

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)**
2 **Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: Monday, September 12, 2022, in-person and online**
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4 **RGB members present:** Mike Cutler, Asher Edelson, Leon Johnson, Jackie Kelly, Fran Kinney, John
5 MacDonald, Charles Putney, Ken Swierad, Dane Whitman and Anthony (TJ) Williams
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7 **CDC represented** by: Michael Lawler, Superintendent/Director; Meg Honsinger, Assistant Director and
8 Rebecca Tattersall, Business Manager
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10 Audience: CAT-TV; no public attendees
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12 **Recorder:** Sandra Redding, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
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14 Chair Ken Swierad called the meeting to order at 10:01AM noting there were no members of the public in-
15 person or online for any comments other than CAT-TV. He proceeded to the consent agenda:

- 16 • Minutes from the August 8th full board meeting were presented for approval. With motions from
17 F. Kinney and J. MacDonald and unanimous approval, the minutes were approved.
- 18 • Payroll warrants were approved after motions from F. Kinney and L. Johnson and unanimous
19 support from board
- 20 • Vendor warrants were approved after motions from F. Kinney and L. Johnson and unanimous
21 support from the board. There was a question on the higher number of warrants this month.
22 (Simply due to carryover from the previous month) Question concerning insurance monies from
23 flood damage-(settlement still a work in progress.)

24 Business office documents located in drop box were available for comments and/or concerns. Hearing
25 none, the documents were accepted as presented.
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27 There were no committee reports.
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29 **Action Items:**

- 30 • FY233 VACTED Consortium Agreement-this is a formality each year as we belong to this group.
31 With motions from M. Cutler and L. Johnson, the board approved this document unanimously.
32 Johnson asked if, in the future, could we show documents publically as the board discusses
33 them. Supt. Lawler said this is possible.
- 34 • School bus purchase-due to many factors, the bus we planned on getting has not even been
35 manufactured yet and the price has increased. Supt. Lawler shared that finding a decent,
36 appropriate second hand bus is almost as impossible as ordering/waiting for a new bus. He
37 mentioned we might need two RFBs, one for a used vehicle, one for a new bus. Prices are
38 escalating at a serious pace. Lawler would like approval to move ahead quickly if a suitable
39 vehicle can be found. The board previously approved \$67,195 for a bus purchase, but that will
40 not be sufficient in today's economy. Supt. Lawler suggested an increase of \$5,000 for a
41 possible purchase. After some discussion, motions from Kelly and Kinney to increase purchase
42 funds for bus for up to \$70,000 were made. Motion was approve, but with one nay vote. The
43 search continues for an appropriate vehicle.
- 44 • School Safety Personnel-Supt. Lawler explained to the board the present situation we have
45 concerning the availability of security/safety personnel from the Bennington Police Department.
46 As they are currently understaffed, we are not able to fill the usual 20 hours per week staffing in
47 our school that we have had for the past several years. This is a funded expense in our budget,
48 so cost is not an issue and there is additional funding available at this time as well. Our faculty
49 has indicated to Lawler that they are concerned about safety/security in our building. MAU has
50 three personnel on staff dedicated to just that and we do not have any legal document with them
51 as to their response to any emergency on our side of the building. It should be noted that the
52 MAU security staff responds as quickly as possible when the need arises, but we were very
53 comfortable with having a Bennington Police officer here almost every day for 4 hours a day to
54 circulate, connect and provide knowledgeable information to staff and students
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1 Discussion ensued:

- 2 • R. Tattersall noted that we have access to a one year grant thru Act 83, no strings attached as to
- 3 how this is used
- 4 • Cannot count on BPD as they are short-staffed
- 5 • Sheriff's department also short-staffed
- 6 • BPD cost has been included in yearly budget for awhile
- 7 • Use of MAU personnel not included in allocation agreement
- 8 • Could teachers have further training to enable them to spot potential issues with students? We
- 9 currently provide professional development which includes training in social and emotional
- 10 learning. Some board members feel teachers should be more pro-active in hallway duty and
- 11 recognizing student issues/problems. Perhaps use any additional funds for better/continued
- 12 training for staff.
- 13 • Do we really need uniformed personnel with weapons to patrol the halls and is this detrimental to
- 14 a positive atmosphere for all students?
- 15 • Teachers feel strained with additional responsibilities now, so could be a problem to add more
- 16 enforcement type activities to their schedules
- 17 • Could we reach out to retired law enforcement personnel?
- 18 • What do we have in place as far as policies go in the discipline area? Should we be
- 19 looking/updating those?
- 20 • Not all teachers are comfortable/capable in handling discipline issues
- 21 • Use any extra funds for continuing education/safety/security/mental health training
- 22 • Incidents at MAU have increased this year. Teachers are more nervous especially with the
- 23 ongoing escalation of violence in schools and the realization that we do not have our usual
- 24 support from BPD due to lack of personnel.
- 25 • We feel it is very productive for students and staff to have access to safety/security personnel as
- 26 this helps to build relationships here at the school and out in the community
- 27 • Should this lack of BPD personnel be addressed with town leadership? (They are aware.)
- 28 • Could parents/volunteers be approached to help?
- 29 • As we have several district sending schools as well as MAU, we must be able to insure the safety
- 30 of their students in accordance with their protocols
- 31 • How can we do a better job of identifying those students who are in need of special assistance or
- 32 have issues that may be in the developing stages?
- 33 • Are there any legal/liability issues involved with onsite law enforcement personnel or lack of
- 34 same? (Not required)
- 35 • The board, as well as SWT administration, takes very seriously the concerns of school personnel
- 36 and will continue to provide a safe and secure environment for all.
- 37 • Supt. Lawler will provide some data on incidents documented this year at MAU

38 Supt. Lawler requested a straw vote on the request for a Safety/Security Liaison position. At this time,
39 with a negative response from a majority of board members, Supt. Lawler will bring a revised description
40 for the position along with data for the board to consider. He also suggested the Education/Facilities
41 committee meet to consider additional information before the next full board meeting. Board members
42 were reminded to state their names when voting for identity purposes.

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44 Superintendent's Report:

- 45 • Thank you for calling a Education/Facilities committee to further discuss suggested position and
- 46 provide leadership to board.
- 47 • Professional development has been provided to faculty and staff for three days at the beginning
- 48 of our school year using the 7 Mindsets curriculum. This is a requirement from the state that we
- 49 provide Social and Emotional Learning for our personnel to better assist our students. This has
- 50 been an ongoing training and is appreciated and enjoyed by all.
- 51 • We will be hosting a lunch advisory committee meeting day here at SW Tech on Wednesday,
- 52 October 26, 2022. Our programs are required to meet with their advisory committees twice a
- 53 year and this one hour luncheon with a meeting within each program works quite well. Committee

- 1 members have the opportunity to interact with other community members who are assisting our
2 programs to move forward in the best way possible.
- 3 • Program enrollment is very strong, final numbers will not be available until October 15. Our
4 classes are pretty full at this time with 16-21 students per class. We are busting out at the seams
5 with not a lot of room to accommodate more students even though we receive many applications.
6 This is a good problem to have. Some programs have a waiting list. Yes, it would be grand to
7 expand, but due to cost factors/budgets, no realistically priced real estate, and the lack of
8 available personnel to hire, that seems unlikely right now. We, also, are happy to note we have
9 not heard of any bullying/harassment issues.
 - 10 • Supt. Lawler shared that his new arrangeme, for his part, has been working quite well and
11 supported by faculty/staff. We have very advanced communication tools to have instantaneous
12 connection with him anywhere, anytime.

13 Chair Swierad shared that the VSBA will be holding their yearly conference October 22 and 23, so go
14 online if interested in attending. L. Johnson mentioned that there is a lot to learn online if you care to
15 check it out.

16 Swierad thanked everyone for the solid and good discussions. Motions were made by Cutler and
17 Johnson to move the October meeting to the 17th due to the holiday on the 10th. This was unanimously
18 approved.

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20 With no further business at this time, the board unanimously voted to adjourn at 11:30AM.

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