

Voluntary Regional Education District Study Committee
Leland & Gray Library – 8/21/2013
7:00p.m. – 9:00p.m.
Approved Minutes as Amended

Present: Emily Long (Chair), Neil “Bucky” Pelsue, Bruce Parliman, Lee Anne Parker, April Chase, Ken McFadden.

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

Members of the public: Nancy Dyke, Jerry Dyke, Tom Tolbert (Jamaica Board)

Review State Board of Education approval of proposed Articles and Study on August 20, 2013

There was not a quorum to start the meeting. Emily reviewed the vote on the Articles by the State Board. She talked about the process of the meeting and the fact that only two members voted against the articles as written.

At 7:42 s quorum was established and Emily Long called the meeting to order.

Review Agenda- No changes.

Comments from the public- Nancy Dyke commended everybody for sticking through the process. She did voice concern about open conversations/informational meetings in the towns, particularly in Windham. She suggests that there should be someone moderating the meeting to ensure that a process is followed (non- Windham resident preferable.)

Questions are being asked ex: If Windham maintains its school, how could a unified board be of an advantage to Windham?

Question to this committee: *What will be the approach of this committee if there is a block to the informational meeting in Windham?* (Meetinghouse is an option for the forum if the school is unavailable.)

Emily hopes that Windham’s meeting runs just the same as all the rest.

Discussion ensued to create a general list of things to do for public outreach:

- Petitions for board members need to be completed by September
- Get press release out to newspapers, List Serves ex:- Brookline (Julie Lavorgne) & Townshend; all Town clerks
- Email to board members - encourage them to talk to one another to determine who will run for which terms
- Steven will verify exact # of signatures needed per town
- If no one petitions to run for the WCED Board?- Will have write-ins (Majority voters and enough #s by write-in)

Question for clarification: If there is no candidate...will there be an appointment by the school board? (question on whether or not the district boards that are working in tandem are able to do the appointment) *Steven will find out the answer.*

Review and approve minutes August 7, 2013

Buck moves and Bruce seconds to approve the August 7th minutes as presented.
All in favor. Motion passes.

Public outreach planning

Emily asked if Steven reviewed the contract for John Everett with the VSBA. Steven read the contract and it indicates that *the consultant will be available for 5 additional meetings after the articles are approved short of the ballot.....at no charge from the VSBA.*

Steven reads answers to the 3 questions that were sent with the original request for approval of the Articles.

1. Q: What authority does the board hold to change the Articles?

A: It is possible for the WCED Board to change the articles, but not the attachments with the co-mingle.

2. Q: What happens if there is a petition for revote in a town?

A: Only the petitioning town needs to vote- the rest do not. (within 30 days of initial vote)

Bucky- How many times can they call a revote? Emily believes that there is only 1 opportunity for revote. (*Steven will confirm*)

3. Q: What is the process and timeline for elections?

A: *Email response from John Everett-*

Nomination to run for office: Towns that elect officers by Australian Ballot require candidates to submit a nominating petition signed by 30 voters or one percent of the checklist – whichever is less. The petition must clearly indicate the office and term length on the petition prior to circulating it for signatures. 17 V.S.A. §2681(b). The nominating petition must be filed with the municipal clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the sixth Monday preceding the day of the election. The sixth Monday is September 2, which is Labor Day, so the deadline is **Tuesday, September 3 at 5:00p.m.**

Press Release- Emily asks if everyone is comfortable with the Committee Chair being a spokesperson for interviews by the newspapers and cable companies? Everyone agrees that the more information that is out there, the better.

Further discussion about the specifics of the voting process.

-Who signs the warning(s)?

-Who approves candidate?

-Who prints the ballots?- Each town clerk should make copies of the ballots we provide to them. (Note: There is a new Town Clerk in Windham)

-Who determines the poll hours? - Emily thinks that the polls have to close by 7pm, but need to be open between the hours of 10-7. Steven thinks all towns have to have the same hours.

The committee reviewed the Draft Warning dated May 2nd - The article was edited to the best of the group's ability. *Steven will make these revisions and get approval from legal counsel for finalization.*

- Steven will file the report from the state approving the Articles.
- Steven will seek counsel about wording on Windham's warning

-Who approves the warning? *School districts sign the warning (Board chairs sign along with Study committee chair)

- Who votes to approve the warning?- School district board?

Bucky moves that the amended revisions to the Warning, pending legal counsel, be approved and submitted to respective towns/required parties. LeeAnne Seconds.

Discussion to clarify the language and meaning of the motion.... Bucky offers a friendly amendment.

Amended Motion: *Bucky moves that this committee approves the proposed warning pending legal counsel review and approval and be submitted to towns. LeeAnne seconds. All in favor motion passes.*

Ken makes a motion to give committee chair, Emily Long, the authority to sign the warning if required.

Bucky 2nds

All in favor motion passes.

Emily reiterates that candidates should discuss within their town what position they are running for so that everyone doesn't vie for the same terms on the WCED Board.

Bruce asked if information should be made available and engage select boards?

Timeline Draft Frank offers some information based on the results of successful public outreach campaigns from other school districts in the state.

- Define the problem
- Define the need
- Describe your solution
- Engage the public-
 - phone calls to active members of communities
 - invite to public information meetings
 - short brochure available (history, problem, solution)

-Create a website

-Engage the Press

Tentative meeting schedules- based on the legal requirements and short timeframe.

10/8 Vote in each town

10/1 *Tuesday* - Regional Meeting at L&G for all towns (notice to be warned/ posted before 9/17)

9/24 Newfane/Brookline (LeeAnne suggests that Brookline/New meet together)
9/17 Windham (*Steven will be touching base with the Board to verify date and location*)
9/12 Jamaica
9/9/13 Townshend

- All meetings will be at 7pm at specified locations
- Steven will confirm with committee the dates set
- Steven will issue warnings for the towns

Discussion about informational meetings:

Tom- suggests that perhaps the Jamaica meeting can be combined with school board meeting

Bucky- asks if Jamaica and Windham could do a joint informational meeting?

There was some concern by the committee about whether or not townspeople would go to other towns

April asks for clarification about these public meetings. Aren't all meetings open to the public and people from any town can come? (April further suggests that there should not be a separate meeting for Townshend) The committee decided that it would be appropriate for Townshend to have an informational meeting.

There was further discussion about the importance of offering to present information to the select boards as well as inviting them to the public meetings.

LeeAnne- suggests that we should at least approach the selectboard to offer a presentation either separately or by invite to the public forums.

Forums:

-Emily suggests that the committee members go to as many informational meetings as possible.

-Steven is advised that the Superintendent, Business Manager or Consultant not be moderator

-Perhaps committee members take parts of the presentations in all towns- we will determine who next meeting.

-Technical and financial questions will be answered by Steven and Frank

-Emily suggests our Consultant take on the creation of the outreach campaign-Website, Power Points, brochure, etc. can be coordinated by him/her.

Next Meeting 8/29 at 7pm at L&G Library - Review Warning and Questions

9/4 Tentative date for following meeting

Meeting is adjourned at 9:30

*Respectfully submitted by Samantha Bovat
Rev. 8.29.13*