

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Communication Committee Meeting

Tuesday, April 24, 2018

6:30 p.m.

SAU #1

MINUTES

Committee Members:

- Niki McGettigan, Chair
- Rich Cahoon
- James Fredrickson
- Stephan Morrissey
- Janine Lesser
- Kristen Reilly

Committee Members Present: Niki McGettigan, Rich Cahoon, Jim Fredrickson, Stephan Morrissey, Janine Lesser (7:00 p.m.), Kristen Reilly

Others Present: Myron Steere, Heather McKernan

1. Call to order

Niki McGettigan called the meeting to order at 6:41 p.m.

2. Accept minutes of March 27, 2018

Stephan Morrissey moved to approve the minutes of March 27, 2018. Jim Fredrickson second. Rich Cahoon abstained. Unanimous.

3. Monadnock Ledger-Transcript (MLT) Publisher, Heather McKernan Presents (30-40 min.)

- a. Set up a regular spot in the Monadnock Ledger for School Board Communications' publishing.
- b. Heather will share possibilities, times, structure, etc.
- c. Bring your completed assignment of three possible article topics, titles, to share with Heather (not completed or even drafted necessarily but topic and title etc.)

Niki McGettigan introduced Heather McKernan, Monadnock Ledger Transcript (MLT) Publisher. Niki said that the school district is looking for possibilities to work with the MLT on a regular basis. The goal is to improve communications district-wide. Other connections and an online presence is needed too.

Heather McKernan thanked the committee for having her tonight. She said that looks forward to working as a good partner. Common interest to communicate the information that communities need to be informed citizens and active voters is important. The MLT provides news coverage. A reporter is dedicated to cover ConVal. A direct connect to editors should be in place as well. Ms. McKernan spoke about limited resources. ConVal is important. As much coverage as possible can be provided. They rely on community submitted press releases, photos, and tips. A regular "In the Schools" segment is in place. Viewpoints are encouraged as well as Letters to the Editor. Niki spoke about the need to duplicate a submission of importance so that if a reader didn't catch it the first time a second opportunity, closer in time to the topic that is significant, might take place. Some topics for submission might require a framework or mapping out of the topic to allow a series. Knowing that the MLP is part of ConVal's strategy is important and work can be done together. Niki spoke about the sharing of information on specific issues such as community schools and what takes place in them. Good things are happening in our schools. Rich Cahoon asked what the expectation is in regard to the level of detail that follow-up research might be done. Is the expectation that the reporter will read through information and distill it for the reader or present both sides? Heather said that the time required is what journalists aspire to. Sometimes information is funneled into pages in a short amount of time. The latter is more likely. Niki asked about timelines and deadlines. Jim Fredrickson asked if someone on the board might "fact check" an article before it runs; would it help? Heather said that it depends on what it is, if it is a hard news story, editing would not be given to the board. When the issue is complicated, a check for understanding might be asked of the reporter. The reporter might give a call to check for facts. Rich Cahoon said that often there are three sides to a story. The boards' position should be a single direct contact through Niki McGettigan as Communications Chair. Providing direct link information in a small summary clip in the paper was one suggestion. Rich said that it was made clear that the Union went in to the MLT and talked to Heather but the Board nor the Superintendent did. Reciprocal types of opportunities are welcome. Establishing a better relationship is one goal. An executive summary might be provided to the reporter. Niki said that communication on the district side has not been a strength.

4. How can we use MLT and how can they benefit from us?

One week a month, a focus on a topic could be submitted. The next week might be bragging on what is going on in the district. The next week would be a different focus and the same for the fourth week. Two weeks might be covered by the Board and two from the Superintendent. Heather noted that the teachers have a regularly run segment in the paper. Rich asked if there is a way that the board can help fact check. There are somethings that are factual or not; it would be easy to identify what was not accurate. Heather said that the common goal is to have factual, accurate information to the reader. Jim spoke about the need to be more proactive with the message from the board side. Direction from the paper on how the Board should get a viewpoint out is needed. In terms of a column, how should that be mapped out and laid out? Is a Letter to the Editor more favorable? Rich spoke about edits that are made only online; some readers will never see that. An Editor's note is needed. Having a corner where letters will all run would provide the district with feedback.

A column is a possibility. Trying to do better to connect with the reporter that feels safe to fact check. An ongoing story that is informative is important.

Is there a cost to this collaboration? Press Releases, View Points, regular columns; all no cost. A special section including a comprehensive view would have related costs. Digital messages are also possible.

5. Review/discuss/create assignments from above ideas. (10 min)

Committee members were asked to think about three topics for communication.

A table was shared that outlined who would review based on topic and fact checking.

A School Board blog on the website that would post monthly was suggested. Should the Board send quarterly newsletters? Building our database for contacts will take place as a result.

6. Commit to online meetings/writing reviews/set dates.

a. Decide on readers for the first assignments/at least 3 readers before publishing. (10 min)

Niki McGettigan spoke about the checks and balances before publishing. Kimberly will receive a copy of all communication before publishing.

7. Plan for next meeting (Helfried to come present to teach us about online publishing and moving it forward as soon as possible) (5 min)

Niki reported that Helfried Zrzavy will attend the next Communication Committee meeting to talk about a School Board blog for the district website.

The next Communication Committee meeting will take place on May 22nd at 7:00 p.m.

Checking for items to read are needed in order to commit to regular, more frequent communication.

Stephan Morrissey motioned to adjourn at 8:13 p.m. Second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok