

1 **Southwest Vermont Regional Technical School District (SVRTSD)**
2 **Regional Governing Board Meeting Minutes: Monday, March 13, 2023, in-person and online**
3

4 **RGB members present:** Mike Cutler, Asher Edelson, Leon Johnson, Fran Kinney, Jackie Kelly, Ken
5 Swierad, Greg Sauer, Dane Whitman and TJ Williams (on-line). Absent-Tim Kane and Charles Putney
6

7 **CDC represented** by: Michael Lawler, Superintendent/Director, (online); Meg Honsinger, Assistant
8 Director and Rebecca Tattersall, Business Manager
9

10 Audience: CAT-TV; no public attendees
11

12 **Recorder:** Sandra Redding, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent
13

14 Meeting was called to order at 10:02AM by Supt. Michael Lawler. He welcomed all and asked for public
15 comments. Hearing now, he initiated the **re-organization of the 2023/2024 Regional Governing**
16 **Board** by asking for nominations for a chairperson. Ken Swierad was nominated and hearing no other
17 nominations, voting ensued. With motions from F. Kinney and L. Johnson, Swierad was unanimously
18 elected to chair this board for the coming year. Meeting then continued with the chair in place. Swierad
19 asked for nominations for vice-chair. Dane Whitman was nominated and hearing no other nominations,
20 voting ensued. With motions from A. Edelson and L. Johnson, Whitman was unanimously elected as
21 vice-chair. Jackie Kelly was nominated as Clerk of the board. With no other nominations, motions by A.
22 Edelson and L. Johnson were unanimously recorded for Kelly.
23

24 The board re-organization continued:
25

26 ***The SW Tech Assembly Room at 321 Park Street, Bennington** was approved as the place for
27 approved meetings. ***Time and date of monthly regular full board meetings** will remain the same,
28 second Monday of the month at 10AM. The ***2023/2024 meeting dates** were approved with motions
29 from M. Cutler and L. Johnson and unanimous vote of the board. *** F. Kinney** was unanimously elected to
30 serve as SW Tech **representative for negotiations** with motions from L. Johnson and M. Cutler.
31 The ***paper of record** will continue to be the Bennington Banner with motions from M. Cutler and L.
32 Johnson which were unanimously supported. ***Off-Warrant signers** will continue to be the board officers
33 supported by motions from M. Cutler and D. Whitman and unanimous vote of the board.
34 The ***School Board Code of Ethics** was shared and discussed by the board and signature sheet passed
35 around for board members to voluntarily sign for the record. An informative packet concerning the VSBA
36 was referred to and L. Johnson shared some good advice and information pertaining to VSBA benefits
37 and instructional materials available to board members. K. Swierad noted that the VSBA has a very good
38 website and weekly news concerning conferences and specific trainings.
39

40 Board members were asked to introduce themselves and state which town they represent.
41

42 The consent agenda was presented for vote:

- 43 • RGB Full Board Meeting Minutes, January 9, 2023, motions to accept by Edelson and Cutler
44 were unanimously approved
- 45 • RGB Policy Committee Meeting Minutes, motions to accept by Edelson and Johnson were
46 unanimously approved
- 47 • RGB Annual Meeting Minutes, March 6, 2023, motions by Kinney and Edelson were
48 unanimously approved
- 49 • Payroll Warrants were unanimously approved with motions from Edelson and Johnson
- 50 • Vendor Warrants were unanimously approved with motions from Kinney and Edelson
- 51 •

52 Business office documents were noted as present with no questions or concerns.
53
54
55

1 Policy Committee Chair Edelson reported on the January 9, 2023 Policy Committee meeting, noting a lot
2 was accomplished in this past year and he hopes for continued progress in the coming year. It was
3 suggested that board members could find quite a bit of information regarding any changes in policy on the
4 VSBA website.
5

6 Supt. Lawler began his report by sharing the nomination for SW Tech's Law Enforcement Program,
7 Amanda Knox who will begin her career with us today if approved by this board. He presented the
8 nomination and pertinent facts relating to her employment. With motions from Kinney and Edelson and
9 unanimous approval from the board, Knox was approved for hire.
10

11 Supt. Lawler then welcomed the newly elected and incumbent elected to our board, Glen Sauer, Tim
12 Kane and Dane Whitman. There is a full board of eleven at this time. Lawler expressed his thanks to the
13 voting members of our district for supporting our district financially by passing our budget by approx..
14 75%. Both the Reserve Fund and Capital Fund requests were supported strongly as well.
15

16 Assistant Director, Meg Honsinger, reported on the many events taking place in the coming months at
17 SW Tech. She provided a detailed list which will be expanded as there are additional projects in the
18 works. She thanked Lisa Harrington for all the help in organizing these upcoming events. Johnson
19 thanked her for the great detail and advance notice of the upcoming events. He feels it is important to
20 reach out to young students as early as possible to share what we have available in tech education; the
21 career fair where parents and students can interact with SW Tech instructors and programs is very
22 important and lastly, a reality fair for students is critical to assist students as they transition into adulthood.
23 Supt. Lawler thanked Honsinger for her support and organizing with Harrington to create these
24 events/projects for our students and community. He noted we have made many changes in the past year
25 and hope to update our website within a month. He commented on the fact that we were back using the
26 Assembly Room finally after many months of repair work caused by the November 2021 floods. He
27 thanked Brian Coon's Building Trades classes for the fine work done on the new tables in the Assembly
28 Room as well as new wood cabinets re-built in several of our classrooms. Updating and repair work is a
29 continual activity.
30

31 Lawler shared that community members should check the Vermont News Guide each week as we
32 sponsor and highlight a "Student of the Week." Our students and faculty look forward each week to
33 seeing who will be featured.
34

35 Supt. Lawler noted that the next year school calendar must be set by April 1. Some modifications can be
36 made after that date. This past year, we experienced some difficulties with the inclusion of so many half
37 days on the MAU District schedule. There were several series of half days that were very impactful to our
38 students/parents/instructors and Supt. Lawler met with our sending school principals several times to see
39 if they could reach a compromise concerning the many half days. The increased number of half days are
40 leading to huge inequities for many. Supt. Culkeen has expressed the reasons his district supports the
41 increased half day schedule. This is just not working for the SW Tech district as we also must be
42 inclusive of the schedules of our other sending schools, BBA, Arlington and Hoosick Falls. Students miss
43 up to a month of classroom teaching time due to these half days. There are schedules that could be
44 created which would work a compromise for all involved. Supt. Lawler is open to discussion as are the
45 other sending school principals. We must note that our three other sending schools may decide not to
46 send their students here if they are not getting the required number of in-school days that they are paying
47 for. That would be very costly to our district.
48

49 Chair Swierad shared his report:
50

- 51 • Looking forward to visiting programs to see students and instructors in action
- 52 • Concerned about the increased number of half days in the school calendar. He will write a letter
53 to the AoE as a private citizen concerning this matter. L. Johnson took it one step further by
54 requesting a motion that a formal letter be sent from this board voicing their concerns about this
55 issue. Motions from Johnson and J. Kelly with unanimous approval from this board that a formal

1 letter be created with Lawler and Swierad's input and put forth in a timely fashion stating our
2 concerns. It will be done.

- 3 • Swierad shared information concerning HVAC programs that have been supported at McCann
4 Tech in Ma. He would like to see our tech center develop a similar program. This would need
5 additional funds from the state of Vermont, so this board should inform the AoE that we would be
6 looking for funding to build/ lease/obtain a site for this additional program so desperately needed.
7 This should also go thru the education committee for discussion. However, Swierad feels it would
8 be wise to write a formal letter to the state concerning our developing needs. Motions by
9 Johnson and Kelly to assign to Lawler and Swierad the task of creating a notification in writing
10 from this board to the proper state officials/agency that SW Tech will be requesting funds to add
11 new space and programs for the continued support of our students in this district was
12 unanimously approved. The letter will be created and the board informed when ready to send.
13 Dane Whitman suggested best to do this sooner than later as to fit into state budget cycles.
- 14 • So, two letters to be completed in the coming week and sent out
- 15 • Work with Education Committee within the next year to pursue strengthening SW Tech
16 schedules, programs and future endeavors.
- 17 • Pursue any grants available to this district as we look at enlarging our school as we are at
18 capacity now
- 19 • Chromebooks-do we use them and how? Yes, and they are kept here at school for students to
20 use in their labs. We do not hand them out.
- 21 •

22 With no further business to come before the board at this time, board adjourned at 11:04 with motions
23 from Edelson and Whitman and unanimous support.