

DANVILLE SCHOOL BOARD
Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 14, 2023, 7:15pm
Danville School Library & Zoom Teleconference
[Video Recording Available](#)

Board Directors Present: Clayton Cargill, Melissa Conly, Molly Gleason, and David Towle (via Zoom initially and then in person)

Planned Absences: Tim Sanborn

School Administrators and Staff Present: Mark Tucker (Superintendent)

Public Present: None

- 1. Call Meeting to Order:** Clayton called the meeting to order at 7:18pm. Introductions were made around the room.

Clayton recommended adding 1 V.S.A. § 313(3) Executive Session: Evaluation of a public officer to the agenda.

MOTION: Molly moved to add 1 V.S.A. § 313(3) Executive Session: Evaluation of a public officer to the agenda, Melissa seconded, all in favor.

- 2. Board Business:**

- Error in District Warning (*Discussion/Steps to resolve / Possible Board Action*)

Clayton shared a [letter](#) Mark sent to the board on Thursday, June 8th, 2023, regarding an error in Danville School's request for funding for the upcoming year (2024) in the Town Warning for Town Meeting Day 2023. The requested amount was understated by \$972,613; the budget approved by the board and submitted to the State of Vermont was \$7,609,397, and the amount on the warning was \$6,636,784, which was the amount on a previous warning that Mark used as a template to draft this year's warning. Clayton stated his disappointment and frustration with the error, adding that had the board known about the error before the June 6th regular meeting, the financial items on the agenda would have been tabled for another time. Mark stated that he was informed of the error by Passumpsic Bank through the TAN (tax anticipation note) process, and he was waiting for a solution to bring to the board. Clayton added that

the board's lawyer confirmed it is common practice for superintendents to delay notification of an error until they have a solution to present. Mark apologized and took full responsibility for the error.

Clayton reviewed the following timeline regarding the error and how it occurred:

- Board Meeting January 10th, 2023: 28 minutes into the meeting video, Mark stated, "I have to fix Article 4 to reflect the budget amount you just voted." Clayton added that the board viewed an incorrect warning, and Mark said he would fix it and did not. Clayton then asked a question about the election of a treasurer, which was tabled. The plan was for Mark to fix the warning and bring it to the board the next day to review and approve before the Building Committee meeting.
- Building Committee Meeting January 11th: Clayton stated that the review and approval of the warning did not happen at this meeting.
- Building Committee Meeting January 25th: There was a snowstorm, and this meeting was virtual via Zoom. Mark presented the warning remotely again at the meeting without paper copies available to board members. The board approved the warning on January 25th, after removing the equalized pupil spending language, and assumed the other changes had been made and it was now accurate. The entire document wasn't fully shared on the screen. The warning was still incorrect, and the board had to meet again.
- Special Meeting February 1st: The board met again to add questions 7 and 8 to the warning regarding the Australian Ballot, after it had already been submitted to the town once, incorrectly. The assumption in this meeting is that the warning is correct in Article 4, and it was not. The board signed it at this time, and it was then taken to Town Hall, where it was already days late. There is no video of this meeting.

Clayton added that Mark was working remotely during this time for personal reasons. Mark stated that this is the biggest mistake he's made in his professional life and that he is accountable for getting the warning in order. Clayton shared that Mike wasn't at any of these meetings, and it was a rushed process.

There was a discussion on other errors, including another clerical error in a CCSU meeting and the error with the tax impact information for the building project, as well

as difficulty in receiving access to the backend spreadsheet to view the administration's calculations.

There was a discussion on a solution regarding the warning error, and Mark stated that the state received the board-approved budget and tax rate. If the error wasn't fixed or the town didn't approve of this additional amount, the district would still receive the funding from the state's Education Fund but could not spend it without town approval. The error was on the ballot and the warning; it is correct in the meeting minutes, the budget in the Town Report, the newspaper, and in all other documentation. Mark will find out if/how many votes are needed to pass a vote and the costs of the mistake (legal fees, running another election). He will check with Wendy Somers, Danville Town Clerk, about what is needed to run a special election and draft a letter to submit to the Caledonian Record and the school community that explains the error and the next steps.

Board members briefly discussed the CCSU structure and whether there is a more significant issue that needs to be addressed with workload and the complexity of managing many districts, accounts, and budgets within one supervisory union.

There was a discussion on the Executive Session and whether Mark could be there. Clayton stated that the board needs to discuss aspects of this situation without him present.

- 3. Public Input** - None. Video ended at 8:08pm (Recording ends here because Mark left, and he was the Zoom host)

- 4. Executive Session**

MOTION: Dave T. moved to go into Executive Session at 8:09pm, Melissa seconded, all in favor.

MOTION: Melissa moved to come out of the Executive Session at 8:45pm, Dave T. seconded, all in favor. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

- 5. Adjourn**

MOTION: Dave T. moved to adjourn at 8:46pm, Melissa seconded, all in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Molly Gleason, Clerk, June 15th, 2023