

Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee
Leland & Gray Library - 6/5/2013
7:00pm - 9:00pm
Approved Minutes

Present: Bruce Parliman, Ken McFadden, Joe Winrich, Neil "Bucky" Pelsue, Emily Long, Cory Stark, Lee Anne Parker. John Everitt-VSBA Consultant.

WCSU Administrators: Steven John, Samantha Bovat (minute-taker)

Members of the public: Rick Hege, Jerry Dyke, Nancy Dyke.

Emily called the meeting to order at 7:03pm

Review agenda

Emily adds a piece of correspondence to the agenda.

Comments from the public:

None

Correspondence

Emily reads correspondence dated 5.21.13 from Windham Elementary to RED Committee.

Discussion ensued about whether or not Windham can be "let out of the study."

John E- Once the study committee is formed, it is required that they continue as part of the study. They are members of L&G Union so can't just be removed. We have honored their requests over time by making them Advisory.

Rick Hege- The terms "necessary" and "advisory" are too confusing. Seems that it is easy for Windham to assume that they can just get out of it.

Steven- Suggests that the committee respond in writing to the Windham Board. This is Windham's responsibility to find out.

MOTION: Joe makes a motion to respond in writing to include language in the letter that acknowledges receipt and will take under advisement. "As we understand the process, because you are a member of the L&G board you are required to be a part of any RED articles to be presented to the citizens for a decision."

Bucky - seconds

Discussion about K-6 board and 7-12 as Unified Unions

Bucky- K-6 is entirely separate organization with regard to goals than 7-12. I read that they do not want to be a part of the RED effort. They may still want to be part of L&G just not the RED.

Ken- Could it be possible to be K-6 MUUD and L&G board?

John- Yes.

Nancy Dyke - Read a quote by Milton Friedman: "Only a crisis actual or perceived will cause change..." Even if this whole idea goes down- the important thing is the discussion....Bringing it to the people is the only way, regardless of the outcome. Even if it produces anxiety....it will be valuable.

Joe-We have lost sight of our goal. We can either gather our courage and submit articles or we can quit. We have not moved out of fear.

Vote- 6 in favor, 1 abstention: Motion passes

Steven will write a draft for review.

General Discussion about RED Study Committee

LeeAnne- The passion for this study seems to be dwindling

Emily- Seems that there is a changing interest and commitment.

Bruce- With Wes leaving the Jamaica board, there seems to be a renewed interest. Still want the community to have input. The group is concerned with a lack of clarity from their perspective.

Joe- Townshend is interested in looking at a new school again. They voted to approve the articles *with* a school.

LeeAnn- Brookline and Newfane are still reacting to the merger of the two schools. Concerned about more change for these two towns.

Emily- We formed this committee to improve student opportunities *not* to build a new school. Suggests that if there is not passion from this committee she is concerned for the successful completion of this study.

Bucky- Observation. In the 1st few months there was enthusiasm, but as constituents such as Windham decided they didn't want to continue things have changed. We have *reacted* to making a change. Not interested in RED/ WCED if so few towns interested. (min. of 4) Not sure we are achieving our goals.

Review and Approve Minutes - April 3, 2013:

Bucky moves to approve the April 3rd Minutes, LeeAnne seconded.

All in favor, motion passes. (No changes)

Vote to approve or disapprove committee report to State Board of Education with articles to form a unified union school district.

Ken- Indicates that he will approve sending the articles if there is no mention of cost savings....

Article 1

John- We need to decide how many districts are enough? Once decide that can decide on “necessary” and “advisable.”

These articles dated May 1, 2013, are based on changes *you* wanted, not his recommendations. Cautions that we have to be careful about Newfane and Brookline being “Necessary” because they are already connected and we have to be careful that it doesn’t seem the can become unconnected. B&N should be necessary towns.

All in agreement that 4 towns are necessary.

Ken-clarification that if Windham votes no- they have no voting rights on RED, but will have a vote on L&G board?

John- Yes

There was discussion about how the voting on budgets works.

John will request an answer from the state on how the budget votes would happen on the WCED budget for Windham if not in the WCED.

Articles 2-9 - no changes

Article 10- You can approach it that someone might say no or that all will say yes.

Steven- Change 1st line to read WCED not unified union school district.

Article 11- Date should be Tuesday, October 8, 2013

Article 12- Date to become operative: November 7, 2013.

Discussion ensued about the renewed interest in building a school.

Bruce- Jamaica is interested in the school- 1st set of articles

Steven- Jamaica is in transition as a board right now with one open seat and a new Chair. They feel like would like to bring to voters, but they did not vote on whether or not they want to consider building a new school specifically. They did appoint a committee member for the RED.

Bucky- Perhaps in Article 12- we can provide an *opportunity to consider a project to build a new school....and move it down to the 4th bullet.*

Change bullet #4 to “Consider a project to build a new elementary school. For example: a new elementary school serving Jamaica and Townshend students.

Article 16-

Leave article as is regarding town vote.

- Remove 3rd sentence in third article “Both towns will...”

Article 18 -

Do we still have an advisory committee? John suggests that this is a good faith article.

Change line 1 from the Board WILL appoint to the Board MAY appoint. Second line- The Board WILL appoint.

MOTION: Bucky moves to submit the Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee Report dated June 5, 2013 to the State board of Education.
Cory Seconds

There was further discussion about whether or not there would be cost savings with a RED.

Emily- April sent an email indicating that the town would want the building back if becomes unoccupied- so there should be no carrying costs moving forward.

Bruce- Jamaica has not talked about this specifically.

Rick Hege suggests that we clarify any article that if any schools were closed, they be offered to the town for \$1. (written legal guarantee)- Frank will work with John to find language.

Bullet in Article 12.

Consider a proposal to build a new school- if approved empty schools will be sold back to the towns for a \$1

VOTE: All in favor - motion passes.

Set a date for citizen votes. 1st Tuesday of October 8th- Operative on November 7 (article 12)

John put this year's data about the schools now that he has access to that in Article 1-.

**Once draft is sent to Study Committee- please review and send any edits to Emily. She and John will revise accordingly.

Next Steps- including public outreach and next agenda

Adjourn: Bucky made the motion to adjourn at 9:14 p.m. Joe seconded. All in favor.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 7 at 7:00p.m. @ Leland & Gray Library.

(review questions and list of advantages for public outreach)

Respectfully Submitted,
Samantha Bovat