

Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee
Leland & Gray Library - 4/3/2013
5:30pm - 7:30pm
Approved Minutes

Present: Bruce Parlman, Kim Friedman, Ken McFadden, Lyndall Boal, Joe Winrich, Neil “Bucky” Pelsue, Emily Long, April Chase, Cory Stark, Wesley Ameden, Lee Anne Parker. John Everitt (by Skype)-VSBA Consultant.

WCSU Administrators: Steven John, Frank Rucker, Alison Hescoock (minute-taker)

Members of the public: Rick Hege, Jerry Dyke, Nancy Dyke, Drew Hazelton

Comments from the public:

No comments.

Review and Approve Minutes - March 6th, 2013:

Ken made the motion to accept minutes. Bucky’s name needs to be removed as he was not at the last meeting. Joe Winrich seconded the motion. All in favor. No abstentions. Motion passes unanimously.

Confirm Committee Membership (see below):

Welsey Ameden has taken the place of Drew Hazelton for Jamaica.

*Alison to add Wesley’s personal e-mail address to RED e-mail list.

Review and make decisions on questions for financial estimating (attached):

Cost/Savings of forming a new school - questions that need to be answered by the committee prior to Frank & Steven providing further, more detailed estimates. They need answers to these questions. - John Everitt.

April - Doesn’t see the need to move forward on this discussion. Community members she has spoken with don’t want to move forward with a new school, at least in Townshend. April doesn’t want to waste time exploring this any further.

Wesley - Jamaica was interested in this in the beginning regarding the new school. Jamaica isn’t interested in a RED without a new school.

Bruce - Forming a RED isn't only about a new building. It's also about governance and there are other advantageous aspects to forming a RED. In other words, there are lots of reasons administratively to move forward with a RED other than a new school.

April Chase - Agrees but doesn't see a reason to close a perfectly good school to make a new one that could potentially be too far to travel to. She doesn't think that it's something that can't be considered later on but doesn't see the need to consider it now.

Neil - There is interest in a unified curriculum. Local control is another issue to consider. Are there enough pros to outweigh the cons to warrant a continuation of this committee?

April - At the most recent WCSU Meeting a discussion was tabled regarding Governance. There is no resolution to voting rights at this time and may not be until the next WCSU Executive Committee Meeting to be held on April 24th.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

The Committee revisited assumptions that were pulled together about a year ago including comparisons to NewBrook that led the committee to create the articles.

A suggestion was made to alter an article to allow for a RED not to remain contingent on building a new school.

Discussion ensued.

Joe - Has heard opposite feedback of what April has heard. There are varying opinions all over. The RED can do whatever they want after the RED is formed, whether they want to build a school. Are we at the point where we are ready to ask " don't build the school" or "build it"?

Frank - It's clear from our own collaboration - NewBrook as an example - the programs that must be provided such as art, counseling, etc. Many support services tripled for students to have better access to these. When there is some form of regionalization, there's the result of what happened in NewBrook - a higher spectrum of services. It is predicated on a new building. It's very black and white that supportive services are tripled when combining schools occurs opposed to when schools aren't combined. What happened in 1969 has had a very large impact. Frank encourages Jamaica and Townshend to take another look.

Kim suggested moving ahead on the discussion of finances.

Frank reviewed the patterns of the NewBrook budget over the past few years since Newfane and Brookline school districts combined to create the Brookline-Newfane Joint School District. Frank's review included the previously discussed hypothetical scenario with realistic numbers for building a new school structure for the towns of Townshend and Jamaica.

John - This committee needs to make the decision to link new school and RED. It keeps many decisions alive. Do you want to decouple these two things or not? It's hard to go down one path without knowing whether or not you want to go forward with submitting articles to the state or not.

The NewBrook board would like to move forward with Townshend. It's hard to imagine possibilities without looking at the different Governance structures.

More lengthy discussion ensued regarding Governance and Sustainability.

Wes made a motion to discontinue the Red Study Committee. Joe seconded the motion. Motion failed.

Next steps including (public outreach and next agenda):

Item #1 - What does the future hold for collaboration with fewer towns involved?

Item #2 - John will have a set of articles for both scenarios of having or not having a new school structure included.

Adjourn:

Ken made the motion to adjourn at 8:10p.m. Joe seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 8:11p.m.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, May 1st at 7:00p.m. @ Leland & Gray Library.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alison Hescocock