

**Minutes of the
Monson School Committee
Working Meeting
Quarry Hill Community School – Superintendent’s Office
April 25, 2017**

Present: Chair Peter Sauriol; Secretary Patricia Oney and Committee Members Joel Keller, Joshua Farber, and Ed Maia; and Superintendent Cheryl Clarke

Note: This meeting was not video-recorded.

Chair Sauriol called the meeting to order at 6:14 p.m.

As stated in the Agenda, the purpose of this working meeting was to follow up on the MASC Working Meeting. The discussion initially centered around the concept of “product”, which is more concrete in the policy book and therefore more easily understood and discussed, versus “process”, which is not so clearly addressed by policy and where the participating individuals therefore act in accordance with his/her own expectations. The policy book gives the Committee little direction with regard to communication, particularly outside of the meeting environment, and does not even sanction our term of “working” meeting for these types of meetings where we address issues of how the Committee operates and how to improve processes and communication within the Committee. Mr. Farber asked whether these meetings are really more like “retreats” and stated that other school committees likely use that device. Ms. Oney volunteered to follow up with MASC to learn more about that option and the operational and legal requirements related thereto.

The more challenging issue is the unique and various expectations of the individual committee members on many aspects of the work of this Committee, with communication noted as a specific example. The propriety of addressing specific questions with one other member or with Mrs. Clarke directly was in question, at least in part because such conversations could indicate a lack of collaboration, depending on the nature of the question, or might invite an allegation of indiscretion. Those issues led to an involved discussion of trust, during which Mr. Maia left the meeting at 7:04 p.m. after being interrupted by Chair Sauriol, who was controlling the flow of the discussion. After continued discourse, the remaining members agreed that the ability of the Committee to do its work well relies on the members’ relationships and the capacity to feel safe in expressing thoughts and ideas. The Committee determined that there is a level of trust in the intellect and reasonableness of the members and ultimately decided that it is sufficient to review protocols as issues arise.

As we move forward to continue to make policy and procedure more clear and recognizable, Mr. Farber suggested the following as issues to address:

1. What is the role of subcommittees?
2. How and where do we effectively raise concerns about process?
3. How do we clarify expectations about release of information by the Superintendent?
4. How do we create a safe space for discussion and sharing ideas and information?
5. How do we documents the outcomes of working meetings?

Further, the Policy/Diversity Subcommittee will take a leading role in addressing those questions, along with the issue of whether “working” meeting is an appropriate label, and following up on the retreat concept.

- **Motion by Ms. Oney to adjourn the meeting at 7:44 p.m. (Second by Mr. Farber)**
- **No further discussion**
- **Motion passes 4-0**

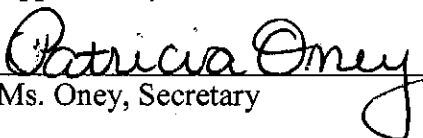
Documentation for this meeting:

Agenda

Distributed at meeting:

n/a

Approved by Committee:



Ms. Oney, Secretary