

**DORSET BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS  
MEETING MINUTES  
JANUARY 14, 2010– 6:00 P.M.  
THE DORSET SCHOOL LIBRARY**

**DORSET BOARD OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS:**

**Robert Allen: 768-8065; Liz Berard: 362-2949; Stephanie Breed, Clerk: 867-2531; David Chandler, Chairperson: 867-5533; James Salsgiver: 867-4115; James Merryman, Principal: 362-2602; BRSU Superintendent Daniel French: 362-2452**

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**Regular scheduled meetings held on the fourth Tuesday of the month, unless otherwise noticed.**

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**PRESENT: Board Members: Robert Allen, Liz Berard, Stephanie Breed, David Chandler, and James Salsgiver; Principal Jim Merryman, BRSU Supt. Dan French**

**ABSENT: None**

**AUDIENCE: Debbie Antonez, Walter E. Freed, Esther Gray, Linda Mitchell, Christina Roe, Phyllis Tate, and Cindy Tosone**

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**Chairperson David Chandler called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. in the library at The Dorset School.**

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**● MEETING MINUTES:**

**Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2009 were approved as corrected – Moved by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Salsgiver, and so moved unanimously.**

**● REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:**

**Mr. French reported on the following:**

**► SECONDARY TUITION REQUEST:**

**Superintendent French informed the board members that he had received the following secondary tuition request for Dorset student:**

<b>NAME OF STUDENT</b>	<b>GRADE</b>	<b>SCHOOL TO ATTEND</b>	<b>SCHOOL PREVIOUSLY ATTENDED</b>
<b>Leech, Samuel</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Holderness School</b>	<b>Holderness</b>

**Prior to voting on the tuition request, Board members inquired if The Holderness School had been “vetted.” Superintendent French replied that Holderness School was among those schools previously approved and had become “grandfathered”, however, any new tuition requests for schools not on this list would be subject to “vetting” before bringing tuition requests to the board for approval.**

**A motion was made by Mrs. Berard, seconded by Mrs. Breed, to approve the tuition request as printed, and so moved unanimously.**

**► RECOMMENDATION TO ELIMINATE ACCOUNTING POSITION:**

**Superintendent French read his recommendation to eliminate the Accounting Position from the proposed Dorset School Budget, and thus consolidate the accounting functions of the District into the BRSU central office. Mr. Allen stated that considerable discussion had taken place, and in light of other proposed cuts, he supported this recommendation. Superintendent French stated his research**

had determined that a .50 position would be adequate, since other staff members already in place at The Dorset School would be able to take care of other required paperwork and financial related needs. Superintendent French added that eliminating this position would fall under his recent recommendation to reduce the administrative costs at the individual schools, and this would be an economically sound reduction in staff. Mrs. Breed shared her thoughts that she felt further down the road it would make more sense if The Dorset School combined with a neighboring school district, then that would be the time to eliminate this position and not now. Furthermore, she continued, the building principal had already made additional budget cuts for this version of the proposed budget. Mr. Salsgiver stated that he has been able to spend more time with the current accounting manager this past year, much more than any other board member. He continued that he viewed this in-house position as a positive asset, and appreciated Mr. Cepela's position as part accounting and part clerical, and above all a cog in the smooth functioning of the school. Mr. Salsgiver also offered his opinion that he believed that current and correct financial information could be made available to the BRSU office utilizing the technological programs in place now and in the future. After additional discussion, a Motion was made by Mr. Allen to adopt the recommendation of the superintendent to eliminate the present Dorset School Accounting Manager position, and consolidate the accounting functions of the District into the BRSU central office. There was no second to this Motion and thus the Motion failed.

► **2010-2011 SCHOOL BUDGET:**

Superintendent French led the board in a further discussion of the proposed 2010-2011 Dorset School budget, including the new changes proposed by the building principal. He informed the board that the current copy of the proposed 2010-2011 Dorset School District budget had a 2% decrease in the elementary line compared to the previous proposals. A further question and answer period took place with board members inquiring about ADM numbers and how the State arrived at "weighted student attendance numbers." Mr. Merryman explained how 504 costs were dealt with at the elementary level, where those classroom accommodations listed on a 504 Plan were just part of regular classroom arrangements and no costs related to the majority of the 540 accommodations. The superintendent continued by explaining the reasons for the increase of 92.2% increase in Early Education costs for the 2010-2011 budget. In the past, MEMS had openings to allow Dorset Early Ed students to attend their program, however no space will be available for the new school year, and under Act 62, a program must be made started for those students requiring services.

At 7:55 p.m., Chairman David Chandler called a five-minute recess, and the board reconvened at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Merryman informed the board members that adjustments had been made to the proposed budget after the January 14, 2010 board meeting, and he held discussion with staff from the school concerning lowering cots at the school. He further stated he felt that with the newly proposed budget adjustments, no decrease was made to the quality in excellence in education at the school. Mr. Merryman said that there will be a physical relocations in the downstairs area to rearrange support staff, as well as making other area adjustments to the school for inclusion of an Early Education program.

**Audience member Walter Freed, former State legislator and Dorset School Board member, questioned the board about a proposed increase in the proposed budget due to secondary tuition, with no increase in elementary student numbers. He further asked, with Burr & Burton Academy student numbers decreasing, why did their increase in tuition costs to Dorset and other school districts occur. He stated that demographics within Vermont were changing, including a 14% decrease in overall population, and strongly suggested that the Dorset Board “push-back” against the announced BBA tuition costs per student for the 2010-2011 school year. Mr. Chandler replied that it was the intent of the board and other surrounding school boards to enter into a discussion of long-term equations, consolidation at the elementary level of school districts and possibility of a secondary school replacement. Superintendent French also added that a joint meeting of the Manchester, Dorset and Sunderland school board members was scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2010 at the BRSU and secondary programs was an item of discussion on the agenda for that meeting. Mr. Freed also continued by reporting that last year the State increased state taxes, income taxes, alcohol and tobacco taxes, as well as business taxes. This resulted in an unfriendly atmosphere for new business, resulting in further loss of State revenue. Cindy Tosone commented that she felt the taxpayers should know why there was an increase in secondary tuition from BBA, and why no line-by-line budget information was ever available to taxpayers from the districts who tuition their students into BBA. Phyllis Tate commented that perhaps strategic planning by the Dorset Select Board and interested residents could be held to develop a plan to bring new business to Dorset, and wondered how the residents could approach the State government to become “more friendly” to businesses.**

**Mrs. Breed had several questions about adjustments pertaining to the new Proposed Dorset budget and several related to personnel retention and cuts. At 8:30 p.m., a Motion was made by Mrs. Breed to move into Executive Session for matters relating to proposed personnel matters, seconded by Mrs. Berard and so moved. The board entered into Executive Session for matters relating to personnel and came out of Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. No further action was taken at this time.**

**The board reconvened to continue budget discussion, including development of a long-term plan for a tuition student program. Superintendent French gave a more detailed explanation of the agenda for the January 19, 2010 joint board meeting at the BRSU offices. The meeting will include an explanation of a “virtual reality” presentation suggested by the State for high school students, sharing of staff and services, negotiations and school governance. Mrs. Breed inquired if the topic of consolidation was being included in all school district within the State of Vermont. After further points of discussion and explanation about the proposed budget, the board Chairman, David Chandler, entertained a motion to approve the proposed FY 11 Dorset School budget. A Motion was made by Mr. Allen, seconded by Mr. Salsgiver, to approve the 2010-2011 Dorset School District budget of \$4,783,856, and so moved unanimously (4-0). This will result in a .2% Decrease in the elementary portion of the proposed budget, and a 10.1% Increase in the secondary section of the budget. It is estimated that the equalized residential property tax rate will increase by 12 cents.**

▶ **APPROVE DORSET TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT WARNING:**

Superintendent French read the Dorset Town School District Warning for the board members. Discussion about the Dorset Town meeting took place and Mrs. Breed inquired if the “Warning” items could be rearranged for the Town Meeting. A Motion was made by Mrs. Breed, seconded by Mrs. Berard to approve the “Warning” and so moved unanimously.

▶ **APPROVE TUITION RATE:**

Superintendent French made a recommendation to set the Tuition Rate for the 2010-2011 school year at \$11,500. A Motion was made by Mr. Salsgiver to accept the recommendation of the superintendent and set the tuition rate at \$11,500 for the 2010-2011 school year, seconded by Mrs. Breed, and so moved unanimously (4-0).

▶ **LONGTERM PLAN FOR TUITION STUDENT PROGRAM:**

Additional conversation ensued concerning the Tuition Reserve Fund, and Mr. Salsgiver recommended setting a target balance for an additional four to five additional students and revisit it each year for budgetary purposes. Further discussion of this topic will take place at the joint board meeting on January 19, 2010 at the BRSU Central Office at 6:30 p.m.

▶ **REVIEW OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION:**

This topic had been touched upon briefly earlier in the meeting when the topic of the Accounting position was discussed. This topic will also be part of discussions held on January 19, 2010 at the joint board meeting at the BRSU.

▶ **REPORT OF PRINCIPAL:**

Mr. Merryman reported that he was continuing with the observations and Evaluation process. In addition, a lengthy time was spent meeting jointly with the staff for the further development and recommendations for the proposed budget.

▶ **PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Discussions and questions from the public took place earlier in the meeting prior to the board members going into Executive Session. No more at this time.

▶ **ACCOUNT MANAGERS REPORT:**

Mr. Cepela had prepared the Warrant for the board’s approval and the following report for:

**REVENUE RECEIVED:**

<b>HOT LUNCH REVENUE</b>	<b>3,657.00</b>
<b>BREAKFAST REVENUE</b>	<b>115.00</b>
<b>VT SPED PAYMENT</b>	<b>91,748.00</b>
<b>TUITION – PARENT - PAWLET</b>	<b>300.00</b>
<b>HULBERT- PARENTS</b>	<b>1,655.00</b>
<b>FIELD TRIPS - PARENTS</b>	<b>315.00</b>
<b>8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE FUNDRAISER</b>	<b>654.00</b>
<b>ADOPT-A-CLASS</b>	<b>275.00</b>
<b>IN-MEMORY DONATIONS</b>	<b>550.00</b>
<b>MILK</b>	<b>270.00</b>
<b>STUDENT COUNCIL - SKATE</b>	<b>359.00</b>

LUNCH - FED REIMB	1,360.00
BREAKFAST - FED REIMB	95.00
COBRA REIMB	263.00
VT KAT GRANT	750.00
BOX TOPS	471.00
LIONS CLUB - S/PED EQUIP DONATIONS	500.00
DONATIONS	3,100.00
IN MEMORY DONATIONS	200.00
TOTAL	\$105,728

**WARRANT SUMMARY:**

FUND ACCT #	100	100-200	106	108	115	116	TOTAL WARRANT
FUND NAME	GENERAL	HOT LUNCH	SUPP FUND	ADOPT A CLASS	8 <sup>TH</sup> GRADE	HULBERT	
PAYROLL AP WARRANT: 12/16/09	5,650.43						5,650.43
PAYROLL WARRANT 12/23/09	47,114.43						47,114.43
PAYROLL WARRANT 1/08/10	46,757.81						46,757.81
PAYROLL AP WARRANT 1/11/10	22,931.08						22,931.08
AP WARRANT 1/14/10	166,358.00	6,817.35	450.23	139.50	1,050.00	1,292.00	176,107.08
TOTAL	288,811.75	6,817.35	450.23	139.50	1,050.00	1,292.00	292,910.40

The Warrant was approved and signed.

► **NEW BUSINESS:**

None at this time

► **OTHER BUSINESS:**

Mr. Salsgiver gave a brief update on the Dorset Energy Committee by reporting about a plan to initiate a new resident wind study. One place discussed for site of wind towers was on the grounds of The Dorset School, where electricity could be generated for school use. He reported that the Committee would be researching this topic and obtaining additional information. Mr. Salsgiver added that this could be an educational opportunity for Dorset, and similar wind towers generate power for schools in Mt. Holly and Danville.

There being no further business to come before the board, Chairperson David Chandler adjourned the meeting at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,



Betty Morsch

1/2/10

**NEXT DORSET BOARD MEETINGS:**

**FEB. 23, 2010**

**MAR. 1, 2010 (Town Meeting)**

**MAR. 23, 2010 (Board Reorganization)**