

**OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
106 Hancock Road
Peterborough, New Hampshire**

CONTOOCOOK VALLEY SCHOOL BOARD

Communication Committee Meeting

Thursday, September 10, 2020

2:00 p.m.

Physical Location: None

Virtual Location:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84677369170?pwd=eHljeERjQmxubTVyWm1qQkZBbUVtQT09>

Meeting ID: 846 7736 9170

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Minutes

Committee Members:

- Niki McGettigan, Chair
- Alan Edelkind
- Jim Fredrickson
- Janine Lesser
- Kevin Pobst

Present: Niki McGettigan, Alan Edelkind, Jim Fredrickson, Janine Lesser, Kevin Pobst,
Dr. Kimberly Saunders

1. Call to Order

Niki McGettigan called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. Accept Minutes of August 13, 2020

Passed over.

3. Review Communication Firm Search/Recommendation and Timeline

Three Communication firms are under consideration for ConVal:

Guilfoil Communication, Jordan Mayblum, introduced himself. He shared a proposal for SAU 1. JGPR was founded in 2013 with the philosophy that every police and fire department deserve a public information officer and effective public relations. Every small town and school district deserve the same. The Communications Team makeup was shared.

Mr. Mayblum shared their four-prong approach on how they would help ConVal:

- Public Relations, Media Relations & Content – press releases, blog posts, letters to community, strategic planning etc.
 - Up to 12 pieces of written content per month on any topic.
 - Six videos, up to three minutes each per year i.e. branding video that highlights the good work ConVal is doing (positive feel good videos) video that “let’s the community in to see the good without actually letting them in.”
 - 24/7 availability for work on crisis management, incident response, and media relations.
 - Development of an aggressive strategic communications program.

- Districtwide Communications Audit – how is ConVal communicating already? Is it effective, how can it improve, what opportunities are missed?
 - Will develop and distribute a broad ranging survey to understand ConVal’s current communication efforts as a baseline for the future. The survey will build a picture of current program, will be housed on a unique website, with real-time results, and can work with district staff to develop and promote “listening sessions”, etc.

- ConVal News Portal
 - Will design a stand-alone news portal for the district, serves as a district-owned media outlet where all public relations content can live, links seamlessly with district social platforms, automatically posting to relevant pages, each building would have its own section, and district staff would be trained to on the easy-to-use platform to add their own updates as needed.

- COVID-19 Communications Plan
 - Creation of a general school district communications plan tailored to the COVID-19 situation, which can be adapted for more general needs later. The plan includes identifying appropriate spokespeople for the district, a hierarchy of alerts ranging from green to red, outlines communication options at the district’s disposal and when they should be used i.e. social media, email, websites etc., coordinating health sensitive information with local public health authorities, communication about district procedures in response to potential spread, and infographics for social media, all in addition to standard PR services.

Costs – Year 1, \$39,938 and tapers downward in following years.

The thing that separates Guilfoil from other companies is that they were built on addressing the needs of the public sector.

Do we (ConVal) own the content of material and video produced? Yes.

How are people assigned to accounts? Regular team of staff assigned to ConVal. There is also a rotating weekend, holiday staff. News breaks when it breaks.

Relative to content (12 pieces per month) – how is content initiated? Rough outlined to near finished draft can be supplied; edits will be made to turn it into a finished publishable piece.

Does the Superintendent get the final review? Yes, nothing goes out without the approval.

Is tone adjusted when considering the audience? Yes, communication will be transmitting in ConVal’s voice.

Louis Karno & Associates – Jayme Simoes and Stacey Smith

Jayme Simoes shared a PowerPoint of points that Louis Karno & Associates can offer the ConVal School District.

The Plan – to be ConVal’s partner 100%, always available and ready to work. Research to find opportunities, threats, and issues to better communicate.

A Behavioral Plan based on goals and knowledge to build systems to save time.

Speak with One Clear Voice.

Support Strong Communications.

Good times and bad, be ready to communicate.

Why Louis Karno & Co?

- More than 80 years of collective expertise.
- Team has decades of work with public and private schools across the country.
- National reputation, local focus.
- Professional affiliations and network.
- Full service when needed: web, content, planning, pitching and crisis.

First Steps were outlined.

Stacey Smith said that a lot of their work in New England has been with private schools because of the way that public education is funded in NH. She knows schools very well. Knows the region very well.

Jayme Simoes would be the key day-to-day person of contact. However, he is part of a team.

Are services a la carte? How is the pricing? It is a bundle. Time is tracked and applied to the contract on a retainer basis.

Research based behavioral plan? Public Relations firms will talk about building awareness for stakeholders they are trying to reach. We are more focused; what needs to stop or start to allow work to continue.

What is the timeline? What is a sense of the steps that take place? Start immediately. Research of the district is important. Messaging would follow. Looking at priorities that the district identifies i.e. websites, social media, media relations etc.

Web base experience? Has created websites for Hitchiner Mfg. and others. Recommends that one go with Square Space rather than html sites. They have people who write and design websites. Would train ConVal staff to make web updates. Additional website possibilities were shared. Content is produced by their team.

Who owns content? ConVal owns content. Anything that is done is ConVal owned.

Christine Mann shared that she had budget information from Louis Karno & Co. in hand.

What have you done for other school districts? Berlin SAU Messaging Points will be shared. Sample press releases will be shared.

Montagne Communications, E.J. Powers:

E.J. Powers and Lisa Cran said that 95% of work is public relations. Montagne brings a skill set to build integrated customized campaigns for clients. Montagne has been in existence for 14 years with many more years of experience. They are a team of former journalists and private sector workers. Clients

range from Chambers of Commerce to Lottery Commission, Bishop Guertin, St. A's, PSU, NH Charitable Foundation, food banks, and Monadnock Community Hospital, just to name a few. Mr. Powers said that this provides insight on how it would be to work with a school district.

The scope of work presented is clear. Most projects begin with a communications audit. It allows a discovery phase to understand the work of the district. He recommends to start with a key stakeholder survey. Preferred communications will be identified. A true sense of impressions from stakeholders will be identified. Montagne would look at how ConVal communicates with our audience. Key audiences will be identified. Obviously, taxpayers, students, parents, and community are audiences. The most effective means of communicating with groups will be identified.

Next, a 12-month communication plan would be developed.

What makes ConVal a destination district should be identified to encourage people to move here. What is the district doing that should be emulated throughout the State?

Proactive public media relations will be developed right out of the gate. It is important to know that crisis communications are available day one.

Lisa said that they are Manchester based and are familiar with New Hampshire. They know the media and the landscape. They work with high schools and higher education. They are aware of some of the dynamics and challenges. Lisa said that they are excited for the opportunity to jump in.

E.J. Powers spoke about the multiple layers of support in place for ConVal. They will make sure that the client is taken care of.

How would doing the communication audit allow the start up to move forward given limited time of administrators? E.J. said that research has begun. Frequency and type of communications will be researched. They want to be self-starters and not a burden understanding that administrators are taxed with their time. Montagne considers themselves an extension of the ConVal team. No lag time from the start. Great successes taking place now in the district would

Size of firm and roles people play? Largest strategic firm in NH with nearly 10 employees. Pride themselves in being large enough to provide a level of service where multiple people with different skill sets on board. Intimate as well. Robust team of members across the spectrum with various levels of expertise.

Positive attributes will be shared; there are many.

Pricing structure model is built upon budget provided and building services based on an hourly rate. For government institutions and no-profit is \$150.00. 25 hours of service roughly each month. Goal is to exceed customer expectations so often provide services at no additional charge.

Ongoing weekly status report shared. Meet regularly at what interval district would require.

E.J. said that they are very excited about the opportunity to work with ConVal.

Recap –

Kimberly Saunders said that she met with each of the three firms; Guilfoil, Louis Karno & Associates, and Montagne. A recap of each was discussed.

Is this the best time, given that ConVal has spent a lot of money as a result of COVID-19, to sign on for a communications contract? This is the best time. It is essential to talk about ConVal and grow our investment.

Kimberly will develop a write-up. The recommendation will be under new or old business.

Chris Mann thanked the committee for their work.

4. Adjournment

Niki McGettigan adjourned at 4:43 p.m. Second. Unanimous.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Marschok