

Select Board Meeting Minutes
September 26, 2019

Select Board (SB) Members: Jared Cadwell (Jared), Chuck Martel (Chuck) and Mike Jordan (Mike)
Select Board Assistant: Patti Lewis (Patti)
Guest Present: Matt Lillard

Jared called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

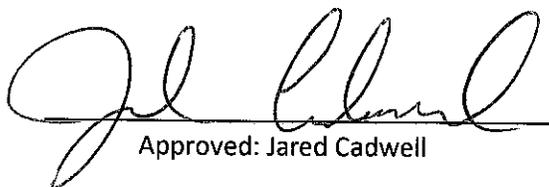
Selectboard discussed and signed the attached letter from them to the HUUSD Board of Directors after hearing citizen concern from previous meetings regarding the potential closing of the Fayston Elementary School in the HUUSD redesign plans.

They also heard from Matt Lillard who supports the closing of FES. The Selectboard appreciated hearing another perspective on the issue.

2:00 p.m. Mike made a motion to adjourn. Chuck seconded. All in favor, no further discussion, motion carried.

Respectfully submitted:

Patti Lewis



Approved: Jared Cadwell

TOWN OF FAYSTON
866 North Fayton Road
Fayston, VT 05660

September 26, 2019
Attn: Caitlin Hollister, Chair
Cc: HUUSD Board of Directors
From: Town of Fayston Selectboard
Re: HUUSD Redesign

The Fayston Selectboard and many of our town residents are concerned about the school consolidation scenarios that depict the closing of Fayston Elementary School (FES). While we support the efforts to maximize operational efficiencies and provide the highest quality educational experience, we also believe that the HUUSD Board must consider the social and financial impacts to the community of such a closing. The potential decrease in property values, possibly leading to a higher municipal tax rate, the potential decrease in our ability to attract new young families to Town, and the possible out-migration of young families to other towns that have their own school, are downstream results that studies have shown happened after rural school closings around the country, and deserve further analysis here.

In addition, the Town of Fayston is unique in that we have no Town center, no post office, and no business district. As a result, we feel that FES is the Town jewel. It is a center of learning, caring, and dedication that has evolved over the years, where students and families can feel welcome to grow, learn, and network together.

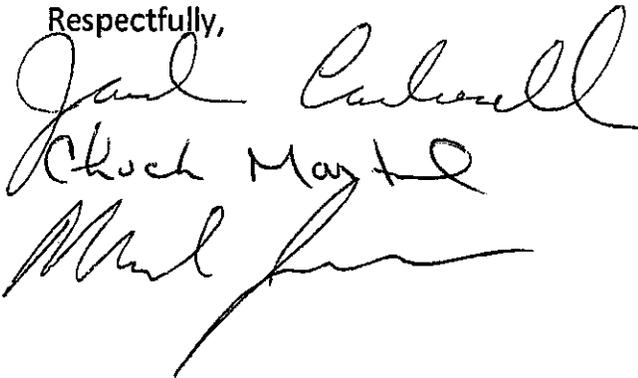
With this in mind, we respectfully ask the following questions:

- 1) What educational benefit would the closure of Fayston School have for its pre-k thru 6th graders?

- 2) What guarantees can the HUUSD board give us that Fayston families would have free choice of district elementary schools if the Fayston School is closed?
- 3) What is the education property tax impact maintaining all the district's elementary schools, a merged middle school at Crosset Brook (with either district wide 5-8 grades/or Moretown/Duxbury/Waterbury sending its 5/6 graders w/ the Valley sending its 7/8 graders) and Harwood HS for 9-12? (this also assumes needed bond financing for Harwood HS and related school facilities).
- 4) What, if any, contingencies has the HUUSD made for maintenance of any closed facility while the transfer of ownership is taking place?
- 5) If Fayston school were closed, the Town of Fayston has a vested interest in taking ownership of the building and its other real estate. The Town asks for clear assurances that it will have the right of first refusal of the building and its other real estate.
- 6) Has the HUUSD considered re-purposing the FES for innovative programming such as Burr & Burton's successful Mountain School program? See <https://www.burrburton.org/academics/mountain-campus>
- 7) What are the economic benefits, i.e., property tax savings, to Fayston taxpayers if its school were closed?

Thank you for all you do for the school district. We realize that yours is not an easy task, even without the challenges of consolidation. We look forward to further robust discussions regarding the proposed redesign scenarios.

Respectfully,

Three handwritten signatures in black ink, stacked vertically. The top signature is 'Janet Carlwell', the middle one is 'Chuck Mayhew', and the bottom one is 'Mark [unclear]'. The signatures are written in a cursive, flowing style.

Town of Fayston Selectboard

Fayston Select Board

Subject: FW: FW: Response to Fayston Select Board Letter

October 7, 2019

Dear Fayston Selectboard,

I want to acknowledge receipt of your recent letter to the HUUSD board. I look forward to your continued participation in our planning process and hope to see you at our upcoming board meetings and community events.

In addition to appreciating the concerns you shared with us, I note a number of questions about what might happen if the School Board adopts a long-term plan that includes closure of the Fayston Elementary School. I can appreciate how the prospect of this type of decision weighs on a town and its leaders, and how eager you are to know more about what will happen next.

At our Oct 16th school board meeting, we do expect to have more information to share about tax rate implications.

In considering any change model, school board members are focusing on the educational benefits we hope to provide our PreK - 12 students, including of course the current Fayston Elementary School students. I expect you will hear our board members speak to what opportunities they see in each change model in the course of our upcoming meetings. One of our primary responsibilities is to consider the effects of any changes on our current and future students and families.

At this time, we are not prepared to address change of ownership, other possible uses for a school building and maintenance during any possible transition as we have not adopted any change model that would involve closure. If we do reach that conclusion, we will then begin to address any such considerations as part of the next stage of the planning process, likely over a multi-year period, to implement changes. Such planning would necessarily address topics such as school choice and assignment of students, staff reorganization, transportation, and the fate of any buildings, as well as many others.

We expect to choose a model to adopt at our November 13th meeting and we understand the Selectboard's interest in these matters. If the School Board decides to move towards closure of any school, any plans will be guided by applicable Vermont statutes and our HUUSD Articles of Agreement.