

**REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT #16 SCHOOL BOARD
Mechanic Falls – Minot – Poland**

**The 4th Special Meeting of the RSU #16 School Board
for 2010 – 2011 was held
Monday, May 23, 2011 at 6:00 P.M.
at Elm Street School in the Gym**

NOTE:

6:00 p.m. – School Board tour of possible Adult Education

MINUTES

Present: Annette Annance, Terri Arsenault, Carl Beckett, Sue Callahan, Norm Davis, Dave Griffiths,
Melissa Hodgkin, Steve Holbrook, Mary Ella Jones, Jeanne Manley, Scott Sawyer,
Martha Stone, Jack Wiseman
Absent: Yvette Murray

1.0 CALL TO ORDER: Dave Griffiths, Chair
Dave Griffiths called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

ACTION ITEMS:

- 2.0** Discussion to revisit the Adult Education location
Motion: by Terri Arsenault to approve Adult Education moving into ESS as proposed by Dennis, with the addition of a bathroom
Seconded: Steve Holbrook
Vote: 9–3 (Carl Beckett, Scott Sawyer, Jeanne Manley opposed)
- Dennis talked about the options for Adult Ed concerning moving to the Head Start building or the vacant wing at Elm Street School. The cost to move into the Head Start building is \$46,000 and we don't own the building. It will also need a new roof, a new heating system and insulation. Dennis proposes to move the Adult Ed program into Elm Street School. He explained the logistics of that and what types of things the program would have access to. He asked the school board to revisit their decision and move Adult Ed to Elm Street School.
 - Scott inquired about the length of the lease in Mechanic Falls. The lease is for 20 years.
 - Carl – If we move to ESS we should use the whole addition with all nine rooms and the bathroom. There is a bathroom issue and having Adult Ed students being unsupervised in the halls.
 - Terri – Both Mary and Dennis say this can work. If we use that whole hallway Mary said it would cramp the kids who need that space. Mary and Dennis recommend and we should go with it, but add a bathroom.
 - Mary Ella – What would the cost be to put up partitions in the four rooms? Gary estimates \$3,000 to \$4,000.

- Dennis – Adult Ed students are great kids. Often there is a negative picture painted of them. They are no different than any other kids. They are not going to be running through the buildings. We can work this out, with the right attitude and shared spaces.
- Dave reviewed the fact that the school board voted a few weeks ago to move Adult Ed to the Head Start building. Since then, they received a letter from Tony Bennett and Gary Purrington suggesting that it would not be a good idea to put money into the old Head Start building. He hands out diplomas at Adult Ed graduation and knows they are good kids and good people.
- Mary Ella – There are also rooms that can be shared by Adult Ed staff and K–6 staff. Afternoons would be available.
- Sue Littlefield – What about the Superintendent’s office? Dennis said they have looked at closing the central office and moving to ESS. The problem is there is no place to put the busses. The rooms/offices at central office are very small and not built for educational purposes. Sue asked if any thought had been given to the ESS K–1 wing. Those kids have to travel the farthest to the playground from that wing. Mary said she thought it might be a bit more difficult to have that wing be self-contained. All the little kids couldn’t be moved, so some of them would have to stay upstairs.
- Scott – What about Adult Ed students who are prohibited from being on school grounds? How can we educate those students? Dennis explained that we are mandated to offer the programs through Adult Ed. We are not mandated to have adults on school grounds who are prohibited from being there when school children are present. They can come when kids are not present. Many Adult Ed programs are offered in high schools now and they work it out.
- Laura Parks – Revisit Central Office. Why can’t the busses stay there with Adult Ed and move the central office to ESS in the four large classrooms. Dennis explained that they also looked at the open space next to Dunkin Donuts in Poland for Adult Ed. One of the concerns is that many of the kids in the program are located in Mechanic Falls and may not be able to get over to a Poland location.
- Nancy Watson – She agrees there would be additional repairs needed at the Head Start building and future money needs are uncertain. In terms of Adult Ed moving to ESS she explained what their needs are. She has a concern about handicap access, but it seems that has been addressed. She would like to see a written agreement to define the terms of the time Adult Ed can rent space there. They want to pay rent and pay their own way. They want to cooperate with ESS and she has talked to Mary Martin about this.
- Carol Lundberg – What about handicapped accessibility? There are stairs on both sides. Dennis said the handicapped access is in front of the building, side of the building and the lower gymnasium side.
- Carl – Do we have to put the partitions in the rooms, what about windows and heat? Partitions wouldn’t go all the way to the ceiling so the heat would circulate. Nancy said that would be a problem because of a lack of confidential space. Dennis – We will work out the fine details of this.
- Steve – What about students who are not allowed on school property? At what age can we refuse them if they have a record like that? Dennis wasn’t sure.
- Bonnie Payette – Why not put the rent money that was being paid at the town office towards repairs to the head start building? Gary Purrington explained that the

\$14,000 is not CIP and that amount would only take care of heat and power for the year.

- Mary Ella – Potential use of shop and kitchen areas at ESS are a big benefit.
- Jeanne Manley – We would have to put a bathroom in for \$21,000 at Elm Street. Possibly up to \$8,000 for doors and partitions.
- Dennis – Regarding sexual offenders. We have to offer Adult Ed during the day because we would lose a lot of our students if we didn't. If we limit it to night classes only, we would run into the same thing. Sexual offenders are on every street corner in every town. They would have access to our building only when students are not there. It can work here.
- Jeanne – Who is on duty at Adult Ed for an administrator?
- Carl – Will you negotiate with Nancy if she ends up needing one or two more rooms? Dennis said they would work together to solve any issues.
- Jack – If there are circumstances where you need to have a one-on-one conversation with someone, there is not an issue coming into the school and using a classroom or Mr. Reed's former office. I think it can be worked out. There is too much space for too few students in Adult Ed to use the entire wing.
- Norm – We should look at the possibility of putting a ramp at the further end of the wing.
- Laura Parks – When we look at the adults that have the sexual issues, and are looking at the 4-6 wing, it faces the playground. There are children playing on that playground in the evenings without adult supervision.
- Terri – Why are we assuming the Adult Ed students are a bunch of pedophiles? These people are here in this community. There are 25 living right here. Will this cause an issue for the school from a legal standpoint?
- Nancy Watson – one option that some Adult Ed program use is to have the instruction for those students take place off school grounds.
- Ashley (an ESS parent) – Concerned about safety for the children. When they come in from recess how will you guarantee no contact? Dave said kids are not in the halls without a teacher, security here is very tight.
- Carol Lundberg asked about handicap access and the gym door. Dennis said we would accommodate any handicap student that enrolls in Adult Ed.
- Jeanne – the Adult Ed students will have to follow the rules and policies of the school, such as no smoking.

Motion: by Melissa Hodgkin to call the vote
Seconded: by Steve Holbrook
Vote: Unanimous

Discuss the 2011-2012 Budget Revisions

- Dave – Concerned that this matter of what we pay for education can really divide a community. We have not been divided in the last several years and he hopes this won't happen now. He spent a couple of hours in town talking to people who may not share his view of supporting the budget. The people who voted against the budget are telling us, in this economy that everybody should live within their means and that includes us.

- Dennis provided the handout of the presentation and explained some of the changes after the budget was voted down in the three communities.
- Carl – Has done some math. In 2008–2009 when we were Union 29 we spent \$19.2M. This year we are spending \$17.8M. We have cut \$2.3M from the budget since 2008–2009. In the past three years, we have cut well over \$4M that we were spending as Union 29. This consolidation has worked. The numbers don't lie. He doesn't know why people are voting against the budget.
- Ollie Emery – The problem is people are suffering. You need your 6th grade teacher at ESS. You need your 4YO class in Minot because it makes money. That will come in with a zero budget and that will pass.
- Mary Ella – Some of the positions we need are mandated. What you aren't seeing is all the other needs and wants that aren't even being brought to the table because they were already cut. This is an investment in the kids.
- Norm – What are the \$15,000 stipends? Dennis said they are not earmarked just yet. Some of those are contractual. It will not be a cut in programs.
- Jeanne – RE: pay to play. Kids pay \$500 for hockey. We may need a more equitable way of doing that. Get money from PTO and Boosters.
- Sue – These clubs and PTOs already give a lot of money towards education programs. We can't ask them for more. This budget would cost her \$4 a month more in taxes and she could handle that. This is a bare, bare bones budget. If we go deeper than this, we are affecting our children.
- Martha – The Booster Club gives thousands of dollars per year at the high school.
- Hope Becker – Opposed to the other budget and this one also. What I see is that this economy cannot handle it. Greater salary freezes for teachers are a possibility. Portland has had a freeze. Windham, Lewiston and Lisbon have had a variety of freezes on salaries. We could save some programs by doing this. These salary increases will cause more cuts in the future. Many of the salary increases are not related to building equity.
- Terri – If this were next year, I wouldn't vote for pay increases. The reason I say that is because when we consolidated all the schools had their own contracts and the pay differences were huge. We are trying to get all teachers and staff in the district on the same contract and pay scale. Once everyone is on a level playing field, I would vote for a salary freeze.
- Hope Becker – What is the cost for a sick day in the budget? Why are there two personal days for teachers?
- Lester Stevens – Reminding you that the economy is bad, he went five years without a pay increase then lost his job.
- Steve Holbrook – I can live with this new budget. When Gov. Baldacci consolidated our schools, it was mandated that all teachers be under the same salary level. We have to do this.
- Lester Stevens – Is there anything in that mandate that says everyone has to go to the highest pay scale or can you bring some down and meet in the middle?
- Mary Ella – We are still under negotiations. No one has said that is what we are going to do.
- Bonnie Payette – It is admirable that was one of the stipulations, but if we all had a crystal ball we would know what we know now. \$164,000 just in high

school stipends on top of their salaries. She listed how many sick days employees have in the different towns. There are two people getting huge stipends for not taking insurance.

- Scott – Why wasn't the school board budget committee involved in reviewing the revised budget again and making a recommendation to the school board? Terri explained that we are in crunch time in getting a budget passed by July 1st. She met with Dennis last week and he went over it with her.
- Steve Robinson – \$703,120 increase in the budget. There are other opportunities to tighten down the ways things are done. Encourage the negotiations committee to drive that home. The middle school and high school salaries are not an equity issue.
- Terri said that is not true, with the consolidated middle school we had teachers move from the K-8 at ESS contract to the WMS K-8 contract. So it is only the high school that is not an equity issue with increases.
- Brian Gagnon – When you start talking about budget increases into the bigger towns like Lewiston and Auburn, be careful. There is a very different set of numbers comparing what you are providing here and what they are providing there. They already have a much bigger budget.
- Dennis asked people to look at our cost per student and see that we do not overspend. If you look at the salaries in Portland you would be amazed. They make \$77,000 when our teachers make \$44,000.
- Ollie Emery– Back when we were our own district the economy was a lot better. People were working. Now the homeowners are paying all the taxes.
- Kurt Becker – It cost more to attract a teacher in Portland because it cost more to live there.
- Lester Stevens– Look at the general assistance budget. Costs have more than doubled than what we budgeted for. We should have a wage freeze for everybody.
- Norm Beauparlant – Town of Poland employees got a 2.6 increase. My concern is that this isn't being seen by a large group of people. I think the problem is that not enough of the public has been involved in the budget process along the way and that is why we ended up here today. In addition to meetings broadcast on cable TV we need town selectmen, townspeople and budget committee involved all the way. He suggested holding another public forum and try to involve more people. Dave said tonight's meeting was announced in the paper and we had three meetings before the vote.
- Dennis said having another large meeting at PRHS that is broadcast over cable is a good idea. We would like to have a district budget meeting by the second week in June.
- June 6th public hearing at PRHS.
- Brian Gagnon –Board of Selectman from Poland are saying they were not responsible for any tax increase and they would like to blame the teacher salary for any tax increase.
- Jack – We have to wait for numbers from the state. It sets us apart from the town budgets. The town can come forward and say what they have done. The school department isn't complete until we have those numbers and we are done.

- Sue – Minot’s budget is all done by the time the school department starts thinking about it. The towns and the schools need the same calendars for the budget process. There needs to be better communication. The town budget committees were not invited to the school budget meetings.
- Dan Callahan – It would be helpful to have a limited line budget, maybe 20 major items.
- Laurie Callahan – If we keep cutting we are going to lose state funding. People need to look at the state funding formula. Many people voted based on misinformation.

Motion: by Carl Beckett to have an extra public hearing before the public meeting vote

Seconded: by Mary Ella Jones

Vote: 11–1 (Steve Holbrook opposed)

There will be a public hearing on Monday the 6th followed by the school board vote, then Thursday the 9th a public district meeting and vote with the referendum vote on June 14th.

Motion: by Steve Holbrook to adjourn at 8:42 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis J. Duquette