union

Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union also decided not to participate in the funding pilot largely because of the administrative burden required to track time and services delivered. While they appreciated the flexibility allowed, they felt that the current time samples method of accounting was more efficient and effective than what they needed to do to meet the requirements of the grant.

For more information, visit <http://www.swiftschools.org/>.

Agency of Education SWIFT Contact: Karin Edwards, Director of ISL PreK-8, at [karin.edwards@vermont.gov](mailto:karin.edwards@vermont.gov) or (802) 479-1407.

**MVU School Board Meeting Minutes**  
**MVU Library 7:00 PM**  
**May 16, 2016**

**Attending:** Denis Boucher, Chairperson, Don Collins, Richard Flint, Vickie Gratton, John Ho, Gregg Gervais. **Others:** Becky Hart, Dennis Hill, Win Goodrich

**Absent:** Earl Fournier, Lisa Letourneau, Bob Irish

Denis Boucher called the meeting to order at 7:04 PM.

**Agenda Amendments:**

**Board Presentation**

- SBAC Presentation
  - How do SOAR students take SBAC?
- Muhammad Culture Audit

**Executive Session:**

Gregg Gervais moved, seconded by Vickie Gratton to enter executive session at 7:20pm for school crisis plan overview. Board approved 5-0 vote.

The Board exited Exec. Session @ 7:35

**Finance Report**

- Check Warrants - 4/19 to 5/2 \$83,178.69 Gregg Gervais moved, seconded by John Ho. (5/0)
- Check Warrants - 5/3 to 5/12 \$97,358.50 Don Collins moved, seconded by Vickie Gratton. (5/0)
- Financial Report - \$700,000 carry over trend - underspending by 2%
- Capital Reserve Fund - \$440,000 put in CD
  - Motion to authorize business manager to select a one year CD investment and deposit \$440,000 in the Peoples Trust Bank @ .65% moved by Gregg Gervais, seconded by Vickie Gratton. (4/1)
  - Keep \$175,000 in savings acct.
- Bond Discussion - Bonding
  - The board discussed a time line for a bond vote
- Consider bond vote for 11/2016
  - Motion to empower sub-committee to develop a bond process for a possible November vote and present to board on June 16<sup>th</sup> Vickie Gratton, seconded by Gregg Gervais. Board approved (5/0)
- FFA Fournier Fund - Authorize board chair to authorize Scholarship Acct. to be opened with signers, Sue Fournier, Robin Blouin, and Becky Hart - Richard Flint moved, seconded by Don Collins. Board approved (5/0)

MVU. Board paid final bond payment of \$126,000.00

Board voted to continue the line amount in 2017-18 budget, Jan 3 2017 meeting.



**MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MVU LIBRARY**

**October 6, 2016**

**6:00 PM FINANCE COMMITTEE  
7:00 PM SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

**Present:**

**Board members:**

Earl Fournier  
John Ho  
Richard Flint  
Dennis Boucher  
Gregg Gervais  
Bob Irish  
Vicky Gratton

**Not present:**

Lisa Letourneau  
Don Collins

**Administration:**

Rebecca Hart  
Winton Goodrich, Superintendent  
Dennis Hill, Principal  
Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary  
Paul Gregoire

**Visitors:**

Ch. 16.

**SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES:**

Mr. Boucher called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

Mr. Goodrich highlighted the Lights On Afterschool program and said that they were doing a fantastic job, with STEM learning, with a combination of wellness and academic focus. It was a good opportunity for students through the elementary and high schools.

**Call Meeting to Order**

- **Agenda Amendments**

Mr. Goodrich added a Drone Policy discussion to the Superintendent's Report.

The Vermont School Boards Insurance Trust had a model policy that could be used to create a policy. Mr. Goodrich said he attended a varsity field hockey game in which the drone was filming over the game, and at half-time the officials asked, "Is your coach using this for scouting?" They were not, but the incident brought up questions. What happened if a drone crashed during a game? Would it impact the nearby airfield? They needed to think ahead from a liability standpoint.

Mr. Irish asked if there were any policies on capturing photos of students. Mr. Goodrich said there could be, and by federal law, students and families signed off on school registry information. John Ho considered that this was a public facility with public property; you could not tell someone not to take a picture in a public place. The proposed drone policy would address many applications, not just athletics. The board discussed academic institutions and news agencies that were using drones.

### **Old Business**

None.

### **New Business**

- **Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drug Policy Discussion**

Mr. Goodrich stated that the Supervisory Union had received a \$30,000 tobacco prevention grant, available each year for four years. He would do an analysis of their current policy to see if they could meet the grant's qualifications. Each board would have to ratify the policies. The grants were designed to help provide structures for students to make positive choices.

### **Meeting Dates**

- Act 46 Independent Committee Meeting – Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 7pm @ MVU Library
- FNWSU School Board Meeting – Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>, 6:00pm @ Swanton
- Next MVU Board Meeting – Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> (**Off Schedule**) @ 7:00pm
- VSBA Board Chair Training – October 19<sup>th</sup>, noon to 7:00 PM at Lake Morey
- VSBA Fall Conference - October 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> at Lake Morey
  - VEHI Annual Meeting – Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>, 8:00 AM at Lake Morey
- Negotiations Meetings
  - Teacher Negotiation Dates (all @ 7:00 PM in MVU Library) Oct. 27, Nov. 21, Dec. 19, Jan. 11
  - Support Staff Negotiations Dates: (all @ 6:00 PM in MVU Library) Nov. 17, Dec. 1, Feb. 2, Feb. 23

Mr. Goodrich was concerned that with Act 68, the way the funding system treated the loss of a large budget item like the \$125,000 bond, they should set aside money as

though they still had a bond payment and use it for facility upgrades. Mr. Irish emphasized the importance of having a definite plan for the money.

Vicki Gratton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gervais, to authorize the board chair to sign a side letter with the association in regards to leave-time and sick-days, which stated that the master agreement language should revert back to the October 25, 2015 language. Full-time full-year custodians shall receive 12 sick days per year. Motion carried 5-0, with one abstention (Mr. Irish).

#### **Anticipated Executive Session**

- Negotiations Update
- Contract Issue

Ms. Gratton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Gervais, to enter executive session at 9:10 p.m. for teacher negotiations and two contract issues, where premature public knowledge would clearly place the board or other party at a substantial disadvantage. Motion carried 6-0.

The board exited executive session at 9:30 p.m. No action taken.

#### **Adjournment**

Mr. Flint made a motion, seconded by Mr. Irish, to adjourn at 9:30 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

**MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MVU LIBRARY**

**November 9, 2016**

**6:00 PM FINANCE COMMITTEE  
7:00 PM SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

*Present:*

*Dennis Boucher  
Richard Flint  
Bob Irish  
Vickie Gratton  
Gregg Gervais  
John Ho*

*Not present:*

*Lisa Letourneau  
Don Collins  
Earl Fournier*

*Administration:*

*Becky Hart, Business Manager  
Dennis Hill, Principal  
Winton Goodrich, Superintendent  
Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary*

*Other: Channel 15*

Mr. Boucher called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

**Call Meeting to Order**


- Moment of Silence for Christian Reagan – Eight Grade Student Who Passed Away

An 8<sup>th</sup> grade student, Christian Reagan, passed away in an accident a few weeks ago. The board held a moment of silence in his memory.

- **Agenda Amendments**

Mr. Goodrich added an announcement to the “truth about drugs” handout for students. There was also a change in the actual solar contract, a merging of the fall sports presentation,

**Public Comments Regarding Current and Future Agendas**



Mr. Goodrich reminded that they had talked about keeping the \$125,000 bond amount in, even after the bond was paid off, to be used for a capital reserve fund for expensive repairs in the future. Mr. Irish suggested talking with people to consider what they might support and named certain people who might be able to help inform the public of the board's intent.

Mr. Flint said that, if they were going to keep the football program, they needed a better "feeder" program and might want to upgrade the track. The board discussed the programs of neighboring schools. Mr. Goodrich said that the facilities audit had included a discussion about the track, and they had the option to research the costs and details for those athletic fields. Mrs. Hart reminded that they had to decide whether it should be a line item in the budget or as a separate ballot item.

The board discussed the need to replace the bleachers and gym, but because the gym was round, the bleachers had to be custom made and were very expensive. They were looking at the needs for the broader facilities. Mr. Gervais suggested having a preliminary budget meeting to educate the public on the board's intentions. Mr. Goodrich suggested having Ch. 15 cover the November 30<sup>th</sup> meeting, since a number of people watched the meetings. Mr. Ho commented that the community could suggest uses for the \$125,000; Mr. Hill said they could be given a number of options to consider.

### **Principal's Report**

#### **• Athletics Fall Report**

Mr. Hill praised John Lumsden's tireless work for the athletic program at MVU. He presented a memo about the fall season, summarizing the following:

- BBQ on August 22<sup>nd</sup>
- 296 fall athletes had participated in 16 fall sports teams, compared to 258 athletes last fall
- two new coaches on staff for 7<sup>th</sup> grade girl's soccer and for high school football
- MVU hosted the "homecoming" on September 16<sup>th</sup>
- the first "under the lights" middle school soccer games
- the NVAC cross-country championships with 696 runners from 23 high schools
- varsity girls' field hockey team made it to the Div. 3 state finals and came just short of the title
- the varsity soccer field was reseeded, aerated, and fertilized over the summer
- several coaches attended a workshop about "inappropriate behavior"
- two fences were installed in front of the middle school baseball field for player safety
- the "Abby Group supplies "free" lunches for student athletes a doctor at NMC looked at injuries once a week as a free service
- NMC donated a medical table, 2 stationary bikes
- the girls and boys soccer and football teams participated in a FIFA 11+ program, a study of athletes participating in strength and conditioning programs monitored by doctors from UVM.

Nick Marchessault was nominated for an athletic/academic award; he was a leader in the school and a great model for other kids.

**MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
MVU LIBRARY  
November 30, 2016  
6:00 PM SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET MEETING**

**Board members:**

*Dennis Boucher  
Bob Irish  
Don Collins  
Earl Fournier  
Vickie Gratton (not present)  
Greg Gervais (not present)  
John Ho (not present)  
Richard Flint (not present)  
Lisa Letourneau (not present)*

**Administration present:**

*Dennis Hill, Principal  
Becky Hart, Business Manager  
Paul Gregoire, Grounds & Facilities  
Winton Goodrich, Superintendent  
Yaasha Wheeler, Secretary*

**SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES:**

**Call Meeting to Order (Listen)**

- Agenda Amendments

Mr. Boucher called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m. There was no quorum present, but discussion could be had.

**Public Comments Regarding Current and Future Agendas**

None.

**Adopt November 9<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes (Action)**

Postponed until there was a quorum.

**Review Warrants and Prepare Committee Recommendations**

- ~~Check Warrants~~ – Postponed until there was a quorum.
- **Budget Development**

mandated a program, without offering money to offset it. Mr. Gregoire explained how the pick-up and storage worked; currently, the compost was picked up only two days a week. The contract had not yet been signed.

Mrs. Hart showed that the capital/building projects showed a significant increase; they had not decided if this was coming from the \$125,000 in debt service. Mr. Goodrich added that they did not want to lose the line item, because a future bond would add that cost back in the budget and it was important to maintain a bond payment level. Mr. Gregoire said that they needed funds for the stage ceiling and catwalks for the lighting; these funds could go into those improvements. Mr. Goodrich added that different expenditures could be addressed each year from the five-year facilities plan. The board discussed the facilities audit and how it should guide their use of the funds.

Mr. Gregoire added that there was no good sewage system for the agricultural building either; he would like a gravity feed wastewater from the handsinks to a manhole and patch it into the school sewer line. Mr. Collins considered this issue a priority, to show the school's commitment to the agricultural program. The board discussed a few projects to pitch for use of the money in the line item.

Mr. Gregoire explained his plan for potentially saving money on washing and waxing the classroom floors.

Mrs. Hart summarized that the tax rate was going up and she expected to know the tax rate before January. She and the board discussed the best way to present the numbers to the voters. They estimated about a 5.5% increase. Mr. Fournier emphasized that the voters would be most interested in knowing the tax rate. Mrs. Hart explained that it was important to show the taxpayers that the special ed assessment's apparent lower rate was because the money was actually going to the SU. Mr. Irish summarized that the increase in special education students and the increase in salaries were driving the increase in the budget. The increase, however, did not show the revenue side. Mr. Fournier suggested looking for ways to lower special ed costs.

Mr. Ho suggested reviewing some of the line items to match actual expenditures for this year with recommendations for next year, rather than simply putting in the budgeted number again.

- **School Improvement Grant Implications**
- **Report on Community Feedback to Board Members Regarding School Bond**
- **Football Side Ballot Item**
- **MVU Long Range Plan**

Postponed.

- **Check Warrants (revisited)**

**MISSISQUOI VALLEY UNION SCHOOL BOARD BUDGET MEETING  
MINUTES  
MVU LIBRARY**

**January 3, 2017**

**7:00 PM SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

*Present:*

*Denis Boucher, Richard Flint, Bob Irish, Vickie Gratton, Gregg Gervais, Don Collins, Earl Fournier.*

*Not present:*

*Lisa Letourneau, John Ho*

*Administration:*

*Becky Hart, Business Manager  
Dennis Hill, Principal  
Winton Goodrich, Superintendent*

*Other: Channel 15*

**Call Meeting to Order**

Mr. Boucher called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

- **Agenda Amendments**

**Public Comments Regarding Current and Future Agendas**

No public comment.

**Adopt December 15<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting Minutes**

Gregg Gervais made a motion, seconded by Don Collins, to approve the meeting minutes. Motion carried 7-0.

- **Budget**

Draft 4 of the FY18 budget was presented and reviewed. The overall budget is \$14,609,610 reflecting an expenditure decrease of \$992,948, due to the Special Education revenue going in to the SU Special Education



budget beginning next year. Without these revenues being net from Special Education Assessment expense, as done in prior years, the budget to budget increase is 3.65% in Draft 4.

Mrs Hart summarized the few revisions made to draft 4 of the MVU budget since the last meeting. FY18 Vocational Tuition expense is down as the 6 semester average is reduced from the current FY17 number. Draft 4 also reflects the board discussion on the \$125,000 previously budgeted for the school renovation debt service. A separate category was created delineating the three (3) projects that would be funded-Ag Building Sewage, Water Line Replacement, and the kitchen Gas Hot water Heater. These projects were discussed, and the board discussed whether to remove the \$125,000 from the budget and to fund the projects with monies from the Capital Renewal Fund. Gregg Gervais moved, seconded by Earl Fournier to cut \$125,000 out of the budget. The motion failed on a 2-4-with 1 abstention. The board wanted more research completed with other tracks for the track upgrade cost estimate and reporting back to the board on January 19<sup>th</sup>. The board discussed the Ag Drain issue, and the capital reserve fund. They will finalize the budget at the January 19<sup>th</sup> board meeting.

#### **Meeting Dates**

- Act 46 Independent Committee Meeting - January 16<sup>th</sup> 10 am at the SU Office
- Next MVU Board Meeting - January 19<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 finance/7:00 board meeting
- FNSWU School Board Meeting - February 1 6:30 p.m in Sheldon
- Support Staff Negotiations- Feb. 2, Feb. 23, 6 p.m. in MVU Library
- Teacher Negotiations - Jan. 11 7 .m. in MVU Library

#### **Executive Session**

##### **o Negotiations update**

Mr. Gervais made a motion, seconded by Mr. Irish, to enter executive session at 8:15p.m. with the finding that premature public knowledge of these matters would clearly place the board or other party at a substantial disadvantage. Motion carried 7-0.

The board exited executive session at 8:41p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

Denis Boucher declared the meeting adjourned at 8:42p.m. Motion carried 7-0.