

Orwell Village School Board
Regular Meeting
January 19, 2010

UNAPPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Peter W. Ochs, Glen Cousineau, Judy Fyles, John Tester

Administration: Ron Ryan, Sue DeCarolis

Others: Andrea Ochs, Chris Mongeur, Miles Tudhope, Mark Young, Ted Simmons,
Susan Young, Jim Nichols

John called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Judy moved the Board to approve the minutes of December 10, 2009, seconded by Glen. The following corrections should be made: Page 1 (3rd paragraph from bottom, last sentence) should be changed from “has gone done” to “has gone down”. Page 1, last line on the page, should be deleted as it is repeated on page 2, first line. The motion passed.

Glen moved the Board to approve the minutes of December 15, 2009, seconded by Judy. The following corrections should be made: Page 2 (2nd paragraph, 1st sentence) should be changed from “also shared the” to “also shared that”. Page 3 (3rd paragraph, 2nd sentence) should be changed from “voters approve \$462,000” to “voters approve \$412,000”. The motion passed.

Under public comment, Mr. Nichols stated that Fair Haven Grade School donated three wrestling mats to OVS. Sue indicated that she had spoken with Jim; there was not sufficient room under the stage due to the structural supports to store them. There is the possibility of storing two of the mats up on the stage, but didn't feel we can have them out in the gym because of liability. Glen suggested moving some of the tables in the cafeteria. Jim will look at other avenues. He will take possession of them.

Mr. Simmons stated that petitions need to be in by the 25th. People are having a hard time paying their taxes. The Town budget is up this year, we need a new dump truck. Glen asked about the common level of appraisal for this year, are we looking at going with the tax rate. Mr. Simmons indicated that we will be starting a reappraisal this year and plan on having the new appraisal for April 1st next year. Glen doesn't see property moving that rapidly. Mr. Simmons stated that property sales have dropped, but values have not.

Correspondence – Sue gave John some thank you notes.

Sue presented the Board with a Principal's report handout. She went over the service learning update. She read the Board a letter sent to approximately 12 non-profit organizations that serve Orwell inviting them to a dinner scheduled for Wednesday, February 10th, at 6:30 p.m., at the Town Hall. The snow date is February 24th at the same time. Joining them will be members of the faculty, Orwell School Board and Student Council. Sue is trying to make learning as authentic as possible. In doing a food drive, the students will learn something about hunger in Vermont. They will also see a documentary talking about hunger. She explained that there are five stages to any service learning project: investigation, preparation and planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/celebration. Some of the students will be going to the Addison County Food Shelf.

Another example of service learning is Andrea and Peter Ochs are teaching the 7th and 8th graders CPR. A lot of kids are engaged; once they get involved, they get engaged. This introduces them to community service. Sue is collecting ideas from organizations. She is pleased with the responses she is getting. VSAC is excited about this project. Sue wrote a grant to pay for the dinner. It is also good for kids to look at careers.

In the professional development update, Sue stated that she is excited to have the services of Dr. Rajia. It is the second year of his working with the school. He has reviewed our scores, has insights as a mathematician, he has gotten to know our kids, and can easily mold instructional practice from K through 8. Teachers have finished a two credit course in Algebra. The course was paid from the Federal consolidated budget.

People were concerned about our Math performance. The next test results come out January 27th and will be made public on February 3rd. We have made some improvement from 2005 where 61% of our students met the standard to 2008 where 74% met the standard. It is because of the actions teachers are taking here, they are very specific. Dr. Rajia will work with us a third year.

The Abbey food service has talked about the possibility of getting internet access in the Town Hall. The options are DSL or a fiber line(expensive) about \$2,500. There is concern about the different wiring in each building. There is also the concern that we are pretty slow and bringing Abby on could make it slower. They talked about what they could do for us financially. There is an idea of putting antennas up on the building. Sue needs a knowledgeable person talking to them. Once she gets a cost, she will come back to the Board. John asked that Judy be kept in the loop.

Sue put out posters on the Board vacancy around town. She received a letter from Chris Mongeur. Judy inquired if we were required to have it filled. Ron responded that Statute requires that it be filled in 30 days. John felt that, because we have someone interested and we are required to fill it, we have an obligation to take action on it. Ron stated that the new member won't be able to vote until sworn in. The petition has to be in soon. Judy moved the Board to accept the application of Chris Mongeur for the vacant Board position, seconded by Glen. Ron stated that the Statute allows substitutes and coaches, so he can still coach, should write a letter to the Commissioner. The motion passed. Chris should stop at the Town clerk's office for the paperwork and bring it to the February meeting.

Ron said that the \$50,000 grant for building improvements was not approved. A revised budget for \$1,712,785 needs approval. Glen commented that we still have not set the payroll stuff with union people. Ron indicated that they won't deal with contract stuff until February. It wouldn't effect the budget. Glen moved the Board to adopt the revised expenditure budget of \$1,712,785, seconded by Judy and passed.

Ron talked with John Rayhill about the HVAC bond for \$430,000. He asked him if this is the correct figure. \$430,000 is the amount proposed for the bond. He has to get the clerk's signature. Ron went over the procedure. The bond has to be by Australian ballot. Glen moved the Board to adopt the HVAC upgrade project resolution certificate, seconded by Judy. There was discussion about the amount of money to pulled out of the budget and put into the bond. Mark Young inquired about the project, John gave a brief description. There will be a special meeting on this. Miles asked about removing carpeting, Sue replied we received a grant to do it. The motion passed.

Judy moved the Board to adopt the warning of the HVAC Upgrade Project for \$430,000, seconded by Glen. The informational meeting will be held February 25th at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall. The motion passed.

Glen moved the Board to adopt the HVAC Upgrade Project ballot, seconded by Judy and passed.

Ron commented that the Benson school shares a couple of positions – nurses and guidance counselors. They have finalized their budget, increasing the nursing position to a full-time position. It will have an impact on Orwell. In guidance, there will be a full-time guidance position eliminating the part-time counselor and school-based clinician. Orwell will need to find someone.

John stated that the Board report needs to be amended reflecting \$430,000 and percent decrease. He would like a final copy.

The next meeting is during the February vacation. Sue will not be here. John will not be here on the 23rd. It was decided to leave the February date as is.

Under old business, the ball field issue was addressed. Ron stated that there is a policy in place which is specific. The signs are up. The Board should address those items by conversations with the individual, following up with it. If it continues, issue no trespass orders. As a Board, you are obligated to follow through. Judy inquired if it is after the fact or at the event. If at the event, are we required to address it. Ron stated that you need to say something. If it gets out of hand, call law enforcement. Judy had a problem with that. John commented that you need to take appropriate action, don't put yourself in harm's way. Discussion followed. Glen said that our policy means nothing if there's a State statute. Ron stated that policy governs what you do.

Chris asked about the unfinished ball field. John said that it is being completed by volunteers. The committee needs to get reformed and come back with some sort of plan.

The oil bill has been corrected, and a credit was issued.

Judy inquired about a mentor program. Sue hopes the service learning will start to develop that.

Under the approval of bills, Glen inquired about a travel expense for a student transported back to Orwell. Sue said this was for tutoring and had to be provided as required by law. Glen had some bus maintenance questions – some damage to seat 6 which took four hours of labor to fix it. Sue will look into it.

Glen inquired about the sewer bill – the number of students declined, should the amount due decline also. Mr. Simmons stated that there are more adult employees and extra-curricular activities in school. Judy said that it needs to be based on something other than the number of students, measure usage. John stated that next year we will have 115-117 students and 30 adults, and we are paying for 200. How do we make that number go down? Mr. Simmons explained that the sewer plant has operating costs. If the school doesn't pay, then individuals will have to cover them. Discussion followed. Mark Young gave an explanation of units and how they were originally set up. John stated that we need to follow up on it. A delegation should go to the Select Board.

Judy moved the Board to approve bills in the amount of \$204,270.00, seconded by Peter and passed.

Glen moved the Board into executive session at 8:35 p.m., seconded by Judy and passed.

Out of executive session at 8:45 p.m. No action taken.

Judy moved the Board to adjourn at 8:45 p.m., seconded by Glen and passed.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Flood