

TOWN OF STRATTON  
STRATTON SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES  
OCTOBER 1, 2015

APPROVED

The Stratton School board held its monthly meeting on Thursday, October 1, 2015 at the Stratton Town Office. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the September 10, 2015 were read. It was reported that Jerry & Nancy Dyke were Windham School board members. The minutes have been modified to read that they are in fact residents and not board members of Winhall.

**ATTENDING:** Thomas Montemagni, Chairman, Siobhan Eddy Young, Director, Lorraine M. Weeks Newell, Secretary. Steven John, WCSU Superintendent, Marty Nadler, Vice Chairman of the Winhall School Board, Jacki Murano, Chairman of the Searsburg School Board, and VT State Representatives Laura Sibilgia and Oliver Olsen. Charles and Susan Boswell also attended.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Charles and Susan Boswell attended the meeting. They made a request that the Board reconsider its Residency Policy which requires their Stratton property to be declared a Homestead under Vermont law. The Boswells reported that they had filed a Homestead declaration upon notice of this requirement but they were denied by the Vermont Department of taxes.

The Boswells explained that each Vermont town's Grand List has two types of properties: Homestead properties which are owned and occupied by that town's residents and Non-residential property such as rental property or vacation homes. Owners of Non-residential property are, by operation of law, not considered residents of the town where such property is located.

The Board noted that it has a fiduciary duty to the town and its residents to diligently screen residency application for school tuition purposes. As such the owners of Non-residential Stratton property are not eligible for school tuition payments.

The Boswells contested this policy saying that their Homestead Declaration filed with the State was denied. They were also concerned that the Board's recently enforced policy of requiring proof of a Homestead declaration for residency purposes was a change from their original obligation in obtaining tuition payments from the town in past years.

Superintendent Steven John explained that the Board did not have any latitude in paying tuition to property owners deemed by the Vermont Department of Taxes to be Non-residential property owners. He opined that the Boswell's only option is to appeal the Tax Department's decision.

The Board deliberated and held that the Boswell's request for reconsideration of its residency policy requirement of Homestead status should first be addressed by appealing the Tax Department's decision denying their Homestead Declaration.

The Board decided that if the Boswells prevail in their appeal to the Tax Department they could notify the Board with a copy of that decision and the Board would then review their application for school tuition.

### **ACT 46 DISCUSSION**

Marty Nadler, Jacki Murano, and Laura Sibilia who, like Stratton, represent a K - 12 non operating school district, agreed to proceed along with Stratton in exploring options to establish a RED, Regional Education District. VT State Representative Oliver Olsen and Superintendent Steven John offered suggestions and information to the Board and other district representatives attending. The Stratton board will appoint an investigative committee to gather information helpful in its decisions on redistricting.

### **Billing**

#### **Order 10/1/15 to 10/1/15**

Burr And Burton Academy - 1st Semester Tuition - \$63,800.00 #4283

Carol A. Joyce - Special Education Consultant - \$735.00 #4284

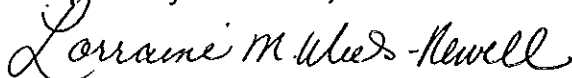
The Board reviewed and approved the order.

The amount of the 10/1/15 order was \$64,535.00

Due to an error from the SMS billing department, Check #4285 in the amount of \$31,145.52 was voided. The school erroneously submitted invoices for both semesters. In addition, the school revised the original invoices to remove Victoria Powers. With the voided check #4285, the revised order total was \$64,535.00

As there was no other business, Siobhan Young made the motion to adjourn and Lorraine Weeks Newell seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,



Lorraine M. Weeks-Newell

Stratton School Board Secretary